

Expectations and evaluations of social media use by neighborhood organizations

A case study of Chicago, Illinois



'Eventually, I think Chicago will be the most beautiful great city left in the world' – Frank Lloyd Wright

Master's thesis

Cristian Wessels, s2045419

Socio-spatial Planning, Faculty of Spatial Sciences

University of Groningen

Thesis supervisor: dr. ir. T. van Dijk

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Abstract

In this thesis, the use of social media by neighborhood organizations is examined and evaluated. According to literature, the use of social media can have opportunities for neighborhood organizations. It is an easy and accessible way for organizations to connect and interact with people living in the neighborhoods covered by their community organizations. Neighborhood organizations and residents of these neighborhoods have the possibility to communicate through social media, which yields social capital and community capital that benefits the urban neighborhood context, the neighborhood organization and the residents of these neighborhoods. Chicago is the context in which a descriptive case study is executed. Semi-structured interviews, conducted with representatives from five neighborhood and community organizations, have been used to evaluate their social media use. First the structure and purposes of the organizations is examined. Both opportunities and difficulties, regarding social media use by neighborhood organizations, have been found. Social media is accessible, has an interactive and participatory nature, can be geographically specific and can increase the online presence of an organization. Social media can however also lead to negative behavior, can not replace current software regarding membership administration and information dispersion, requires a lot of maintenance for occasionally incapable board members and might need attention in its use considering local demographics of both the neighborhood and the neighborhood organizations itself.

Keywords: *social media, neighborhood organizations, community organizations, communication, organizational communication, social capital, community capital, Chicago*

Colophon

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Author: name: Jan Wessels, given name: Cristian

Email: cristianwessels@hotmail.com / j.wessels.1@student.rug.nl

Phone: +31 6 36 22 45 60

Program: Socio-spatial Planning / Master Lerarenopleiding Aardrijkskunde

Supervisor: dr. ir. T. van Dijk

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1. Introduction

1.1 Changes and innovations in social media use

On March the 3rd of 2015 the New York Times reported about a new San-Francisco based startup named Nextdoor. The startup had slowly built a network of around 53.000 micro communities on the internet, across the United States of America which are based on neighborhood boundaries. The communication in these communities is only restricted for those who live in these communities close to another. This new social network can be described as a more attractive version of a community email list service or another popular message board like Yahoo Groups. Because Nextdoor is also working with 650 local government agencies, the network can also be used to send out alerts, for instance crime alerts (New York Times, 2015). Nextdoor can thus, because of its occurrence as a private social network, be used to create trust between citizens and local organizations. It allows them to communicate about issues apparent on the neighborhood level and is an example of new technologies, which can be adapted by both individuals and organizations to interact with each other about issues concerning their local urban context. In the recent past, alongside the rise of social networks like Facebook and Twitter, also non-profit organizations, like neighborhood organizations, have adopted these new forms of media. The main difference between Nextdoor and the earlier forms of social media like Facebook and Twitter is that the former is private and its use is restricted for residents from a certain area and the latter is open for all users who want to participate in a certain Facebook page or Facebook group. An open web environment where people, who are engaged in their city and their neighborhood, can discuss urban matters might be a merit for both organizations and individuals involved in urban issues. In this thesis, the use of social media by neighborhood organizations and evaluations of this use will be researched by interviewing persons who are involved in the use of social media by these organizations.

1.2 Societal and scientific relevance

The world has changed a lot over the past decades. Changes which, occurred in the past decades, might be caused by technological innovations such as new forms of transport, communication and information technologies. These global changes had the implication that some areas dilapidated and that some areas flourished (Spaans, 2004). This change became thus evident on a local scale. Couch et al. (2011) state that in the seventies, because of these global changes, it became apparent that traditional methods such as physical urban renewal were not sufficient and that a new way of coping with urban problems was needed. Because of the increasing number of cases of urban decay, a new way of coping, with the problems which came with urban decay, was needed. A way which dealt with social and economic impacts of these changes on the city, in a right way. A process, which is currently dealing with these problems of cities, might be urban renewal and the more specific process of 'neighborhood renewal' and the well-known concept of 'gentrification' that comes often along with it.

Encyclopedia of Chicago (2015) argues that Chicago since the fifties initiated urban renewal projects and that, from the first project Lincoln Park, it has spread to other parts of the city.

The changes of cities caused by urban renewal can be seen from different perspectives. Zheng et al. (2014) mention for instance the improvement of spatial quality, the increase in land values, repairing the problem of urban decay, the improvement of existing social networks, the inclusion of vulnerable social groups and coping with the negative effects on the living environment. All these factors might play an important role in the process of neighborhood renewal, however in this upcoming thesis the perspective of community-based and neighborhood organizations and their use of social media will play a central role. Bailey (2012) states that community-based organizations more often are an important part of civil society and that in many countries these community-based organizations are becoming more and more assertive in their wish to participate in policies. These community-based organizations could thus probably also play a role in policies and practices relating to neighborhood renewal of urban areas. Furthermore, he states that the strength of these organizations lays in the fact that the social capital, which is present, can be used to render benefits by for instance mobilizing people from a certain neighborhood regarding a certain issue (Bailey, 2012). Neighborhood organizations might thus benefit the neighborhoods they are embedded in because they could potentially help to build social capital in a certain area, which can benefit planning processes regarding the social and physical environment.

In the early 2000s, Hampton (2003) already argued that 'the Internet' supported neighboring and that it was facilitating discussion and mobilization around local issues on the scale of the neighborhood. His research showed that the contact between citizens with an internet connection was changed and that it enhanced neighboring. The citizens knew a lot more of their neighbors and their new acquaintances were also more geographically dispersed around the neighborhood. Ellison et al. (2007) support the findings of Hampton (2003), which suggested that 'information technology may enhance place-based community and facilitate the generation of social capital' (p. 1144), to the original incarnation of Facebook namely as an online network for the college student population. Tayebi (2013) states that after the introduction of Habermas' communicative rationality many planners have tried to bring this idea into the planning and tried to redefine planners with new roles being facilitators, advocates and mediators. He further argues that because of the technological changes, like the rise of information technology and social media, activists and citizens were revolutionized in pursuing their causes. The use of social media in planning might thus probably, because of the changes in the use of media and information technology, have improved the standpoint, voice and participation of citizens in neighborhoods and the organizations in which they might be involved. The question remains if and to what extent organizations, like community-based organizations and neighborhood associations use these forms of social media in the benefit of the citizens, which are living in these certain neighborhoods. Another question might be why they started using it and if they are satisfied with how they used social media. Changes within the quantitative and qualitative

use of social media could thus also happen and the question might be if community-based organizations were and are coping in a good way with these changes.

Another critical point regarding the use of social media by neighborhood organizations comes up in a 2015 study by Johnson and Haleboua. They found out in a study about social media and a neighborhood organizations that a neighborhood organization which wanted to revive itself, after a couple of years of decline, by using social media as a new starting point, to get to the citizens, failed. The residents who were most interested in the neighborhood association were those who chose and preferred social media for neighborhood outreach and not email or normal mail. Social media might, in this case, thus be a starting point but other, more traditional forms of media should not be forgotten in that case. Johnson and Haleboua (2015) conclude their study with stating that 'neighborhood associations and planners must be careful not to alienate those who see social media communication as exclusive, intrusive or a time waster' (p. 265). Social media might thus be very useful in communicating to citizens but not all citizens might prefer it and be familiar with it. Social media could therefore be a compliment to the communication toward citizens instead of a substitute.

