

Groningen's Foodprint

Researching the complex two-way relationship between social capital and the urban food system of Groningen



Figure 1 : Community garden "Oude RoomsKatholieke Ziekenhuis"

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Abstract

This research studies the complex two-way relationship between social capital and grassroots urban agriculture in the city of Groningen. With the help of GIS-data and in-depth interviews with different stakeholders and initiators of food projects, this study gives insights into the interplay of these concepts. The research shows that the relationship between social capital and the development and maintenance of the urban food system in Groningen is one that is strongly correlated and the two concepts have a reinforcing impact. The overall impact of the food projects on social capital is very positive, although the dangers of inclusion and exclusion should be considered. Differences in success rate are associated with the neighborhood the projects are set up in, although other external factors such as the role of the municipality and the capacity of the initiator should be considered in these grassroots projects.

Keywords: *social capital, grassroots urban agriculture, neighborhood, inclusion, exclusion.*

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1. Groningen's Foodprint

1.1 Background

When Carolyn Steel visited the city of Groningen in 2012, she inspired the local municipality in the development of a so-called urban food system. The architect and writer travelled around the world to speak about the concept she terms *Sitopia*. This concept called for a new approach to urban design, an approach that emphasizes the way in which food production and the city are intertwined and shaped as a whole. The concept is adopted by more cities recently as they recognize the issues surrounding food and sustainability and create their own urban policy concerning food and its production.

Over recent centuries people have become increasingly disconnected (socially and spatially) from the agricultural environment and the sources of their existence: the land, the farmers and harvesters, the production of food itself. Indeed, it has been argued that the current homogenous food system has worked to make people passive and unknowledgeable about the impacts of the food they eat. To this end, it calls for alternative food systems and a growing awareness of these issues have been made in a direct response to the question marks surrounding the future of sustainability in food production, distribution and consumption (Feenstra, 2002).

The emergence of the food issue is rather recent in the world of planning. While planning studies claims to be both future and spatially oriented and to be relevant to society and policy, the system of food production and consumption has been remarkably neglected as a topic of study for planners. But as the growth of set out food visions throughout the world show, there is a growing awareness concerning the fact that the existing food system needs to adapt if we are to approach a more efficient and eco-friendly existence (Sonnino, 2009).

The concept of urban food systems is one example of a potentially important alternative for sustainability, both social and environmental. Food systems in general touch upon a myriad of elements that are relevant to planning studies and can be defined among other things as the *"interconnections among distinct community facets, incorporating linkages among physical, economic, natural, and social dimensions and connecting subjects like transportation, land use, housing and economic development"* (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000, p. 118). Food systems have long been a concern for rural agriculture and farmlands, however, since we live in an era where more than half of the of the population of the planet now lives in cities, a share that keeps growing, the topic of food provision, and its concerns for society and environment, becomes an issue that concerns the urban too (Sonnino, 2009). Key elements for the design of urban food systems are urban agriculture, fair trade food and a local food distribution, of which all are designed to foster a positive influence on

the ecological footprint (or foodprint so to speak) and social sustainability of the city (Steel, 2012). While an integrated urban food system was pioneered in 1991 in Toronto (Canada), the city of Groningen was a one of the first in Europe to embrace the concept of *Sitopia* and create its own urban food system. This system contains a few key elements that were designed to increase awareness about food and lower the ecological footprint of the city and to fall in line with the durability plans of the city (Afdeling Beleid en Programmering, 2012). In particular they include: sourcing of more local food, making room for local food-initiatives and markets, and encouraging urban gardening. The city itself created its own food department within the municipality, which focuses on making the city's food consumption and production more sustainable and fair. But although their main aim is to make the city more sustainable (Veldstra, 2016), the urban food system can have a lot of other effects that can positively influence the city. The impact of these food projects on social capital and social cohesion in neighborhoods throughout Groningen is very positive and as this research demonstrates this social dimension of the food projects is a topic that is very underappreciated.

1.2 Research focus

The main aim of this research is providing a better insight in the effects of a local food system on the development of social capital in the city of Groningen. Sonnino (2009) underlines that importance of such studies by saying that planners and policy-makers can be helped in understanding the functioning of this urban food system by in-depth case studies and data gathering concerning the development and potential of the urban food system. The importance of the development of this system doesn't only lie in the feeding of the cities, but also in reconnecting the citizens with their surroundings and one another in terms of social, economic and environmental aspects. This means that the food system has a great impact on the quality of urban life. According to Pothukuchi & Kaufman (1999, p. 221) the *"significance needs to be understood more fully for its impact on the city's economy, public health, environment, land use and other community systems"*. The aim of this research will be to focus mainly on the impact of the urban food system on the neighborhood level. The low visibility of the food system doesn't mean it can't have a significant impact on urban citizens. Projects that are part of the urban food system include activities concerning meal programs and sustainable food activities such as urban agriculture, waste reduction and connecting local farmers and consumers (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000). Such projects offer a myriad of opportunities for the gathering of a diverse crowd of people that live together in neighborhoods and communities. It provides them the opportunity to get together to talk and listen, make plans, solve problems, learn from each other, agree and argue, and all within the context of a shared purpose. Within these initiatives social capital may develop which can later function as *"the glue that allows the new*

community food system to hang together or not” (Feenstra, 2002, p. 102). Moreover, the organization of the community is an essential factor of this system, since it adds to democratic participation and can be a solution for social exclusion. Wolf & Rozance (2013) add to that by saying that communities with strong social capital have: Lower mortality rates, higher self-rated health, more social support, lower incidence of crime, more trust in neighbors and a rise in neighborly interactions. This research will zoom in on the impact of the urban food system on the development of social capital within neighborhoods and also the role this social capital has in the success of the urban food system. With this research we contribute to policy-making and the role it has on the built-up and continuation of an urban food system and demonstrate how this is important for initiatives for different groups in society. The scientific contribution of this research lies in studying both ends of social capital in this two-way relationship and the addressing the context of the neighborhood in the development of the projects that are part of the food system.

1.3 Overall research aim and individual research objectives

Although the strong link between social capital and the urban food system is underlined, detailed research in general is lacking. Given this, the overall research aim is to explore the links between social capital and the development of the urban food system in Groningen. In order to address this research aim, the main question which this research seeks to answer is:

“What comprises the relationship between social capital and the development and maintenance of urban food systems in Groningen?”

The main question will be answered by addressing the following interrelated subquestions:

- *“What is the role of the municipality in the urban food system of Groningen?”*
- *“Where can we find the projects that are part of the urban food system of the city of Groningen?”*
- *“What role does pre-existing social capital play in the setting up and maintenance of the food projects in the city of Groningen?”*
- *“What role do the projects have in the development of social capital within the neighborhood?”*

Before focusing on the case study, the theory frames the existing research and defines the key concepts of *social capital* and *urban agriculture*. Following these questions the existing literature is further discussed and narrowed down to the two-way relationship of social capital and urban food projects, which gives answer to the question: *“What role does social capital play in the development of grass-root urban agriculture?”*.

This forms the base for the case-study done in Groningen. Before the actual case-study is analyzed, the role of the municipality will be explained. Interviews with the initiators of the urban food system and the help of reports aim to give an insight in the influence of the municipality on the development of food projects. This forms the background for the further case-study, where the projects in the city are analyzed by using Geographic Information Systems, which places them in the neighborhood context. The shown linkages in GIS form the base for the in-depth case study, where the use of semi-structured interviews indicate the relationship between these projects and (pre-existing) social capital. The results gathered answer the questions that concern the complex two-way relationship between social capital and food projects.

The research is concluded by linking the in-depth case study with the data gathered from the GIS and interviews with the foodpolicy department of Groningen. This way, the overall and complex relationship between social capital and food projects is investigated and the main question: *“What is the relationship between social capital and the development and maintenance of urban food systems in Groningen?”* is answered. In the theoretical analysis that follows the subjects of social capital, urban agriculture and grassroots development are researched.

2. Critical review of Related Literature

2.1. Introduction

As mentioned above, the urban food system is thought to play an important role in the development of local social capital, while social capital is itself deemed important for the maintenance and viability of urban food systems. The key motivation to this research is thus to get a better understanding of this complex two-way relationship. Consequently, the theory section seeks to detail the concept of social capital and how it interplays with grass-root initiatives and urban agriculture, that fall within the borders of the urban food system. The first part explores the multifaceted concept of social capital and its connection with neighborhoods. Following this, urban agriculture and grass root initiatives are defined and subsequently connected to the development and maintenance of local social capital. This is done by looking at how these projects add to the social capital of a neighborhood, and also how they may depend on existing social capital for their long-term viability.

2.2. Defining social capital

The concept of social capital has been much researched in social sciences and governmental policy practice. In a certain way there is nothing new or special about the term. The fact that involvement and participation in communities can have a positive impact on the individual and on groups is not a surprising notion. Research shows that communities with strong social capital have: lower mortality rates, higher self-rated health, more social support, lower incidence of crime, more trust in neighbors and a rise in neighborly interactions (Wolf & Rozance, 2013). However, the heuristic power of social capital is found in the fact that it puts these positive effects in a broader discussion and shows how non-physical and non-economic capital can also be a great source of influence. The shift to self help and community autonomy instead of top-down initiatives ensures the fact that it also becomes a field of interest for policy-makers, especially in times where they are seeking less costly solutions (Portes, 2000). Pierre Bourdieu defined social capital as “[t]he aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition” (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 249). The concept can be split up in two essential parts, the relationship which gives individuals access to resources they couldn’t access on their own and, secondly, the quantity and quality of the resources (Narayan & Cassidy, 2001). The sources of social capital are complex and multifaceted and so are its functions. Portes (2000) makes a distinction of three sorts of contents: A source of social control, a source of support and a source of benefits through the networks.

2.2.1 Strong and weak ties

Granovetter (1973) made a first distinction in the strength of ties within social networks and their relationship to social capital. Drawing on the network theory, he stressed the point that micro-level interactions are very influential to macro-level patterns. According to Granovetter's ideas, the strength of a tie is decided by a combination of the amount of time spent, intensity, intimacy and reciprocal services that connect the tie. Interestingly his analysis of networks and similar research led him to conclude that strong ties lead to overall fragmentation instead of connecting different groups. Therefore the importance of weak/subtle ties is stressed, since these are the gateways providing opportunities for individuals to integrate into communities. Therefore, weak ties offer the possibility to connect micro levels with macro levels, be it at the local scale through neighborhood projects, or at a larger-scale for instance with multinational companies. Some decades later, Putnam (2000) elaborated on this notion. In his book 'Bowling Alone', he asks himself the question why people are bowling alone on a Friday night, something he couldn't comprehend happening. This image was developed as being a metaphor for the individualization of society, which for Putnam (2000) was deemed to be an underlying problem in modern society. Looking for the causes and consequences of today's decline in communal social capital, he defines two different forms of social capital: *bridging* and *bonding* which are not so different to the aforementioned idea of strong and weak ties.

As this research will intensely analyze social capital it is important to be wary of the pitfalls and negative elements that it can produce and focus on the in- and excluding powers of the social capital created. Firstly, a bonding social capital has strong positives, but it too has strong negatives. Putnam (2000) speaks of the positive impacts of strong bonding capital. Bonding social capital can be seen as the social equivalent of superglue. It is a network based on strong ties that often bind rather homogenous groups, for example, fraternities and country clubs. It intends to reinforce solidarity and often promotes strong reciprocity. So it provides strong positives and benefits for the people included in this network, but it also has a great downside, or as Putnam (2000) puts it, a so-called "dark side". Bridger & Alter (2006) elaborate on the negative aspects and links this with community development. While some may benefit from the solidarity of such networks, others are excluded from such communities and their interests thus ignored. Geys & Murdoch (2010) warn that it is essential to analyze which form of social capital is present in specific activities and whether it benefits, and is accessible for, the whole community or only specific individuals. Bridging social capital, on the other hand, can be compared with Granovetter's (1973) aforementioned idea of weak ties. Instead of creating strong homogenous bonds, it offers individuals the possibility to access certain resources or activities. The accessibility is based on transcending cultural and economic differences and creating weaker and more diffuse linkages throughout the community. It has the

quality of fostering social trust and norms of reciprocity. The main focus is the divide within social capital that is dubbed strong and weak ties or bonding and bridging capital. The strong ties and bonding capital has strong positives and weaknesses and offers complications in in- and exclusion of people, whereas bridging social capital offers weaker relationships, but more possibilities in connecting a broader and diverser community. Schafft & Brown (2000) warn to be wary of the fact that social capital cannot be conceptualized as easily as sometimes put by Putnam, since that doesn't address the complexity of the phenomena described. Portes & Landolt (1996) argue that conceptualizing social capital as a social good can produce analyses that miss the downsides in the form of exclusion of the social network, restrictions of individual freedom and group pressure. This would make it wiser to conclude that social capital cannot be considered an absolute social "good", but to analyse the cases and see how the complex notion unfolds in practice. Coleman (1990:302) suggested that social capital can best be seen as a given form that can be valuable to particular entities, but may be of no interest or even be harmful to others. The questionmarks attached to the study of social capital will be further contemplated in the latter part of the theoretical framework, but before this will be broadened out, the other half of the two-way relationship is defined below.

2.3. Defining urban agriculture

Thibert (2012) confirms that it is of great importance that urban agriculture will be brought to a conceptual consensus, because with a better consensus and functionality it will turn into a useful tool for us to understand and measure. First off, urban agriculture is of course different from rural agriculture, but it is also supplementary to it in local food systems. Urban agriculture is integrated within the local, urban, ecological, economical and social fabric of the city. The concept should be described clear enough, so that it can be easily perceived and used in theory and practice. As Mougeot (2000) says:

"the operational translation of the (UA) concept should enable us to grade specific agricultural activities observed in particular urban areas."

When looking at the types of economic activities that are included in urban agriculture, it is especially important to look at the way that it distinguishes from rural agriculture. The important difference is found in the process of production, processing and marketing, which is more interrelated with time and place. Rural agriculture is more based on the economics of scale, while urban agriculture has a system based on economics of agglomeration (Feenstra, 2009). Difference in location plays an important role, which for urban agriculture means 'in and around cities and urban areas'. De Bon et al. (2010) say the following about UA:

“Urban agriculture is that being carried out within or on the outskirts of a city where a non-agricultural use of local resources is a real option; rural agriculture is found in areas where this option is not an issue.”

So, urban agriculture is relying more on a decentralized supply system with a direct reach to a consuming demand (Feenstra, 2009). It comprises the fact that production can be for both self-consumption and little trade. The most important characteristic of UA is its integration into the urban economic and ecological ecosystem. The fact that it is embedded within the urban context is the strongest distinction from rural agriculture. This integration in the urban ecosystem means an urban location, urban residents that produce and consume and a production line adapted to its urban surroundings. A clear and complete definition, given by Mougeot (2000), goes by these lines:

“UA is an industry located within (intraurban) or on the fringe(periurban) of a town, a city or a metropolis, which grows or raises, processes and distributes a diversity of food and non-food products, (re-)using largely human and material resources, products and services found in and around that urban area, and in turn supplying human and material resources, products and services largely to that urban area.”

For the selection of the urban agriculture initiatives within the urban food system of Groningen it is important to look at the criteria mentioned above. This way the selection of cases for this study can be boiled down to initiatives that are found within the urban context and the production, processing and distribution is also found within the urban outlay. And as the focus of the study is on social capital, the selected projects won't have commercial aims, but aim to add and give back to the community and the members involved, not only with produce, but also with human and social capital. The importance of this latter part is reflected in today's shift towards citizen-led initiatives, that aren't set up by governmental or commercial institutions, but by residents themselves (Caton Campbell, 2004). A clearer definition is given in the next part, where the concept of grassroots is elaborated upon.

2.3.1 Grassroot Urban Agriculture

Grassroot projects are bottom-up developments that can serve as the source of capacity development, and is an essential ingredient for the development of social capital (Chavis, 1995). As Seyfang & Smith (2007) describe it, grassroots innovations describe a web of relations between activists, citizens and organizations which generate bottom-up solutions and initiatives. Mainly focused on sustainable development, which food projects can be seen to be part of. Projects that respond to the local context and interests from within the communities that are concerned and

involved. They operate in civil society, contrary to mainstream business, and are mostly set up by activists or enthusiasts within the development of greener solutions (Macias, 2008).

Another definition describes the purpose of grassroots initiatives to make change relying on people with limited resources and abilities. They are moved and motivated by enthusiastic volunteers who aren't shy to spend a lot of their resources and free time in community projects (Middlemiss & Parrish, 2010). Important sidenote is the fact that these initiatives are affected strongly by the capacity of the initiator(s) of these projects into how they will develop. The capacity varies according to the opportunities and challenges and, with that, the strength of the social capacity of the community (Firth & Maye, 2011). The continuity of the projects depends on the ability of the initiator and the social capital within the neighborhood that impacts the capacity to sustain the initiative. As said while introducing this research, system-wide transformations are required to address change on climate and a low-carbon economy. That is why a local urban food system can be of such essential importance in the development of a green future. Grassroot initiatives play a huge role in this development, since the recent times ask for citizens carrying that change instead of the national and local governments (Seyfang & Haxeltine, 2012). Only one important ideology on modernization and the future imputes this on community-based change. This so-called, radical humanism, underscores this human agency as playing a central role in moving towards a more equitable society and a healthier future for the world (Dovey & Onix, 1999). Since the grassroots development is first and foremost a social development where projects rely on social capital and social capacity of communities, it is a logical development that this study uses this concept in the following research about food initiatives and projects in the city of Groningen. The fact that the analyzed projects all fit the description of grassroots development; they all rely on social capital and community capacity and evolve around volunteers who initiate and develop the small urban agriculture initiatives, makes that for this study a new definition is given:

Grass-root urban agriculture (GRUA) is the grass-root development of small urban agriculture as described above and as is studied in this research. It considers volunteer-based projects that practice urban agriculture: located in, or on the fringe of, urban areas which grows, processes and distributes several food and non-food products and relies on materials and the volunteer work of communities and citizens nearby these projects, which return these cultivated resources in capital for the urban surroundings. With this definition, a selection is made of projects that are analyzed and used to see how social capital develops these projects and vice versa. It's interesting to see how food projects and urban agriculture are used and how they add to the development of social capital within a neighborhood. It is also important to ask this question the other way around and dissect the influence of social capital on the capacity to initiate and develop an initiative.

This concept is placed on the background of a new development within the municipality of Groningen. Where the government is shifting its position to a reactive government, wherein the dynamics between initiative and the authorities disappear and the municipality becomes part of the network. Neighborhood initiatives have intrinsic motivation as their driving force, which means that the citizens aren't guided by the wishes of the government. (SME Advies, 2015).

2.4. Grass-roots urban food systems and the relationship with social capital

Now the fundament for the two elements that comprise this research, is set. A further elaboration on the concept of social capital is important, before drawing in to the complex two-way relationship, which is central in this research. So connecting the two elements, the following section addresses the role of in- and exclusion within social capital, link social capital with community development and gives insight in the development of social capital in certain neighborhoods and the lack thereof in others. What are the underlying factors that play a role in the development of social capital? And why is social capital important?

2.4.1 Social in- and exclusion

Portes (1998) observes that social capital via community gardens and urban agriculture is obtained by membership in varying social structures. This suggests that the upkeep and continuation of relationships is only possible through social interaction of these members. As Portes (2000, pag. 48) states *"To possess social capital, an individual must be related to others, and it is those others, not himself, who are the actual source of his or her advantage."* Thus, people have limited resources if they are on their own, and through direct and indirect social interactions and relations they can access a greater social capital. This is affirmed by the philosophical look on social capital by Mayer (2003), which is one worth-noting. She states that the idea of social capital is that all parties should be able to access it and with the right investment in the social capital it can overcome the great inequities in financial capital (Smith & Kulynych, 2002) via (Mayer, 2003). This means that the resources that are formed within these community organizations neutralize the differences in financial capital. The basic essence of a working society is to be without prejudices based on material, cultural and financial differences. And with having a shared interest and a joint problem-solving in a community project, it is important to suspend these fundamentally different situations within the confines of these initiatives. Mayer (2003) says that in dissolving these issues to the background you reach the ultimate social capital. Although, reality can be refractory, otherwise there wouldn't have been a distinction made in different forms of social capital, such as, bridging and bonding (Putnam, 2003). A strong element in diminishing the negative effects of social capital is social inclusion, which speaks of an equal consideration of the community and its varying aspects, which means differences in class, age and gender. This process of social inclusion is based on *"respectful interactions between*

different groups and a focus on mutual empowerment" (Hinrichs & Kramer, 2002), wherein participation is seen as the essential part and is prioritized by the greater part of development projects. But, to work on social inclusion it is important that these initiatives create and work on the development of resources and capacities of the specific disadvantaged groups within the neighborhood so that they can also participate in a pro-active manner (Shucksmith, 2000). This last part still remains the biggest challenge when considering social inclusion. A broad range of grassroots initiatives can be a solution and develop a better social inclusion within a neighborhood. This includes community gardening, improving public transportation, local food markets and initiating community-supported agriculture, wherein a community collaborates with a local farmer. In short, an urban food system. Organizing a range of initiatives is already happening in a lot of cities and neighborhoods and can address more people with different interests and backgrounds (Hinrichs & Kramer, 2002). Musterd & Murie (2002) suggest that intervening in neighborhoods should be done in a cautious way. Neighborhoods are more differentiated and context-sensitive than initially thought and this sensitivity implies that policy written in cities can't be easily copied from other cities. The authors (pag. 71) suggest that *"a dynamic concept of social capital which takes into account the trajectories of neighborhoods, their stage of development and the direction of and influence on change"* is needed. External influences such as public policy, leisure facilities, maintenance and transportation shouldn't be ignored in the development of social capital (Musterd & Murie, 2002).

So to deduce the statements above, social inclusion thrives in developing a social network of weak ties. The weaker connections offer a context wherein financial, cultural and all other sorts of differences can be overcome, but the social capital blooms in certain areas whereas it doesn't in others. This can be overcome by implementing activities that serve the development of social capital, which the next section elaborates on, also some underlying reasons behind the differences in social capital are mentioned. We finish this section by elaborating on the other part of the two-way relationship, which focuses on the influence of pre-existing social capital on the development of grassroots activities.

2.4.2 Social capital in the context of community development

Social capital and its development is influenced by its context, which results in differences in social in- and exclusion between the neighborhoods within the city. Therefore it is important to see how social capital interlinks with the development of a community and how this can be influenced by activities. Bhattacharyya (2004) sees any activity, such as elderly care, better schools and activities, as community development; where the activity is driven by intentions of engendering solidarity and agency. Agnitsch *et. Al* (2006) say it will then add to the development of social capital in a community. So by creating activities and networks the social capital of a neighborhood will be

positively influenced. Newman and Dale (2005) see 'agency' as the capacity for individuals to have the freedom to act and they point out that this positively influences social capital, maintaining an upwards spiral. Oulton (2012) shares this opinion saying that the essence of agency and solidarity is in connecting different cultures and classes and creating an environment in which to act and think freely. This is where Newman and Dale (2005), logically, plea for the development of a bridging social capital which allows the inclusion of people with different backgrounds, instead of a community of exclusion wherein the base of the further development of a shared social cohesion is undermined. The general positives of a well-developed social capital are mentioned above and the benefits for a community are proven to be present. But the question remains as to what characteristics are associated with greater/lower levels of social capital.

Putnam (2000) said it is the social trust that leads to an active community life and participation within the community. And this social trust may differ in every context and every neighborhood. There are a few results explaining that some variables can play a role in the amount of social trust and capital measured. For example, in small towns and villages the social trust is higher than in the urban areas (Putnam & Feldstein, 2004) And since this study focuses on the city of Groningen, it is interesting to see whether the urban area shows differences in social trust and capital and if there are factors that influence this. However, a lot of research that has emerged link very specific, and measurable, neighborhood predictors with social capital, though it should be noted here that there has been disagreement regarding the concept of community development and its ties to neighborhood. Indeed, the idea of a community is subjective and not necessarily confined to a physical neighborhood, for instance, the question of where a neighborhood starts and where it ends will depend on each individual. This definitional struggle is discussed in the methodology. With that said, Gough *et al.* (2006) have found that a significant predictor for social capital for women in neighborhoods is concentrated affluence. Other research from Magdol & Bessel (2003) has also shown that neighborhood density is an important factor in the development of social capital. This offers the opportunity for residents to engage and build relationships (Leyden, 2003). Another influencing factor is homeownership. A neighborhood with a high amount of owner occupied homes means the community has more heavily invested in the neighborhood, giving an incentive to make the neighborhood a better place (Temkin & Rohe, 1998) Ethnic diversity may reduce social capital, based on a study conducted in the United States, where results from this research claimed that immigration and diversity foster distrust among races and could cause social isolation for minorities (Putnam, 2007). In low-income neighborhoods, the residents want to move 'up' to a better neighborhood and therefore don't feel the attachment with their current neighborhood or are not willing to invest in it, a scenario that also influences the social capital in these areas. Often a higher

amount of social capital is measured in the high-income neighborhoods of a city compared with the lower income neighborhoods. As Gesthuizen et al. (2008) say, the conditions aren't as one-dimensional as previous research claimed. Economic inequality, where diversity is accompanied with, is the main element that causes this diversity and influences the eroding social capital. Other recent studies back this statement, such as the article by Letki (2008), that argues that certain conditions, such as crime, low income and diversity are not the key element in undermining social capital within a neighborhood, but the combination that results in a low neighborhood status is the key element that causes the decrease social capital.

Putnam (2000) mentions individual factors that also influence a neighborhood. Worries about money take away the will power to invest in social capital. An area with a lot of working women also affects the social capital and liveliness. Part-time workers have a positive effect, but a family with two full-time workers affect the social capital in a negative way. Homogenous neighborhoods often have a strong bonding character, whereas diversity can positively influence the bridging character of social capital, because it allows the different people to come together, which hasn't always have to be the case. Given the above, it would appear that the key to reviving neighborhood is to create activities and initiatives in several subjects, wherein young people, elderly and people with different backgrounds are allowed to work together and build up social contacts, strong or weak. There are several neighborhood conditions that decide the pre-existing social capital of the neighborhood. If there is a correlation between social capital and the setting up of food projects, the projects are mainly found in neighborhoods with a high amount of home-ownership, low ethnic diversity and high average income. The case-study uses the mentioned neighborhood conditions to see if the probability of pre-existing social capital impacts the set up of food projects in the city. The next section attempts to outline how projects in urban agriculture are an ideal solution.

2.5. Grass-roots urban agriculture and its relationship with social capital

As was mentioned in the theory above by Newman and Dale (2005) building agency is of great importance for the development and growth of social capital within neighborhoods. The urban food system can function as a form of agency and help in the development and maintenance of social capital. The research looks at 'grass-roots urban agriculture' (GRUA) and its two-way relationship with social capital. And the following section centers around answering the following question: *"What role does social capital play in the development of citizen initiatives?"* It also highlights the other side of the two-way relationship in explaining how grass-root urban agriculture and community gardens influence the social capital in a certain community. The fact that there is little literature written about the link between agricultural projects in the urban context and its linkage with social capital, makes this research a useful and interesting one. Therefore the specific social effects of food projects are further addressed here.

2.5.1 Social capital and food projects

After giving a clear insight into the definition of social capital, the functioning of social capital and framing the grassroot initiatives, it is interesting to narrow the theory down. As mentioned earlier, the importance of activities and projects within neighborhoods is valuable, since it can have a positive impact on the social capital within local communities. In this last part, the researches on urban food projects and social capital are studied. The main argument is to see if these local initiatives can help to develop and maintain social capital within neighborhoods. First and foremost, the homogeneity of an environment can have a bonding impact on a community and can therefore help in the increase of social capital. The other neighborhood conditions like density, crime rates, homeownership, income and others, also have probable influence on the social capital within a community, although neither of these factors can guarantee a stronger or weaker social capital. In the case study of this research, these conditions will be linked with the projects involved in the urban food system to see if there is a plausible connection between them.

It is not only the pre-existing social capital that is of importance for the development of food projects, the social capital that is created is the other significant aspect within the two-way relationship. Community gardens serve as sowing lands for community building, which is an important indicator of the presence of social capital. Social capital is quintessential in the buildup of a community and the creation of neighborhood cohesion. Therefore, community gardens provide a context wherein the development of social capital can be theoretically explored (Glover, 2010).

The article by Glover (2010) is based on the thought that social capital has a beneficial and a detrimental side to it, which depends on how the social network functions. It is found that, although

a community garden is a symbol of collective success within a neighborhood, within the process of founding and working on it there is an unequal access to this social capital. Some felt distant and detached from the process because they have a weak social position and therefore weren't able to achieve their personal goals within the project. This eventually created a certain resistance towards other members and the garden itself. Geys & Murdoch (2010) say that this can be caused by the bonding character of these initiatives. When a project is executed for a large part by a homogenous group, there can be a strong social capital within this group, but it can create a situation wherein the rest of the stakeholders feel excluded. Stronger diversity within a project is recommended, if possible, because it can serve as a bridge for different groups and eventually allows a bond to be formed. Another research analyzed an urban community garden in Melbourne wherein this project was analyzed on its potential of enhancing social capital. The benefits of the community garden are numerous. It increased the social cohesion between the people working on it, it gained social support and it ensured social connections. A great side note is the fact that, especially in the early stages, these benefits didn't transcend the confines of the garden project (Kingsley & Townsend, 2007), which tells us something about the time that is required for developing social capital.

The writing of Smit & Bailkey (2006) is summarizing and underlining the importance of urban agriculture in the building of communities. The practice has proved to be an often successful model for the inclusion of different urban communities. The main idea is the production of food but achieving other objectives, such as the building of community capital, shouldn't be ignored.

“The multifaceted character of successful community-based urban agriculture is to create a place-based form of grassroots community development, which allows for the inclusion of women, children, the poor, the homeless and the elderly into constructive food production activities.

Thus urban agriculture, in a manner consistent with the practice of conventional community (social and economic) development, can be a constructive contributor to city neighborhoods, and the social networks of entire cities.” (Smit & Bailkey, 2006)

Thus, it could be expected that urban agriculture initiatives placed at the edge or within neighborhoods can bring residents together and generate interaction in Groningen too. A sense of shared ownership and responsibility in a local food system can lead to a collective feeling of power, which allows the people involved to think better of themselves and their neighbors (Donald & Blay-Palmer, 2006). Wolf & Rozance (2013) mentioned the positive effects of urban agriculture are mentioned: They serve as a place for people in the community to come together and interact and is a great place for holding events. One quote of a New York gardener sums it all up:

“Community gardens are a place to develop friendship, learn to share and help other people, exchange plants and help each other.” (Salvidar-Tanaka & Krasny, 2004)

In the article of Maller et al. (2002) it is stated that we continuously rely on nature in an emotional, intellectual and physical manner. By experiencing nature through education our attachment with it will be intact. Which is why urban agriculture and other projects within the urban food system are a great opportunity for connecting people and are naturally appealing to everyone (Kingsley & Townsend, 2007).

Welsh & MacRae (2011) confirm that food projects have a lot of positive social effects, by saying it is a space where relationships are made and made stronger between different groups of people. Connecting different people is the bridging importance of community gardens and this bridging aspect adds to the community development, which is, as addressed earlier, the key element in a better social capital in a neighborhood (Bhattacharyya, 2004). Dempsey et al. (2011) emphasize the role GRUA has in creating a better society and neighborhood en name five main positive elements: Safety, sense of place, community stability, social interaction and networks and social equity.

The potential of so-called spatial flows, which can be seen as social networks and exchange processes that influence the spread of social capital. If the resources of the created social capital and activities done are not exclusive, the benefits may spill over to neighboring communities, producing so-called spatial externalities (Sampson et al., 1999). Projects within the local food system have the possibility, not only to create social capital within the neighborhood, but can plant their seeds in neighboring locations.

2.6. Conclusion

Concluding the theory, it is important to underline the importance of social capital and how GRUA can add to the development of social capital in the neighborhood. The theoretical framework has shown that there are roughly two categories in the concept of social capital, namely bonding and bridging capital. Which have positive effects on the wellbeing of communities, which can be multifaceted as it can raise the overall productivity in communities and enlarge social networks, help find new jobs and make new friends. But the concept isn't as straightforward as has been expected, as we should be wary of the pitfalls of social capital and shouldn't consider it as an absolute social "good". Downsides can be found in forms of exclusion, group pressure and limiting freedom can impact the social wellbeing of individuals and the community.

The effects of social capital will be studied in relation with GRUA, which falls under the overarching urban food system of Groningen. These are volunteer-based projects that are located on the fringe of or within the urban outlay and where food is grown, processed and distributed and rely on the volunteer work of community members. The two-way relationship between these concepts is complex and the interaction between the two can best be divided in two parts. The role of pre-existing social capital is underexposed in the overall literature, which stresses the relevance of analyzing it's impact on setting up initiatives in the city. There are conditions that influence the social capital in a neighborhood, such as education level, crime rate, homeownership and many others and it would be interesting to see if these factors effect the amount of projects found in neighborhoods. The influence of GRUA on social capital in communities is studied well and results in a great amount of positive effects as the gardens serve as a great instigator of greater social capital and agency in neighborhoods, which are guided by factors, such as reciprocity, trust, collaborating and sharing. The keyword is involvement. When you're not involved in the creation of the social capital, there is a small chance you will profit from the development of it. The theory already warned for the negative impacts social capital can have and it would be interesting to analyze if the positive impact of food projects is as straightforward as the thoughts about social capital were in the beginning. Essential is trying to reveal the sort of social capital it creates in order to see how the initiatives influence the social values of the community. What is the role of pre-existing social capital? And is there a clear divide between bridging and bonding social capital and can bridging capital be sustained?

3. Conceptual model and hypothesis

3.1. Conceptual model

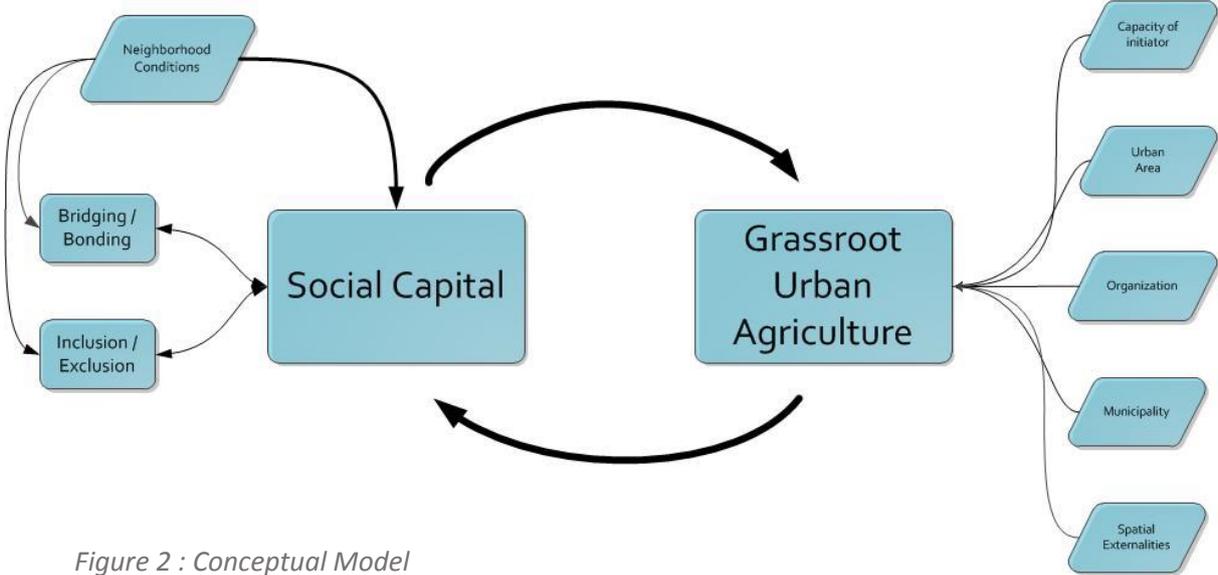


Figure 2 : Conceptual Model

The conceptual model depicts the two-way relationship between the main concepts presented in the theory. There is a constant interchange between these two, which starts with the neighborhood conditions. These conditions are the main influence on the measure of social capital within a neighborhood. The pre-existing social capital influences the development of grassroot urban agriculture together with some other prerequisites: It is run by enthusiastic initiators, the projects are found in an urban area and the capacity of the neighborhood as well as the initiator play a role in the set up of the project. GRUA impacts the social capital within a neighborhood, which can develop in different ways. The social capital can be bridging or bonding and thus in- or excluding. The development of the social capital effects the course and success of the food project making this a two-way relationship.

4. Methodology

4.1. Introduction

With the theory as the base for this research, the study continues with a description of the methods and applied research strategy. The aim is to provide a better insight into the overall complexity of social capital and confirm or debunk the theories and concepts mentioned above. The case study on the urban food system of Groningen is approached with the application of two research methods. In the first part a complete selection of community gardens is utilized to measure the locality and socio-economic background of the food projects in the city. This is done by combining project locations and small area statistics within a GIS. The second part of the study contains an in-depth analysis of selected community gardens within the city. This part aims to provide a cross-section of the projects that are involved in the Eetbare Stad-projecten, which will be explained in section 4.3. The selection of the projects analyzed aims to provide a complete insight in the projects, that vary in size, age, neighborhood background and set up. In this cross-section the two-way influence of the urban food projects and social capital within the neighborhood is dissected. First, the research strategy is discussed thoroughly and the framework for the data analysis is set. This forms the motivation and validation for the data selection and methods used for the analysis, which is established in the third section (4.3). In the last part of the methodology, the limitations of the research are drawn out.

4.2. Research strategy and framework for data analysis

4.2.1 GIS-data

The use of maps are a good way of providing a visual overview of the projects and the use of GIS has become a fundamental tool in fields of urban studies, which is specifically interesting when studying the interaction between social and spatial phenomena. Maps can provide a better understanding of data and provides the possibility of integrating different types of information into a clear visualization (Fielding & Cisneros-Puebla, 2009). This case study aims to achieve that, as the location of the food projects are associated with wellknown correlates of social capital. By connecting several of these correlates to the spread of the initiatives, the location of these projects are linked to the high or low probability of social capital that the neighborhood produces. These so-called neighborhood conditions will be elaborated upon in the Results section. From the GIS we move on to a more intensive qualitative approach; interviews focusing on specific projects as well as expert interviews that provide an overall policy perspective.

4.2.2 Interviews

For the in-depth analysis of the community gardens spread through the city, semi-structured interviews are chosen as the research method. The use of interviews in a case study is very useful as

the respondents, that are selected upon their potential knowledge can provide the investigator a piece of the puzzle and confirm or debunk the assumptions based on the theory (Silverman, 2006). In this the initiators of active community projects are approached and interviewed as they have a clear overview of the course of the project and the impact it has on the neighborhood. The application of semi-structured interviews has been used in this case study and give the participants a right amount of flexibility and gives the researcher room to probe for information. As the outcome and the story of every particular case is different, the flexibility of an interview can be helpful in gathering the required information from the respondents. This allows us to achieve 'rich data', wherein the interviewee is allowed the freedom to talk and ascribe meanings (Cohen, 2006). On the other hand, the interviews are based on some discretion about the order of questions and parts of the interview questions are prepared beforehand, which allows the interviewer to gather the wanted results. As Silverman (2006) says that the structured course of an interview provides a good overview on a subject it is used in this research on how the projects are developing and how the projects influence the neighborhood. As the theoretical framework shows that the two-way relationship between social capital and food projects is a complex matter, the use of close-ended questions wouldn't have served the overall purpose as it is difficult to conclude parts of the concepts with certainty. Open-ended questions allow the recognition of patterns and perceptions and give the respondents the opportunity to sort these patterns and perceptions in their own project and own framework. This increases the validity of the research and gives a greater depth to the overall interviews (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002). The interviews done for this case study serve several purposes. First of, a few experts from the municipality have been interviewed to get a clear insight into the overall urban food system, it's role in the whole process and it's successes. The most important part has been the in-depth interviews with the initiators of the projects. What makes it interesting is the fact that two research methods are chosen that complement each other and result in a coverage of several views on the urban food system and hopes to provide a strong insight within the limited time and possibilities of the research.

4.3. Data

4.3.1 GIS-data

The selection for the GIS-data is based on the concept dubbed GRUA, as first mentioned in the theoretical framework this means that the selected projects are found within the registered boundaries of the city of Groningen, which makes these projects, urban food projects. With that, it relies on the work of volunteers living nearby and in the community, who return these cultivated resources in accessible capital for its surroundings. This doesn't mean that the projects are the same; they differ in size, neighborhood background and locality.

The municipality of Groningen has mapped out the food projects that fall under the urban food system, which is a selection of around 50 food projects throughout the city. This concerns small neighborhood projects which only encapsulate two fruit trees to large projects such as Tuin in de Stad which consist of several elements such as a free food restaurant and a large food market. In Appendix A the projects that fall within the lines drawn by the definition of GRUA are summarized in detail, with a description of their characteristics. These projects are all included within the Eetbare Stad, which is an overarching organization that is part of the municipality. They have mapped out all the locations of the projects and with adding the locations of the failed projects throughout the city, an interesting overview is created of the success of the projects spread through the city. This raises the following question: What does the location of a project tell us about the link with social capital? When looking back at the theory there are a few variables that have proven to have a strong link with social capital and with the help of these variables, there are some explanations found as to how and why the projects are dispersed in the particular way they are dispersed.

The neighborhood conditions can tell us something about a high or low probability of social capital within a community, so by converting these conditions into GIS-data, we are able to indicate the probability of social capital within neighborhoods in the city of Groningen. By laying the spread of the projects throughout the city over the shapefiles of the neighborhood conditions, the research can visualize the connection between these conditions and the setting up of the projects. This way, the research aims to find a link between pre-existing social capital and food projects. Placing the selected projects in the map gives insight in to where projects thrive and in which neighborhoods the projects don't succeed. The visualization of the data will result in the making of several maps wherein the different neighborhood conditions will be shown and linked with the food projects. This can give an indication whether the theory of social capital is reflected in the case of the city of Groningen and as a consequence this study desects the underlying factors that impact the sprawl of the projects within the city.

4.3.2 Interviews

The concept of social capital can be seen as ambiguous, but as discussed in the theoretical framework there can be a distinct definition, which in this research is based on the work of Putnam (2000) and Granovetter (1983). With the help of interviews the social nature of the food initiatives is made clear. As the GIS data give insight into the role of neighborhood conditions and pre-existing social capital in the setting up of food initiatives, these data also frame the further case study as it shows the diverse backgrounds and starting history of the food projects. For this research, it is deemed important to approach the right projects to achieve a justifiable cross-section of the projects. The case-study started with interviewing several experts working on the food vision of the city of Groningen. The

two initiators of this vision were interviewed to get insight in the overall aims and set-up of the policy. These interviews led to Laurens Stiekema, who is the linked with the municipality as well as the food projects throughout the city and provided more detailed information about the food projects and its social impact. This interview also resulted in a list of succeeded and failed projects. The provided information was the base for a cross-section of GRUA and the projects that fell within this cross-section were approached with a short interview. These interviews provided a clear insight in the diversity of the projects considering size, neighborhoodbackground and participation. The responses can be found in Appendix C and resulted in the approach of several projects for an in-depth, semi-structured interview, which was based around the same questions but demanded far more detail from the respondents. The cross-section of the interviewed projects is a well-considered one, whereby the view of experts in the field, the provided list, GISdata and the short interviews are used for the made selection. The provided information created the opportunity to base the selection on diversity in size, neighborhood background and social impact. By zooming in on a few diverse cases, the two-way relationship between the projects and the development of the social network and cohesion within the neighborhoods is researched. The aim is to connect these elements and give a prudent insight into the development of social capital and how this development varies among several projects. The final in-depth study concerns the analysis of eight different projects, whereby eight different respondents who initiated eight different projects that fall under the Eetbare Stad have been interviewed. With these interviews we tried to achieve a representative overview of the food projects and their role in the development of social capital.

As seen in the Appendix C the questions aim to give clarity in the complex two-way relationship of social capital and urban food projects. By asking questions about how people got involved, diversity, background and history of the project, it is possible to gain insight into the bonding or bridging character of the project within the neighborhood. Through the interviews, we aim to see which form of capital (bridging or bonding) the projects are based around, and how these projects influence the social capital within the neighborhood. Not only are the neighborhood conditions linked to the development of the project, but the influence and maintenance of pre-existing social capital is also likely influence the success of the initiative. Through its design, the interviews also enable insights into the process of social in- and exclusion and underline the potential aspects that influence the social development within the project. By approaching a diverse range of projects, it is mainly interesting to compare the projects and identify the similarities and the differences between the projects, this comparison allows us to see which factors influence a positive or possibly a negative relationship between the food projects and the social capital in the neighborhood. As the influence of GRUA on social capital in communities, according to the theory, results in a great amount of

positive effects, it was also noted that potentially negative impacts can emerge. When you're not involved in the creation of the social capital, there is a small chance you will profit from the development of it. It is only through indepth semi-structured interviews that we can gain such detailed insights and get to grips with the potentially contradictory and circular relationship between social capital and the urban food system in Groningen.

The results of the gathered data are transcribed in full and can be found in complete form in Appendix C, the results are coded and categorized into several main topics that came forward from the interviews and based on these categories the results section is written out, but first, the limitations and potential issues of the research are discussed in the following section.

4.4. Limitations of research strategy and potential issues

Before analysing the two-way relationship between social capital and food projects in Groningen, there are a few things that have to be considered. First of, it is of great importance to take note of the unsuccessful stories and initiatives that can be found in the city of Groningen, the projects that haven't been set up due to a lack of interest from within the neighborhood. The interviews with the initiators of the food vision at the municipality, pointed out that a few projects didn't succeed due to different reasons, such as plans made by the municipality and housing corporation or lack of participation from the neighborhood. Therefore, the failed projects in the municipality are mapped out and the underlying factors that influenced these failed projects are explained. Comparing them with the successful projects, that is, the projects that are set-up and executed by the citizens, gave us the possibility to find explanations and help us in forming suggestions for making the projects work. The difficulty lies in the fact that it is difficult to approach the failed projects as they don't exist. Therefore this study will miss some potentially valuable insights into the role of social capital and project failure.

Another difficulty is measuring the reasoning of people who are not included in the project and finding out why they aren't motivated to participate or aren't included in the food projects throughout the city. Conclusions and statements concerning this are based on small groups and findings of individuals. The limitations of this research don't offer us the possibility of researching this exclusion and non-participation thoroughly, although literature and the case-study give us some suggestions.

Finally, resource restrictions, in terms of time and money, mean that the research is necessarily restricted to a small section of the urban food system. Given it is only possible to carry out in-depth analysis of a small part of the urban food system in Groningen, broader generalizations of the results of this thesis (visavis the relationship between the urban food system and social capital) cannot be formed. With this in mind, further research focused within different contextual settings is advised.

5. Results

5.1. Introduction

The results show that the notions of social capital and GRUA are reflected in the city of Groningen. As the influence of the municipality in setting up this food vision sparked the development of the food projects and this research, its role in GRUA is discussed before analyzing the food projects themselves. Reports and interviews with the initiators of the food vision provided a context for the case study where this research is based upon. The visualization of the neighborhood conditions will be discussed in the section 5.3 and 5.4, in these section we show the GIS maps, which provide an overview of several neighborhood conditions that are selected based on the theory and which claim to influence social capital. The food project which are related to the Eetbare Stad will be draped over these shapefiles. With doing this the role of these neighborhood conditions will be critically analyzed. Also other factors that influence the setting up of food projects are addressed.

The role of pre-existing social capital will be further analyzed with the interviews held, Section 5.5 provides a connection with the further case-study, whereby the in-depth study gives an insight in the interaction between GRUA and the development of social capital. Touching upon topics such as the impact of the initiatives, bridging or bonding developments and inclusive vs exclusive aspects. These topics are touched upon in Section 5.5 and form the core of the case study. Next to that, the research aims to place the development in a context. By studying the participants views on factors that influence the development of social capital and the role and process of initiating these set ups in its success.

5.2. The role of the municipality; perceptions of the municipality workers

As we look at the role of pre-existing social capital it is important to understand that these are not the only factors that play a role in the development of an urban food system in the city. Of course the role of pre-existing social capital is essential for citizens to take the initiative, but the preconditions set for food projects affect the sprouting of grassroots developments as the further sections will underline.

The changing role of the municipality

As mentioned in the introduction and a short notion in the theory, it is important to place the projects in the context of a recent, social shift. One of the initiators of the urban food system indicates that:

“the existence of grassroots initiatives is a recent development, wherein citizens take over tasks that otherwise would have been fulfilled by the municipality. The transition of these dynamics is forcing the municipality into a different role.” (Veldstra, 2015)

Neighborhood initiatives have intrinsic motivation as their driving force, which means that the citizens aren't guided by the wishes of the government. This shift calls for a reactive government, wherein the dynamics between initiative and the authorities disappear and the municipality becomes part of the network, as mentioned earlier by the report of SME Advies (2015). With setting up the urban food system, the city of Groningen has been experimenting with the new position it has in the interaction between citizen and government. These shifting power relations are adopted by the food department and vision as they try to cause havoc in the municipality by challenging the existing views:

“There have been some fundamental changes within the municipality, wherein we let go of strict goals and react more to what is happening in society. It has become a more practical approach, as we look what happens at certain locations and try to react to what happens. It is really important to note, that it is not up to the municipality anymore to decide how sustainable Groningen is going to be. The role of the municipality has become more of a facilitating one.” (Veldstra, 2015)

The initiators consider the food vision and department's approach to be a leading example of the new role of the municipality in the city and see that the success of the food vision lies in the fact that it adapts, listens to and facilitates the citizens if necessary:

“Because we decided to adapt to the current changes and not impose our ideas and vision the food vision has become more successful. We proposed the citizens our ideas and asked to react and well, they did! We organized and started a lot of discussions.” (Veldstra, 2015)

Process of setting up food initiative

The local authorities have to provide the right preconditions, which invoke the citizens to take the initiative to come up with ideas that result in neighborhood participation. This hopefully contributes to a better livability and social capital within the community. In its report, SME Advies (2015), elaborates on these preconditions and says three conditions are important: The availability of space, room to develop your own plan and the need from the citizens for set-up these initiatives. By giving the citizens room and adjusting yourself to the new role, authorities provide the community the right springboard for the development of an initiative. The municipality of Groningen has listened to this advice well, as the municipality says that the role of the municipality in the food vision is giving information on what they can add to the urban food system and promote the options the citizens have:

“We provide materials and financial aid via several subsidies if we believe in the projects. The citizens take initiative in asking us if they can carry out their plan on a plot. The food vision is the perfect example of how the municipality is reorganizing and what we believe our current role should be.”
(Van Duuren, 2015)

Although the food projects can be considered grassroots, as they are set up on the initiative of the citizens, the municipality can influence the citizen by providing information about the food vision, initiating discussions and creating events. The material and financial aid helps the citizen in realizing their plan, which means that the role of the municipality can be considered an important one in the development of the food projects. In section 5.5.5, we reflect on the role of the municipality and consider the view of the initiators on the municipality's influence.

The success of the food vision

According to the municipality, the amount of food projects is the highest of all cities that have created a food vision in the Netherlands and the vision is working well. As the vision tends to leave the initiative to the citizens, the overall willingness of the citizens to set up grassroots projects and execute a project within their neighborhood could be seen as strong. When asking about the reasons behind the considered success, the coordinators say the following:

“The main factors are the prerequisites and the facilitating role the municipality offers and the social component as the main motivator for citizens to get involved. The participation within a project enlarges the success of the project and this success will motivate others. The municipality's main goal was to focus on a sustainable future for the city, the food vision aims to provide this by producing more local food and creating more awareness about food production.” (Veldstra, 2015)

The social benefits these food projects can have weren't a direct aim, but considered a very positive incidental. When asked about the relationship between the food projects and the social capital within the city, Van Duuren (2015) says the following:

"It is doing something together that motivates the people and food is an easy way to bring people together as it is a relatable subject. This can invoke other initiatives as cooking together or organizing workshops. In a social way it can create weak and strong relationships wherein people can bond and do other things together. I think this sharing and caring tendency that is growing in today's society adds a lot to the success of the projects, this provides a strong base which will keep on growing and that's why I believe these projects will keep on being a success."

And also Stiekema (2016) sees that the food vision has a social impact:

"I believe that the gardens bring people together and can have a positive impact on a neighborhood and if these gardens don't bring people together then it is much more likely that it will fail, because the organization becomes more difficult and finding people to work on it will not be easy. If the garden has positive impacts on the people then they want to work for it. Social capital is also needed for the maintenance of the food projects."

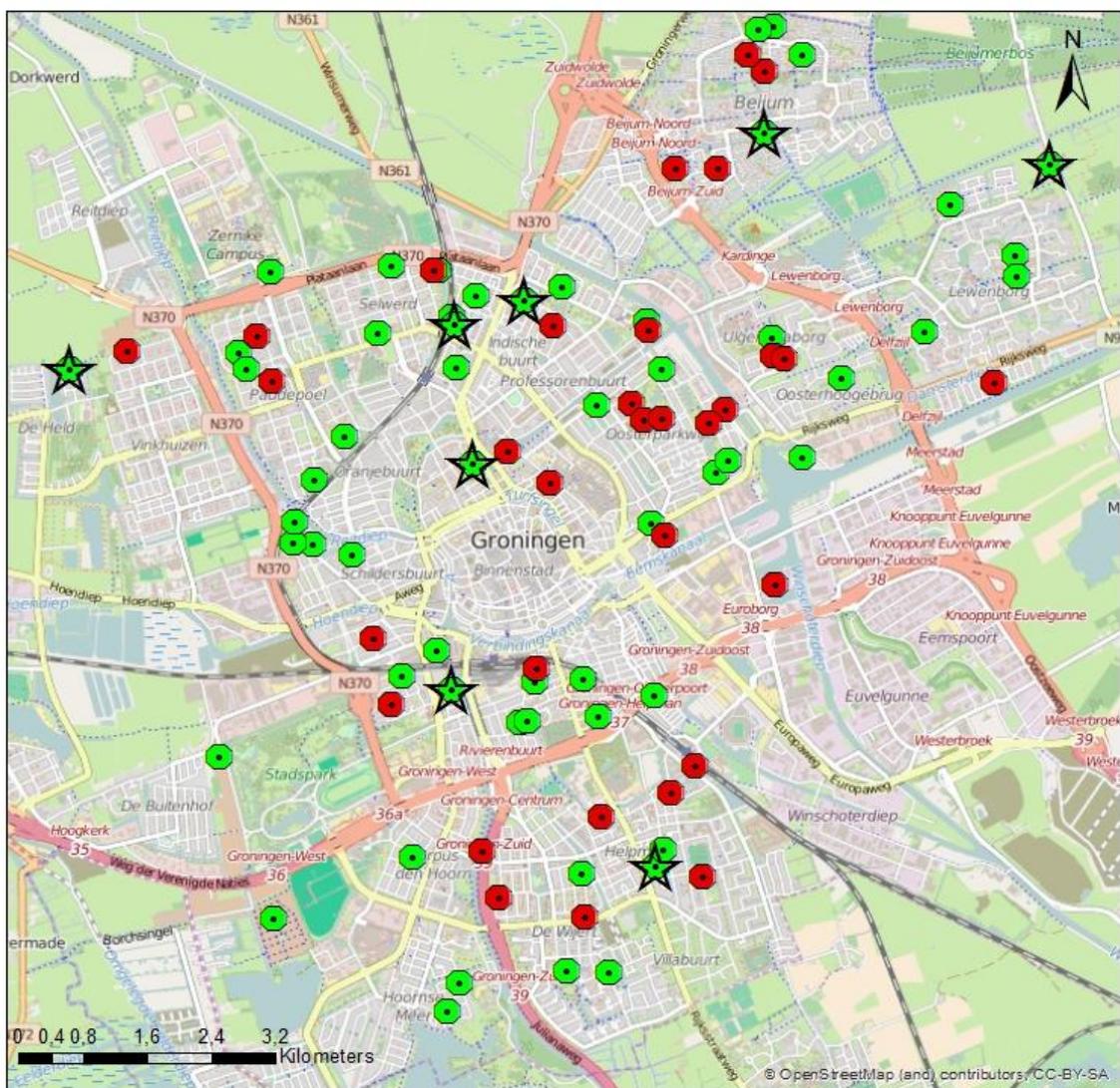
The municipality believes the garden can bring people together and creating these connections add to a further development of the gardens. Van Duuren (2015) mentions the notion of weak and strong relationships, which we find in the theory of social capital, referring to the weak and strong ties that grow in a social network. Something that is thoroughly addressed in Section 5.5. Another interesting notion that is underlined by Stiekema (2016) is that he speaks about social capital that is needed for the maintenance of the food projects. It is interesting to see if the results of the case-study validate these words. The words of the initiators and coordinator about their food vision are very positive, and may not be completely objective. The social impact is therefore thoroughly discussed in Section 5.5, even as the role of the municipality perceived by the initiators of the projects.

The following sections elaborate on the social impact of the food projects and studies if this impact is the same for every project. It considers influencing factors such as neighborhood background and the role of the municipality. The main issue that will be elaborated upon is the interplay between social capital and the grassroot urban agriculture, whereby the role of pre-existing social capital is discussed in the next section.