1.3 Problem statement and research purpose

The central topic of this thesis will be how neighborhood organizations in Chicago evaluate the use of social media in their day-to-day business. Neighborhood organizations can probably be a beneficent factor in urban areas, because of their collaborative and participatory way of planning and because of their access to social and community capital combined with the use of social media. Citizens can vice-versa, because of their connectivity with each other and with community-based organizations through the use of forms of social media, benefit from using it to pursue their causes regarding their living environment. The purpose of this upcoming thesis is to research why community-based organizations started using social media, how they have used it in the recent past and how they evaluate it.

1.4 Research questions

Main question

In which way did neighborhood organizations use social media in the recent past in Chicago and how do they evaluate it?

Sub questions

- 1. How are neighborhood organizations in Chicago structured and what are their purposes?*
- 2. Which opportunities and difficulties can the use of social media have for neighborhood organizations?*

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Neighborhood organizations

Community organizations are begun by one person or a small group who organize intentional activities to give the bringing together of community residents some structure. In this way they take joint action to try to improve the quality of life of their community. The action taken does not only affect the people who take the action but also the broader community (Berkowitz, 2000). The National Community-Based Organization Network of the United States of America (NCBON) (2015), states that a community-based organization is an organization that is 'driven by community residents in all aspects of its existence.' These aspects include for example that the priority issue areas are identified and defined by the residents in which a community-based is resided. The fact that the main operating offices of the organization must be in the 'community' is also one of the points of criteria of the definition derived from the NCBON. Community organizations can, when successful, result in better communities when they listen to what the community's expressed needs are (Berkowitz, 2000). Berkowitz (2000) also states that those positive outcomes are both for individuals and the communities. This thesis will mostly be focused on the role of neighborhood associations, which is a form of a community-based organization. Neighborhood organizations are thus organizations, which focus on the context in which they exist. They also are a link between the local government and the citizens, which live in a certain area governed by this local government.

2.2 Social Capital

2.2.1 Social capital and community capital

Around the turn of the millennium, technological advances were criticized by scientific literature for having a potentially negative impact on the social fabric and social lives of citizens in the United States, when looking back on the last fifty years. According to the well-known publisher Robert Putnam, in his book *'Bowling Alone'* from the early 2000s, civic engagement and therein the importance of social capital was decreasing in the United States because of lack of communication within neighbors in loose communities. Ellison et al. (2007) state that when social capital declines a community can experience increased social disorder, potentially more distrust among community members and a decrease in participation in civic activities. Putnam (1995) states that the diminishing of civic engagement and social connectedness was caused by, among others, the movement of women into the labor force, the rise of automobile ownership and therein the rise of individualism, the increase in the number of divorces, decrease in childbirth and lastly 'the technological transformation of leisure' (p. 74). People were, according to Putnam, spending their leisure time in front of, for example, the television in the mid-nineties. According to him these kind of technological transformations were thus causing individualization and were disrupting the opportunities for the formation of social capital.

About a decade later, the then wider spread technology, the Internet, had to undergo criticism. Gil de Zuniga et al. (2009) support Putnam's findings and state that in the past many of the social ills were attributed to communication innovations and that the infamy the television first had, has spread to other technologies such as the internet, which had also been accused by as they mention, Kraut et al. (1998) for 'promoting a decline in social involvement, increasing loneliness and depression' (p. 557). McPherson et al. (2006) had similar research findings; namely that the core networks of Americans have shrunk and have become less diverse over the last two decades. People rely less on the network of voluntary groups and neighborhoods. Social change is according to the authors responsible for this trend. Hampton et al. (2011) state, regarding the research by McPherson et al. (2006), that they suggest that the rising popularity of new information and communication technologies, like the rise of the internet and the mobile phone, were responsible for this social change.

Despite Putnam's and Kraut's criticism on new communication technologies, the formation of social capital, in the United States did not come to a complete halt. Putnam (2000) argues that participating in associations is beneficial for the formation and development of this social capital. Masden et al. (2014) argue that the work of Putnam has been criticized for a variety of reasons, for example in DeFillipis (2001), but that criticism on the importance of social capital is scarce. It became evident that strong social ties were important, because those ties could be used to organize, for example, recovery after a disaster and the unprecedented grassroots planning process of communities in post-Katrina New Orleans (Irazabal and Neville, 2007) or to create a higher level of community empowerment and attachment. DeFillipis (2001) states that

Putnam and his arguments had rapidly become central to the research and practice of community development in the United States of America. Change in neighborhoods with a high level of social capital are expected to react effectively to the forces of change and are supposed to remain more stable over time and neighborhoods with a lower level of social capital are expected to more often succumb to forces of change and experience decline, according to Temkin and Rohe (1998). They state that the relative levels of civic engagement and mutual trust might be important predictors of change. In their further research it appears that the responsibility for the development of social capital is primarily dependent on community-based organizations and when those organizations take a more comprehensive approach, than only focusing on housing development, they are more likely to be successful. On the one hand social capital might, in a sort of way, thus have decreased but its importance, regarding the context in which it exists, has definitely not decreased.

In addition to social capital, literature proposes a more extensive view on the creation of capital by actors in society. Hancock (2001) comes up with a more comprehensive approach towards the creation of different forms of capital by actors to obtain an increase in wealth. He does not see wealth as primarily constituted from economic capital, but also includes ecological, social and human capital. Hancock (2001) sees human capital as constituted from social, ecological and economic capital. Human development and the achieving of human potential should be the main purpose of governance and the common theme that unites all the sectors. He distinguishes herein the statutory (public), the business (private), voluntary and community sectors. Teorell (2003) states that involvement in voluntary organizations is a form of social capital itself, 'even this human capital explanation has social capital as its prime mover' (p. 50). He uses the work of Coleman (1990) to argue that social capital is not a single entity but 'a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals within the structure' (p. 50). Teorell (2003) continues by stating that social capital resides in the structure of relations among and between persons, and not merely lodges in individuals like human capital does, because human capital is a composite from more forms of capital. The connection individuals have, in this sense, to a voluntary organization like a neighborhood organization can thus be seen as a form of social capital.

Supplementary can be argued that in the past, the focus was mainly on the increase of economic capital at the expense of the other forms of capital (Hancock, 2001). This proved to be unsustainable over time. For example by discharging people, thus disrupting and decreasing social capital which was constituted by this networks, long term unsustainability was proven and so decreased the overall human capital. Focus must thus be on human development instead of economic development, but economic activity is one of the means, beside social and ecological development. This thesis will be more focused on the social and economic dimension of neighborhoods rather than on the ecological dimension. Hancock (2001) typifies this combination of human, economic, social and ecological capital as community capital. Inclusion

of all the aforementioned sectors might, according to the author, also be important because these forms of capital participate in the constitutions of governance. In this thesis will be mainly focused on the voluntary and community sectors because the development and aggregation of social capital is mainly dependent on these sectors.