5.3. Location of the projects

To give a good overview of the projects used for the case study, the map (Figure 3) will give a clear insight into the spread of the projects over the city. For the projects, this research used the data handed over by the municipality. The provided list (Appendix A) gives insight in some details of the projects and based on this a map is made wherein both the succeeded and failed projects are shown (Figure 3). This gives an overview of the spread throughout the city of Groningen. The succeeded projects are indicated with a green dot and the failed or quit projects are indicated with a red dot.

Overview of food projects in Groningen



Legend

- ☆ Cases
- Succeeded Projects
- Failed Projects

Figure 3 : Overview of food projects

What this and other maps don't reveal is the success rate of a succeeded project and the exact reason why failed projects have failed, although the list makes a distinction between failed projects and projects that are completed. The municipality revealed that the shutting down of the projects is due to various reasons.

"After a couple of years a project is passed its due date and people lose interest, which doesn't mean it didn't affect the social capital within a neighborhood, but the time the activity absorbs is too much for the participants. Other reasons are the plot has found a new purpose, which means that the housing corporation or municipality is planning to built new houses." (Stiekema, 2016)

So, next to time constraints and lost interest, the municipality says new plans are often made for the plot where the project was based. This shows that these community based projects are dependent on land use plans and could therefore also be short-lived.

Based on the overview the first conclusions about the spread of the projects are drafted, whereafter the projects are connected with several neighborhood conditions. These variables give an indication of a *probability* of pre-existing social capital, which means that these variables don't guarantee the presence of a high or low amount of social capital. The highlighted stars are the projects that are used for the case study that follows. The first conclusions that we can draft from figure 3.1 is that the projects are relatively well spread throughout the city. The projects can be found in all directions of the city, but there are some neighborhoods that don't seem to be participating in the overall urban food system of the city. The fact that Euvelgunne and Eemspoort (in the South-East of the city) has few to no initiatives is probably due to the fact that this area is largely built-up with industries. Other areas that have remarkably few initiatives are the city centre, the Oranjebuurt and Vinkhuizen in the North. There are some areas dominated by mainly green dots, which means that the projects set up in these neighborhoods are often a success. This comprises Lewenborg, the area at the edge of the Schildersbuurt and Zeeheldenbuurt and the very South-Western part of the city in the direction of the lakes. Also the neighborhood which can be found just beneath the Central Station is mainly colored green. Helpman and De Wijert shows relatively more failed projects, same as Beijum and Paddepoel. Oosterpark shows the most failed projects, although in every area there are also projects that have succeeded. According to Stiekema (2016):

"A lot of projects popped up in the North of the city first, the South and East played catch up and the Western part is lagging behind a bit."

The coordinator aimed to provide a clear explanation for this development. When being asked if the amount of room for the development of food projects was unequally spread throughout the city, Stiekema (2016) responded by saying:

“If you want to set up a project there is always some space to be found, which means that in every neighborhood there is a possibility to set up a project, but the neighborhood has to have the capacity to organize a group that is motivated to do this. The neighborhoods Selwerd, Paddepoel and Vinkhuizen have a lower average education, which makes it difficult. We provide a bit more help to these projects, but the initiative has to come from the citizens. Areas such as the Schilderswijk and the area around the Noorderplantsoen are often intensively built and expensive, which is the same with the city centre and doesn't allow for larger initiatives.”

The level of education was also an indicator mentioned in the theory, but the statistical data centre of the Netherlands doesn't provide information about the education level of the city on neighborhood scale, which creates difficulties in underlining or debunking the statement made by the coordinator. Despite that the first map gives a clear overview of the spread throughout the city. To get a better insight in why there are some blank spots in the spread of the projects, why some neighborhoods mainly have successful projects and some areas show a more variable pattern, they are linked with neighborhood conditions. All this is discussed in the following section.

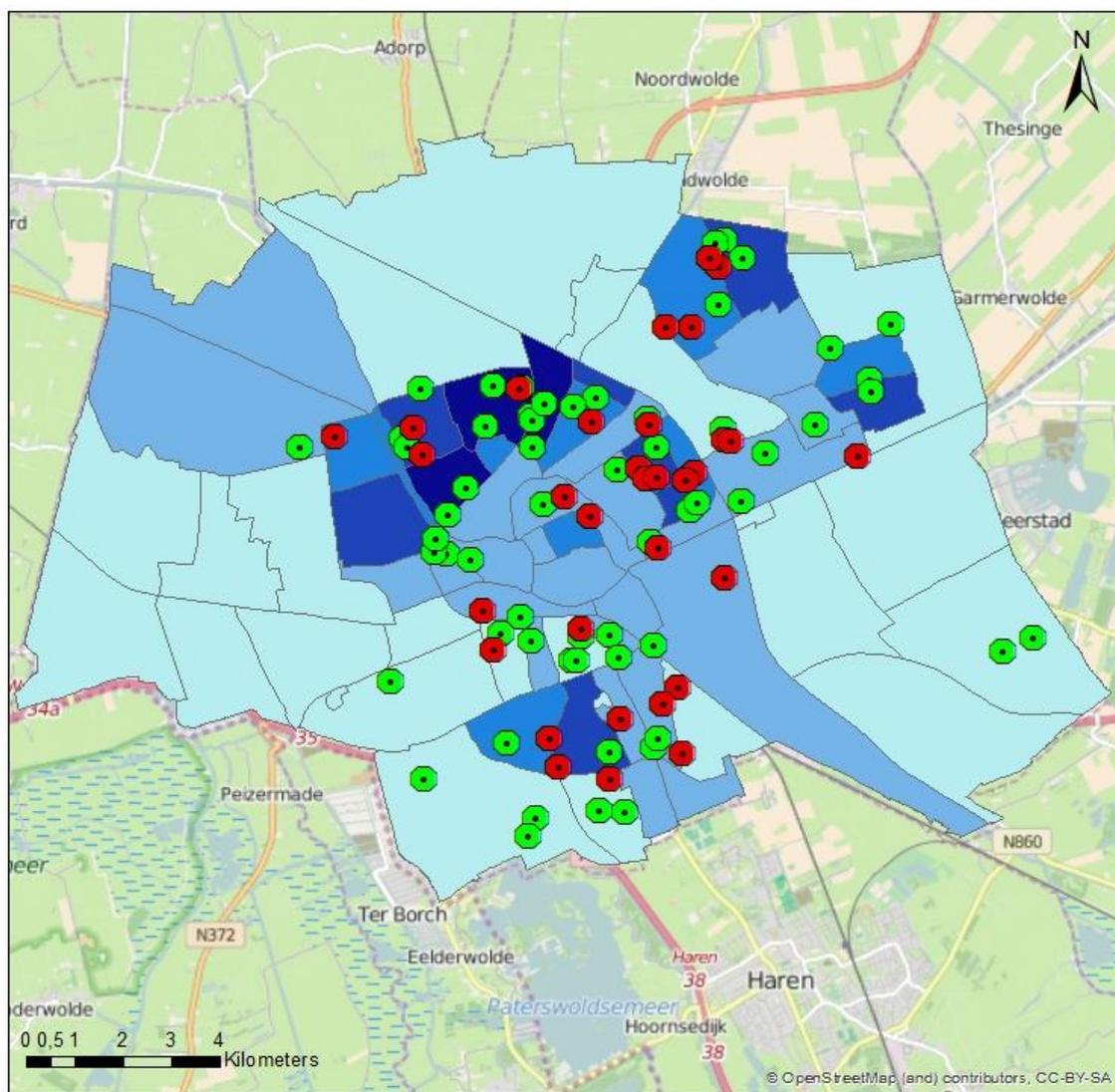
5.4. The role of pre-existing social capital

From the theoretical framework we drew particular neighborhood conditions which can impact the probability of existing social capital within a neighborhood. In the following paragraphs we link the neighborhood conditions to the base map in Figure 3.1. Based on the visualization of these data we are able to see if there are connections between food projects and characteristics of existing social capital. The several conditions are discussed in separate sections. For this research, data on neighborhood level is used as this gives the most detailed insight into the locality of the variables that influence the successrate of community gardens.

5.4.1 Ethnic Diversity

Figure 4.1 shows an overview of ethnic diversity and food projects in the city of Groningen. As the map shows there is a weak correlation between them as the neighborhoods with the lowest ethnic diversity and the neighborhoods with the highest ethnic diversity seem to have the highest successrate of food projects in the neighborhood. That doesn't mean that the projects are particularly affected by ethnic diversity, because the projects are spread through the entire urban outlay.

Ethnic Diversity Groningen, 2013



Legend

- Succeeded Projects
- Failed Projects

Non-Western inhabitants in %

- 0 - 5
- 6 - 10
- 11 - 15
- 16 - 20
- 21 - 25

Figure 4.1 : Overview of ethnic diversity in the neighborhoods of Groningen *Ongeldige bron*

As Putnam (2007) concludes in the theory, the impact of ethnic diversity is that it may reduce social capital. His study in the United States claims that immigration and diversity foster distrust among races and could cause social isolation for minorities. Based on this statement the gardens aren't expected to be found in an ethnic diverse neighborhood, but more in neighborhoods where the percentage of native inhabitants is higher. A homogenous environment would be able to reach a faster consent, which allows for a higher chance of success. The results show otherwise, which means that this particular theory doesn't seem to apply to the food projects. The link between the ethnic diversity and success rate could be explained by the fact that the neighborhoods with the lowest ethnic diversity could be more homogenous. This homogeneity allows for a potentially more successful and fast set up as the group of people is potentially more like-minded (Putnam, 2007). The success rate of the communities with high ethnic diversity is explained by Stiekema (2016):

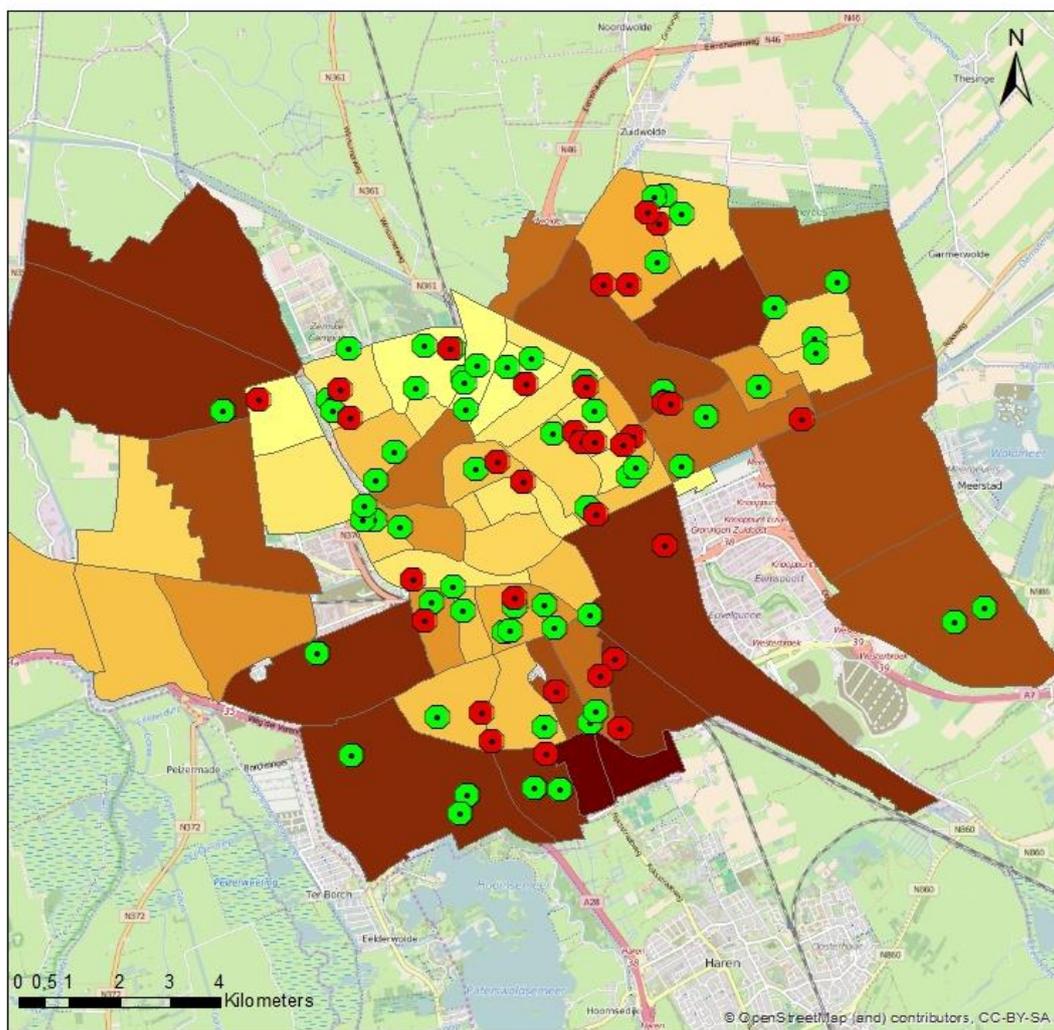
“Immigrants have got a better relationship and connection with growing food, then the native Dutch and a garden can bring them more together. Especially the northern part, Vinkhuizen, Paddepoel and Selwerd, have a lot of nationalities and a garden can really work well and bring the participants together. De Gelderse Roos is a good example of an ethnic diverse project that is very successful. There are a lot of different nationalities involved in a lot of different projects.”

This means that ethnic diversity could be seen as a potential factor that influences the outcome of a garden as the diversity can potentially influence the community interest for the garden. This doesn't mean that ethnic diversity plays a role in the set up of the garden as we find food projects in neighborhoods with every rate of diversity.

5.4.2 Average Income

The literature tells us that in low-income neighborhoods, residents want to move ‘up’ to a better neighborhood and therefore don’t feel the attachment with their current neighborhood or are not willing to invest in it, a scenario that also influences the social capital in these areas. Often a higher amount of social capital is measured in the high-income neighborhoods of a city compared with the lower income neighborhoods. This may suggest that residents of a low-income neighborhood wouldn’t be interested in setting up a garden, as they wouldn’t feel the attachment with their community.

Average Income in Groningen



Legend		Average Income per Income Recipient	
●	Succeeded Projects	 	19,500000 - 20,800000
●	Failed Projects	 	20,800001 - 22,500000
		 	22,500001 - 23,900000
		 	23,900001 - 25,200000
		 	25,200001 - 26,800000
		 	26,800001 - 28,800000
		 	28,800001 - 31,300000
		 	31,300001 - 35,200000
		 	35,200001 - 42,500000
		 	42,500001 - 58,600000

Figure 4.2 : Overview of the average income in the neighborhoods of Groningen *ongeldige*

As the visualization shows, there are more projects found in low-income neighborhoods than in high-income neighborhoods, which are a lot less filled with food projects. This suggests that the average income of a neighborhood probably doesn't influence the spread of the projects in the city in the way that it is suggested by the theory. This implies that the probability of pre-existing social capital is not influencing the set up of the food projects. That can be explained with the help of the theory about GRUA mentioned in section 2.3.1. The theory already suggested that there are external factors that are decisive for the set up of a grassroots initiative, such as the capacity of the initiator. Projects are always set up by an initiator and these individuals are probably not representative for the entire neighborhood and aren't influenced by these conditions for the set up of their idea. This doesn't mean that the neighborhood conditions don't impact the further development of the food projects.

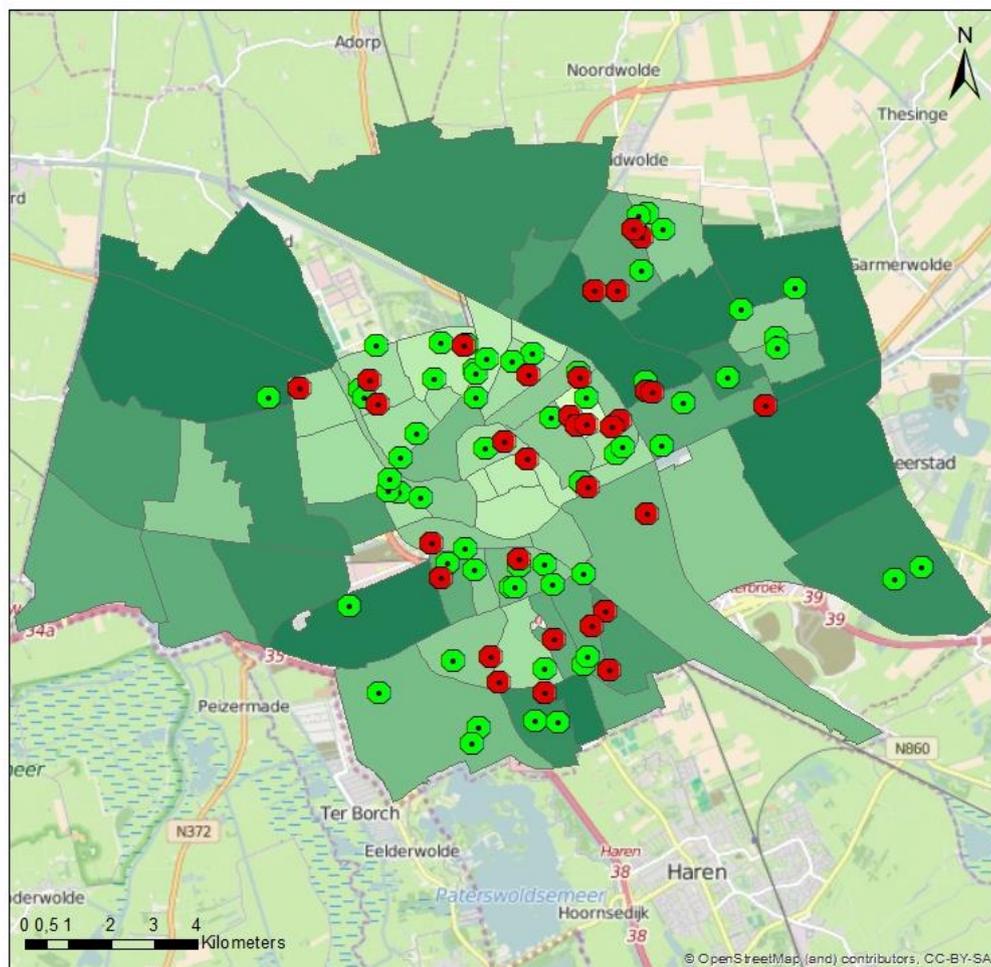
"The projects in the lower income areas are often given a bit more aid from the municipality as we see that some of these initiators need some more help to get the project started. And in these areas you can also find people with a high income and a more idealistic approach that want to set up an initiative." (Stiekema, 2016)

These words explain the spread of the projects throughout the city and the role of the initiator. The municipality aims to give more support to the people who need it and encourage citizens to execute their plans, by approving the ideas and giving aid. The map also suggests that setting up a project in a high income neighborhood gives a higher chance of succeeding food projects than the low-income neighborhoods as there are less failed projects in these areas. Section 5.5 touches upon this potential correlation as the neighborhood conditions are addressed in the case study.

5.4.3 Homeownership

In figure 4.3 the link between homeownership and social capital is put forward, which makes clear that the neighborhoods with the highest amount of homeowners barely sees any projects that are set up. Whereas areas with a low amount of homeownership are cluttered with projects. The factor of homeownership correlates well with the variable discussed above. The higher the average income, the more homeowners can be found in the area. The literature shows that homeownership correlates with social capital in a similar manner. A neighborhood with a high amount of owner occupied homes means the community can be more willing to invest in the neighborhood, giving an incentive to make the neighborhood a better place (Temkin & Rohe, 1998). If pre-existing social capital is to play a role in the set up of food projects, we would expect the projects to be found in areas with relative high rates of homeownership.

Homeownership Groningen, 2013



Legend

- Succeeded Projects
- Failed Projects

Amount of non-rental houses in %

0-10	50-60
10-20	60-70
20-30	70-80
30-40	80-90
40-50	90-100

Figure 4.3: Overview of homeownership in the neighborhoods of Groningen *Ongeldige bron*

But the map contradicts the expectations, as the neighborhoods with a high amount of homeownership only see a few projects and the projects with a low amount of homeownership see more initiatives. These results suggest that the set up of projects in the city of Groningen aren't influenced by a probability of existing social capital which is probably due to external factors.

5.4.4 Conclusions

What this analysis mainly achieved is providing an insight in the locations of the projects and the background of the neighborhoods these projects are set up in. There are only a few areas where GRUA isn't set up, which is mainly in industry areas, the city centre, the Schilders- and Oranjebuurt and Vinkhuizen. The first two can be explained by the fact that these areas are mainly used for other purposes than residing. The explanation for the Schilders- and Oranjebuurt could be the fact that the areas are really dense, which suggests that there is no room for the setting up of initiatives, although municipality workers indicate they feel there is often room for a small project. As for Vinkhuizen, factors like homeownership and average income don't seem to play a role, which means the explanations have to be found elsewhere. The neighborhood conditions show some slight correlations with the successrate of the projects spread throughout the city. The neighborhoods with a high income and high amount of homeownership don't see any failed projects in their areas whereas communities with low-income and a low amount of homeownership count more failed projects than average. On the other hand, these areas see a lot more projects than the richer areas of the city, something that wasn't to be expected based on the theory that connects neighborhood conditions with social capital. This shows that the concept of pre-existing social capital probably doesn't impact the set up of food projects in the city of Groningen. The variables may predict probabilities of existing social capital, but it is fair to say that these measurements are suggestive. To better capture the role of the neighborhood the in-depth analysis is helpful. This provides an insight in the real factors at play for the set-up and continuity of the projects. The overview aids the selection of projects that are approached for the further case-study as it shows the background of the projects part of the Eetbare Stad. This allows the in-depth analysis to make a cross-section based on the differences in neighborhood background. Two conclusions can be derived from the data thus far: 1) the maps don't provide an insight in the role of pre-existing social capital. They only suggest factors that may play a role in the development of GRUA in the city. 2) The other part is the fact that other factors than pre-existing social capital play a role in the set-up of these projects, such as the capacity of the initiator. The spread and locality of the projects is made visible and shows that neighborhood conditions aren't decisive for the set-up of GRUA. The in-depth analysis provide a better insight into the role of these factors and the role pre-existing social capital plays in the set-up

and development of the projects, but the GIS served a purpose in showing the spread and locality of the projects.

5.5 In-depth analysis of the complex two-way relationship

The neighborhood conditions that were highlighted in the GIS data didn't show any strong correlation with the probability of social capital and thus its influence on the setting up of the food projects, it is therefore even more interesting to see whether the in-depth analysis can find a better explanation and another image of the role of the neighborhood conditions. The in-depth interviews provide an insight in the social impact of the projects and the factors that influence the amount of the social capital found within the project and neighborhood.

In the section that follows, the selected projects are introduced and the neighborhood conditions and pre-existing social capital of the neighborhood are analyzed. This way it is possible to confirm or debunk the suggestions made about the pre-existing social capital that evolve around the projects and their influence on the development of the projects. After that, the two-way relationship between social capital in the neighborhood and the projects is analyzed. The municipality of Groningen is mainly interested in understanding whether the local food network reaches a big audience, which people are involved and the overall social impact of their food vision, which gives this research social relevance. Themes such as social capital, weak and strong ties, social control and in- and exclusion are studied. It is interesting to see how the different neighborhoods result in different outcomes. The interviews that are carried out are done with initiators of the projects that are introduced in Appendix B. It is *strongly* advised to read the introduction to the food projects, as this gives a better understanding of the discussed results.

5.5.1 Pre-existing social capital

In this section we focus on the role of the pre-existing social capital on food projects. Although literature does not give much input in the role of pre-existing social capital, we can distill that social trust can lead to an active community life and participation within the community (Putnam, 2000). This social trust may differ in every context and every neighborhood. The projects sustainability also depends on the strength of the pre-existing social capital within the neighborhood (Firth & Maye, 2011; Stiekema, 2016) The interviews with the initiators of the aforementioned projects aim to give more clarity in the role of pre-existing social capital and the neighborhood conditions. The correlation between the neighborhood and the impact of the projects isn't directly found with the use of the GIS-data.

By making a cross-section, we aim to detect differences between the development of the projects and try to link these to factors such as neighborhood characteristics. According to the theory, the

neighborhood characteristics say something about the probability of social capital. The following section draws out the differences between the projects considering neighborhood characteristics. As these characteristics aim to tell something about pre-existing social capital, we observe if these differences in neighborhood background also show differences in pre-existing social capital in the neighborhood as seen by the initiators of the project and residents of the neighborhoods. Next to that, we observe the role of pre-existing social capital in the set up of the projects.

Neighborhood characteristics

The place to begin the case-study is the largest of the projects within the research, the Grunotuin. The garden has grown really fast from the beginning onwards and the project is a strong representation of the neighborhood. The neighborhood is not that diverse when looking at ethnicity, but there is diversity in economic background and ages.

“The neighborhood was originally occupied by laborers and the working class and with the neighborhood renewal, the community got filled with more starters and young families and it is mainly rent.” (Respondent#6, 2016)

The Violenhof is the project that can be found in the city center and draws similarities based on income with the Grunotuin. It has a high amount of homeownership and the area is likeminded as the people living there are often high educated and ‘a bit elitist’ (Respondent#5, 2016). Another project with similarities in its background is the Aquamarijngaarde, which can be found on the edge of the city and is a neighborhood with similar conditions, it has a lot of homeownership and a relative high average income. The neighborhood also has very low ethnic diversity and that makes the community very homogenous in cultural backgrounds (Respondent #3, 2016). The Noabertoen is situated on the fringe of the city in Noorddijk, a former village that is ‘adopted’ by the city of Groningen. The area has a low ethnic diversity, high average income and a high average homeownership. These projects are all set up in an area with a supposedly high probability of social capital, according to the theory.

The projects that differ from these neighborhood conditions are the projects in the Barmaheerd, Mollukkenstraat and the Van Oldenbarneveldtlaan. The GIS-data already showed that the initiatives are found in areas with cultural diversity, a lower average income and less homeownership. Respondent #4 (2016) recognized that in the Barmaheerd, they are coping with nuisance in the neighborhood in the form of pollution and vandalism and the set up of the garden changed that for the part of the neighborhood where she lives in. And in the Oldenbarneveldtlaan the neighborhood experiences a certain amount of crime and poverty. The project in the Mollukkenstraat is set in a neighborhood background that has a large diversity in social, economic and ethnic backgrounds, this

is also due to the fact that the neighborhood is being renovated. There is an inflow of new residents and a lot of old residents that still live in the neighborhood, which causes a diversity in lifestyles. The neighborhood conditions of the three projects mentioned above indicate a lower probability of social capital.

The project at the ORKZ, the squattercomplex, is a stranger in the midst as the complex is a secluded area. The building can be found in the middle of Helpman, a neighborhood with a socio-economic background that would suggest a high probability for the development of social capital, but the squattercomplex has a complete other socio-economic background, where the sense of community is very strong, as most of the people are very likeminded (Respondent #8, 2016).

There is a difference in the neighborhood characteristics with every project and although every project is unique there are similarities between the projects. Four of the projects are based in a neighborhood where the characteristics would suggest that there is a high probability of social capital and there is a group where the socio-economic background would suggest a lower amount of pre-existing social capital.

Pre-existing social capital

As the GIS-data have already shown, the role of pre-existing social capital doesn't impact the set up of a project as external factors that aren't connected to social capital are decisive for the set up of these projects, these factors are elaborated upon in section 5.5.5, but the initiators of the projects can tell a lot about the process of this setting up and the social connections the neighborhood already knew and if this was translated to the project. Based on the GIS-data and the responses of the initiators, it is suggested that several neighborhoods already have a strong social network. Social capital contains social support, trust in neighbors and a rise in neighborly interactions (Wolf & Rozance, 2013). Social control and benefits through networks is mentioned by Portes (2000) and Granovetter (1973) underlines the importance of ties in social networks. This suggests that these characteristics could already exist in some neighborhoods and are less in others. The Aquamarijngaarde is one of these projects with a high probability of social capital, but despite that, Respondent #3 (2016) was surprised about the low amount of social contact in the neighborhood:

"I organized a get together for all the neighbors ... I was shocked by the fact that everybody had to introduce themselves to their own neighbors, there was very little interaction. So, doing something together and have fun and have some small talk was something I really wanted to achieve."

At the Violenhof there wasn't a strong feeling of community, with social ties. Respondent #5 (2016) sees that: *"The community was individual before the project began ... There were not really groups of friends joining and a lot of members didn't know each other beforehand."*

So the presence of pre-existing social capital isn't impacted by indicators, such as average income and homeownership in these areas. As is also underlined by Respondent #2 (2016), who doesn't believe neighborhood conditions, such as crime rate and poverty, impact the social cohesion within the neighborhood, as he sees that in the neighborhood:

"You need help with everything and you need help to get things done, which brings people together. Social cohesion is something that is strong here, I believe, everyone greets each other in the neighborhood."