2.2.2 What is social capital and how does it work?

There is often confusion on what social capital is, what social capital is used for and what the outcomes of this use are (Kearns, 2004). Kearns (2004) states that the three components of social capital, which are though most referred to, are: 'the social networks used by people; the social norms adhered to in people's behaviour, and in particular whether these norms are widely shared; and the levels of trust people have either in their neighbours, in people in general, or in the institutions of government' (p.7). Purdue (2001) states that Bourdieu (1986) saw social capital as the personal resources individuals derive from membership of a group. He also states that social capital has been viewed as residing in these relationships between individuals in families or communities. Ellison et al. (2007) state about the distinction between bridging and bonding social capital, as formulated by Putnam (2000) is that the first stand for weak ties. These are loose connections between people which might provide them useful information or new perspectives but do not provide emotional support. Bonding social capital, on the other hand, can be found between people in tight emotionally close relationships, like families and close friends. One of the conceptualizations which might be most useful in this thesis is formulated by Lin (2008) in Gil de Zuniga et al. (2012) where they state that social capital is 'resources embedded in one's social networks, resources that can be accessed through ties in the network' (p.320). Social capital is also; 'investment in social relations with expected returns' (Lin, 1999, p.29). Thus, the access to social capital requires investment, which might implicate that it's a two-way process; one invests something in social relations and those social relations can give you something in return.

Also, social capital might be a valuable asset for both neighborhood associations and citizens. Lin (1999) explains why embedded resources in social networks can increase the outcomes of actions, namely these resources facilitate the flow of information so that social ties, which have better positions, can provide other individuals with information that would otherwise not be available. This also works for a community through which these ties can be informed about the availability of an individual that would not be recognized without this information. As Steinfeld et al. (2008) state, relating to Lin (1999), social capital refers thus to the benefits people receive from their social relationships. Neighborhood associations and individual citizens might both have resources and possible information embedded in their networks and these sources of information make up a part of the total community capital present in a community. Therefore, social capital are the networks, and information in these networks, neighborhood associations have of individuals living in a certain neighborhood, which can be used to address problems present in that neighborhood. Individuals might thus, vice versa, also use these same networks

to address problems and get in touch with neighborhood associations and other individuals to cope with these problems. Social capital, regarding to the link between neighborhood associations and individuals, can thus be conceptualized as an asset that might be beneficial for both involved parties.

2.2.3 Social capital and political participation

To define which forms of human activity can be characterized, as political participation, might be hard. Teorell (2006) argues that it might depend on which normative model of democracy one adheres to. Becker (1967) in Teorell (2006) states as a reason why social organizations, for instance neighborhood organizations, have political effects is that they are yielding returns in human capital which are; 'personal skills and capacities that enable action' (p.799). Teorell (2006) further distinguishes three conceptions of political participation namely 'participation as influencing attempts' (p.789), where participation in the public sphere is only considered as an indirect action 'vis-à-vis the policy outcomes' (p.789). Secondly he distinguishes the conception of 'participation as direct decision making' (p.790) where 'the authority of the individuals is not delegated to some representative but is exercised directly by them' (p.790). Thirdly political participation can also be seen as a political discussion where participating is to engage in some kind of collective endeavor which can be more seen as a political discussion which is aimed at the formation of opinions even if no collective decision is to be reached. Participating in neighborhood associations might be a form of participation where the first and the third conception of political participation better apply to than the second, because of its advisory, indirect and informative nature. Neighborhood associations have contacts with local governments, as will be seen further on in this thesis, but do not decide all changes in their social and physical environment themselves.

Since individuals also participate in and with organizations in the public sphere, like neighborhood associations, they also might yield human and social capital. Kang and Kwak (2003) state that individual characteristics and community-level characteristics can promote or constrain the process that gets someone involved in civic affairs. La Due Lake and Huckfeldt (1998) state that social capital cannot be defined solely on the basis of individual characteristics or on the basis of individual organizational memberships because social capital cannot be possessed by individual people. They propose that it is produced through structured patterns of social interaction. How people benefit from these structures and relationships must be assessed relative to the patterns of these interactions. These patterns of interaction must be understood correctly to specify the relationship between human capital and political activity and the consequences of organizational involvement for political activity (La Due Lake and Huckfeldt, 1998). Social capital might thus be found and yielded in the patterns and structures of social interaction found in and around neighborhood associations.

2.2.4 Social- and community capital and neighborhood planning

Focusing on neighborhood renewal, Kearns (2004) sees an important role for community capital, which he defines as the networks and linkages neighborhood organizations have in wider arenas, besides a study of social relations between individuals. Social relations between individuals are thus important in the process of neighborhood renewal but also focusing on the linkages and relations neighborhood associations have with individuals in a certain area and the linkages outside of that area. An individual's power is, according to Kearns (2004), also enhanced within wider decision-making, when he or she represents a community group in representative politics. Community organizations, like neighborhood associations have in their turn the access to those individuals to deploy them to support collective actions and social activities to generate social capital. Bowles and Gintis (2002) argue that communities, and therein organizations from and within those communities, are a part of a good way of governing because they address problems which are hard to be handled by only individuals which are acting alone and cannot also be addressed by markets or governments.

To illustrate this good way in which community organizations can address certain problems, Bowles and Gintis (2002) mention an example in the context of Chicago. They speak of a sort of collective efficacy when they mention the study of Sampson et al. (1997) which discusses the context of Chicago where local residents handle the problems of young people skipping school and the decoration of a wall with graffiti by them. The local collective efficacy differs between neighborhoods depending on for instance how rich or how poor a neighborhood was but both rich and poor, black and white neighborhoods could exhibit high and low levels of collective efficacy. One thing that is clear is that where collective efficacy, perceived by neighborhood residents, is high, violent crime, including past crime rates, is lower. The knowledge and cooperation people from a neighborhood have together can thus, when organized in for example a neighborhood association, be used to address problems in a neighborhood. Erete (2013) also found, in her study of the role of technology and citizen activism regarding the protection of homes from burglars, that neighborhood cohesion was a bigger deterrent, than security systems, cameras and alarms, in the perspective of burglars. In the next part of this theoretical framework, the use of the communication form; social media, in the process of neighborhood planning by community-based organizations and neighborhood associations and the link it has with community- and social capital, will be discussed.

2.3 Organizational communication

2.3.1 Strategic communication by organizations

Strategic communication is defined by Hallahan et al. (2007) as; 'the purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfill its mission' (p.3). Every organization has a mission whether it is of commercial nature or as is aforementioned a nature which aims for social return, as neighborhood organizations do. Using strategic communication is thus as important for non-profit organizations as for for-profit organizations. Disciplines within organizations and their causes which engage in the development, dissemination and assessment of communications include management, marketing, advertising and public relations. Communicating carefully is thus according to Hallahan et al. (2007) required to live up to an organization's mission. As many non-profit organizations and therein neighborhood organizations also include different disciplines in their organizations such as, management and public relations, within their organizations it is also for them required to make a purposeful use of communication and communication technologies to fulfill their mission. Already in the early 2000s, Boeder (2002) states that internet offers an effective platform for communication and fundraising and that it can also be used to inform the public about non-profit's missions. The contemporary use of social media might have added to Boeder's statement the dimension that the public can also inform, the non-profit organizations, their opinions and beliefs.

2.3.2 Organizational use of communication technologies

The use of information technology, in a strategic way, is thus something that is not totally new as, for instance, has been seen in the example from the introduction where internet use among neighbors in the early 2000s was examined. Greenberg and Macaulay (2009) state that non-profit organizations have been among the early adopters of new technology, for instance has the world wide web played a big role by enabling volunteer-based groups and charities to expand their advocacy efforts and grassroots mobilizations throughout the 1990s. A transformational paradigm shift has happened to media institutions, organizations and technologies, 'changes in communication technologies are both shaping and being shaped by new forms of social organization' (Greenberg and Macaulay, 2009, p.66). Despite these changes, the more traditional forms of communication media, such as television and radio, do still play an important role in the society by informing people and by shaping the focus of public conversations. Those top-down broadcasting technologies are being replaced by a media environment which is a network where a extensive amount of actors are mutually connected. Greenberg and Maculay (2009) conclude about this shift in media technologies;

'With this paradigm shift in media organization and technology, the relations between social actors are also undergoing change. In theoretical terms, the idea that there exists a national public sphere in which otherwise free individuals come together to debate issues openly and thus construct something approximating 'public opinion' has been replaced by an increasingly

fragmented global mediascape and the emergence of more segmented spheres of assimilation in which individuals coalesce around narrower interests' (p.66).

Both individual people and organizations are through this paradigm shift thus able to display their beliefs and ideas and this might benefit themselves and organizations. People in a certain local neighborhood might thus be enabled by their connection to the internet to communicate their opinions and beliefs about a very specific matter to both other local citizens and people in other places and organizations.

2.4 Social media

2.4.1 Organizational use of social media

Through time evolving technology has had a drastic impact on how organizational leadership and the abilities involved with it, is perceived. Jiang et al. (2016) state that the impact of digital technologies, for instance social media, is still in its nascent stage. They further state that the impact of new media adoption on the effectiveness and operation of an organization must be considered. Because the difference of organizational structures means of communication must be used in a strategic way, which aims at the purposeful use of communication for advancing the mission of an organization (Jiang et al., 2016). Since neighborhood organizations differ from other enterprises and businesses, which aim for a monetary profit, the use of social media fitting to the structure of a more non-governmental and community-based organization must be accurately conceptualized.

How social media is used by organizations varies depending on how those organizations are structured. Go and You (2016) provide an overview of the types of social media applications used by organizations. Their results showed that the organizations examined in their study used blogs the most and virtual worlds the least. Facebook and Twitter were among the most popular forms of social media in this particular research. In the next paragraph these different kinds of social media will be more thoroughly examined and defined. Go and You (2016) listed a number of findings regarding social media applications used by organizations, some of them connected to this thesis' theme will be discussed shortly. First, they found that some organizations mainly use one dominant type of social media applications while other organizations combined different social media applications. Large organizations with a long history (f.i. Boeing) tended to use one type of social media, namely the blog, which can facilitate one-way communication. They state that this finding might imply that large and established organizations wish to handle their contact with their publics.

Second, they found that non-profit organizations were using social networking sites most often. They state that this might imply that non-profit organizations are more open to connect with their publics, but they do not have enough resources to utilize diverse technological tools. Greenberg and Macaulay (2009) state that for non-profit organizations the 'prospect of lowering the transaction costs of organizing and delivering service, and of helping enable the emergence of new social patterns, is highly appealing' (p.65). Social media can thus provide a way to interact with their publics and it can help them lower their communication costs.

Third, Go and You (2016) found that internet-based organizations and telecommunication companies like to use social media applications combined with each other, for instance they combine social networking sites and crowdsourcing mechanisms together. This means they are able to engage users in the problem-solving processes, which might lead to a better kind of relationship-building which might improve the customers perceived levels of control and

empowerment. Last, Go and You (2016) found that fashion and furniture organizations were found to use multiple social media applications. They state that this finding might be attributed to the product types they deliver, which require applications that can display both visual and textual content.

Neighborhood organizations, which can be regarded as a non-profit organization, are thus expected to use social-networking sites because of the need to interact with their public and their lack of, for instance, monetary resources to use more expensive technical tools. As will be discussed later in this theoretical framework, the free availability of social media and the possibility that it offers to interact in a reciprocal manner are two factors that might benefit a neighborhood organization's way of communication.

2.4.2 Types of social media

Social media are applications in which the user activity has a central position. Possible synonyms for social media would be; community media, participatory media, user-generated content, Web 2.0 and social networking (Nakki et al., 2011). Social media services and platforms offer a wide array of digital channels for expression and interaction (Rotman et al., 2011; Croituru et al., 2015). As examples of the difference between social media services they mention forums and message boards, weblogs, microblogging, wikis and social networking services. Go and You (2016) mention sites that allow users to upload and share content in different formats like; text, image, audio and video. Examples might be Flickr, Youtube and podcasts. Also, they include more advanced types of social media like widgets, virtual worlds and crowdsourcing. This thesis will be focused on channels like microblogging mostly, for example Twitter and Instagram, and on social networking services like Facebook, Nextdoor, Google+ and LinkedIn. This is because they are most commonly used among the neighborhood organizations and community organizations mentioned in this thesis.

A new form of social media, which is supporting local neighborhoods, became apparent in the last 3 years, namely Nextdoor. Nextdoor is now used by more than half of all neighborhoods in the United States with 92.164 current communities. According to Nextdoor (2016) their mission is 'to use the power of technology to build stronger and safer neighborhoods'. Nextdoor can be used by neighbors to create online communities which are private. In these communities they can ask questions, get to know other neighbors and exchange advice and recommendations for their local contexts. The topics of discussion can be very varied because they can edit their own content (PR Newswire, 2016). This thesis will also evaluate the use of Nextdoor by community organizations and neighborhood associations, if applicable, by including it in the interview guides and results. It will however not be a main research point in this thesis, because it is more focused on communication and social networking between citizens in a certain neighborhood and not merely on the inclusion of organizations in these networks.

The current trend toward social media can be seen as a transformation back to the roots of the beginning of the Internet, because it recreates the Internet back to where it initially was created for; namely a platform for its users to facilitate information exchange between them. Social media started getting into shape with the introduction of Open Diary, which brought together online diary writers into one community and the word blog was also first used around that time. The growing availability of high-speed internet access led to the introduction of MySpace in 2003 and Facebook in 2004 (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). The latter can still be considered as one of the most successful and popular form of social media in recent times.

2.4.3 Social media use by non-profit organizations

Through the rapid rise and the diffusion of social network sites and the accompanying rise of the use of mobile communication technologies over the last 10 years, social media have become one of the most popular Internet services in the world (Kleinhans et al., 2015, Gil de Zuniga et al., 2012). These authors see a discussion which was apparent if it contributes to society or if it distracts people from public affairs and if it fosters shallower relationships. Gil de Zuniga and Puig-I-Abril (2009) state that there were initial concerns about the possibility that certain communication technologies would actually increase social isolation but that most claims were not based on a substantial body of evidence, because this debate took place in the early stages of the Internet. Further they state that the Internet has shown that it has had reinforcing effects on information-seeking and sociability. Compared to the traditional media, digital media is a unique phenomenon. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) state that early studies about Web 1.0 technologies showed that nonprofits were not able to use websites as a 'strategic, interactive organizational communication and stakeholder engagement tool' (p.2). A website of a nonprofit organization has, according to Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), become the public face of these organizations and this also a vehicle through which meaningful public interactions can take place.