There are two projects that did experience a strong pre-existing social capital. These are the projects of the Noabertoen and the squatter complex, the ORKZ. Respondent #1 (2016) from the Noabertoen admits that almost everyone in the neighborhood knows each other, which made it very easy to gather people and get things done:

"Noorddijk still feels like a village where the feeling of togetherness is strong and influences the project in a positive way. As almost everyone knows each other it was really easy to gather people and get things done, and this togetherness resulted in an organic organization, wherein everyone was positive to help."

And also Respondent #8 (2016) from the RKZ-complex admits that:

"the social cohesion within the complex was already very strong before the project was set up, which helps as everyone in the complex works with the same mindset. ... The feeling of togetherness in this environment helps in doing something about the surroundings you care about, it is a shared responsibility."

The two projects that already experienced strong social ties and trust and a cohesion in the community where it is set up, admit to the fact that this pre-existing social capital resulted in an easy set-up of the food project. So, despite the fact that pre-existing social capital doesn't decide if a project is set-up or not, it can make the overall set up of a project easier as the organization of the project is run in a more organic way.

Conclusion

Based on the GIS-data, we wouldn't expect to see a correlation between the neighborhood conditions and the set up of the food projects. The case-study showed that neighborhood conditions don't influence the set up of the gardens, since these are linked with external factors such as the capacity of the initiator. The fact that there are some neighborhood indicators that suggest pre-existing social capital isn't reflected in the cross-section made in this research. The projects are set up in surroundings where most of the people didn't know each other and the overall social ties and

connections were seen as weak by the initiators of the projects and most of the residents didn't know each other before they joined the project. Exceptions are the Noabertoen and the project in the ORKZ, where a strong social network was already present. Both initiators believe that this helped the set up of the garden as the organization developed in an organic way. In the next section, the neighborhood conditions are linked with the overall social impact of the food projects.

5.5.2 Social Capital

Section 5.5.1 provided an insight into the strength of the pre-existing social capital within the neighborhoods and the neighborhood conditions these projects are situated in. The analysis shows that these projects are all placed in a different context and based on this information it is interesting to see if that results in a different development of the social capital in the neighborhood. A broad range of grassroots initiatives can be a solution and develop a better social inclusion within a neighborhood. The main argument is to see if these local initiatives can help to develop and maintain social capital within neighborhoods, which is one of the main aims of this study.

Community interest

First of, we consider the community interest for the projects and how this community interests differentiates per garden. Social capital and its development is influenced by its context, which results in differences in social in- and exclusion between the neighborhoods within the city (Agnitsch et al., 2006). Therefore it is important to see how social capital interlinks with the development of a community and how this can be influenced by activities. Bhattacharyya (2004) sees any activity, such as elderly care and better schools, as community development; where the activity is driven by intentions of engendering solidarity and agency. Agnitsch et al. (2006) say it will then add to the development of social capital in a community. So by creating activities and networks the social capital of a neighborhood will be positively influenced. If the participation of the activity is high, the impact it can have on the development of social capital in a community increases. The differences in neighborhood background could influence the community interest for the project as the probability of social capital differentiates. The following section links the neighborhood background with the community interest for the project and thus it's impact on the social capital. The differences in the projects can be found in the level of participation and involvement from within the neighborhood for the projects that are set up.

We start at the Grunotuin, where Respondent #6 (2016) says that:

“the project started with fourteen people but was enlarged tenfold and the growth develops in a organic way and goes very fast. People keep applying and flyers were only used during the set up of the garden.”

Stiekema (2016) links the growth to an environment where people want to invest in their neighborhood and surroundings, since there are a lot of likeminded people. We find similarities in the Violenhof and the Aquamarijnngaarde, where most of the people involved didn't know each other from the beginning, but the neighborhood conditions show a high probability for social capital and a likeminded surrounding.

“The project is proceeding really well, the garden had grown in a really fast pace and the group is very motivated. We always worked with a waiting list, but turned it into a call-up list, where we ask people if they can help with big maintenance jobs.” (Respondent #5, 2016).

“The set up of the garden was followed by a lot of enthusiasm, we had twenty applicants and there was a lot of enthusiasm.” (Respondent #3, 2016).

Both the projects experience a lot of interest from the beginning onwards, and that was also due to the fact that people thought likeminded about the project and the project addressed the interest of the neighborhood.

The projects with a lower probability of social capital showed different results when considering community interest. Respondent #4 (2016) recognizes that the neighborhood was happy with the idea of the garden, but weren't interested in getting involved in the project:

“Only my neighbor is actively involved in the garden and has his own piece of the land where he grows his own vegetables. Most of the people said they already had their own garden to take care of or weren't interested in gardening at all.”

The problem with interest for the project is similar in the Van Oldenbarneveldtlaan and although the project is set up in a very non-committal sense, the neighborhood doesn't seem to be interested in the project. The set up is done by three men that don't live in the neighborhood, but that found support for their own idea during several neighborhood meetings, wherein people agreed that a community garden would be a nice addition to the community. The core of the people working on it is still just the three initiators (Respondent#2, 2016).

“We wanted to create an area where people can meet each other in an inspiring way and can be with each other. The focus of the garden is on bringing people together and let people get along in a new way.” (Respondent #2, 2016)

But the help the three men get is sporadic. The interest for the harvest is very big, as the food that is grown is given away to the residents of De Hoogte, which results in thankfulness for the work that is done (Respondent#2, 2016). The lack of interest is explained by two things:

“The garden is set up in a very non-committal way, if we would have given the residents their own plot to work on there probably would have been more involvement ... We hope more people come and help, but I am not sure if people in this neighborhood are willing to participate.” (Respondent #2, 2016).

The fact that the idea was already in the head of the initiators and the initiators don't live in the neighborhood itself, shows that good knowledge about the interest of the residents would have helped in the interest for this project.

"You need to find a certain group of residents that is not only interested, but really wants to participate." (Respondent #7, 2016).

The initiator of Braakland = Maakland also recognizes the fact that community interest is very important as they tried to execute their plan in several places within the neighborhood, but the projects failed as they now know that there needs to be enough spirit within a neighborhood to execute the plans. The project in the Mollukkenstraat was the only project that came of the ground and was successful. The diversity of the neighborhood didn't impact the interest of the community, but did cause some conflicts as the people often didn't agree on how the garden was evolving.

"I believe that if we would have had a homogenous group of people involved, we would have had a lot less problems within the group, because a lot of people would have agreed with each other on how to use the garden" (Respondent#7, 2016)

The likemindedness derived from the neighborhood background does seem to impact the development of the food projects throughout the city, as it makes decision-making easier and results in a high amount of community interest. The likemindedness brings us to the two projects that experienced pre-existing social connections, which resulted in the projects developing in an organic way, wherein an organizational structure wasn't deemed necessary. The people involved were all prepared to help each other, without people asking for it and the decision making developed without any problems.

"The feeling of togetherness creates an intrinsic feeling of doing something and making the surroundings a better place. It is a shared responsibility." (Respondent #8, 2016)

When considering neighborhood interest, the projects are very inclusive for their own neighborhood, but fail to reach out to the surrounding areas. The overall interest of the communities in the two projects is high:

"It is going really well and without a saying. A lot of people are picking up tasks and the vegetable garden is doing fine. We don't have a waiting list, but make extra room if someone new applies. If there are any vacancies, they are filled up pretty fast. Everyone is welcome to come and help, but the garden kind of belongs to this town and that is its main quality." (Respondent #1, 2016)

Something that is recognized by Respondent #8 (2016), saying that:

“The group within the complex is secluded and although the whole neighborhood is welcome, the only people involved are living in the complex.”

The togetherness that is spoken of by both the initiators is reinforced by the food projects, which increases the bonding character of the community. As the theory already shows, this can have a negative impact on the surroundings. Chapter 5.5.4 will zoom in on these negative effects. The neighborhoods which are considered to be rather homogenous, but don't experience a pre-existing social capital all have very positive feelings about the community's interest during the set up of the project. The residents in the community don't have to know each other, but the people in general are interested in doing something in the garden and working together and get to know the neighborhood better. This isn't always the case with the food projects in the neighborhoods that experience more heterogeneity and have a poorer socio-economic background. These projects show that the success isn't always based on interest of the community, but the projects are run by enthusiasts who want to achieve social goals, but where the neighborhood isn't participating. The project in the Mollukkenstraat does achieve a lot of participation, but also identifies the fact that the diversity in background can result in conflict, which could have been different if the project was set up in a more homogenous neighborhood. It is possible that the neighborhood conditions impact the probability of community interest, as the neighborhoods with more homogeneity and likeminded residents find a higher participation grade than the other neighborhoods.

Linking this to the theory you could say that the neighborhood conditions do impact the probability of success of GRUA and therefore show that the location of the food project does have impact on the development of the project. The theory also shows that the success of GRUA is also influenced by other factors. These will be taken in consideration in the latter part of the research. The study continues with its main focus, which is the two way relationship between social capital and food projects. The earlier mentioned theory says activities add to community development, which add to the development of social capital. The creation of activities positively influences the social capital of a neighborhood and if the overall participation is high, the overall social impact will be higher. The differences in participation rates probably result in differences in social impact. The following section zooms in on social capital and how the projects influence subjects such as social ties, sense of place and social control in the neighborhood.

Social capital

In this section we disseminate how the projects play a role in the development of social capital. Roughly said there is a divide into three different projects within this case study. 1) The projects that possessed a low social capital, but a high probability of social capital to blossom. 2) The projects with a low social capital and a poorer socio-economic background. 3) Two projects with a strong pre-existing social capital.

Social ties

In the first group, the projects have a very positive impact, the popularity of the projects already hinted at a better social capital within the neighborhood and this is perceived as being achieved. The Grunotuin is the best possible example as being one of the biggest projects in the city. For the people involved in the project, the garden changed their social environment and the initiative has become to a greater or lesser extent valuable. The impact the gardens have had on the growth of social ties is noticeable in every group.

“Children get to know each other on the playground, which is fun. Residents met each other while working on the garden and decided to drink coffee or watch each others dogs. Its just easier to get things done and find help if you know people in your neighborhood. It can have social value, but it can also pan out to be really helpful. So it varies per person, it had even resulted in some connections related to business, which is pretty funny” (Respondent#6, 2016).

The project in the city-centre has a similar effect. One of the gardeners that dropped by said:

“The garden has been of great importance for me and how I look at the neighborhood. I feel more at home in my community and know a lot of people since I work in the garden. For me, it is not important to really become friends with them, but just saying hi and making small talk makes me feel more attached to my neighborhood. The garden itself has also been very positive, because working together with other gardeners and building something together creates feelings of being a collective, a group and that is very pleasant” (Respondent#5, 2016).

And also the project of the Aquamarijngaarde has a lot of positive outcomes, Respondent #3 (2016) sees that a lot of beautiful things have sprung from the garden, such as small talks and greeting each other on the streets has added to the social capital in the neighborhood. New contact has risen, as a lot people wouldn't have known each other if the garden wouldn't have existed. For herself, even a good friendship sprung from the garden. So, next to the high community interest the projects resulted to produce a better social capital which can be seen by several measures.

As social capital can add to the development of weak social ties as well as strong social ties, the initiators underline that the social ties on several levels have grown in a positive way. For most of the

people the food project has resulted in new, weak social connections, such as the greeting of residents of the neighborhood and connected them with people. This contact can also result in stronger social ties, such as the growth of friendship, which appeared at several projects.

The food projects at the Barmaheerd and The Oldenbarneveldtlaan have a lesser impact on social ties in the neighborhood. The theory learnt that community development is created with the help of projects, but the amount of interest for these projects play a role in the development of social capital. As the overall interest of the community for these projects is lower, there are less social ties that are able to grow. This doesn't mean that the set up of the food projects didn't impact the neighborhood in a social manner:

"First, it was a simple 'Hello' when I saw my neighbors and that still is the case sometimes, but the interaction in the neighborhood has grown for sure. ... Everyone who walks by or is working in his own garden finds the opportunity to have a chat and ask how everything is going." (Respondent #4, 2016)

Her neighbor underlines these words and says:

"I always have a chat with the people sitting or working in the garden and the garden has allowed for more conversation and small talks in the neighborhood."

Respondent #2 (2016) of the garden in the Van Oldenbarneveldtlaan:

"We don't really have a social impact on the neighborhood as we didn't really gather people to work with us in the garden, but we get a lot of compliments and people have a chat while we are working."

The lack of involvement results in less interaction and less social ties that are created, but that doesn't mean that the gardens don't have a social impact. Both the gardens seem to create a place which allows people to walk by and have a chat. The ties that spring are mainly weak of origin. Based on the neighborhood conditions, the project in the Mollukkenstraat finds some similarities with the two other initiatives, although the neighborhood has been recently renovated and new residents have come to live here, together with the old residents. The project has a different outcome as it is very popular, the garden grew to 55 gardeners within the first year (Respondent #7, 2016). The effect the garden had on social ties for the people involved was very positive:

"The garden really allows you to get to know the whole neighborhood. Everyone knows each other by name, which wasn't the case before the garden had started and the contacts in the area grew as a result of the initiative. Contact varying from greeting people that were strangers before or visiting the neighbor's birthday. That was seen as the main message concerning the garden and considered to be positive." (Respondent #7, 2016)

This shows that the project draws a lot of similarities with the first group, the projects with a high community interest. The social ties that grew from the project have changed neighborhood relationships. It has impacted the weak ties as a lot more residents know each other since the set up of the garden.

The two projects that evolve around a strong pre-existing social capital have positive experiences with the social capital produced by the gardens. As expected considering the theory, the effects of these gardens, would be slimmer as the social capital is already noticeable. Respondent #8 (2016) of the squat-complex believes that the garden has added to a feeling of togetherness and there are some friendships that originated from the garden. This is encouraged by the garden as the initiators always organize a dinner before or after a working day, where the aim is to get to know the other people that are involved. For others the garden can result in a small chat or greetings in the hallway (Respondent #8, 2016). The Noabertoen also has a positive impact, but there aren't a lot of new contacts that sprung from the garden as all the people involved knew each other in general. Respondent #1 (2016) sees that:

"The contact in the community has intensified and the garden made it easier for people to approach each other and it provides a topic that everyone can talk about. People work together pretty often, which they organize by themselves."

The overall effects of the gardens on social ties are positive. Most of the projects produce a lot of new social ties, especially for the projects that are set up in a neighborhood where a lot of people didn't know each other. The ties that arise vary from weak connections, such as greetings in the supermarket and small talk with the neighbors to strong connections that results in friendship, connections for work and watching each others dog. The effect of these social ties can be that people feel more attached to the neighborhood and feel like they belong to a group, which allows them to perceive their living environment in a more positive way. The Van Oldenbarneveldtlaan and the Barmaheerd also experienced a change in social connections as a result of the garden, but the lack of community interest resulted in a weaker impact, resulting in mainly weaker social ties. The projects that experience a strong pre-existing social capital added to a feeling of togetherness, where the project at the squatcomplex even resulted in a few, new friendships.

Social control

Social control is another aspect that is considered an important aspect of social capital and this section shows that the food projects induce social control in the neighborhood. A lot of the projects find a growth in social control due to the initiatives, where Respondent #3, #4, #5, #6, #8 (2016) all mention it. Respondent #4 (2016) from the Barmaheerd says the following:

“It raised the social control as most of the people can see the garden throughout their window. If there is any nuisance or if anyone want to dump waste in the garden, people approach them and the neighborhood is kept clean.”

Respondent #5 (2016) mentions the following:

“The social control within the group is pretty strong. People are willing to help other people in the garden in growing the food, but also in looking after their piece of land if they are gone for a small holiday.”

The social control can positively impact the overall tidiness of the neighborhood as well as the neighborhood of the gardens themselves are influenced by the social control that has sprung from the gardens.

Meeting place

That the food projects bring people together has become clear in the fact that a lot of different ties have sprung from the neighborhood and the social control has added to the overall maintenance of the garden and its surroundings, but the garden also functions as a meeting place for a lot of residents in the neighborhood, actively involved in the project or not. The Grunotuin is one of the projects that functions as one:

“I also love the fact that the garden has become sort of a meeting place for a lot of residents, it is sometimes a place to gather with neighbors and have a talk and a beer or a place where the activities are developed and so the role that it fulfills is something I am proud of.” (Resident #6, 2016).

The project in the Mollukkenstraat as well:

“We also made a meeting place next to the garden, which has been a great success. People would come to help in the garden or just drink a cup of coffee sitting at one of the selfmade tables. The space also allowed us to organize events, such as a neighborhood barbeque.” (Resident #7, 2016).

And the project of the Barmheerd has a terrace to sit:

“The terrace is very nice to sit at and this means that neighbors that live here can also use it, if they want to. And it happens ever so often, which is fine. I also sit here sometimes with other people from the neighborhood and this way it really adds to the livability of the neighborhood.” (Resident #4, 2016).

The creation of a terrace or picknicktable or any other form adds a public space for the surrounding area to meet, get in touch and recreate. This also allows people who aren't involved in the growing of food and the overall project to get in touch with other people and enjoy the positives the neighborhood has to offer. The project even seem to add to the livability of the neighborhood.

Conclusion

Concluding from these cases, the gardens have a positive effect on the social capital within the projects. The neighborhood conditions have turned out to play a role in the success rate of the projects as some projects didn't make as much progress as others. The overall impact of the garden is very positive for the people involved. It created new social interaction and networks and the diversity of the socio-economic backgrounds show that the gardens overcome the prejudices about socio-economic backgrounds, which prove that bridging social capital is achieved with these projects. The theory considers the involvement of a divers group of people with different backgrounds to be very positive as the projects overcome other prejudices as also mentioned in the previous chapter about neighborhood conditions. The mentioned benefits of the community garden can be observed in this case-study as well, it has increased the social cohesion between the people working on it and ensured the social connections between the people involved, it created a network that consisted of weak ties for the one, but created links that were positively influencing the work sphere of members and there even sprung friendships from the gardens. The stronger social ties were mainly found in the projects with a higher community interest, which could be linked back to neighborhood conditions, which play a role in the homogeinity of the environment. The different backgrounds of the projects lead to different results within this case-study. As most of the projects experienced a positive impact, there were two projects lacking behind in their progress and development. The lack of community interest resulted in a weaker, but still positive social impact. The garden creates weak social connections in the neighborhood. The gardens also raised the social control within the neighborhoods, which results in a neater surrounding and less nuisance, whereby it adds to the livability of the neighborhood. Another important notion is the fact that the gardens often function as a meeting place for people to get together. It is at these meeting places where social ties grow and give room to people who aren't involved in the growing of the food to be part of the project. It is therefore deemed important to create a public meeting place in the community garden as this will add to the social impact of the project. The research turns to the next chapter, where the projects are analyzed in the broader context of the neighborhood.

5.5.3 Social impact on neighborhood

As the effects for the people that are included in the project are analyzed, the influence of the projects on the overall neighborhood are addressed in this chapter. The projects have the aim of achieving a better social climate in the neighborhood and this is achieved within most of the projects. There are a lot of community members that didn't know each other before the initiatives and experience the social changes as a positive addition to their social life in the neighborhood. It has brought people together, work relationships grew and friendships blossomed. Connecting different people is the bridging importance of community gardens and this bridging aspect adds to the community development. A great side note is the fact that, especially in the early stages, these benefits don't transcend the confines of the garden project (Kingsley & Townsend, 2007). Also, Geys & Murdoch (2010) warn that it is essential to analyze if the social capital is accessible for the whole community. This section studies the inclusiveness and accessibility of the food projects.

Despite the fact that not every project achieved the participation of the community in its food project, all the initiatives experience a positive response from the neighborhood and the people that aren't involved. The projects that are set up in a neighborhood with a high probability of social capital are experienced a high demand of people that want to get involved. The popularity results in adaptations in the garden, since the goal of inclusiveness leads to giving everyone a role in the project. The projects have found several solutions, such as giving residents the possibility of getting a small piece of the plot or help in the maintenance days or workshops organized by the garden.

"By creating activities and workshops people can get to know the garden and the people that work on it, which helps in decreasing the barrier of joining the garden or getting involved in other activities that are part of the garden. The projects receive a lot of compliments and positive reactions from passersby or neighbors that aren't participating." (Respondent #2, 2016).

Despite the lack of participation and involvement in the projects of the Van Oldenbarneveltlaan and Barmahoord, these projects notice the positive influence of the gardens on the neighborhood. Respondent #4 (2016) says:

"I already knew most of the people in the neighborhood block, which has always been a simple greeting, but the garden allowed more interaction in the community. Everyone who walks by or is working in his own, adjoined garden finds the opportunity to chat. The garden serves as a public place for the neighbors and makes it easier to have a chat with the neighbors. The terrace of the garden is very nice to sit at and the residents of this block are free to use it as they please."

Respondent #2 (2016) sees that the project has influenced the social cohesion in the neighborhood in an indirect manner. Despite the fact that they didn't involve the neighborhood, they showed the people that:

"You can do things for someone else and that is something we get a lot of compliments about. The garden also serves as a topic of conversation for the passersby, this way we get to know the neighborhood a lot better."

The projects based on a strong pre-existing social capital have less impact on the rest of the neighborhood, but this preposition enlarges the overall success of the project. The Noabertoen has a great involvement as the feeling of togetherness is the base for this project:

"The people that aren't participating actively are for a large part involved in the maintenance days which prove to be very popular." (Respondent #1, 2016)

The homogeneity of this environment leads to a lot of positive response. The positive response from outside the community is an issue at the squat-complex, where there were some complaints from the neighbors about the appearance of the garden. This negative also has a positive, says Respondent #8 (2016):

"It brought the complex in closer contact with its surroundings and even resulted in a collective workday where the surrounding neighborhood was also invited. This activity helped in creating better understanding between the neighborhood and the complex."

Conclusion

In most neighborhoods the appearance of the garden has had a positive impact on its surroundings, which is positive for the adjoined residents. The garden is for most of the projects something that is diminishing nuisance and avoids waste-dumping and gives a facelift to the surroundings (Respondent #5, 2016; Respondent #4, 2016; Respondent #6, 2016; Respondent #7, 2016). The improved surroundings results in more social control in the neighborhood, as the residents want to protect it. Despite the fact that the projects differentiate in their social impact, the garden always adds something to the social network in the neighborhood itself, even though people aren't interested in getting involved in the project themselves, the garden is a topic of conversation and residents who aren't involved often make conversation with the working people. The overall response to the food projects is positive.

5.5.4 The dark side of social capital

All the positive claims about inclusiveness and positive responses of the neighborhood make it interesting to see if the community gardens also have negative aspects. The negative developments are experienced in a few gardens within this case study.

Inclusion and exclusion

A good example is an event where a neighborhood barbeque was the occasion for a conflict within the garden:

“Everyone from the neighborhood was welcome to join the barbeque, but who is part of the neighborhood? Some had the idea of inclusiveness and everyone was welcome to join and others had the idea that only a few blocks were part of the neighborhood and welcome to join. These different views cause conflicts within the participating group and let others feel excluded from the project.” (Respondent#7, 2016).

This clear example shows the two negative sides of social capital; the exclusion of people from the project and the conflicts the project can cause within the group. When a project is executed there can be a strong social capital within this group, but it can create a situation wherein the rest of the neighborhood feels excluded (Bridger & Alter, 2006). This form of exclusion can be seen as the ‘dark side’ of social capital. Respondent #6 (2016) admits to the fact that people probably feel excluded from the project and that this exclusion is difficult to avoid:

“If you purposely didn’t join you can feel excluded; possibly because of a fence that is built around the garden or if you see people working together, people can feel intimidated by the project and are too shy to break this barrier and ask if they can join.”

The Mollukkenstraat-initiative had a lot of issues with the idea of inclusion and exclusion. It tried to achieve inclusiveness in the project, but the initiators found out that this is very difficult to achieve. Just as in the Grunotuin, Respondent #7 (2016) underlines the fact that:

“Exclusion is very difficult to avoid, if people aren’t involved from the beginning they feel they are being excluded from the project and two groups form; the people that are involved and the people that aren’t. This results in complaints from the excluded people as they feel that the group is doing what it wants with something that is part of the neighborhood.” (Respondent #7, 2016)

For the gardens that experience a strong pre-existing social capital, the project has less problems with the idea of in- and exclusion. The boundaries for the group is already set and the homogeneity in the group is, despite the diverse backgrounds of the members, higher (Respondent #1, 2016; Respondent #8, 2016). Both of the projects have an inclusive goal, but Respondent #8 (2016) says:

“People from outside the complex don’t feel like they can join, because the squat-complex is a community on its own.”

Respondent #5 (2016) says the following about the effects of forming a collective:

“It is a force that is felt by everyone, because working in the garden is something that you do together, which results in feeling like a collective. Being part of a collective process results in a greater social control, trust and social cohesion within the project, which is a positive development. It can be combined with being a very inclusive and open project where everyone is welcome to join, by organizing activities and workshops for everyone we achieve this. We want people to participate in the project and should be wary of the fact that the group is not becoming too excluded from the rest of the neighborhood.”

This shows that the bonding social capital can be experienced as very positive for the people involved, it creates strong ties and results in social trust and cohesion, but only for the people involved. The collective that is formed is underlined to be having a possible exclusive effect on the neighborhood and the Violenhof, in this case, aims to avoid the negative effects by being as inclusive as possible. The theory underlines that the problem is often that the social improvements don’t transcend the food projects (Kingsley & Townsend, 2007). Although diversity within a project is therefore recommended, because it can serve as a bridge for different groups, this diverse group can grow on to be a collective as shown by the Violenhof and the Grunotuin. The advise can be to create activities, workshops and inviting people to come help, this way the exclusiveness could be addressed in a succesfull manner.

Negative effects within project

Most of the projects didn’t really experience a lot of issues within the group self, some discussions always arise, but they were all solved in a democratic manner. Respondent #7 (2016) believed that if the neighborhood would have been more homogenous the project would have had less issues and conflicts within the project:

“Some conflicts within the project can be linked to the heterogeinity of the group. The different views resulted in some small conflicts and people blaming other that they execute things without consulting the other. This resulted in some group forming within the group.”

The theory advises to reach a diverse public to reach a bridging effect and overcoming socio-economic backgrounds, but these projects can also underline these differences and cause conflicts. Respondent #7 (2016) admits that he believes these conflicts could have been avoided if the organization would have been more structured:

“We started with the idea that everyone is welcome and can bring their own plans to the table and work them out. This led to a new issue and that was that everyone did what he wanted, which led to claiming pieces of the community garden and just started working on a piece of land. Result was that the garden developed in a free-state and decisions would be taken without incorporating everyone. If we had set up a formal structure and made some rules, the development of the garden would be a lot more systematic and organized.”

This leads to conclude that a certain organization would be advised to avoid conflicts within the group that is working on the project.

Conclusion

The results of exclusion are due to the fact that the project allows a collective to grow and the group has a bonding effect that makes the initiative less approachable for outsiders. This bonding effect is mentioned in literature and can cause a divide within a neighborhood and result in complaints and conflicts. This means that often the benefits of the social capital created are only accessible for the people that are involved in the project. The exclusion of people is often difficult to avoid and easily achieved, but as the Violenhof shows, the organization of activities can help in achieving more inclusiveness and trying to avoid exclusiveness. Although reaching out to a heterogeneous public can also help in achieving a more bridging network, this diversity can also result in conflicts and exclusion within a project as the ideas about the project are difficult to match. Projects can help overcome differences in socio-economic background, but can also result in underlining the differences that exist within the neighborhood and as a result of that create a bigger gap between groups. A stricter organization and rules set a better framework and would be advised to avoid these problems.

5.5.5 External influence on social capital

The case study has shown that the two-way relationship isn't as straight-forward as thought, but the overall impact of the project is positive for the development of the neighborhood. As the influence of the project is positive it is important to keep this GRUA alive. The theory about GRUA mentions several factors that aren't directly influenced by social capital, but are as important for the development of the food vision of Groningen as these factors help in the set up and maintaining of the food projects. We address the following factors shortly: The capacity of the initiator, the organization and the role of municipality.

To see if the local food projects can be shared under the created concept of GRUA, they were asked about the way they have set-up their own initiative. The concept concerns projects that respond to the local context and interests from within the communities that are concerned and involved. They are mostly set up by enthusiasts that operate within civil society and aim for greener solutions (Macias, 2008). Important sidenote is the fact that these initiatives are affected strongly by the capacity of the initiator(s) of these projects into how they will develop (Firth & Maye, 2011). The organization of the project should be added to this as well, as during the course of this study, the interviews made clear that differences in set-up and organization also play a role in the development of the projects and thus in the development of social capital.

Capacity of initiator

Not every initiator was alone in the set up of the project, several projects have done it with more than one person, which can be helpful as it is underlined by a lot of them that the project consumes a lot of time and dedication. Respondent #5 (2016) of the Violenhof says that:

"A motivated initiator is really important, an initiator that is willing to invest a lot of spare time into the project. The fact that she had a clear goal in mind made her willing to overcome all the setbacks that she encountered during the process."

Another factor is the fact that the initiator functions as the driving force which stimulates the volunteers to stay motivated in the garden:

"If you see that others work hard, then you're also willing to do something extra" (Respondent #5, 2016).

Also the Grunotuin and the Aquamarijngaarde have initiators that were willing to invest a lot of time in the project, although they were both surprised by the amount of work it cost. The role of the initiator is somewhat unclear for the two projects that are set up in the environment of a rich pre-existing social capital. The roles are divided in a more organic way and the development of the

project elapses based on intrinsic motivation, which makes that the role of the initiator is not one with a lot more responsibilities:

“If you want to get involved in the garden and work on it, you do it and most of the time everyone is okay with it.” (Respondent #8, 2016)

If the responsibility is carried by the group easily in projects with strong social capital, then that would mean that the taking over of the responsibility of the initiator in the other groups would point out the development of social capital and strong neighborhood capacity. This differentiates between the projects, the Violenhof experienced a very natural way of transposing the accountability onto the group:

“They are all really motivated to do some maintenance and extra work in the garden, although I am still the contactperson in the project” (Respondent#5, 2016).

Also the group involved in the Grunobuurt was willing to take over responsibilities really fast, whereas the Aquamarijngaarde had more problems with sharing responsibilities. Respondent #3 (2016) says:

“Some small tasks are not a problem, but the role of supervisor is something that is difficult to hand over to others. The maintenance of the overall garden is done via working days, but members are mainly concerned about their own plot.”

The gardens with the least social capital achieved also have put a lot of time in the projects and have created a nice garden, but didn't achieve to reach an audience with their investment, yet. As earlier mentioned, it is important to find support in the neighborhood to spark the community interest, if the community is not interested the effort is futile.

Role of municipality

The municipality underlines that the responsibility lies in the hands of the initiator and that the municipality has a passive role in the overall GRUA, which makes this a grassroots development. The initiative has to come from the citizen and not from the municipality, although the municipality can service the citizen (Veldstra, 2015). The municipality makes people aware of the urban food system, this way people are triggered by its surroundings. The municipality is willing to help with money and material in exchange for the compliance to several requirements (Stiekema, 2016). The projects can also apply for funds that don't come from the municipality, which has happened for several cases. The importance of the role of the municipality is underlined by all the initiators. The aid they offered and the requirements set helps in the development of the projects in the neighborhoods.

Respondent #6 (2016) speaks of the role of the municipality as an essential one for the development of the garden:

“There are short lines between the project and the municipality, so the project doesn’t have to wait to get into gear. Laurens Stiekema was really willing to help and provided a lot of financial and material aid, which made it possible to get started, but also strict about the conditions he set, before approving.”

The municipality also influenced the accessibility of the projects, by giving financial aid a project like the Violenhof didn’t have to ask contributions from its members, so that everyone was included within the project. The overall impact of the municipality is best underlined by Respondent #8 (2016), who admits to the fact that the squat-complex has had a somewhat negative idea of the municipality, but the role of the authorities in the food project has changed their opinion.

“They think more positive about the municipality as they were given the room to exploit their own ideas and the municipality was very positive and helpful in the process. It felt like the complex was accepted by the municipality, instead of the usual tension and discontent between both parties.”

The response from the initiators show that the position of the municipality as a reactive government is very useful in the development of grassroot projects. By setting certain requirements and offering financial and material aid, the success of the projects is helped, although the citizens have to maintain it. The position of Laurens Stiekema makes the communication with the projects and the municipality very easy, as he is very approachable and makes the municipality quick to act.

Organization

During the research the importance of organizing the garden and organizing activities was underlined in the continuity of the garden. As the projects are very important for the development of social capital in neighborhoods it is this continuity that decides the length and volume of the development. Two notions are mainly stressed in the interviews; a good organizational structure and the organization of activities. Respondent #7 (2016) mentioned that a better organization could have reduced the amount of conflicts and may have created more understanding between the different groups involved in the garden. The project in the Oldenbarneveldtlaan also has this sense of inclusiveness and free-state spirit, but here the project isn’t going well as the initiators already had the idea of performing the project, without considering the importance of the communities interest (Respondent #2, 2016). This shows that a base of interest and capacity is essential for the set-up of a project. Other projects have a clear organization that differentiates per project, but gives clarity to the people that are member of the initiative. Some rules and hierarchy gives the members handhold

and clarity in working in the garden (Respondent #5, 2016; Respondent #6, 2016; Respondent #3, 2016). The squat-complex based their organization on the intrinsic motivation of the members:

“Too many rules make people feel obliged and people are more inclined to wait on the organization’s initiative.” (Respondent #8, 2016)

This idea of organizing led to the fact that the garden wasn’t maintained for a year, as most of the people weren’t motivated to work on the garden. The garden now also has some rules which result in more activity.

Stiekema (2016) mentioned the fact that he pressures the gardens to organize as much activities as possible. The municipality also organizes events for the gardens that are involved with the Eetbare Stad, such as a harvest-party and trade markets (Van Duuren, 2015). Most of the initiatives underline this and say that creating activities is the key to keeping the garden alive (Respondent #5, 2016; Respondent #6, 2016; Respondent #3, 2016; Respondent #7, 2016; Respondent #8, 2016; Respondent #2, 2016). Organizing something fun is important for having a positive social impact (Respondent #6, 2016). Respondent #5 (2016) says:

“These activities make sure that the people involved are being motivated and stimulated by these activities and that there are always a lot of people interested.”

And Respondent #3 (2016) knows that with the lack of recent activities:

“The progress of the garden has stagnated and the renewed enthusiasm is needed to give the garden a new kickstart.”

When this is communicated with the municipality, they stress that:

“The gardens often have an expiration date and that it is really normal that gardens don’t last longer than a couple of years. Most of the time, the goals of the gardens are achieved and it consumes too much time for some of the people involved.” (Stiekema, 2016)

These external factors play an important part in the two-way relationship between social capital and grassroots projects as the organization and capacity is on the one hand indirectly influencing the development of the projects, but as the garden creates social growth, the capacity of the initiator and organization grow. These influencing external factors show that social capital isn’t decisive for the setting up of a project, but it plays a role in the development of the projects.

6. Conclusion and discussion

To conclude on what the relationship between social capital and the urban food system of Groningen comprises, the results and theory show that the concepts are influencing each other. And that both the concepts are connected with external factors that influence them. The goal of the study and the interest of the municipality was to see what the social impact of the projects on the neighborhoods has been. The case-study analyzed eight different cases to see how the food projects influenced the social capital and the social capital influenced the development of the food projects. The interesting part of this cross-section is the fact that the research is able to see if the different neighborhood backgrounds achieve a different result. As the theory mentioned the fact that different neighborhood conditions impact the social capital in a community the case-study aimed to link the projects to these variables with the help of maps. The maps showed little correlation between the conditions and the initiatives although there were some factors that may play a role in the development of GRUA in the city, there were a lot of successful projects on the fringe of the city where the overall socio-economic background is better. The neighborhoods with a poorer background found more projects than these areas, which is as Stiekema (2016) already pointed out, impacted by external factors such as the role of the municipality and initiator. The spread and locality of the projects is made visible and shows that neighborhood conditions that predict a probability of social capital can't be seen as decisive for the set-up of GRUA. The research showed that the set up of the project is decided by external factors as was suggested by the theory. The projects are set up in surroundings where most of the people didn't know each other and the overall social ties and connections were seen as weak by the initiators of the projects and most of the residents didn't know each other before they joined the project. Exceptions are the Noabertoen and the project in the ORKZ, where a strong social network was already present. Both initiators believed that this helped the set up of the garden as the organization developed in an organic way.

The in-depth analysis provided a better insight in the role of these factors and the role social capital plays in the development of the projects. Neighborhood context definitively impacts the further development and success of GRUA and therefore show that the location of the food project does have impact on the development of the project. The neighborhood conditions are an important part of the social capital that is formed and thus the success rate of the gardens. The community interest is overall higher in neighborhoods with a higher probability of social capital, although these neighborhoods are often less diverse when considering ethnicity and income. This leads to an overall great success for the projects that share a better socio-economic background. The projects in neighborhoods with higher diversity and lower income are often less successful in achieving

participation from the residents. The third group of projects is based on a strong pre-existing social capital, which results in a high rate of participation and enthusiasm.

The core of the research was to analyze the social impact of the gardens. Connecting different people is the bridging importance of community gardens and this bridging aspect adds to the community development. The research looked at the social ties that were created within the projects and the strength of these ties. All of the projects were able to create weak social ties, although the amount of social ties varied due to differences in community interest. The projects with a high probability of social capital achieved the most social impact and also the creation of strong social ties. The gardens with a lower probability mainly achieved the creation of weak social ties and the projects with a strong pre-existing social capital were able to reinforce the togetherness that was already present in their community. The overall impact of the gardens is very positive for the people involved. It created new social interaction, more social control and trust and strong and weak social ties. The diversity of the socio-economic backgrounds show that the gardens overcome the prejudices about these backgrounds and prove that bridging social capital is achieved with these projects. The theory considers the involvement of a diverse group of people with different backgrounds to be very positive. The mentioned benefits of the community garden can be observed in this case-study as well, it has increased the social cohesion between the people working on it and ensured the social connections between the people involved, it created a network that consisted of weak ties for the one, but created links that were positively influencing the work sphere of members and there even sprung friendships from the gardens. The different backgrounds of the projects lead to different results within this case-study. As most of the projects experienced a positive impact, there were two projects lacking behind in their progress and development. The implementation of a meeting place in the food project is advised as these create a platform for residents to enhance the social contacts and keep a connection with the people involved in the project.

In most neighborhoods the appearance of the garden has had a positive impact on its surroundings, which is positive for the adjoining residents. The garden is for most of the projects something that is diminishing nuisance and avoids waste-dumping and gives a facelift to the surroundings. The improved surroundings result in more social control in the neighborhood, as the residents want to protect it. Despite the fact that the projects differentiate in their social impact, the garden always adds something to the social network in the neighborhood itself, even though people aren't interested in getting involved in the project themselves, the garden is a topic of conversation and residents who aren't involved often make conversation with the working people. The overall response to the food projects is positive.

But as the social capital is surrounded by positives, the dark side of social capital is also applicable to grassroots urban agriculture as the negative side is also noticeable in the projects of Groningen. Geys & Murdoch (2010) already warned for the fact that a community garden is a symbol of collective success within a neighborhood, but that there is an unequal access to this social capital. The results of the case study show that if a group is working as a collective on a project, this collective is growing and the group can develop, despite its bridging effects, a bonding capital that makes the initiative less approachable for outsiders. The exclusion of people is often difficult to avoid and easily achieved. The fact that people see others working on a project as a collective, gives them the feeling of not being able to join. This can negatively impact the neighborhood and result in complaints and conflicts. It is underlined that a diverser community can aid this feeling of exclusion as the ideas about the project are conflicting and very difficult to match. Projects can help overcome differences in socio-economic background, but can also result in underlining the differences that exist within the neighborhood, which means that the overall aim of the projects should be to achieve as much inclusion as possible, as exclusion within and outside of the initiative can form a threat for the project. The overall impact on social capital is positive as the initiators, the people involved and most of the residents that aren't involved collectively see that the neighborhood has changed. The food projects serve as a breeding ground for the development of social capital in the whole neighborhood. Organizing activities and workshops could increase the inclusiveness of the project as it let's people participate who aren't actively involved in the project and also let them profit from the social benefits the projects have to offer.

The differences in participation and community interest are mainly linked with the neighborhood conditions, but there are also other factors that influence the development of the food vision of Groningen. As Van Duuren (2016) underlined, the position of the municipality in Groningen the reason why it is, as they claim, the most successful of the Netherlands. The shift to a reactive government results in a attitude of the municipality that gives the residents the freedom to execute the plans that they want to execute. The attitude of the municipality helps the capacity of the initiator to execute what he or she has in mind. The other factors mentioned by the theory are the capacity of the initiator, which plays an important role in the cases as well. The role of the organization isn't mentioned as playing a role in the success of grassroots projects, but it plays a role in the success of the urban food projects as the organization of the garden and the organization of activities is essential for keeping the projects alive. The relationship between social capital and the development and maintenance of the urban food system in Groningen is one that is strongly correlated and the two concepts have a reinforcing impact. The overall impact of the food projects on social capital is very positive, although the dangers of inclusion and exclusion should be

considered. Differences in success rate are due to the neighborhood conditions the projects is set up in, although other external factors such as the role of the municipality and the capacity of the initiator should be considered in these grassroots projects. Although it is impossible to say that the urban food system of Groningen is the most successful in the Netherlands, this research can conclude that the overall success it has in creating social capital in the neighborhoods is positive. Further research could provide a better insight in the factors that play a role in this success rate of the projects and the impact of neighborhood conditions on the development of food projects and social capital and change these conclusions into generalities about the two-way relationship between social capital and GRUA. Policy makers should strongly consider the social aspect of these food projects as it impacts the neighborhoods in Groningen in a very positive way. The role of the municipality is considered to be essential as it gives the citizens the freedom to execute the plans they have on the one hand, but also provides the right amount of aid each individual project needs. To end with the words of one of the initiators:

“I would advise every neighborhood to start their own community garden, since it has been and still is a very positive experience.”

7. Reflection

When looking back on writing the master thesis it is easy to conclude that the research consumed a lot of time and effort and I am partially happy with the results that derived from all these efforts. The chosen topic is something I am happy with as I am still interested in and committed to it. Also the social and scientific relevance made the addressed topic an interesting one. This made it easier for me to keep working on the research. I believe the master thesis really added to developing my skills as a researcher and writer. The good guidance from my supervisor helped me in achieving that. When considering the content of the written research I am not as satisfied as I would have hoped to be. In retrospect it would have been wiser to have narrowed down the subject a bit more, which would have allowed for a further deepening of the addressed topics. The limited amount of words and time I was allowed to use, made it difficult to address all the topics that were relevant to this research in a thorough manner. Next to that, the use of questionnaires, next to the interviews done, would have made the overall results more convincing as the view of the initiators is selective and less objective. This causes the research to give less clear conclusions as was aimed before the research had started. The fact that the response on my questionnaires was very underwhelming is something that you don't have any control over. I also would have liked to interview gardens with a bigger ethnic diversity, but the requests for interviews wasn't always responded to. This shows that the reality of doing a research can be harsh and that not every goal set can be achieved.

Appendix A: List of projects Eetbare Stad

X Project with active group of members
Done & Still in use

Location	Remark	Owner of Ground	Finished
Bleekveld	Fruitrees	Municipality	Initiative stopped
Kastanjeplein	Edible square	SKSG	X
Violenhof	Community garden	Municipality	X
Resedastraat	Participation project	Municipality	X
Prof. Rankestraat	Redevelopment area	Municipality	X
Coranthijnestraat	Construction of plant boxes	Municipality	X
CIBOGA		Municipality & Nijestee	Initiative stopped
Smalstraat/Kortestraat	Community garden	Municipality	X
Samarangstraat	Edible firehallway	??	Initiative stopped
UMCG	Artwork at hospital	Hospital	Being built
Pioenstraat	Community garden	Municipality	X
Friesestraatweg	Community orchard	Municipality	X
Noorderbrug	Community garden	Municipality	Initiative stopped
Molukkenstraat	Community garden	Lefier	X
Florakade	Community garden	Municipality	Initiative stopped
De Velden	Community garden	Nijestee	Initiative stopped
De Velden oost	Community garden	Nijestee	Initiative stopped
JOP Oosterpark	Vegetable tanks	Municipality	Initiative stopped
Paradijsvogelstraat	Community garden for the Food Bank	Nijestee	X
Antillenstraat	Construction of plant boxes	Nijestee	Initiative stopped
Holtstek	Fruitrees	Municipality	Initiative stopped
De Hoogte	Community garden	Municipality	X
Hermanstraat	Community garden	Municipality	X
Johan de Witstraat	Community garden	Municipality	X
Pioenpark	Community garden	Municipality	Initiative stopped
Stadswerf	Community garden	Nijestee	Initiative stopped
Kopland	Vegetable tanks	Nijestee	X
Van Oldenbarneveldtlaan	Community garden	Municipality	X
Wielewaalplein	Community garden	Municipality	Spring 2016
Mondriaanstraat	Eco-friendly street	Municipality	Spring 2016
Viaductstraat	Fruitrees	Municipality	Initiative stopped
Aalscholver	Fruitrees	Municipality	X
Badhuisplein	Community orchard	Municipality	X
Den Uylstraat	Community orchard	Municipality	X
Piccardthof	Several locations	TV Piccardthof	X
Verzetstrijderslaan	Community garden	Municipality	Initiative stopped
Van Brakelviiver	Fruitrees (rejected)	Municipality	Initiative stopped
Winschoterdiep	Herb garden	Municipality	X
Van Houtenlaan	Community garden	Nijestee	X
Herehof	Fruitrees and Community garden	Municipality	X
De Linie 2	Community garden (no interest)	Municipality	Initiative stopped
TRV Stadspark	Fruitrees	TV Stadspark	X
Brederoschool	Fruitrees	Municipality	X
Domela Nieuwenhuislaan	Community garden (no interest)	Municipality	Initiative stopped
Eindhovenlaan	Fruitrees	Municipality	Fall 2015
Haydenlaan	No plot available	Municipality	Initiative stopped
Koeriersterweg	Fruitbomen	Municipality	X
Davidstraat	Vegetable tanks	Municipality	X
Oude RKZ	square foot gardening	Nijestee	X
Stephensonstraat	square foot gardening	Municipality	X
Julianaweg 1019	Community garden	Municipality	Initiative stopped
Spiegelstraat 141	Community garden	Nijestee	Initiative stopped
Grunobuurt	Community garden	Nijestee	X
Rivierenbuurt	Fruitrees	Municipality	X
Sterrenbosstraat	Fruitrees	Municipality	X
Schumanstraat 51	Community garden	Municipality	X
Betje Wolfstraat	Community garden	Municipality	Initiative stopped
MFC de Wijert	Community garden	MFC	X
Bordewijklaan	Fruitrees	Municipality	X
H.L. Wichersstraat	Community garden	Municipality	X
Helperwestsingel	Community garden	Belegger	Initiative stopped
Merwedestraat	Community garden	Municipality	Spring 2016
Achter de Reisdijk	Fruitrees	Municipality	X
Gelderse Roosstraat	Community garden	Nijestee	X
Westpark	Fruitrees	Municipality	X
Reitdiep	Community garden	Municipality	X
Anna Blamanstraat	Community garden	Municipality	X
Bisschop Bekkerschool	Community garden	Municipality	Initiative stopped

Zernike	Community garden	University	X
Jupiterstraat (1)	Fruitrees	Municipality	X
Grote Beerstraat	Community garden	Nijestee	X
Aquamarijnstraat	Community garden	Municipality	Initiative stopped
Vlierstraat	Community garden	Municipality	Initiative stopped
Selwerd	Community orchard	Municipality	X
Jupiterstraat (2)	Community garden	Housing corporation	Initiative stopped
Venuslaan	Community garden	Municipality	X
Bottelroosstraat	Community garden	Municipality	X
Vlierstraat	Community garden	Municipality	X
Vaargeul	Reconstruction lawn	Municipality	X
Vaargeul	Fruitrees	Municipality	X
Sibranda/Framaheerd	Fruitrees	Municipality	Initiative stopped
Bottemaheerd	Community garden	Municipality	Initiative stopped
Rensuma/Scheltemaheerd	Fruitrees	Municipality	X
Eilardaheerd	Fruitrees	Municipality	X
Stuurboordswal	Community orchard	Municipality	X
Molentreek	Fruitrees	Private	X
Boerderijum e.o.	Community garden	Municipality	Initiative stopped
Barnaheerd(1)	Community garden	Municipality	X
Ruischerwaard	Community garden	Municipality	Initiative stopped
Lewenborg(ACL)	Community garden	Municipality	X
Speenkruidstraat	Community orchard	Municipality	X
Baken	Community garden	Municipality	X
Woldjespoorweg	Fruitrees and Community garden	Steelande	X
Noorddijkerweg	Community garden	Church	X
Tormentilstraat	Community garden		Initiative stopped
Beestenborg	Community garden	Municipality	Initiative stopped
Rensumaheerd	Flower garden	Municipality	X
Tasmantoren	Community garden	Municipality	X
Kremersheerd	Community garden	Municipality	Spring 2016
Wiershoeck	Community orchard	Municipality	Initiative stopped
Engelbert	Edible bicycle path	Municipality	X
Kombuis	Community garden	Municipality	Spring 2016
Marjoleinstraat	Community garden	Municipality	X

Appendix B: The projects

The selection of the projects is performed in a very thorough manner to make sure that, with the limited size of the research, a diverse cross-section is made. The selection is based on several aspects. First of all, the list handed over by Laurens Stiekema that can be found in Appendix A. The following eight projects were selected for an interview and in the results, the gardens will be referred to by their respondent number:

Noabertoen (Respondent #1)

An old village, adopted by the city of Groningen. The garden has several functions, it serves as a playground and place to relax. Part of the garden is a community garden, where food is grown by citizens. *“One of the main pillars was achieving more social capital and working together as a community. ... The residents feel like they live in a small village, where everyone knows each other.”* (Respondent #1, 2016)

Based on this information a strong pre-existing social network was expected.



Figure 5.1 : Part of Noabertoen



Figure 5.2 : Van Oldenbarneveldtlaan

Van Oldenbarneveldtlaan (Respondent #2)

A project with a diverse neighborhood background, there is a high ethnic diversity and a low average income, as based on the previously presented maps. The project is set up by three men who don't live in the neighborhood itself, which shows that the set up of projects isn't particularly influenced by the neighborhood background. The garden consists of the shown plot, where everyone is allowed to work on, it is a shared plot where the food is also shared with the neighborhood.

“The focus of the garden was not on size, but on bringing people together and let people get along in a new way.” (Respondent #2, 2016)

Aquamarijngaarde (Respondent #3)

The project is set up in a neighborhood with a high average income and a high amount of homeownership. These conditions are associated with high levels of social capital. Despite that, Respondent #3 (2016) was surprised about the low amount of social contact in the neighborhood: *“So, doing something together and have fun and have some small talk was something I really wanted to achieve.”* The plot contains twenty food tanks where residents grow their own food, there is also a table placed so people can get together.



Figure 5.3 : Part of Aquamarijngaarde



Figure 5.4 : Barmaheerd

Barmaheerd (Respondent #4)

Neighborhood that has a high ethnic diversity and is an environment where nuisance and vandalism is disturbing the neighborhood, according to Respondent #4 (2016): *“The main reason for setting up this garden was the amount of litter and nuisance the plot created, which was annoying everyone in this small block.”* The garden is focused on a small area of the neighborhood. The garden produces vegetables and herbs and has a terrace.

Violenhof (Respondent #5)

The initiative is one of the few projects that is founded in the city centre of Groningen. The initiator has found a place which is somewhat secluded. The neighborhood itself is rather homogenous: *“A lot of the houses are owned and the neighborhood is a slight bit elitist, which sometimes translates to the garden as well”* (Respondent #5, 2016). The garden has large food tanks, as shown in Figure 5.5, where residents use their own part of the tank. The goal of the garden is: *“to grow our own food and teach our daughter where vegetables come from. Adding to the neighborhood in a social manner and creating a more green environment are other positive effects.”* (Respondent #5, 2016)



Figure 5.5: Violenhof



Grunotuin (Respondent #6)

With around a hundred people involved, this is one of the biggest projects that is part of the Eetbare Stad. The neighborhood is being renewed or renovated, which results in a diversity in rent/ownership, economic background and age, but not in ethnicity (Respondent #6, 2016). The initiator tells the following about the goals of the garden: *“I had a dream to do something with the wasteland. I set this plan up from a gardening ideal, since I come from the countryside, I saw the potential. Although the social effects weren’t the main goal from the*

Figure 5.6 : Grunotuin

beginning, this soon changed as the main goal is now to give everyone the room to join and give them a sense that they belong to the group.” (Respondent #6, 2016)

Braakland = Maakland (Respondent #7)

In a neighborhood which was seen as one of the problem areas of the city of Groningen, the initiators have set up an ambitious project on the plot of a housing corporation. The inclusiveness and freedom of involvement are one of the reasons why this project is different than others: *“Our intent was to create a public space where people come together to work on creating their own little utopia. The activities are a way of reaching the goal, which was to bring the neighborhood*



Figure 5.7 : Braakland = Maakland

together. I don’t think that only a vegetable garden does that, but a playground or a yoga-garden can do that, as long as there is something to do collectively.” (Respondent #7, 2016). The neighborhood was given room to fill in the space as they wanted, which resulted in a vegetable garden, a playground and the organizing of several activities, such as a barbeque.



RoomsKatholieke Ziekenhuis (squatcomplex) (Respondent #8)

This garden can be found in a squatcomplex in the city. As the initiator says: *“There is a lot of social cohesion within the complex already. A lot of people think alike and have the same world views. Based on this cohesion there is always an intrinsic feeling of doing something and making the complex a better place.”* (Respondent #8, 2016).

The garden is set up with the goal to make the complex a better place, together with other residents. The project is based on a strong pre-existing social network. The food is

Figure 5.8 : Oude RoomsKatholieke Ziekenhuis

grown in separate food tanks, where each individual is working on its own food, as can be seen in Figure 5.8.

Appendix C: Conducted interviews

Interview Wout Veldstra 17-06-2015

- *Why did you initiate the new food policy in the city of Groningen?*

There are of course several reasons for setting up this new vision spread over the city. We were exploring ways in which sustainability can be made visible and less vague and I had a strong feeling that food plays a central role in this sustainability idea. Around the same period the book of Carolyn Steele was released, called *Sitopia*, which challenges the way we look at our current food system and the world of agriculture. This also triggered the spatial planning division here in the city. What helps is the background of the city, which always had a strong interaction with its surroundings and agriculture. I finally had the feeling that I could do and bring in practice something I strongly believe in and it was no problem to convince the council of my ideas of setting up a food system for the city of Groningen. There were already some conditions that were helpful, since we had already focused on food in some cooperation's with the municipality of Assen and becoming the Capital of Taste in 2011. The cooperation with the province and region capitulated, because of the economic crisis and political shifts, which led to me standing on my own.

- *So the focus was pure on the sustainability aspect of the food system. Was there any mentioning of affecting the social aspect of the city?*

No, in the time that we set up our food vision this was absolutely not something we had in mind. When you read back our goals and proposals, you will notice that this wasn't an aspect that we treated. Participation and the transition towards a different social structure, wherein the interaction and role of divisions of state and the community has shifted, wasn't an issue at that time. That is something that developed in the last 3-4 years.

- *Are the goals that were set before in the policy adapted to these developments?*

No, the goals weren't in the picture anymore. That sustainability policy changed into the energy policy and the food department kind of detached itself from the rest of the sustainability division within the municipality. We now try to include this more and make an overarching sustainability policy. But there has been some fundamental changes within the municipality, wherein we let go of strict goals and react more to what is happening in society and become more aware of the trends of what is going in the city. It has become a more practical approach, as in, we look what happens at certain locations and try to react or adapt to what happens. It is really important to note, that it is not up to the municipality anymore to decide how sustainable Groningen is going to be. The role of the municipality has become more of a facilitating one.

I advise you to talk with Frans Kerver about this subject (he runs the biggest community garden in the city), since he has a lot of interesting ideas about this. Tuin in de Stad was the right example to show the municipality that we have to change. He squatted a big housing corporation location, which was at the time wasteland and changed it into a big community garden with a big community working on it. With this, Frans Kerver, wants to show the municipality that we shouldn't always see land as something to profit from economically, but we can use this lot as something that is of great influence on the livability and social capital of the city and that we can do that as citizens, without any help or constraints. It is decided to remove the project for new housing complexes, which didn't go without any protests. This shows the shift in the current political structure. The real estate division would have had the power up till last year, but nowadays there are other actors involved in the power to the city. Citizens can now have their own impact on the city and the municipality has to decide in

each separate case, how to respond to that. The old situation was that money decided, but that isn't always the case anymore. Today, good ideas decide, but that is something that still has to change in the mindset of a lot of people at the municipality.

This example, shows that the relevance of food and sustainability hasn't changed, but the way we approach this food system is different than how it was when we started the policy.

- *Is that one of the reasons why it is so successful? Because the food division responds and facilitates really well to what the citizens want?*

Yes, I believe so. Because we decided to adapt to the current changes and not impose our ideas and vision this has become more successful. We, literally and figuratively, proposed the citizens our ideas and asked to react and well, they did! We organized and started a lot of discussions and are busy to ensure that there are some people talking about food subjects at the Let's Gro-festival. And this is not only happening in the city of Groningen, but all over the Netherlands. We sometimes have meetings with other people from municipalities throughout the country and it shows that every food vision is completely different, because what works here for example, doesn't work in Rotterdam or Utrecht. You try to adapt their ideas to your own context and make it work here. We had the 'National Day of Urban Agriculture' in Den Bosch last week, where you are talking with everybody else and everyone is talking about how well everything works.