Further, digital media offers organizations participatory functions not found in traditional media. Macafee and De Simone (2012) state that the main difference between traditional and digital media lays in the participatory nature. Whereas traditional media facilitates only the consumption of it, new digital forms of media, for instance blogs, involve both consuming, participating and producing. The use of the different forms of media is thus because of different reason. One might watch television for passing time and entertainment and be deeply involved in participation on the internet for a certain reason. It might also be possible that one uses traditional media and new 'digital' media pure for entertainment and consuming.

However social media can also be used to participate and produce information, when someone feels the need to. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) state that the advent of social networks like Facebook and Twitter have taken away the excuse of having know-how to create more interactive websites, with feedback options and discussion boards, by staff of organizations. They argue that lots of these non-profit organizations have not been able to use websites as

strategic and interactive tools. Sites, like Facebook and Twitter, are free and have built-in interactivity, so any organization can create such a site and build a network. Raja-Yusof et al. (2016) state that social media usage can save nongovernmental organizations operating costs because they have often limited monetary resources.

Further, nongovernmental organizations can also use social media for activities related to fundraising and volunteering efforts (Raja-Yusof et al., 2016). Attouni and Mustaffa (2014) state that 'social media makes organizations to be more accountable for their engagements with the general publics' (p.95). Because of its interactive nature organizations might be very accessible for their public. This might mean that someone who disagrees with some of the organizations actions might easily address these organizations via one of their social media platforms. Harquail (2011) in Attouni and Mustaffa (2014) concludes this by stating that organizations that use social media appear more transparent than organizations who do not use social media. Bashir and Aldaihani (2017) additionally argue that the use of social media by an organization can provide them an increase in their online presence. This might enhance the total presence and visibility of such an organization of their target audience.

2.4.4 Social media engagement, social capital and online political participation

The diffusion of social media is accomodating new possibilities for nonprofit organizations to engage with and communicate with the public (Nah and Saxton, 2012). Kelleher and Miller (2006) state, regarding the aforementioned paradigm shift that has happened in communication technologies, that organizations are more and more encouraged to be open and honest about their intentions rather than operating silently on the background. Greenberg and Macaulay (2009) argue that there exists an increasing form of pressure on also non-profit organizations to shift their culture of communication from a selective dissemination model to one of an open conversation, 'to become more transparent about how decisions are reached and why; and to place member engagement, participation and dialogue at the center of all publicly-oriented organizational activities' (Greenberg and Macaulay, 2009, (p.66). Social media might thus offer a higher transparency for people who want to be involved and informed about a certain issue and in that way social media contributes positively to, for instance, engagement of citizens in certain matters on the scale of a neighborhood.

Two primary purposes, about how organizations employ new media can be distinguished namely; information-sharing and dialogic relationship building (Lovejoy and Saxton, 2012). Both will be conceptualized for neighborhood organizations in the interviews. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), in their research on how on nonprofit organizations use Twitter, found that nonprofit organizations have become more interactive in how they use Twitter opposed to how they have used their websites but that they still use it as an extension of information-heavy websites. The organizations did not use it as a community-building and mobilization tool per se, thereby not using it to its full extent as a stakeholder-engagement tool. Organizations have to know, according to Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), how to use the medium to fully engage with their

stakeholders. Greenberg and Macaulay (2009) argue that social technologies such as blogs and networking platforms, 'not only have the potential of enabling individuals and organizations to share content and socialize, but also to filter news and information' (p.67). They add that it also can be used to organize events, to foster collaboration and to create participation. To obtain this they propose that it must require a cultural and organizational commitment and that it requires resource allocation in the form of time and personnel. Using social media appropriately for neighborhood issues thus requires commitment, time and personnel. For some organizations that lack some of these factors, it might be hard using social media in a good and fitting way.

Non-profit organizations are seeing new opportunities arise from '*web-based social technologies*' to opt for changes to public policy and to build meaningful relationships with their constituencies (Greenberg and Macaulay, 2009). Social media has according to Loader and Mercea (2011) destroyed the monopoly traditional media had on the selection and dissemination of information and news. Everybody now has the opportunity to produce and read online media content, for instance what's available on social media. In this way networked media can have the potential to re-configure communicative power relations. Citizens can in this way engage and challenge the kind of monopoly state and commercial institutions have on the control of media production and dissemination. Individuals are able, by using social media, to no longer have to be a passive consumer of mass media or government news, but can instead test discourse, distribute other perspectives and publicize their own thoughts.

As mentioned before, the rise of new technologies, like the Internet, have not always been linked to increases in social capital and civic participation and psychosocial well-being, for instance Kraut et al. (1998) who state that heavy use of the internet was related with stress, loneliness and depression. After a period of setbacks to the digital democracy, Loader and Mercea (2011) see a fresh wave of technological optimism, which has accompanied the then recent advent of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Also, Ellison et al. (2007) state, in their study among college students, that Facebook facilitates bridging social capital and that social network sites do not in fact remove people from the offline world but that it can be used to support relationships and keep people in contact, also when certain people move away from a particular area.

2.4.5 Social media functionalities and possible implications for neighborhood organizations

Within new forms of media there are also different possibilities to which extent a social media type employs their features. Social media networks might have different typologies, which might imply the different functionalities, which are embedded in the networks. Also, neighborhood organizations might not use the functionalities of a social media platform to its fullest extent. Another possibility is that they use all social media platforms they use in the same way, not according to the different functionalities different platforms have. Kietzmann et al. (2011) distinguishes in social media platforms seven functionalities and implications these

functionalities might have which he visualizes in two honeycombs, one for functionalities and one for implications, visible in Figure 1, namely; identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups, which will be discussed below regarding their connection to the use of social media by neighborhood organizations.