I believe Groningen is doing the best or very well if we look at the amount of projects that are initiated throughout the city. We currently have sixty or seventy projects running. Utrecht is doing really well in creating a social network surrounding these projects and where they have a lot more knowledge concerning for example the integration of immigrants within projects.

- *What are you currently doing with the food vision?*

We are currently working on setting up the Suikerunie-terrain as our headquarter, so to speak. We are hoping that the AOC-Terra, the school of agriculture is getting a plot there for education and development and we also aim to set up a food market for local food from a couple of farmers that work in the province and also the distribution of local food can spread throughout the city, such as restaurants and local food shops.

- *How does the decision making in the food vision comprise itself?*

Well, we have the Eetbare Stad organization run by Laurens. He has the overview of all the community gardens and participation projects, wherein he decides if the projects can be successful and if we, as municipality, should cooperate to make the initiatives work, which is really practical. We sometimes have had the request of more professional farmers, who wanted to exploit a large plot of land for more serious urban agriculture, which most of the time isn't achievable. Most of the projects run via Laurens Stiekema, whereas, here at the municipality we want to create new ideas and visions to achieve. Sometimes projects or initiatives are initiated on the plots and grounds of housing corporations, who are often willing to cooperate as it gives there wasteland a purpose and gives the corporation a more positive prestige. For us, there are a few conditions that are necessary, before we are willing to cooperate: Does the neighborhood agree? Is the plot suitable? Are there enough people that want to participate? And officially there have to be contracts signed to work on these plots and wherein an agreement is achieved, but this bureaucratic measures, we believe, discourage initiating projects and make it less approachable. We are mainly interested if we achieve a big social network and who are involved, which people we address with the food system.

Interview Anke van Duuren 02-09-2015

What was the municipalities motivation for setting up this food vision?

Direct cause for setting up the food vision, was the talk by Carolyn Steele. This is happening around the world and we see a trend in people becoming more aware of their food pattern and its impact on the environment. We see the old system as a threat and want to explore ways in how, we as a municipality can help changing this around and respond to the awareness that is growing within the society, stimulate the society within the city. We were aiming for a better food security and thinking about our food and where it comes from. In the mindset of sustainability we should be more aware of our consuming pattern.

Wout wrote out the whole food vision and I was also doing some work concerning the sustainability of our city, which brought us together. Wout represents the vision and has his network throughout the city and the country and I focus more on the performance of the food system. It is more connecting the parties concerned around the food system. Not only the Eetbare Stad, this is a part of the food vision, but it already started before the whole food vision was created.

If we look at the practice of the vision. The municipality doesn't have a lot of money for performing the food system. Does the initiative come from the citizens of the city? Is it their responsibility?

Our role has shifted more towards giving information to the citizens about what they can do to add to the food system of Groningen. We don't take the initiative in that, the citizens take initiative in asking us if they can carry out their plan on a plot or wasteland. We provide materials and financial aid via the NLA if we believe in the project. The only initiative that started from within the municipality is Toentje, which is a vegetable garden where the harvest is going to the Foodbank.

Do you have an insight into what is the main motivation for citizens to start an initiative?

I think that sometimes there are residents, with some basic knowledge about gardening that want to do something with it, but I really believe that the main motivator is the social component that projects invoke. Within this scale it is of course impossible to live from the harvest you produce and the production is a side issue. People just like to do some positive work in their spare time and really like to do something together. And I think that is a shift that is going on in our current day and age. We had decennia of individualism and people get to see that it has so many positives of doing things together and that the financial crisis was partially a cause in this current shift. People recognize that not everything is about the money and that there are other things that are important, such as being happy, doing things together and serve a cause.

Do you have the feeling that the food system in Groningen is a success, because of the interest of citizens and initiators?

If you want to set up an initiative, you really have to have an intrinsic motivation and believe in the projects that you set up and when you see how this is growing it has a spillover effect, so to say. Other people see that it's possible or have fun in working in a garden and want to set up something for themselves. I visited De Gelderse Roos, a community garden in Selwerd, where there was someone who got bored of looking at the grass surrounding its flat every day and he initiated the plan for a community garden. Nowadays it is a great success, where a lot of different cultures and ethnicity is concerned with the garden and you see that different cultures have a stronger attachment with growing food and wanted to participate, but also an old man who rides a wheelchair and can't work in the garden, decided that he could have a chat and bring some coffee ever so often. And this way more and more people want to help, although they probably hadn't

thought of working in a garden in the first place. It is doing something together that motivates them and of course food is an easy way to bring people together as it is a subject we all can relate to. This can invoke other initiatives as cooking together or organizing workshops. In a social way it can create weak and strong relationships wherein people can bond and do other things together besides working in the garden. So small projects can have a bigger impact than just harvesting some vegetables and that is something this food system is really achieving.

I think this sharing and caring tendency that is growing in today's society adds a lot to the success of the projects, this provides a strong base which will keep on growing and that's why I believe these projects will keep on being a success. Social media is also a strong medium in connecting people in the neighborhood and promoting the initiative you started. You see a lot of facebook-pages from community gardens that send out updates and ask for help.

If you look at the food system, was this something that had a rough start and developed more and more or did it immediately strike enthusiasm?

Well, first, we had to get the council on our side. We couldn't just start this up. This took some time, but after the talk from Carolyn Steel everyone was convinced. We wanted to set up an information window for questions and information, but that is not the way it works anymore. So we were dependent on the initiatives coming from the citizens, whereas we provided as much information as possible on websites etc. The food vision is the perfect example of how the municipality is reorganizing and what our current role should be. We have to integrate everything more, where all the supporting services are becoming one department and where all the policy writers gather underneath one umbrella. This means we have to exchange more and more information, but everyone can adapt their plans to each other and we can function more as a unit instead of working all separately. For example, if someone wants to start an initiative on wasteland of a housing corporation, the real estate department of the municipality should be involved. All these connections work smoothly if we work under one roof with different departments. Interesting example is the SuikerUnie-terrain where a lot of sustainability and food initiatives are set up by the municipality, wherein a lot of departments are working together to achieve something there. This cooperation within the municipality is also allowing us to create an equal mindset.

The market created there will be a good way to give more local farmers the possibility to sell their local produce and this gives restaurants and shops a better access to local food. We see that the distribution and connecting these two parties are the main problems in setting up a better local food system. Also the creation of online platforms for selling and buying local food and the distribution of local food packages from door to door is something that is becoming more and more popular. De Stadsakker is also an initiative that is supported well within the municipality. She started a store in the city center where people could buy tools and materials for their own vegetable garden and she now has found the possibility of starting her own community garden in Hoogkerk on a former soccer field. She also delivers food packages and creates harvest for the foodbank. A lot of neighbors started helping her and she does it mainly with a social ideal.

Education concerning health is also important within our food system. The municipality focused a lot on the influence of sports on health, but we see that food plays a really important role in this issue. So we are trying to find ways of integrating the youth in the food system and projects. We also want to teach children more about preparing food.

I advise you to talk with Laurens Stiekema from Eetbare Stad about the initiatives. We have a lot of contact together and the main issue is that there are a lot of initiatives that are set up, but how do you keep them running. After a while people seem to lose interest in the project and the development is

stalling. One step that initiatives can take is to turn the project into an association. This way, you can get a lot of subsidies from funds and the province. And the size of the project doesn't really matter for this case. This way you can keep an initiative alive. This is also something we can promote from within the municipality, telling citizens and initiators how there are good ways in keeping their project alive. We provide a platform here at the municipality where we hope to make people aware and give suggestions if the struggle, we can also help sometimes by giving materials and financial aid. Besides, we sometimes organize initiatives and meetings for initiators, where the initiators can exchange ideas and give suggestions about how to run a project. This is very helpful and motivating for everyone and creates a stronger network between the projects.

Do you think there is a lot of exchange between the projects and initiatives?

Well, we sometimes organize initiatives and meetings for initiators, where the initiators can exchange ideas and give suggestions about how to run a project. This is very helpful and motivating for everyone and creates a stronger network between the projects. Cilla is trying to create a community with the Nature and Environment Federation to connect the initiators and let them get in touch and exchange information. As is started as a trend and hype it is turning in something more and more serious as there is even a network set up that connects initiatives that take it to the next level and that want to or already do live from the project they have set up. There are even a few persons looking at if they can set up an educating course on how to perform urban agriculture in a more professional way and that is not only focusing on growing food, but also on entrepreneurship. So, you can say that something like a trend can motivate people to do more with it and set up a more serious, sustainable system. And you see, with these networks of initiatives that they always seem to find each other again and motivate each other. These social connections are worthwhile so to say. And we as a municipality are also involved in this network. We provide some information and connect people and let them do the rest.

Shifting to another subject, Tuin in de Stad (the biggest initiative in the city), is probably brought to a halt. Is this a negative development for the food system?

No, not at all. The initiative is set up in a really guerrilla kind of way. Frans Kerver had a nice plan to develop something there without asking permission, but always knew the project would be of a temporary nature as the housing corporation is the owner of the plot. The initiative started as a community garden but developed into a community center and it gives shelter to a project like Free Café and schools are visiting the spot to educate their children. So the initiative became such a success that this evoked a discussion about the social value of projects like these and if that isn't of greater value than a few new apartment blocks. Which is a victory for us from the food department as it is exactly these successes is what we wanted to achieve and it is nice to see that projects like these are taken seriously in broader discussions. It is new for us to see how to measure the social value of initiatives like these and a research in mapping and showing how big the social impact of the food system is in Groningen would also help in that. I believe that the people who initiate these projects have a certain socio-economic background, but the beauty is that everyone can tag along with these initiatives and can profit from the fact that there are people prepared to set this up.

Interview Laurens Stiekema 28-02-2016

What is your role in the whole food system of Groningen?

Six years ago I was asked to become the coordinator of the green participation of the municipality of Groningen in 2010. I had no idea on how to set this up, but they probably thought I was the right man for the job. There were two projects running, but that was about it. Luckily, Wout Veldstra came with the municipality's food vision not so long thereafter. And this evoked a snow-ball effect, because people would like to do something with the green areas and public spaces in their neighborhood, but in that case there has to be something eatable attached to it. There can be some fruit trees of a community garden and from that day on I started really as coordinator. At the end of the day I support and help the initiatives set up by the citizens. That can be anything from trees to gardens to playgrounds. Wherein participation is super important, especially with the withdrawing authorities, participation is essential for these projects to be a success. The biggest benefit is that this results in more citizenship within the neighborhood. People get to know each other better, there is more social control and more positive contact within neighborhoods.

So you are the in-between person that connects the municipality and the projects?

Yes, exactly. I am doing nothing more than lobbying with colleagues and problems to organize the gardens in practice. And judging if some ideas are doable or not. I have to make a constant consideration of the possibilities and the people involved. If you look at the initiatives, we wait for the initiators to come with a plan or approach us and the municipality stimulates this by promoting food projects via the Nature and Environment Federation, these advertisements and talks between persons brings people to me. But the responsibility and initiative lies always in the hands of the citizens. If they don't do anything, I don't do anything, pretty simple. Behind the scenes, I am doing a lot of work, but if they come up with a plan or want to make arrangements, I wait for them to approach me and take initiative. The problem is that it takes a long time for them to come up with something, but that is their responsibility.

How does the process look like, from start to finish?

Look, people are always very enthusiastic, but most of the time they don't actually realize what they get themselves into. So, it is always good to have a conversation with the people and tell them: Did you think about this? Did you consider that this also is part of the work that has to be done? How do you want to organize this? Are there enough neighbors interested? Etcetera. For example, there is a new initiative in the Merwedestraat and they want to set up a community garden and asked me for a list of things to consider before setting up such an initiative. So there are a few simple things, like getting an email account for the project, inform the neighbors and residents in the neighborhood, find enough people that are motivated, make advertisements for the project. See if there are any complaints about project. Sometimes the project evokes old neighborly conflicts and I have to do some relationship/friendship mediation, haha. So the communication is also really important in setting up these projects. Make clear arrangements about what needs to be done and set up some sort of organizing structure, so that the project functions in a structured way.

Is that something that causes struggles for the projects? That the structure or social cohesion or other reasons negatively impact the project?

Well, continuity is the biggest problem. What you see with some projects is that the initiator is often the motivator and the one who keeps organizing and gathers people to invest time in the project. And if that one person is moving to another neighborhood, for example with the Gelderse Es-project, this person has less attachment with the project and this can mean that the whole garden can get

neglected and the result is that the project fails. People need to pick this vacant spot and make some flyers and advertisements to get things running again, but this social capital needs to be there and this intrinsic motivation that is created with the project needs to be strong enough for letting the project exist.

There are two different gardens, so to say. You have the gardens that are set up by one person, or one person comes with the idea, and who has a good self-organizing ability. This means that they set up a plan on their own and make an e-mail account and are already aware of certain conditions that are necessary. There are other projects and groups that need a lot more guidance throughout the whole process. The benefits of someone who is good in organizing and setting things up is the fact that other people can easily participate in the project as there is a lot of work that is already done. The only problem is that if this person is moving or doesn't want to carry the responsibilities anymore, the project can fail if it hasn't created enough social capital to absorb these responsibilities.

Another practical issue is the Oosterpark neighborhood, where the gardens are mostly built on wasteland of the housing corporations, but there are new plans for housing blocks which means that there is no room for the gardens anymore and we have to find other locations. Compliment is that the projects were all really successful and there are enough people willing to continue the gardening at another location.

Is difficult to find new plots of ground in the city?

Yes, actually there is. Well, simply said, if people want to set up a garden or something its always in their own neighborhood and most of the times there are some pockets of space available. For example, Oosterhogenbrug here is new, which is really easy and small. And that's with a lot of these projects. It is not the case of huge plots of ground, you have projects with some fruit trees and that's it, but you always have the exact same route you have to go through with the same sort of conditions.

But is it often a small group that works on these projects?

That differentiates. Sometimes there is a small group and the rest just wants to work on its own plot. But I give some suggestions to the people as organizing an opening party, or working days or a celebration of the harvest, which brings people together. You sometimes have these workdays, where I attend and you here residents of the neighborhood approach each other and say: "So, you are the woman with the red bike." So that can work as letting more people approach the project. It is funny when I look at those workdays, because some gardens have started already and I have a history in agriculture and I know that we didn't do anything before April, but it is the agenda of the urban people that decides when they will start with the garden.

If you look at the last couple of years, has the whole Eetbare Stad-project been growing fast?

Yes, especially the first years, but there is a bit of a turnaround noticeable these days. The community gardens are kind of stagnating, but the citizen involvement is really growing. The half of the projects is playgrounds and such and the other half is gardens and such. You have ideas that pop up within the neighborhoods and then it is up to the neighborhood teams, set up by the municipality, that know everything about the neighborhood and they decide if the project is good enough to give some financial aid. But, I know that at the Wielewaalplein there is some nuisance and the neighborhood team wants to invest in that area in advance. So, the communication between the neighborhood teams and me is important, they decide, after consultation with me, at the end of the day if the projects will be initiated or not. You had the NLA, where a lot of money is used for these projects, that was a combination of the money of housing corporations and the municipality to invest

in projects in disadvantaged neighborhoods, this is about three quarters of the city and now there are neighborhood teams. I, personally, have a really small budget, where I sometimes help with some little things, but most of the times we ask the citizens to arrange everything themselves. And we can reuse materials from old projects or there are some people that I have connections with that give some materials they don't use to others. And for example, the Gelderse Roosstraat want to have some compost for their working day, but they can't find it anywhere. That is where we can help really easily. You see, we don't offer it them, but they have to approach us with these issues. Sometimes I need to help projects, but it's also the case with some of these projects that I never hear from them again, but it is going really well and that is of course beautiful as they can do everything on their own.

That is really nice indeed, can imagine that, that is the main goal of Eetbare Stad, independent projects that are running well. Are there also a lot of projects that have failed?

Hmm, well that is very relative. When has something failed or not? Some people come to the municipality and say: 'It looks horrible!' But when you turn it around 180 degrees and use our perspective then we can say: Of course, a community vegetable garden looks messy for half a year or even longer and there are also some people that really maintain it that well. Nine out of ten people also have to learn to work with vegetables and the garden. Frankville, for example, is built on Zernike, which has horrible ground, but the initiator is really enthusiastic and so we really wanted to help. They have built that garden with an ideal, they want to educate and work with others. The food vision is developed to get food closer to the city and I had some question marks surrounding all these idealistic projects, also like Tuin in de Stad or the Stadsakker, you see, my father had to work real hard to earn money with agriculture and when I hear these people that want to do these gardens for fun, then I always have my doubts if it will work and if they take it seriously, but these bigger projects that I mentioned are actually producing something and sell or give away food packages throughout the city.

The main thing about citizen involvement is that I let people do everything and if I feel they need help of advice, I get involved. For example, the Merwedestraat, there is an initiator where I feel that she isn't really capable of doing it, but she has some people that are really willing to help then I give some extra aid and advice. When looking at projects that really stopped existing, which happens sometimes. I will send you an updated list of all the failed and succeeded projects. First, a lot of projects popped up in the North of the city, but the South and East played catch up and the West is a bit lagging behind. It almost doesn't happen that a project gets rejected, that has only happened two or three times. That happens because the location isn't proper. Often these projects are stopped after a few years, because the housing corporation is going to build on these grounds or that the organizer thinks it is too much work and he/she can't find a new person or group to take over the responsibilities and sometimes there aren't enough people interested anymore.

Do you have an idea of how the future will look like for organizing the food vision?

Well, it is only a few months until Wout Veldstra will retire, he is walking on his last legs so to speak. He started this with a really, idealistic view and set up this vision with real ambition, but I am wondering how many people are as driven in this city to continue this ideal. I am curious to see is someone who will replace him that has the same ideals, because the people that I see walking around at the municipality don't have the same affection with the food vision. The projects and initiatives that are running now are probably not affected by it, as that is something that is done by the citizens themselves.

Has the vision got any social goals to achieve?

Yes, of course, well from Wout's perspective not that much I believe, but it is really focused on the withdrawing responsibility of the authorities and a nice example is the Gelderse Es. There was an opening party for the garden and there was an old man with a walker. The residents had never seen him before, but as of that day he sat there and helped or just had a chat. For me, that is a perfect example of what these gardens can mean for a neighborhood and its residents. Immigrants have got a better relationship and connection with growing food, then the native Dutch and a garden can bring them more and more together. Vinkhuizen en Paddepoel have a lot of nationalities and a garden can work really well to bring them together. So, I believe that the gardens bring people together and can have a positive impact on a neighborhood and that is also important, because if these gardens don't bring people together then it is much more likely that it will fail, because the organization is a lot more difficult and finding people to work on it is not so easy, if the garden has positive impacts on the people then they want to work for it and keep it alive.

Can you give me some advice on which gardens I can approach if I want to make a cross section of the food projects?

Yes, I will make some extra notes for you if I will send you the list. For example, the Grunotuin is very successful, but that is also an environment where people want to invest in their neighborhood and surroundings, since there are a lot of likeminded people. Haddewikersstraat? Is also a funny, small garden. If you bike past it, you see how this can look in reality. The woman behind this project is really active and believes it is really important that other people should be involved as well, so she is actively talking with neighbors and asking for help and this really helps. If you get other people involved, other people will become enthusiastic and then there is really something growing, literally and figuratively. So being open towards the neighborhood and an initiator that really wants to put an effort in it. The project disappears in a few years as there will be a new road that will be constructed, but that also helps, knowing that is temporary, because after a few years, people might lose their interest.

You never get the message that people are really stopping with the project. People just sometimes give up on the project and don't find the energy to invest in the garden anymore, but that is something I never hear from ever again. And that is also their responsibility not ours as a municipality.

- How did the establishment of the garden go? Did you do it on your own or was there any help of the neighborhood and municipality?

The garden is set up in 2014. When the church that is on the opposite of this garden removed their building from the plot, the ground was free. The church planned to grow some grassland on it and with the neighborhood association we had the plan to do something with it. After a few meetings and some consultation with the church, we thought it was a good idea to turn it into a community garden, wherein food would play a big role. Laurens joined the meetings and gave some advice on how to approach this. The ground belongs to the church, so the municipality couldn't provide any help. They said it was a good idea to write out the plan. This way we could approach the Oranjefonds, who provides funds for projects surrounding participation. After writing it out and drawing out the plans for the garden they gave us a total sum of €1000,- to set up this initiative.

- How did you organize the setting up of the initiative?

Well, to be honest there wasn't really much of an organization. As almost everyone in this neighborhood knows each other it was really easy to gather people and get things done. You see, at first, this area was a village near the city of Groningen, but since the neighborhood of Leeuwenborg is built, this village got adopted by the city and is now officially part of the city. Noorddijk still feels as a village near the city and I think that the feeling and togetherness of a small town can still be found here, as you don't see it in the big city. Anyway, we had some meeting with the neighborhood association and everyone speaks of it to their neighbors and such and this way everyone was aware of the fact that this project would be set up. This resulted in an organic organization, wherein everyone was positive to help. Everyone was willing to pick up their own task and everyone took the initiative to do their own part. There are different people with different kinds of knowledge. There are some technical persons, some know a lot about fruit trees and others are really good in organizing. Gathering this people and knowledge facilitates a good cooperation. There is a neighbor who has a company in road work and he was willing to pave parts of the garden for free. Someone has a construction job and he provide two free benches and some other handy men in the neighborhood installed a water pump. Truus, a well known resident, is willing to organize a lot of things and she coordinates a lot of things for the garden, together with me. Oh, and we have made some flyers too, which we spread through the town and fot from house to house, but everyone in the neighborhood knows who to approach if they want to come and join.

- How is the project proceeding according to you? Are you satisfied?

It is going really well and without any saying actually. We got some money from funds at first and now the neighborhood association gives us a yearly amount of a couple of hundred of euros. But we have to do it all by ourselves and I am surprised how easy the process is going. A lot of people are picking up a task, such as mowing the grass and taking care of the flowers for example. The vegetable garden is also doing fine. We have separated the garden in different beds which a member can use. We have never worked with a waiting list of anything, we just have enough beds for everyone and if someone new is applying, we can make some extra room for him or her. I have to see that the interest for the garden is stagnating a bit though. People are still active in the garden and the maintenance, but less then before. Some people haven't put their vegetables in yet, but that is not really my problem. Everyone is taking care of their own part and if they stop doing that I can eventually approach them and ask why they don't do that anymore.

- What were the main reasons for setting up the community garden?

The fact that we discovered that there was a free plot of land initiated the idea of doing something for the neighborhood. This invoked a lot of ideas on how to use it and make it a nice place for everyone. We didn't have any particular plans concerning the achievement of goals, although we had to write out some goals for our plan design for which we got funds. One of the main pillars was achieving more social capital and working together as a community. And I really believe we have achieved this goal as a group.

- Are there many new members applying to help in the community garden?

Not that much, the largest part of the people living here has a big garden and don't feel the urge to maintain another piece of land. But if there are any vacancies, they are filled up pretty fast. Almost everyone involved in the garden and the project lives in this town, which is pretty small, so there aren't a lot of new members. Although I have to approach the people that just came to live here. A friend of mine also works in this garden, but she lives in Leeuwenborg. Everyone is welcome to come and help, but the garden kind of belongs to this town and that is its main quality. There are also a lot of visitors that take a pause in our garden or stop by to check it out and it is a great area for the children to play in, we added a cabin and some playground equipment. I often go to the garden with my grandchildren.

- Has the group a diverse social and economic background? Or is it mainly acquaintances of each other?

It is mainly a group of people with different skills and talents. It is nice to see that the people here are willing to help each other and work together to make something nice. Most of the people knew each other already but have built up a different relationship together. We announce our plans for the garden on the community meetings and ask what everyone wishes for. There already is a strong social capital within this neighborhood and, if necessary, social control. Nobody minds to approach someone else in the neighborhood, having a chat or asking if they need some help. Although the group has several backgrounds regarding age and jobs, the community is quite heterogeneous and there is already a kind of unity within the group as we all live in the same, small town. This made the setting up of the garden also a lot easier as everyone was prepared to do something extra for the garden as it adds to the livability of the town.

- Has the community garden brought social change to the neighborhood?

I think it did. Maybe it influenced the social cohesion in the neighborhood. I already had some contacts in the neighborhood and went to the neighborhood meetings, but because of the garden I have gotten to know the people in the neighborhood a bit better and also have a chat with people visiting the garden. It's not that I became friends with everyone in the garden and that we visit each other on birthdays, but the garden is a subject we can all talk about and you get to know the qualities the town has, that you didn't know before. People working in the garden sometimes arrange evenings wherein they work together in the vegetable garden and other decide they want to do their part of the work solitary, which is fine, because everyone gets the room to fill it in, in their own way. We also have a chat group for the people working in the garden, so the contact within the community has intensified and the garden has made it easier for people in the town to approach others. This also allows for us to organize the maintenance of the garden in a nice way. Everyone is willing to do something for each other and I think that is the main quality of our community. We are willing to help each other and achieve something together by creating a nice garden. Also the people who aren't involved are very positive about the project and making a chat with the people who are

working in the garden. During the neighborhood meetings we have the possibility to update our progress and speak about our plans with the rest of the neighborhood. The garden is also used for several workshops and open maintenance days. On these days the whole neighborhood is invited via Facebook and talks with neighbors to come and help in the garden and sow seeds or do other activities. These are really popular and a lot of people in the town come to help for a day. That is the strength of this community, I think, that everyone is willing to chip in. That way this garden brings people together who don't know each other and I see that it has developed the social contacts within this town.

- Is this also used as a public place for people to come together?

No, not really. People are working in the garden and often there are children playing in this garden, but I don't think that there are people coming here to get together. That is probably due to the fact that everyone has their own garden here. It is a place where a lot of cycling tourists come to have a break. They give us a lot of compliments on the garden, saying that its very nice and peaceful.

- Was there any negativity surrounding the project?

No, everyone was really positive about the plan. We got some critique from people in the neighborhood as they warned us that the project was not needed as everyone has their own garden and the chances were that the garden would stagnate after a few years and although the interest is kind of slowing down, I believe we have showed them otherwise. The garden still looks nice and everyone is still involved. Although some people quit their vegetable garden as it took up too much time, but this was taken over by other people from this town. The people who made some critical notes are pleasantly surprised by the development of the garden.

- How does the future look like for the garden?

At the end of last year, we organized a meeting to discuss the plans and division of tasks for the year 2016. The municipality gave us flowerbox to cheer up the entrance and discourage the parking problems. Some of the vegetable gardens have already been seeded and we get new woodchips for the maintenance of the path from the municipality. We will organize certain days to work in the garden, which is, of course, more fun than working alone. The garden is a great addition for the neighborhood and will hopefully remain so.

- How did the establishment of the garden proceed?

The setting up of the garden wasn't that straightforward. My colleagues, Joris, and I were involved in founding Frankville, the vegetable garden for student at the Zernike Campus and Mark got involved with the project here. It was at Frankville that I realized that it is a lot of fun to do something that you are really passionate about and for me that was doing something with growing food. After Frankville I got involved with the Suikerunie-plot and what you can do with this huge area considering food. That municipality was also trying to come up with ideas for making this area a food headquarter, so to say. Eventually, the plans didn't turn out to be executed. We still had the idea of setting up a community garden and we went to a thinktank-weekend which was about food and that was where we met Gijs Janssen, who is director in the community building of De Hoogte. He said: 'You are detached from the city if you are planning to execute your plans on the Suikerunie-plot. Here at the community building you are in the middle of the city and we have a lot of facilities, which you can use. Next to that, we are going to leave this building in a year, so if you join you can in the meantime think of ways to keep this building from demolition.' That's when we started to execute the plan.

Before we started the garden, we wanted to see if there was any support for the plan and what the wishes of the residents of De Hoogte were. So we organized a lot of meetings, here in the community building. I have to admit that the plan for the garden, was already in our minds before we started the meetings, but the neighborhood residents agreed upon the fact that a garden would be a great addition to the neighborhood. So that's when we started the garden in 2015. We prepared the garden a few months later and started sowing the first seeds in May 2015.

- And do you live in the neighborhood?

No, we as organizers all live somewhere else, but got involved in this neighborhood with the help of Gijs Janssen.

- So, how did you approach the neighborhood for the meetings?

We talked with some people from the neighborhood team and they gave me some names of people to approach. I talked with some people in the neighborhood and then the social contacts grow a little. We organized around five or six meetings, I think? And it was a success. We even had a meeting where around thirty people showed up. We didn't only talk about the garden of course, but other ideas surrounding this community building were addressed. Mark and Joris were only concerned about the garden as further involvement with the community building absorbs a lot of time and energy. I work here now and I am involved in keeping this building in use and giving it a good purpose for the rest of the neighborhood.

- How did it go from there?

We organized it in collaboration with the municipality. The director of Eetbare Stad, Laurens Stiekema, came by to check the possibilities for our plan. We knew him from the earlier project we set up, called Frankville. Laurens made an inventory of the costs. We approached the municipality with the financial inventory and got the amount + some extra to organize more activities. Because we couldn't wait we already start with digging up the ground and when the municipality finally came up with the money, they did the rest of the work. And although it was a lot of work at first, since we did a lot of digging ourselves, we believe that the energy you put in the ground will pay you back eventually. And our harvest turned out to be really big, last year. People didn't even believe it when

they saw it. The plot is on the front of the building, next to the street, which makes it a very visible and approachable location for everyone in the neighborhood.

- With how many people did you start working on the garden, because I guess you need a lot of help making the plot ready?

Well, the core of the people working on it is just the three of us to be honest. We have put a huge amount of time in getting the garden ready. We wanted the residents of the neighborhood to be involved as well. We first approached them at the organized meetings and asked them to come around in the garden. We also had a Facebook-page where we've updated our progress and told the community members to get involved if they wanted to. Which was all in a very non-committal manner. And then things are developing in a natural way. You always have some people that want to do something and help, but the largest part of the community is very difficult to convince and get involved in the project. But to be honest, the three of us have clearly done the biggest part of the work and the residents in the neighborhood decided to help sporadically. But I think that is mainly due to the type of neighborhood we are working in here. As three young guys that they don't know come and work in the neighborhood and say they can get free food, ofcourse people will frown in the beginning. People scan the situation in the beginning, but at the end of the year people started to get interested more. We got a lot of seeds from the whole neighborhood and someone has send me a message saying he has already planted some rubarb in the garden. So people approach the garden in their own way, I guess.

- Did the fact that you don't live in the neighborhood, make it more difficult?

Well, I am not so sure. Maybe it would have provided us an easier way to approach people in the neighborhood as there are more people you know and you can approach, but now that we know a lot of people it is not different from living here.

- What were the main reasons for setting up the community garden?

Our experiences with community gardens is that they are a very nice way to do something fun with other people and get in touch with people you don't usually come to speak with. We also think that it is good for your mental and physical health to work in the garden. We both, as the founders, have experience in organizing other garden projects, one of them is Frankville. With the community garden in De Hoogte we wanted to create an area where people can meet each other in an inspiring way and can be with each other. The focus of the garden was not on size, but on bringing people together and let people get along in a new way. The garden is meant as a leading example for what we want to do with the rest of the building. Bringing people with different backgrounds together and creating a whole new dynamic for the neighborhood. That is, for us, the way in which we wanted to set up the garden. We believe the garden is a way of getting people together and don't see the food production as our main goal. We have decided to create a place where people can grab free food if they want to, and we thought, lets do this in the way we do it and see how it works out. If we want to change our plan, we can always do that if we want to.

- How do you plan to get more people involved in the garden?

We don't want people to become a member or get their own piece of land in the garden, because we believe that the garden and the harvest of the garden is for everyone in the neighborhood. Everyone is free to grab food if it is done. We handed out vegetables last year to passerby and everyone is allowed to get involved in the project. And that is the difference with other gardens, where people have their own pieces of the plot and use that for their own produce. I think that makes our plan also

a bit more difficult, because if people have their own plot, they will come, because it is their own piece of land. But when you set it up with this idea, people don't have the responsibility to look after their own plot, which makes it more non-committal. We do have some people that call and ask if they can help or that just drop by, but that is not often the case. The thing is, we aim to create a whole different dynamics, but I believe that it takes more time for this dynamic to spring. We have similar ideas as to what Michel Spekrijse is trying to create at the Molukkenstraat (See interview Michel Spekrijse), where everyone is included in the garden and everyone has the possibility of voluntarily get the idea of going to the garden. We don't have any rules that we have applied to the garden. The only thing is we want to be aware of is that not everyone takes the harvest of the land by themselves, because then we miss the opportunity of getting to know the people that are using and profiting from the garden.

- Are you overall satisfied with the developments?

Yes, we are satisfied. The idea of the community garden is one of growing free food for the community. Many people have used this opportunity. We gave away a lot of vegetables and the community-initiative called *BuurtBuffet* has made kale-stew for twenty-five people, with kale from our own community garden. We want to do more with these kind of initiatives, cooking food for the neighborhood with food from the neighborhood. That is always a really nice thing to say: Food from your own neighborhood. But as I mentioned before, the problem is that not a lot of people have helped with activities like this and with growing the vegetables, we have done a lot on our own. We hope more people to come and help as the years go on. At the end of last year, the interest has been growing and we get to know more people in the neighborhood, but we don't have any goals for the coming years. We hope more and more people come and help, but I am not sure if people in this neighborhood are people that are getting involved really fast. We have promoted the garden as well, with a neighborhood festival, with drinks and musics and free food for everyone to pick up. This was a great success and the food was gone with the blink of an eye.

- Is this a neighborhood with a strong social involvement?

Yes, well, I think so actually. When you look at the neighborhood on first sight you see that there is a certain amount of crime and poverty and you might say, well, this is a deprived area. But I believe that in these areas, people are more dependent on others and less focused on themselves. You need help with everything and you need help to get things done, which brings people together. Social cohesion is something that is strong here, I believe, everyone greets each other in the neighborhood.

- Has the community garden brought social change to the neighborhood?

What we did with the garden and the whole project, is starting an initiative based on the fact that we think it is a lot of fun to do. People weren't used to the fact that people do something like that. They didn't believe people could just do that with the idea of thinking it is fun. But during the course of time, we made people in the community building and in the neighborhood very enthusiastic about the projects. We opened their eyes in showing that you don't have to do everything for money. Everyone was talking about the fact that we have set this up. We didn't really influence the social bonding in the neighborhood as we didn't gather a lot of people with the project, thus far, but we showed people that you can do things for someone else. And this enthusiasm caused that the community building is getting a new purpose as everyone wants to keep this building alive now. So in the long run we add to the social cohesion in the neighborhood in an indirect manner, I believe. There haven't been any negative reactions to the garden, although there were some people that didn't believe in the usefulness of the garden, but overall, there are a lot of positive reactions. People give a

lot of compliments and have a chat while we are working in it. I can talk for a whole afternoon with passerby, but have to be aware that I still have to work in the garden as well, haha.

- How does the future look like for the garden?

What the future has in store for us, is still unclear. It could be that we have to leave next year, but now we have a cooperation with the district team and we are involved in the setting up of plans for the community building, the future can look very bright. First of all, we have to see if there will be more people interested in getting involved with the project and from there on we will have to see. We have the opportunity to enlarge the project in the surroundings of the building, so if the building stays, where I am pretty sure of, then we have the possibility.

- How did the establishment of the garden go?

I learned from the Eetbare Stad while I was at a Pecha Kucha-night in Groningen. Pecha Kucha is some sort of making a presentation with pictures. I was encouraged by this presentation and started thinking about the concept of a community garden. There was a plot of green land that was used as an illegal dogwalking grassland, so I thought that was a right place to create such a garden. When I moved here in 2010, I organized a get together for all the neighbors to get to know them and I was shocked by the fact that everybody had to introduce themselves to their own neighbors, while they were living here for almost twenty years. It was clear that there was very little interaction. So with the idea invoked by the presentation and it is fun to do something together and get to know people the idea was born. It wasn't my idea to have such a relationship with the neighborhood that I can walk in everywhere and we will be friends forever, but doing something together and have fun and have small talk was something I really wanted to achieve.

So that was when I contacted Laurens Stiekema and he told me that if I could gather around six homes, then we would be possible to start. I put some flyers in the mailbox of all the houses in the surrounding streets, telling the people that on the official Day of Urban Agriculture, I would be standing on the plot we had in mind and come over and register immediately for the project. And if you wanted to help, but couldn't on that exact day, the people could just contact me and join some other time. And on the day itself, I had around thirty people that wanted to take part. Two weeks later we went to Tuin in de Stad to work out the plan for the garden. How do we want it to look like and how do want to grow food and organize it? As we were a bit later, Laurens told us we could begin the next year in 2014. That was something I wasn't really happy with, because I got the people enthusiastic so I wanted to begin now. My background at being a project leader helped and we soon proposed a plan to Laurens. So in June we had twenty tanks with soil in it! The municipality gave us some wood and mowed the grass and built a fence and that was it. So we worked really hard to get thing ready and that is where you get to know the qualities you have in the neighborhood. People had useful equipment, one of the ladies screwed al the food tanks and the men were watching on the sideline.

- You said you had around thirty applications, but twenty food tanks?

Well, we wanted to start in the same year and we have to act fast so the people that weren't able to come to the starting day and work day were a bit unlucky, but we had the idea of letting them join the next year. This actually never happened as most of them weren't that interested at all and so there are still twenty tanks up to this day. And there were some people that said: "Never mind the food tanks, I can help with the fruit trees or with the maintenance days." So they wanted to be part of it, but didn't want to invest that much time in it.

- How is the project proceeding according to you? Are you satisfied?

What you notice when you look at the development of the garden is that at the beginning, the first two years, there was a lot of enthusiasm. Everyone is willing to do something and comes up with ideas, but after some time the interest decreased and decreased. The initiatives and the enthusiasm has died down a bit and most of the people are just concerned about their own food tank. There are four people of the twenty that have stopped in the meanwhile, but it was always really easy to find a replacement. But there is good supervision and we always approach people if they aren't maintaining their garden so well.

- Did you have a waitinglist or something like that?

Yes, we had a waitinglist in the beginning, but nowadays, we don't have one anymore. But there was one tank that became available this spring, which is already filled. So that is not something I am really worried about. People hear from others that there is a spot available and contact me. When you look at the neighborhood, the new residents are all young families.

- Is it a diverse group that works in the garden?

Yes, although the emphasis lies on the young families. It is a neighborhood that is built in the beginning of the nineties and a lot of families that came to live here, were young families. They stayed here until their children left the house, which is this period and this results in that the old residents are finding a smaller place somewhere else. So the last years there are some new families that came to live here, but there are a lot of families living here for a long time. The core of the group is built up of the older families and the new members are the young families. Most of the people come from the surrounding streets and are all likeminded and have their own, bought house. So the new people applying are often new residents that want to grow food with their children. There is a playground next to the garden, which makes it possible for the parents to work in the garden while their children are playing, a perfect combination. It is funny, because ever since the garden is founded, the playground is maintained a lot better than before.

- How did you organize the whole project? Are you the only one responsible?

From the beginning we had the idea of appointing two coordinators or contact persons so to speak. They don't have more saying in what would happen, because everyone is equal, but they would be the ones that maintain the contact with the municipality and you could ask them questions or apply for the projects etcetera. With that comes the responsibility to approach people that wouldn't nourish their food tank or other responsibilities.

- So there were some rules set up at the beginning?

Yes, well, we had some rules to manage the whole project a bit clearer and there couldn't be any confusion or whatsoever. Not that we would be extremely strict about it, but we wanted some guidelines. Things like: Maintain your own plot and you help with the working days. We wanted to have two different coordinators every year, but that is something that is very difficult to do. We had two negative experiences with approaching people and pointing out the fact that they didn't do anything in the garden. You address the person, first via the e-mail in a polite manner and say: 'Are you still working in the garden, because if not we can find someone else that is interested'. And finally, you drop by their house to ask it again. The first person was probably really stressed out as she told me to 'Fuck off!' and made it clear that she didn't want to work in the garden anymore and the second incident was with the second coordinator that didn't maintain his food tank. The neighbors then did the maintenance for him, where he wasn't too pleased with to say the least. He eventually blamed it all on me as being the other coordinator. If it weren't for me, it wouldn't have happened, which is complete nonsense. The next year, I asked everyone the first work day and asked if everyone was still interested and he said he was. So everything turned out fine. I believe that the organization will turn out better this year as there are some people that will have a quieter time at work and more time to spend in the garden.

- Is there any room to ask if other people can watch over your garden if you're busy or something?

Yes, well, I am very busy myself and asked some people if they could do that and that is fine. The coordinating role is something which is difficult to hand over to someone else. Although someone said that he could take over the coordination of the haying and someone else did some communication via the Facebookgroup. Our main communication runs via the e-mail or via Facebook where we ask people to come and help on general working days. And most of the people that work the most on the general working days and in the garden have their own WhatsApp-group. But most of those people knew each other already, before the start of the garden.

- Do you see that there arise some groups within the group?

Yes, or the little groups already existed. Together with someone else, I kind of joined a group that already existed, or I see them more often than I would have had without the garden. And there are some people that already knew each other and joined the garden together to work in it as friends. So you could say there are some groups within the whole group, but that isn't a problem at all. People still feel welcome on the general working days and if you're working in the garden for a couple of years its bound to create some sort of unity. I don't believe that gets in the way of new people wanting to join the project. And the beautiful thing that sprung from the garden is the fact that you have some small talk at the supermarket or greet each other if you drive up the street. That is what is making this project so nice, because how often would you have talked to people that live on the other side of the street? Not so often.

- So there wasn't so much social cohesion in this neighborhood?

Well, maybe on the other side of the neighborhood, but in these streets there wasn't. A few months after I came to live here, I organized a Neighbor Day and that was already a good way to get to know the rest of your neighbors, but I think it was necessary and nice.

- But the garden has brought social change to the neighborhood?

I have to say I know a lot more people in the neighborhood than I did before and there even is a real friendship that came out of it, for me. That is all thanks to the garden as I don't think I would have met her in another way. And you realize what is really going on within your neighborhood. There is one food tank that is not maintained at the moment as the resident taking care of it, is diagnosed with cancer and the rude incident I ran in to, where I got told to 'Fuck off!' was a woman who is apparently really stressed out, because of work and we talked about it. I know that there are people taking care of cats and plants of people they didn't know before. And children get more involved in producing vegetables.

- Is the garden also a place for people to get together?

Well, we have the working days, wherein a group of people is always working in the garden, but we have also bought a picknicktable together and put it next to the food tanks. It is not the case that a lot of people arrange meetings there or eat there together, because everyone has their own garden, but if people have been working in the garden and the wheater is nice then they grab a bottle of wine so to say and sit down for a while. But you have to take note, that these are always small groups as not everyone is working together in the garden at the same time.

- Do you see a divide between people who are only working there and maintaining their plot and people who are actively involved?

Yes, that can be possible. The degree of participation is also due to how busy you are with your work or your family of course. Some people are able to find more time to work in the garden.

- Has there been any negativity surrounding the project?

Well, you have both the incidents which I talked about already. Which are both surrounded by issues that play a role in the background. But next to that, everything is very positive. There was one woman that didn't even live there, that was complaining about the garden being a mess, but the thing is that half of the time there isn't anything growing in the garden. And the grass was growing really fast. But other than that there have been a lot of positive reactions from people that walk past or neighbors that aren't participating, but think it is a nice initiative. And we expected to get more vandalism, because there wasn't a real hang out for adolescents, but it is not too bad.

We get the most response from people if we are mowing with a scythe. We have two members who followed a course in this technique and we are trying to make hay for the neighboring horseriding school.

- How does the future look like for the garden?

We need renewed enthusiasm to give this garden a new kickstart. Everything is still going fine, but the lack of maintenance is a bit of shame. So this will be a year of do or die. Are the new people bringing new spirit and are the old members still up for it? I had a conversation with Laurens concerning this interest issue. He said, well if it isn't working anymore, then you can always quit with the project, right? There is nothing wrong with that. I don't see us doing it until the end of time. But I am happy that we all have gotten to know each other better and had some nice harvest. The garden has brought people together, there have been some friendships that arose from it and I am very thankful for that. So as long as we can keep the garden neat and people want to work in it then it is fine and we can work in it for more years to come. This year is another good year, with enough people that are interested and hopefully the people involved have a bit more time to work on the garden in general.

- How did the establishment of the garden proceed?

Next to the house where I live there has been a lot that has been polluted and neglected for ages. There were trees and overgrown, thorny shrubs and the lot was used as a neighborhood dumpfield. I was annoyed by this development and saw the potential it had, since it is a nice piece of land that is close to the water. At first, I had the plan to turn it into a simple garden where everyone in the neighborhood, including myself, could sit. When I contacted the municipality to ask if they could do something about it, I came in touch with Laurens Stiekema and thought of the plan of turning it into a vegetable garden. The municipality was all ears for this plan, but I had to comply to the conditions set by Laurens. He said I needed to find enough people in the neighborhood that were interested to help and set up the garden. So I shared my plan with the neighboring housing blocks, which is around nine families. They all believed it was a good plan and so the plan was put into practice, some four years ago in 2013. We first started to clean out the garden, but it was so much work. Luckily, the municipality cleaned everything out and even paved the plot and provided soil so that we could work on a nice garden. My partner can't walk and uses a wheelchair, so to pave the garden was useful for her as well. This way, she has the opportunity to enjoy the garden as much as the rest does.

- What would you say was the main motivation for setting up the garden?

Well, it was mainly because of the enormous amount of litter and nuisance the plot created and it was annoying for everyone in this small block. This meant that we all wanted to have it changed and that's what made it easy to proceed with the plans.

- How is the project proceeding according to you? Are there a lot of people involved?

Well, when I started with the plan I asked everyone in the neighborhood if they wanted to help and have their own little plot in the garden. Everyone was enthusiastic about the fact that the garden would come, but most of the people weren't interested in having their own little plot in the garden. Most of the people said they already had their own garden to take care of or weren't interested in gardening at all. Only my neighbor is actively involved in the garden and has his own piece of the land where he grows his own vegetables. Other people said they were willing to help if any help was needed. Maintenance for example. And when I look at it now, several neighbors have helped. The neighbors on one side of the garden have offered to help with the drainage of the garden. They are handymen and willing to provide some help, since I am not someone that is really handy, haha.

- So there aren't much people involved in the garden, except for some help ever so often? You didn't decide to approach other people in the neighborhood?

No, because it is working out greatly with the neighbor who I am working in the garden with. We both have our own piece of the plot and the rest of the garden is doing great as well. We have some herbs and flowers spread throughout the garden and our own little terrace to sit on. Everyone else is happy that the garden is there and they don't feel like getting involved. If there are any new people that want to help in the garden, they surely are welcome to join and grow their own vegetables. They know where to find me. I haven't approached any other that live a bit further away as we are happy the way the garden is proceeding. There was a resident in the neighborhood that was inspired by the garden and had set up something similar a few blocks away, but this didn't turn out to be positive as there was no-one else interested in gardening. I am lucky that I am retired so that I have enough time to work here and maintain the garden. It kind of feels like my own garden now, as I am the one that, together with my neighbor, decides what happens in the garden. So if there were some new people that want to help, they are welcome, but we have to find a way of working together haha. I often sit

here with my partner as this is a peaceful getaway next to the water. There is sometimes some nuisance in the neighborhood as there are some asocial families living in the neighborhood and the garden is sometimes a good way to escape the nuisance.

- Do you believe the socio-economic background of the neighborhood influences the interest in the garden?

Maybe, I haven't really thought about that. I think that most people already have their own garden to take care of and are therefore not interested in doing a lot of extra work in the neighborhood. Maybe they have enough other things that they are busy with or they just aren't interested in gardening themselves. The neighborhood is a bit changing though. All the rental houses are converted into houses you can buy. This somewhat changes the neighborhood and makes it more quiet. The diversity stays and there is still some nuisance and such. Maybe some new homeowners would be interested in working in the garden.

- That being said, do you believe the garden has impacted the garden in a social manner?

Yes, I believe so. Although I already know most of the people in this neighborhood block, it has always been a simple 'Hello, how are you?' and that is still the case sometimes, but there the interaction within the neighborhood has grown for sure. First of, when I am working in the neighborhood or my neighbor is, everyone who walks by or is working in his own garden finds the opportunity to have a chat and ask how everything is going. Everyone is interested in the proceedings of the garden. It also improved the garden in that it is a lot neater and there is no waste being dumped in the garden anymore. I also invited everyone to use the garden if they want to. The terrace is very nice to sit at and this means that neighbors that live in this block can use the garden as they please. I don't want any strangers using the garden, but if neighbors bring friends, that's fine. And it happens ever so often, which is great to see. I also sit here sometimes with other people from the neighborhood and this way it really adds to the neighborhood block we live in. There aren't any negative responses to the garden, because the garden turned out to be positive for everyone that lives near it. It also raised the social control within the neighborhood as most of the people can see the garden throughout their window. If there is any nuisance or if anyone wants to dump some waste in the garden, people approach them and the neighborhood is kept clean.

A neighbor followed our conversation from our garden and wanted to say she was really happy with the garden in the neighborhood. She always had a chat with the people sitting or working in the garden and the neighborhood has been a lot neater since the garden was set up. She believed the garden added something positive to the community and it results in more conversation and small contacts in the neighborhood.

- How does the future look like for the garden?

Well, the plot is owned by the municipality, but it is too small to use as a site to build on. I believe that we can use this plot as long as we keep it tidy. There was a worker from the municipality that dropped by to check out the garden and see if we needed anything. She thought it looked fine, so I believe it is okay. The garden is proceeding in a nice manner. I will put some plants in this week, together with my neighbor and believe we can continue this plan, since we really like the garden and it adds something to the neighborhood.

- How did the establishment of the garden go? Did you do it on your own or was there any help of the neighborhood and municipality?

I came up with the initiative by myself, but it is a lot of work doing it on your own. In my youth I lived on the countryside where my parents had a huge vegetable garden. Now that I have a daughter, I really wanted to give her the same opportunity of growing vegetables and I also wanted to grow vegetables on my own. Near my house there is a big shed which would have been nice to remove and place a community garden on the plot. I was talking about that idea when one of my neighbors drew my attention to a piece of wasteland, here at the Hortushof. With doing some research, I approached Laurens from the Eetbare Stad and he said that the municipality had no idea what to with the plot and there were a lot of complaints from the neighbors about tramps, drugs abuse and other sorts of nuisance. If I could find enough motivated residents, the municipality wanted to help in setting it up. First, I asked my friends, but they couldn't find time, which led to placing an message on the Facebook-group of the neighborhood and spreading flyers throughout the neighborhood. From there on, it went really fast. There were a lot of people that wanted to work in a community garden and soon the municipality was convinced of the plan and they financed the setting up of the garden, providing fences around the plot, dig it out and create large containers with soil, which function as small gardens. So in May of 2015, the first gardens were functioning and the garden was being finished. For this year the financing contains the aid of funds and some extra money from the municipality, for the maintenance. Knowing that this will end after this year, we started asking contributions from the gardeners.

As we know that the garden is surrounded by houses and apartments, we asked permission from the surrounding residents for setting up the garden. They were more than happy with the plans, since they were complaining about the nuisance from tramps and drugsabusers.

How is the setting up of the garden organized? Did you do it all on your own?

The plan and organization started with me, as this was something I really wanted to do and hoped would add to the neighborhood as well. I believe, that it is really important to have a motivated initiator that is willing to invest a lot of spare time in the project. Since I had a clear goal in my mind, I was willing to overcome all the setbacks that you encounter throughout the whole process. During the project that initiator works as the driving force, which stimulates others to stay active and motivated in the garden. If you see that other work hard, then you're also willing to do something extra. Later on the accountability is taken over by the group, which are all really motivated to do some maintenance and extra work in the garden, although I am still the contactperson in the project. We have also set up some meetings to address issues concerning the overall garden. The decision-making process is something that goes in a very democratic manner, where there are some discussions here and there, but that is logical. The overall organization is proceeding in a very organic way, so to say. There are some people that spontaneously decide to plant some flowers on the side or pick some weed, which is something that has strongly developed along the way.

- What were the main reasons for setting up the community garden?

The main reason for setting this up was growing our own food and with that teach our daughter where vegetables and fruit actually come from. This knowledge is somewhat lacking in today's society and I hoped I could give my children that education. Adding to the neighborhood in a social manner and creating a more green environment in the city centre were ofcourse other positive effects, but weren't considered as the main reason.

- How is the project proceeding according to you? Are you satisfied?

Although we just started the project last year, the project proceeds really well. The garden has grown in a really fast pace and the group of fourteen people that is working in the garden is very motivated. We introduced the system of small contributions which has two reasons: We need some money for the maintenance of the overall project and the contribution also works as a certain motivator to stay committed to the project. It would be a waste if people would neglect their piece of land. Seeing everybody work in the garden and paying contribution helps in stimulating the progress of the garden. Not that there were any motivational problems, the social control within the group is pretty strong. People are willing to help other people in the garden in growing the food, but also in looking after their piece of land if they are gone for a small holiday. But setting up rules for the gardeners and asking contribution helps. The project is also a really positive impulse for its direct neighborhood. People that live next to the garden are unanimously positive about the garden, as it diminished the nuisance of tramps and it provides a better view than the wasteland did before. The plot falls under the supervision of the neighborhood association, which took over the plot from the municipality in a lease-lend. If they believe, the garden isn't maintained well enough, they can warn, us, the members to keep working on the project.

- Are there many new members applying to help in the community garden?

We had a waiting list up to this point. By expanding, we ensured that the waiting list was no longer necessary. We worked with call-ups to make people aware of the garden and project, but we stopped doing that, because there is simply no space left within the project. There are some new volunteers that have signed up. We can ask them for help if needed with big maintenance jobs or just for some weeding.

- Is everybody included in the project? Social dynamic within the project?

Yes, ofcourse, we want to reach out to as many people as possible in our neighborhood. The complete Hortus/Ebbinge-area is welcome to join and participate in the project. That is why I handed out flyers throughout the whole neighborhood and tried to approach as many people as possible via Facebook. Ofcourse, the garden itself is not that big, which makes that not everyone can have their own garden and we want people that join to pay some contribution and live up to the rules, but that is also necessary for maintaining the project in a proper way. We want people to participate in the project, so that it is not just the group of members that is gardening. We had some talks about it and know that we should be wary of the fact that the group is not becoming too excluded from the rest of the neighborhood. It is a force that is felt by everyone, because working in the garden and building it up is something that you do together, which results in feeling like a real collective. You have all shared the same experiences and you have a growing shared responsibility and especially with a smaller group of fourteen people you know everyone that is working in the garden. Not being part of a collective process results in a greater social control and trust and also some beautiful cohesion within the project. Ofcourse there are some conflicts sometimes, but that is something that is unavoidable in a group of people and since it isn't our complete life that we invest in it and we have a nice group of people, we can overcome these conflicts and solve them with simple discussions.

- If you say you are wary about it, are there things you do to address these issues?

I know that we have to be cautious about the developments as we see the garden as a very inclusive project and I believe that the group-forming is a positive development, which can be combined with still being a very inclusive and open project where everyone is welcome to join and help.

As the coordinator of the project, I see that a lot of people are willing to help and are positive about the project, which I am very happy with. To have as many people as possible involved in this piece of land, you could say we have split up the overall activities and organization in three ways: First, we have the garden and the gardeners. We provide a waitinglist for people who want to join the garden. This year, three people quit and so three others were able to join the garden and grow their own food. Secondly, we have the primary school who has a big piece of the garden. Approaching the school was my idea, as I thought it was a good idea to educate children about food and the school was really enthusiastic about this. Another positive effect of this idea is the fact that a lot of parents come to pick up their children and are pleasantly surprised about the garden and sometimes even drop by to have a look for themselves. The third part that comprises the set up of the project is setting up activities. Via the neighborhood newspaper and talks with the neighborhood we try to find community members who want to help with workdays in the garden, which can vary from maintaining the overall garden to building a shed or helping in the beegarden. We also organize workshops that aren't necessarily attached to gardens. Last year, we celebrated the day of St. Martin with hollowing out sugar beets which was really succesfull. By creating activities, we also keep the garden alive and make sure that the people involved are being stimulated and motivated and there are always a lot of people interested in these activities, which is nice. We aim to be more then just a garden, where you can grow food. Everyone is welcome and should be able to join and participate in one way or another and I am really satisfied with the way we achieve that.

- Has the group a divers social and economic background? Or is it mainly acquaintances of each other?

At first, I thought of setting up the community garden with friends in the neighborhood, but as they didn't have time to work in the garden, I approached the entire neighborhood, as I said before. This resulted in a very divers group of people wherein I only knew one person. The same goes for everybody else, there were no real group of friends joining and a lot of members didn't know each other beforehand. That turned out to work really well. It is a very mixed group of people working in the garden. It varies from welfare recipients to hard working people and a professor, from singles to families and from young to old. Looking at the gardeners, I am probably the youngest with 35. As you see, the garden itself is surrounded by buildings, which makes it a bit secluded, but only one member lives in a adjacent building, everyone else lives throughout the Hortusneighborhood. There are some similarities as I believe that a lot of houses are owned and not rentals and the neighborhood is a bit elitist as we live in the city center, which sometimes translates to the garden as well. It is a good representation of the garden, only the students that live here aren't really involved in the project.