Figure 1. The honeycomb of social media

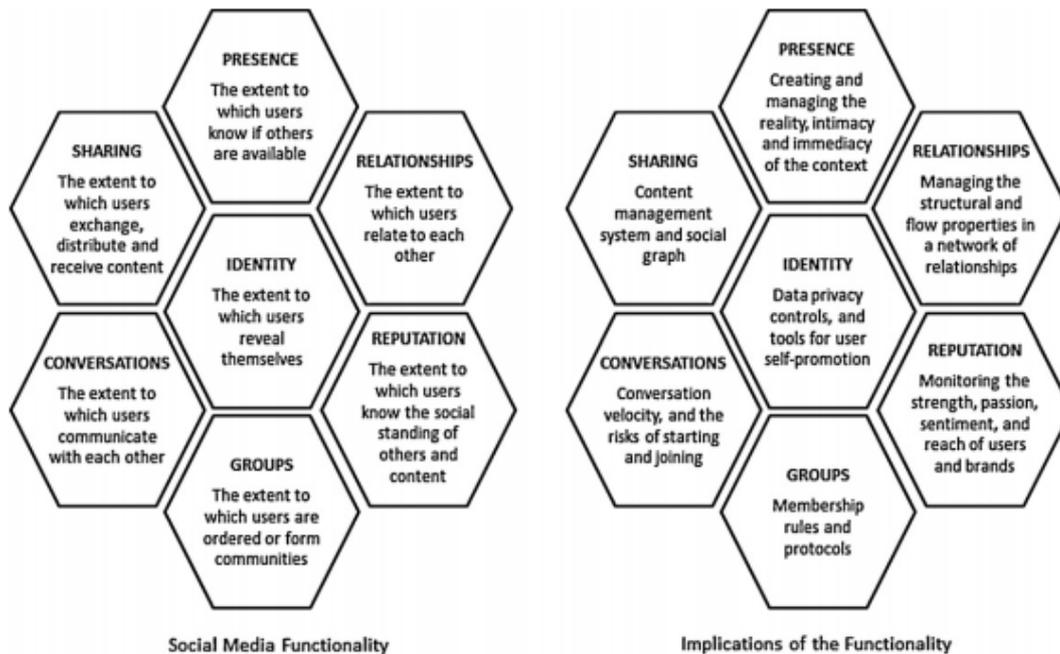


Figure 1: The honeycomb of social media (derived from Kietzmann et al., 2011, p.243)

Identity represents the extent to which users, in a social media setting, reveal their identities. One major implication according to Kietzmann et al. (2011) is the issue of privacy. Users are willing to share their identities on social media platforms but that does not mean that they do not care what happens with those delicate pieces of information. An implication for neighborhood organizations might thus be that individuals from a certain neighborhood might reveal their identity on social media platforms and neighborhood associations must thus handle this information with care and respect the privacy of neighbors or other interested people from across neighborhood boundaries.

Conversations represents the ‘extent to which users communicate with other users in a social media setting’ (Kietzman et al., 2011, p.244). An enormous number and diversity of conversations can take place in one social media setting (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Also, the direction of change of a conversation should be examined. Conversations can change on how favorable or unfavorable a conversation can be towards an organization. As the neighborhood organizations examined in this thesis do not have an enormous number of conversations it might be good for them to examine the conversations on their platforms and take care of how the conversations are transforming, which can be towards a negative attitude towards the neighborhood organization. Monitoring the conversations and their diversity might also provide

the neighborhood organization with information about hot topics among the stakeholders who are engaged in a social media platform.

Sharing is the 'extent to which users exchange, distribute and receive content' (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p.245). One of the implications, according to the authors, is that it should be evaluated what the social objects users have in common or that they have to identified which new objects can mediate their shared interests. Otherwise the sharing network will be primarily about connections with nothing connecting them. Secondly, the degree if something can or should be shared should be examined. Users of social networks can easily share offensive material. Neighborhood organizations might thus deal with offensive content that can be easily shared on or with their social media platforms. They might also identify objects that can be used to create a bond within the users of their social media platform.

Presence is the 'extent to which users can know if other users are accessible' (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p.245). According to the authors, implications might be that organizations need to pay attention to the relative importance of user location and availability. As neighborhoods have boundaries and in the case of Nextdoor, for example, a social media platform can also have boundaries. Neighborhood associations may monitor where people are coming from and who has access to their social media platforms, in order to see which people use their social media platforms. In that way they might adjust their provided information to their target audience.

Relationships is the 'extent to which users can be related to other users' (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p.246) mention that there are numerous implications in this case, but that it is important to see that relationships on different platforms differ because of the different natures of different social media platforms. For example, on LinkedIn relationships of different users might be more formal than relationships on Facebook, because the nature of LinkedIn is generally more formal as the nature of Facebook is more one that can be characterized as informal. Neighborhood organizations might thus take care of how formal or informal they use their different platforms.

Reputation is the 'extent to which the users can identify the standing of others' (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p.247), including themselves, in a social media setting. The authors state that it has a different meaning for different platforms as it depends on the platform which information is visible for which people. Neighborhood organizations might conclude that they must think about what is visible for whom. For instance, not all information regarding a neighborhood and neighborhood organization might be useful, intended and appropriate for people from outside a neighborhood. For instance, Nextdoor deals with this by letting people spatially register, so people know that the information they are sharing only gets received by the people belong to a certain spatially limited area.

Groups is the 'extent to which users can form communities and subcommunities' (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p.247). The authors see two different groups which are apparent in social media platforms. Firstly, the closed groups created by users themselves and secondly the groups which

are open to anyone. Kietzmann et al. (2011) state that an implication might be that a social media community might want to group their users. As neighborhood organizations are also to be expected to have many users with different interests categorizing them or letting them categorize themselves in specific groups for specific purposes might be useful to keep the overview and not let it become a chaotic entirety.

In the section above, more expected implications, of the seven parts of the honeycomb formulated by Kietzmann et al. (2011), for social media use by neighborhood organizations could have been formulated but that would possibly have been too extensive for this chapter. Later on in this thesis, it will be examined if the neighborhood organizations from this case study use some of these aforementioned functionalities and implications to their full extent and how they evaluate and rate these functionalities and their overall social media use. Also, there will be examined if any problems, regarding social media use, arise which have not been included in this prior chapter and cannot be found in existing scientific literature.

2.4.6 Communication, social media and social capital

Communication through social media can facilitate the formation of social capital, as has been explained earlier in this chapter. In this section this will be clarified more thoroughly. Chen and Li (2017) state that communicative use of social media ‘focuses on to what degree people contact acquaintances, friends and family’ (p.959). They also state that social media creates channels through which people can interact with weak and strong ties that are spatially scattered. Social media also has the capability to replace more obsolete technologies like text-messaging and calling. Where as social capital lies in the networks shared by people (Kearns, 2004), communicating between people in those certain networks might be a key to maintain them. Ellison et al. (2011) state that the concept of social capital defines the assets people acquire not only from their relationships but also from their social interactions. Communicating is thus essential in the process of the formation of social capital.

Furthermore, Kim and Kim (2017) determined in a study among college students in an university setting, that social capital was not only formed if students were only talking to friends or family, by using social media, but was also generated when people were interacting with other people in this digital environment. Further, Valenzuela et al. (2009) cites Ellison et al. (2007) who found, in their research about social media and social capital among college students, that its use was strongly associated with the maintenance of existing relationships in the physical world opposed to meeting new people. However they also found out that that the strongest relationship, in their study, was between bridging social capital and social media use. Communicating through social media might thus offer neighborhood organizations chances to facilitate the formation of bonding and bridging social capital, which might help them to pursue their purposes. Using social media for communicating to their public might offer the neighborhood organizations thus the chance to create two types of social capital. Bonding social capital might lie in the social networks found in the organization and its members itself, which might be characterized as the

organization's strong ties. Bridging social capital might however lie in the more weaker ties organizations have to their urban context like connections to other organizations and businesses in their neighborhoods.