- Has the community garden brought social change to the neighborhood?

For me, personally, it did and as I talk with other people involved in the project, this also applies to others. We are more involved with each other, not only within the project, but are also more willing to help each other outside the project. What really has changed is all the small contacts I have in the neighborhood. It is just the small things like greeting people you know on the streets or in the supermarket and making small talk with people in the neighborhood that really adds to this feeling of cohesion in the neighborhood. The community has become less individual and anonymous as it was

before and that is all thanks to the garden. I speak people that have a piece of land, but also people that only drop by the garden sometimes or help with activities and that is great.

One of the gardeners drops by and I ask her how she feels about the social impact of the project. "The garden has been of great importance for me and how I look at the neighborhood. I feel more at home in my community and know a lot of people since I work in the garden. For me, it is not important to really become friends with them, but just saying hi and making small talk makes me feel more attached to my neighborhood. The garden itself has also been very positive, because working together with other gardeners and building something together creates feelings of being a collective, a group and that is very pleasant."

Back to the conversation with Lotte-Marijn. She feels that the garden has a lot of positive effects for the people involved and the neighborhood. Some contacts became more intense, but mainly the contacts are of a weaker social character. You get to you know your neighbors and community members and these contacts can even be very useful. When one of the gardeners was diagnosed with cancer, other residents active in the garden offered to support her in very practical ways, like doing groceries, looking after the garden and walking her dog. The connections she had made were very useful for her and helped her in the process of battling disease. We were also approached by a resident who didn't have a lot of money and asked if we could spare some harvest and support her, which was no problem for us and then you are surprised by the impacts such a project can have. The garden is always accessible for everyone in the neighborhood and it is a place for meeting people and we are always approachable as members. This altogether has a positive impact on the neighborliness here and the livability of this area.

- How does the future look like for the garden?

We just arranged the expansion of this project, which is already really positive news. We will try to organize a lot more surrounding this project, like a vegetable and plant market and with the warmer weather coming up, there will be some more open days, where we hope to organize some workshops and everyone is invited to come and pay a visit. People can always drop by and help, it is very non-committal and that is how I hope to keep it. I notice that people gradually come to know of the garden, by walking by or hearing from it from other people or read the neighborhood newspaper. This results in an ever growing popularity and therefore I believe we can keep this project alive and kicking for many years to come. I would advise every neighborhood to start their own community garden, since it has been and still is a very positive experience.

- When is the community garden set up?

In april of 2012, we put the first shovel to ground. And what happened before was the following. I was part of the neighborhoodteam of the Grunobuurt. This team was set up to see how the money from the NLA could be spent in the neighborhood and the Grunobuurt got NLA-money, because we are a neighborhood that was on the list for renewal. There were some sites that would be renewed and some renovated. The neighborhoodteam consisted of residents, like me, people from the municipality and different organisations, like the neighborhood council and housing corporations. People that were part of the team had the mandate to claim something that should be done. This team was set up to see if there were possibilities to make the neighborhood more livable and stimulate the residents to make it a nicer place to live in and create a stronger social cohesion. I was already really aware of the area near my house, which had been a wasteland for a couple of years, because of the financial crisis. But I thought: It would be nice to create a place here, where people can come together and at first, my plan was to create a pumpkinfield or something. When suggesting this idea, everyone said: 'Great, write it out!' So when the next meeting came, I had it worked out and I planned a budget of around €500,- which ofcourse was way too optimistic. Nijestee, the housing corporation, took the initiative since it is their ground. They made the field safe and clear of toxic waste and ready for sowing. When that was done, I wrote an advertisement that was spread around the neighborhood by myself, wherein people could come and help me with the plan. Within half an hour, I had the first response and within a couple of hours I already had five or something. And so we started with a group of fourteen, which I really didn't expect at all. When we met up for the first time, it became clear pretty fast that we were going to set up a community garden. Partially a shared garden and the rest would be distributed among the members. And from there on it went really fast. And that can happen so fast, because when the neighborhood approves everything is good to go and the municipality and housing corporation were really cooperative and there are very short lines between the project and the municipality, so the project doesn't have to wait on some bureaucratic system to get into gear. Laurens Stiekema was really willing to help, but also strict about the conditions he set, before approving.

- What were the main reasons for setting up the community garden?

I was looking out on that horrible piece of wasteland from my balcony. So, I kind of had the dream to do something with it. And this plan was set up, partially from a gardening ideal. I come from the countryside, with a big garden and I saw the potential to do something with this area. I believe the social aspect wasn't the main goal in the beginning, that was something that came later on. It was a sad sight.

- How is the project proceeding according to you? Are you satisfied?

Well, we had a relatively small garden in the beginning if you look at what we have now. And when we started this land was directly filled up by the members, but as soon as people saw it they also wanted to participate and help in the garden. So we got a small fence that surrounded our garden from Nijestee, so people couldn't walk up the land and steal things or dogs wouldn't walk on it. What happened was that there was a group of people that asked for permission and started there on little garden outside the fence in these square meter bins, guerilla gardening so to speak. So, I told Nijestee what was going on and said I couldn't keep the things outside the fences tidy. That was the point where it was decided that the garden would be enlarged tenfold. Huge!! So we made plans for a glass house, fruittrees and more vegetable gardens. They made the rest of the plot ready to work on. And the funny thing was, that was filled up really fast as well. The setup is as follows: In the centre

we have a central meeting place, a playground and the common vegetable garden, which harvest is for everyone and surrounding it are the private, small vegetable gardens. We made the private gardens a bit bigger than in the beginning. And it has always been filled up ever since, which is beautiful. Of course there are people that move away or get children and can't take care of their plot anymore, but there sometimes is a waiting list and people take over the plots. But we always want to prevent the waiting list and use some of the common garden and change it into a private plot. We want everyone to join in and be welcome. Gardening and harvesting isn't the main goal anymore, the main goal is to give everyone the room to join in and give them a sense that they belong to the group. You don't even have to have your own plot, if you want to help on maintenance days or something you are always welcome to join and get access to the facebookgroup. We always try to organize some working days so that we have activities together as a group and keep things running, but also things like setting up a campfire and grabbing a beer in the warmer evenings of the year. Just organize something fun, which is also important for keeping the project alive and have a positive social impact.

The growth of the garden is not something that is done by advertising or something, it is going kind of organically. Of course it started off with the flyer, but after that there were people walking past it and wanting to participate and now there are members talking to their neighbor or someone in the supermarket and saying that it is fun to participate. There are even some people that come from outside the neighborhood that want to join the garden. And when we were growing so fast, we also told each other that we should allow people from other neighborhoods, also because you don't want to exclude people from the project, but want to include as much people as possible. Also to let as much people know how much fun a community garden can be, maybe the other neighborhoods can also be motivated to set one up themselves. If you are from the other side of town, it is wise to find a community garden in your own neighborhood ofcourse, as that is much more practical.

The first two years I invested a lot of time in the project, I didn't really have a job, so I had the opportunity to invest a lot of hours in the initiative and it was really rewarding work, because everyone was really enthusiastic about the garden. I didn't even go on a holiday, because I felt so responsible. But when I found a job and everything, I can't invest that much time anymore. We already changed the organization and spread the tasks and responsibilities between a few active members, but I am still seen as the leader of the project, which is sometimes pretty difficult. And the situation is bit difficult, because I have to move out of my apartment in a few months and when I live in another neighborhood it will become even more difficult to invest time in the project. I do believe that when I disappear, this group is strong enough to absorb and take over the organization.

- Has the group a divers social and economic background? Or is it mainly acquaintances of each other?

I think it is a group of around one-hundred people that are involved in some sense and we have around fourty private, small gardens. The neighborhood is not that divers if you look at ethnicity for example, but there is diversity in economic background and ages. The neighborhood was originally occupied by laborers and the working class. With the neighborhood renewal, the community got filled with more starters and young families, but there are also students and unemployed people. It is mainly rent. That means that for the garden there is not that much cultural diversity, but it is a group that didn't know each other from the beginning. I didn't know anyone from the first group of fourteen people we started with. The new memberships were some via-via contacts and some people that didn't know anyone, so it wasn't a group or club with good contacts from the beginning, that was something that grew. Of course, you can get along with some people and some people you just say hi to, but that is logical. There is a great diversity in age, which I believe is pretty special.

There are small children playing on the common ground, while their parents are working in the garden. There are young students that have their own piece of land who don't really persevere, haha. Young people up to retired people working in the garden.

- Has the community garden brought social change to the neighborhood?

The thing is that when I walk around in the neighborhood today I know so many people, which sometimes is a bit unpractical if I want to do some quick groceries, but is so extremely valuable to me and I can imagine that if that is valuable for me it is probably valuable for others as well. It is really nice to see that everyone is getting to know the neighborhood better via this project, even if it is only to say hello and have some small talk. For the people that participate in the garden it clearly has changed their social environment, for the people that don't participate, not so sure, probably not. I can imagine that when you live next to the initiative and purposely decided not to participate you feel excluded in one way or the other. That might be because there is a fence built around it or that people are working together and you didn't join. Of course everyone is welcome, but you can feel excluded even though you decided to not join. That might be because they are too busy with other activities or with their job or they aren't attracted by the idea of a vegetable garden. There are so many reasons. Sometimes it is also the case that people don't want to join because they weren't part of the project in the beginning and that can work as a barrier as well, because people are intimidated for example or I don't know who to approach and knowing someone is involved that you know can make it easier to join later on. If there are new residents that are taking a look at the project, they always stand behind the fence and we always invite them to come and to a look and grab some strawberries and if they want to help, that they are always welcome.

And yes, for everyone participating it is in greater or lesser extent valuable. Children get to know each other on the playground, which is fun. Residents met each other while working on the garden and decided to drink coffee or watch each others dogs. Its just easier to get things done and find help if you know people in your neighborhood. It can have social value, but it can also pan out to be really helpful. So it varies per person, it had even resulted in some connections related to business, which is prett funny. You never realize how many capacities and capabilities you have in your own neighborhood. I also love the fact that the garden has become sort of a meeting place for a lot of residents, it is sometimes a place to gather with neighbors and have a talk and a beer or a place where the activities are developed and so the role that is fulfills is something I am proud of.

- How does the future look like for the garden?

Well, I always believed that a project has to be temporary as the continuity can't string on until eternity as you can't keep people attached to a project for so long. This is wasteland of the housing corporation and the plan would be that the plot would be available for around three years and we are now in the fourth year. It is still unsure when the construction will start and we will have to leave. It isn't that sour, because we knew it from the start. But the garden has grown into such proportions and it became valuable for a lot of people, so we really want to see if there are some possibilities to carry through this garden at another spot, but we have to have some talks with the housing corporation about this. Another thing is that we already know that there are going to be a few small squares set up in the neighborhood and we would like to have the opportunity to have some input into how these squares are going to look like and used. Because of the project, this collectivity results in us wanting to have input in what happens in our neighborhood and that we don't want to have it decided by the housing corporations.

- When is the community garden set up?

In the spring of 2013.

- How did the establishment of the garden go? Did you do it on your own or was there any help of the neighborhood and municipality?

I set up the plan together with my neighbor Klaas-Jan. When we thought it was good enough, we have send a letter all through the neighborhood and contacted Lefier (housing corporation) to ask permission for using their wasteland. The concept was called Braakland = Maakland and with that we created a concept of building an inclusive public space, where everyone is welcome to join. It wasn't mainly focused on a community garden. Everyone from the neighborhood was welcome to come up with ideas on how to use this wasteland. We started with the first twelve gardeners, we constructed the garden and after that the interest of other residents and neighbors was aroused.

- What were the main reasons for setting up the community garden?

Well, we just wanted a nice garden and thought that there should be something done about the wasteland at the end of the street. The concept that we developed saved room for a whole lot of other ideas that could be filled in by the rest of the neighborhood. Our intent was to create a public space where people come together to work on creating their own little utopia. The activities are a way of reaching the goal, which was to bring the neighborhood together. I don't think that only a vegetable garden does that, but a playground or a yoga-garden can do that, as long as there is something to do collectively.

- How is the project proceeding according to you? Are you satisfied?

Looking back on it now, I am satisfied with the overall project and its dynamics. When I founded the project in 2013, the garden and the members grew so fast that I was afraid I would lose control of the complete project. This was ofcourse not what I expected and that made the development of the garden a bit chaotic. We started with the idea that everyone is welcome and that people can bring their own plans to the table and just work them out. This lead to a new issue and that was that everyone did what he wanted, which lead to claiming pieces of the community garden and not really applying for a membership, because we didn't have memberships, and just started working on a piece of land. Result was that, from this idea of inclusiveness and everyone can do what he wants, the garden developed in a free-state and decisions would be taken without incorporating everyone, which resulted in some small conflicts. If we had set up a formal structure and made some rules, the development of the garden would be a lot more systematic and organized, but then again, you might lose some of the ideals wherein you have set the garden up with. An absolute free and democratic garden is impossible, that only works if you are working in the garden everyday and be part of every decision or if you are working in a homogenous group, which agrees on most parts of the decisions and thinks alike.

When we started the concept of Braakland = Maakland, we had won a competition set up by Lefier, the housing corporation who the wasteland belongs to. We had won €15.000,- and that gave us the possibility to properly set up the project in our neighborhood, but also gave us the opportunity to use this project as a pilot and implement the same idea of creating a public space in a collective way, where everyone is welcome and everything is decided by the neighborhood. We learned that this only works if there is enough spirit within the neighborhood you are planning this in. You can't just

say: 'Oh, there is some wasteland over there, let's implement our concept in that area!' Because you have to have a certain group of residents that is interested and really wants to do it.

I believe that looking back now, we didn't expect that this would be so much work to organize and that the importance of a formal structure and setting up some sort of administration should be stressed. This would have solved a lot of wronged situations and would have made it easier to make decisions. The lesson is that a free-state spirit sounds really good, but isn't that easy to achieve.

- Are there many new members applying to help in the community garden?

In the first year, we grew from 13 to approximately 55 gardeners. There is an application now and then, but you can see that the spirit that was there a few years ago kind of stagnated. When we walked around in the garden you saw that only a couple of the divided vegetable gardens is in use. The rest still has to start or will be given away to other neighbors. We don't have a proper registration of the current situation as there was a situation that developed wherein people just claimed pieces of the vegetable garden.

What we have learned is that people lose their interest after a while and you have to keep promoting the garden and organize activities to prevent the garden and the work that should be done from being neglected. Activities are the key to keeping a project alive.

- Has the group a diverse social and economic background? Or is it mainly acquaintances of each other?

The group involved is very diverse. There are a lot of social, economic and cultural backgrounds involved in the project. The neighborhood that is aimed to be included is a 50/50 combination of rent and buy. There are also different ethnic backgrounds involved in the project. There is a Chinese man that almost maintains his family for a whole year with his part of the garden and there are also some Moroccan families involved. Another diversity you find is differences in lifestyles. This also results in some conflicts, which I will mention later on.

- Has the community garden brought social change to the neighborhood?

Absolutely, the neighborhood was already a bit social, because there are a lot of families with children here, which allows for some small contact on the streets here, but that is mainly with the direct neighbors. The garden really allows you to get to know the whole neighborhood, which was also the main goal of the project: bringing the neighborhood together and getting to know each other, which is greatly achieved with this project. Everyone knows the biggest part of the neighborhood by name, which wasn't the case before this project started. This contact within the neighborhood can vary from greeting people that you didn't know before or going to each other's birthdays. We also made a meeting place next to the garden, which was a great success, people would come to help in the garden or just drink a cup of coffee sitting on one of the selfmade tables. This is the main message of the project and that is of course really positive.

There are also some social issues that are attached with the garden, which I will explain. Some people felt excluded from the garden in two ways: Within the garden and people that weren't part of the garden.

When looking at some conflicts within the project, we can link that to the heterogeneity of the group involved, which is also a good representation of the neighborhood itself. The heterogeneity resulted in different views on how the project should be used and that meant that some groups arose within the project, doing the things that they wanted. These different views resulted in some small conflicts on how to use the wasteland and some fingers pointing. Some people blaming others that they do

the things they want to without consulting the others and this resulted in some small divides within the group involved. I believe that if we would have had a homogenous group of people involved, we would have had a lot less problems within the group, because a lot of people would have agreed with each other on how to use the garden. The heterogeneity of the group caused some tension and some group forming within the group. The problem of homogeneity of the project would have been that there would be less room for a complete inclusivity of the neighborhood, which was the main aim of the project. A difficult dilemma.

There were also people in the neighborhood that felt excluded from the whole project, which is something you always run in to, I believe. We put an invitation on every doormat in the neighborhood asking everyone if they wanted to be involved. We always had the idea of including everyone in the project, but if some people don't get involved in the first year, the project feels as something that is done by a group that is involved from the beginning. People that weren't involved from the beginning then feel that they are being excluded from the project and two groups are forming within the neighborhood, the people that are involved and the people that aren't. Although this isn't the aim of the project, this is somewhat unavoidable as people just don't want to be involved and then start to complain about the fact that a group is just doing what it wants with something that is part of the neighborhood. There are some people in the neighborhood that called the police if there were some activities in the evening in the garden, luckily these are just a few people in the neighborhood that don't want to see change in a neighborhood, I guess.

Another good example of exclusion and inclusion in the neighborhoodbarbeque we had organized. We had space to organize this on the wasteland and we had a big tent installed. Everyone from the neighborhood was welcome, but then the problem starts: Who is really part of the neighborhood? As it is a public space, the idea from our point of view was that everyone was welcome at the barbeque, but some had the idea that only a few blocks comprise the neighborhood and that people from other blocks weren't welcome. This was in conflict with our idea of an overall inclusiveness. An example of the conflicts that these different views can result in and how groups can be shaped by the people involved in the project.

- How does the future look like for the garden?

We can still garden this year, but in autumn the plot will be cleared. There is new housing being constructed. We still have a group left that is still very active within the garden and who want to continue the work and like the social contact this garden results in. We are both designers and we already designed a new garden just twenty meters from here. We hope to involve the older people that surround this neighborhood within that new project. It will be again a sort of collective space of mixed-use where everyone is welcome. The design is done, we still have to negotiate with the housing corporation. The thing that will change is the fact that the new project would be permantly, which gives the opportunity of using and investing in the space in a different way. Exciting stuff nevertheless and if it wasn't for our current project, this new idea might never have sprung.

- How did the establishment of the garden go?

The gardens of the RKZ were neglected for a long time already and we knew that there were a lot of possibilities.

- And you can find them all surrounding the old hospital here?

Well, you have a few gardens within the complex as well. Everyone has their own garden, there are several houses or apartments that are adjoined to each garden and automatically it is the unsaid rule that you take responsibility over the garden that your house adjoins. So, if you want to do something with the garden, you do it and manage it and most of the time everyone is okay with that. As long as you maintain it and use it. And keeping that in mind, it started in 2013 when we arranged plans to finally do something about a large piece of wasteland here at the side of the hospital. It is a concrete piece of ground which invoked the plan to make tanks or bins to grow vegetables in. We have decided to arrange parts of the gardens and change them into vegetable gardens. I came up with the idea, because of what I had learnt while doing the Occupy-thing in Groningen here. I spent about a year at Occupy and one of the initiators decided to grow food while we were there. He showed that it is really easy to make a foodtank, within 45 minutes, out of a pallet and grow food in it. It is ofcourse beautiful to make that from residual wood. So we decided to do that on the concrete wasteland on the side of the complex. We still have no idea where it really belongs to, but I found some people that were interested and decided to do something about the mess that has been there for several decades. Let's squat it haha. That's when we picked up a lot of pallets and decided to make these foodtanks. We were with around ten people and in one afternoon the tanks were ready to use. I don't know the exact range of events, but I think that is was then, that we contacted Laurens Stiekema to announce our ideas. He was really happy with the plans and offered some help from within the municipality. They gave us compost and soil for free, which ofcourse was really nice and then we could get started.

- So you decided to begin with the garden yourselves and later on contacted the municipality?

Yes, exactly. Maybe it was already announced that we could get some soil from the municipality, I am not sure. But we would have started it anyways, no matter if the municipality wouldn't provide any help with the garden. But it was a very nice cooperation between them and us and that was where we got started. The main question that rose to the surface was: For who is the harvest that we produced and how and why do you guard the vegetables? There have been some vegetables taken away, but that has never been of really serious proportions. And the founding and filling up of the garden proceeded in a very organic way. Some people took care of their own tank and some others didn't, but that was okay.

- How did you approach people to help in the garden?

Well, I am not exactly sure. We have a mailing list for the people that are interested in the garden or working in the garden, but I am not sure if we already had some sort of mailing group with the complex, before the garden was founded or that the mailing group was set up, because of the garden. I believe it was the first and that was when the idea got invoked. So you speak to your neighbors and announce it in the mailing group and that is where you find a group of enthusiasts that want to help in any shape or form. And that is all people from the building complex. We started it for the people that live and work here. From that, another garden was created within the complex. There were just people that felt connected with the initiative immediately and participated.

- How is the project proceeding according to you? Are you satisfied?

The developments around the project are calm but sustained, I believe. There are still some people that make use of the garden, but a lot less than in the beginning and it has stopped for at least a year I think, for most of the people and then there are some abandoned tanks that can be taken care of by others and when I look at it now there are some tanks being adopted by others. In the meanwhile there has been some more work on the maintenance of the garden as there have been some complaints from the neighborhood and deservedly so, about the state the garden was in. Some spots in the garden were used as a waste dump and from that it was decided to have some more communication and contact with the neighborhood, also via the board of this complex. And there are even two families that have made a tank and have put it there. I always believe that there is a steady growth in the project, but it fluctuates a bit. And with activities we aim to involve more people in the project or revive the garden and that always seems to work.

- First, I want to get back to the organization of the garden. How does that work here at the complex?

Well, there had to be something initiated and it was obvious that some people needed to manage it. Ofcourse, people were working on their own part, but it was necessary to have some overarching management, which was picked up by someone in the complex. And he initiated a lot of working days and is the one who has been doing the communication. But there was a while that he didn't get anything back from the members, which can be very demotivational and then it collapses a little. So now he is doing it together with someone else. Next to that, the mailing list helps. It is an easy way to communicate with everybody else. There are around thirty people that are in the list, but I think that around five to ten people respond actively, which are the people that are still really involved in the garden and then we set up a day or a few days to work on the garden and then everything is fine again. For these working days, we approach the entire complex, by hanging up advertisements and invitations, so that people know that they are welcome to help. Sometimes there are a lot of people and sometimes just a few, but there is still something going on in the garden, which will maintain that way.

- So it is quite an organic way of organizing and setting up the garden?

Yes, absolutely. No one is obligated to doing anything, so if you want to work in the garden, you are free to come and help. It is the whole idea of the complex that is surrounded on the idea of voluntarily helping and the word obligation is almost a taboo around here. And that works to the contrary more often than not. Voluntarily doesn't mean non-committal and with every group or club or committee being set up here, there have to be some rules to stay committed. That means that there are some food tanks, that are abandoned and there was a year that nothing was done at the garden, but then it is being picked up by others and it is being maintained again. That is the whole idea that evolves around this complex, which I believe is really positive. And the club of people fluctuated through time and there are also people that aren't involved in the club, but still have set up their own tank, which is completely fine. But this is a result of not having a strict organization and a division of roles.

- Are you working together often or is it each to their own?

Well, the tanks are maintained individually, but the overall maintenance of the garden is done in groups or together on working days. Whoever is interested can help with that. So, I decided to make a fence around the pond to prevent the children from falling in and that is something I put in the mail and then there are two people that want to help and you work in a small group and get it done. And

that is how everything goes around here. You ask neighbors in the complex or people via the mail to do something in the building or in the gardens and people that want to help, do it.

- Would you say that the garden is based on a certain degree of social capital or cohesion?

Well, there is clearly a lot of social cohesion within the complex already. There are a lot of people that think alike and have the same world views and people always greet each other or have a chat. You know some people a lot better than others, but that is very logical I think. Based on that, there is always this intrinsic feeling of doing something and making the complex a better and nicer place to live. That is something we do with each other and every idea to do something to achieve that is embraced. That feeling of togetherness helps in doing something about the surroundings you care about, it is a shared responsibility.

- So, would you say that the project has had a positive contribution to the social capital?

Yes, I think so. We think more positive about the municipality and authorities, because of the project. We are a somewhat secluded group of people and the city is sometimes inclined to think about us in a negative or stereotypical way, but the municipality was very happy with the plans and that feels great for us as it felt like they accept us a bit more and want to help us. Next to that, it is of course another thing that is organized here. There are a million of groups or clubs that work in the complex and this is another one of these things. The garden is a way of getting involved in the building and involved with the other people that are involved.

- Does that mean that you have gotten to know more people because of it?

Yes, you get to know people better that live in the complex. I didn't know everyone that was involved in the garden and I have gotten to know the people that I already knew a bit better and there are some new people getting involved every so often. Especially with the working days, you are working with a big group and you always eat together it and then you get to know people a bit better. Last year there have been some people that live in the neighborhood that helped in the garden and even ate together with us. They thought it was a lot of fun and they had never been in the complex before and were pleasantly surprised by it. This way, you get to talk to the neighborhood and become more connected with the surroundings, instead of being somewhat a secluded group of people. And of course within the complex the garden adds to a feeling of community or togetherness so to say. There have been some friendships that sprung from this garden as well. We aim to create more contact with the people involved, by always organizing a dinner with some activities, which results in getting to know each other better. And that worked here as well and although it is on a small scale and you may not see everybody so often, it can be a small chat or greeting that already helps. The contact with neighborhood also grew because of the garden although the occasion can be a complaint from the neighbors, they appreciate the fact that we do something with it and see that we are not just people that are untidy. This evokes more response from the neighborhood.

- Was that part of the set up? Increasing the connection with the neighborhood or was it focused on the RKZ at first?

Yes, well, we've set this up, because we know each other here and we know how to get in touch, so that makes it very logical to do this with the complex itself. It crossed our minds that it might result in some complaints from the neighborhood who look out upon the wasteland, but then again, it is wasteland and there is something very nice going to grow on it. And the tanks are very mobile, so we could carry them away if necessary, but everything was fine with the neighborhood. When it got neglected a bit, there are some complaints. Well, now that I think of it, we have approached the

neighborhood to ask if they wanted to join, but we didn't really get any response from that. That is something that evolved later on. Because later, we have put some flyers in the mailbox of the surrounding streets again to ask if the people were interested to help with maintenance days. Also, because there had been some complaints from the neighborhood. So we decided to organize a day to work together and see how we could resolve these problems.

These complaints are always dealt with well, within the complex and ofcourse the statement is always pretty aggressive, but when we show that we can cope well with these complaints the complaints simmer down pretty fast. So, that was why we organized a day with the neighborhood and there were some people that were interested to discuss with us. The communication has been positive ever since, but the neighbors weren't interested in getting their own food tank. That is perfectly fine, because the idea is that you do everything with intrinsical motivation. I don't believe that you have to organize everything too much, because people can feel obliged and that is not always positive. So, the neighbors were fine with a working day, but not interested in having a food tank or something here. Things arise here based on that intrisical motivation and that is the best motivation, I believe. This way, things grow based on the fact that people really want it. Next to that, I think that people are more inclined to wait if there is already an organization set up, as people might think that they can do something if the organization says so or if the people who manage it organize something, and that is was sometimes the case here. So, sometimes we make clear that everyone can work on the garden if they want to, but still people wait out the moves that a so-called organization makes. So, that is why the garden wasn't really maintained for about a year, because we didn't have the time to do it and then no one does it.

At the end of the day everyone is welcome to join and help in the garden if they want to. Everyone in the neighborhood knows that, although I think the barrier for the neighborhood is bigger then for the people in the neighborhood. It is aimed to include everyone, but I can imagine that people from outside the complex don't feel like they can join, because there this complex is in a sense a community on its own. I don't really think that the project has impacted the neighborhood. It may have resulted in more approachability, but that is mainly within our own living block. It shows the surrounding neighborhood, that we are working on something nice. It has given the neighborhood a better sight, especially in the spring and summer. Another interesting thing is the fact that there is a new garden set up on the fringe of this complex by neighboring residents, probably inspired by our garden.

- Has the garden invoked some negative responses or has everything been positive?

Well, there have been some complaints from the neighborhood or from people that used the wasteland as a place to walk their dog. But the overall mindset here in the complex is that you know that everything happens spontaneously. Sometimes you can complain about the fact that there haven't been some maintenance, but there is always a form of acceptance within the community here.

- Has the group a divers social and economic background? Or is it acquaintances of each other?

Almost everyone involved knows each other. The location of the old hospital is a tightly connected living area, but there are a lot of people with different backgrounds.

- How does the future look like for the garden?

As long as there are people interested in working in the garden, it will keep on existing. We don't have a goal, which is the charm of the project. There is no pressure to work on the garden or not and

I think this way we have a steady continuity within the community and the garden will always be something that exists within the complex.

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