2.5 Conceptual model

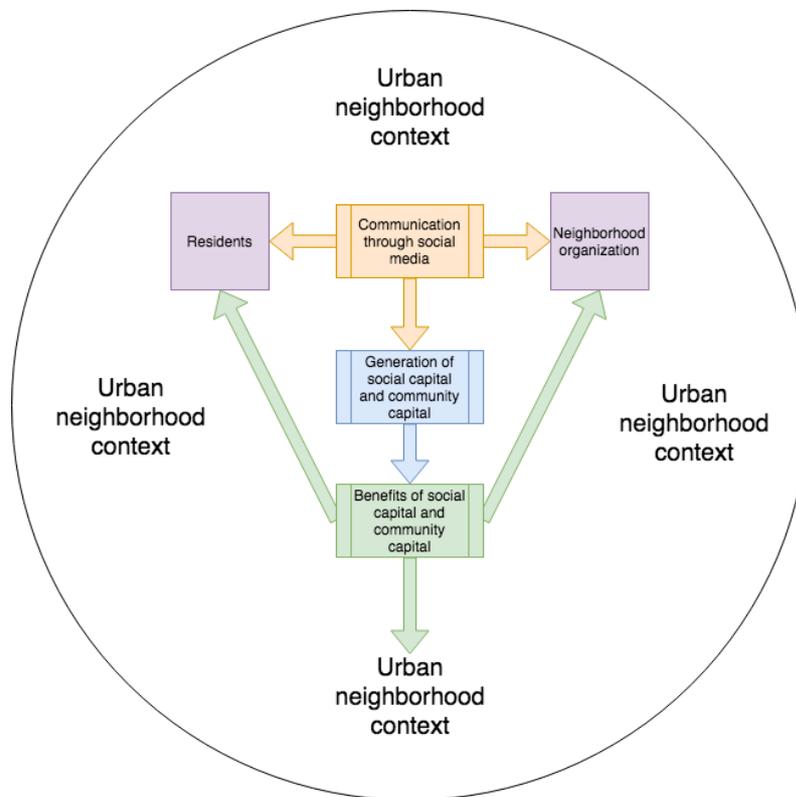


Figure 2: Conceptual model

In the conceptual model, which is visualized in Figure 2, the theoretical structure of this thesis is pictured. This conceptual model will be briefly explained in this paragraph. Residents and neighborhood organizations share an urban neighborhood context in which they are situated. Neighborhood organizations and residents of a neighborhood use media, among which digital media and social media, to communicate about affairs concerning their urban neighborhood context. By communicating to each other, social capital and community capital is formed. Social capital and community capital constituted by the use of social media provide benefits for both the residents of a neighborhood, the neighborhood and community organizations and the urban neighborhood context. The residents and neighborhood organizations (strong ties) might benefit directly from the formation of bonding social- and community capital because of their communication with each other through social media, while the further urban neighborhood context (loose ties), like other organizations and businesses, might benefit more indirectly by the formation of bridging social- and community capital by the communication of residents and neighborhood organizations through social media.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction, research method and qualitative research

3.1.1 Research method

In this chapter, the methods of research used in this thesis will be explained. In this thesis, a qualitative approach, within a case study, is chosen to examine the use of social media by neighborhood organizations in Chicago. Hennink et al. (2011) state that qualitative research is a broad umbrella term. It is not easy to define because it covers a wide range of techniques and philosophies. Broadly, it can be stated that qualitative research is an approach that will allow researchers to examine the experiences of people in detail, by using a specific set of research methods. In this thesis, the experiences representatives of neighborhood organizations located in Chicago have with social media, will be researched.

The goal of this thesis is to research how neighborhood organizations in Chicago evaluate the use of social media in their day-to-day business by looking at how they have used it in the recent past and how they evaluate it. According to literature, communication through social media by residents of neighborhoods and neighborhood organizations might aid the formation of social capital and community capital. The benefits of formed social capital and community capital might in turn flow back to the residents, organizations and further urban environment (see: 2.5 *Conceptual model*). Because this is a not often researched topic, due to the relative novelty of social media, this thesis will try to formulate and gather new information surrounding the aforementioned research goal opposed to testing already existing information. In this case in-depth interviews will be used to examine in which way neighborhood associations use social media in the recent past in Chicago and how they evaluated it. The use of qualitative research, more specifically in-depth interviews, might be an effective way to examine this research question because it can focus on minor details which can influence the way people think about and evaluate social media. Clifford et al. (2010) state that quantitative methods involve the use of physical concepts and reasoning, mathematical modeling and statistical techniques to understand geographical phenomena. By using a more quantitative method of research, those minor details and possible new information relating to this research might not as easily be examined. In this thesis this qualitative approach will be thus used to examine and answer the research questions.

3.1.2 Qualitative research

This thesis will hence use qualitative research as its starting point. Mahoney and Goertz (2006) state that their ideal approach to research consists of 'an explanation of an outcome in one or a small number of cases' (p.231) which might lead 'one to wonder if the same factors are at work when a broader understanding of scope is adopted, stimulating a larger-*N* analysis in which the goal is less to explain particular cases and more to estimate average effects' (p.231). Goertz and

Mahoney (2012) state that they do not see the difference between qualitative and quantitative research in terms of words versus numbers. However, they see differences in the orientations of both schools by how they make inferences. They state that qualitative research might make conclusions based on a small number of individual cases, with mainly within-case analysis as a method and that quantitative research might make conclusions based on a larger number of cases, with mainly cross-case analysis as a method. In this thesis a smaller number of cases (small-N) will be researched and it will be tried to explain its outcome from these handful of researched neighborhood organizations. The goal is not to make a general assumption about how neighborhood organizations evaluate their use of social media in general. Goertz and Mahoney (2012) state further that the leverage, in small-N qualitative research, is derived from within-case analysis, where cross-case methods might play an aiding role. The leverage in this thesis lies in this research might thus, according to the aforementioned quote by Mahoney and Goertz (2006), be a starting point which can lead to a larger-N analysis later on, depending on the findings this thesis will provide. In this thesis four neighborhood organizations and one community organization will be used as cases for examination and because the focus is on formulating and gathering new information the research analysis can be characterized as a small-N analysis.

3.2 Research design

In this thesis, the design cycle visible in Figure 3; the 'qualitative research cycle' by Hutter-Hennink (2011) in Hennink et al. (2011), will be used to frame the design of the research. This design cycle is constructed by four interlinked tasks, which are; 'the formulation of research questions, reviewing research literature and incorporating theory, developing a conceptual framework for the study and selecting an appropriate fieldwork approach' (p.4). The research starts with formulating a research question and then follows the aforementioned other steps. According to Hennink et al. (2011) it is possible that the researcher, at any moment, can take a step back in the cycle if something is not working out. In this way an earlier step in the cycle can be improved so the researcher can go on with the research without getting stuck on a certain problem. This possibility of taking a step back in the cycle was also used because the scope of the research, and the main question herein, was early in the process of writing this thesis narrowed down from cases in the Netherlands and in the United States to only a case in the United States. Based on existing theory, mostly in the context of non-profit organizations in the United States, it seemed more appropriate to narrow the scope down to a single case namely Chicago.

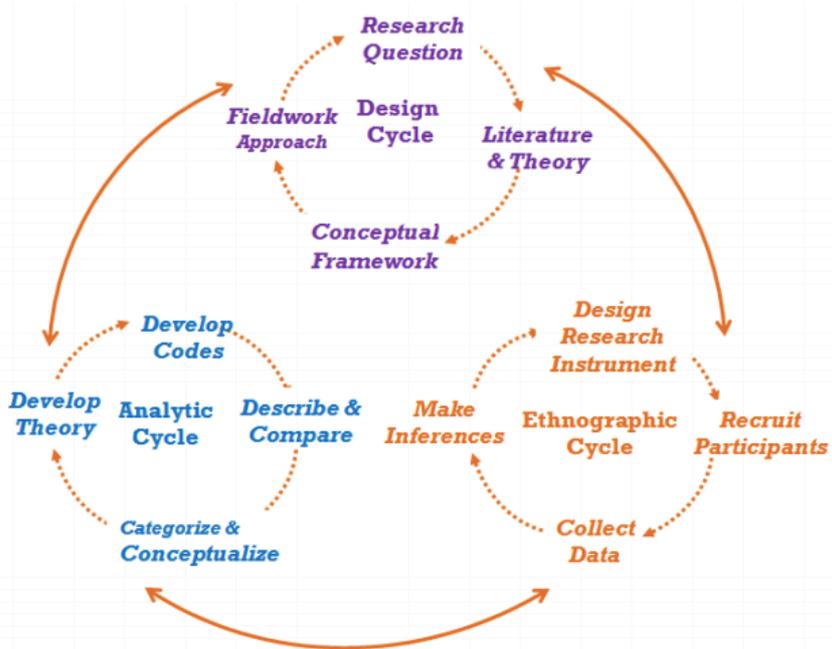


Figure 3: Hutter-Hennink qualitative research cycle (derived from Hennink et al., 2011, p.4)

3.3 Data collection

3.3.1 Semi-structured in-depth interviews

In this thesis semi-structured in-depth interviews are used to collect data to answer the research questions. Hennink et al. (2011) state that an in-depth interview is ‘a one-to-one method of data collection that involves an interviewer and an interviewee discussing specific topics in depth’ (p.109). The purpose of the researcher is to obtain insight into certain issues by using a semi-structured interview guide. The insights, which need to be obtained in this thesis, are firstly how neighborhood organizations in Chicago used social media in the recent past and how they evaluated this use. Also, the purposes of these organizations and their structure must be obtained. Finally, the opportunities and difficulties of using social media by neighborhood organizations must be examined in these interviews.

The specific method of interviewing which will be applied in this thesis are semi-structured in-depth interviews. Wengraf (2001) in Hennink et al. (2011) states that in-depth interviews can be used to identify three things namely; narratives about people’s lives, which is the story the interviewee shares. Secondly, the subjectivity of the interviewee, which is the background characteristics and the identity of the interviewed person which can influence a person’s story. Finally the context in which the interviewee lives can also be identified. By interviewing the representatives from the neighborhood organizations the story of involvement in their urban context, the story of the neighborhood organizations can be obtained. They can be specifically questioned about the goals and practices of their organizations, something that might be harder by using more structured and systematic methods, because when the representatives give a

lead, the interviewer can respond to this and ask more thorough questions. Following Wengraf (2001) in Hennink et al. (2011) also the urban context of the neighborhood organizations can be identified. This might be important because it can help the comparison of the purposes and goals of the organizations and the urban context in which they exist. This thesis, being written from a spatial point of view, might thus benefit from specific knowledge about the urban context of the neighborhood organizations in the city of Chicago. Fylan (2005) in Miles and Gilbert (2005) states that semi-structured interviews are conversations in which the researcher knows what he or she wants to find out. The researcher also has a set of questions to ask and a good idea which topics will be covered. The conversation however, can be free to vary and is likely to change substantially between interviewees. Structured interviews in contrast have a predetermined list of questions that are ordered in the same order in every interview. Another contrast is also noticeable in comparison with unstructured interviews, where the area of research is delimited but there are very little boundaries to the topics that will be covered. By using new information derived from interviews, the theoretical framework might also be adjusted to get to a more specific set of questions, used in the interviews to explain the main question and scope of this thesis.

As semi-structured interviews are quite flexible, they are well suited to answer a why question (Fylan, 2005 in Miles and Gilbert, 2005). Semi-structured interviews are also suitable to explore more complicated questions, like the one in this thesis. By changing questions and the covered areas by the interview, during the different interviews, aspects can be addressed which are important to the different interviewees. By doing this, a better understanding can be gained regarding the research question. Because of the use of the semi-structured interview type it is possible to vary the subjects and it is possible to change the questions included in interviews. Also, it is possible to add questions to the interviews when new insights arise. In this way new insights can be examined and can be added to the already assumed results. Because little is known about the role social media might play for neighborhood organizations, specific insight that is obtained by interviews can be used in further interviews. A dynamic discourse will arise and new things, that before were unknown, can join the already known insights about how neighborhood organizations use and evaluate the use of social media.

No data analysis software like *Atlas. ti. is* used to analyze the transcriptions of the interviews. The transcriptions were manually transcribed and analyzed by underlining key words and usable quotes. These key words and usable quotes were then compared and connected to theories, which can be found in the theoretical framework, to see to which extent the theory compares and differs to empirical evidence.

3.3.2 Case study

This thesis can be characterized as a descriptive case study. Thomas (2011) defines case study as follows; 'case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies,

institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame—an object—within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates’ (p.513). In this thesis, the neighborhood organizations can be designated as subject of this study and the opportunities and difficulties they experience, regarding social media, can be designated as object of this study. Stake (1978) states that case studies can be useful in the study of human affairs because they are attention-holding and down-to-earth. He adds further that they are not a suitable basis for generalization, which is indeed not the goal of this thesis. Rather, by exploring personal meanings and feelings of a handful of cases, in this thesis neighborhood organizations, a brief and clear overview of opportunities and difficulties neighborhood organizations experience in their day-to-day business is tried to be given.

The specific method of case study used in this thesis can be characterized as a descriptive case study. Yin (2003) in Baxter and Jack (2008) states that a descriptive case study can be used to ‘describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred’ (p.548) in which the intervention or phenomenon is the use of social media by neighborhood organizations and the real-life context is the functioning of neighborhood organizations in the urban context of Chicago. Flyvbjerg (2006) further states that; ‘the case study is useful for both generating and testing of hypotheses but is not limited to these research activities alone’ (p.229). By using Popper’s falsification theory Flyvbjerg (2006) remarks that the case study is suited for the identification of ‘black swans’. If all swans are white, the observation of one black swan will falsify ‘this proposition and in this way have general significance and stimulate investigations and theory-buidling’ (p.11). This case study can thus try to identify those black swans because of its ‘in-depth approach: what appears to be ‘white’ often turns out on closer examination to be ‘black’.’ (p.11). Neighborhood organizations might on the surface be satisfied with their use of social media but might on closer examination encounter problems. This thesis, being quite an experimental study, might thus serve both as a testing of hypotheses made in the theoretical framework and as a generation of hypotheses which can be researched in follow-up studies. A more quantitative approach, including cross-case analysis, might be chosen in possible follow-up studies to achieve more generalization of the experiences of neighborhood organizations with social media.

3.3.3 Case selection

The cases used in this thesis were selected by approaching neighborhood and community organizations, which operate within the urban limits of Chicago, Illinois. There were a few criteria for the selection of organizations. Firstly the organizations, elaborated in this thesis, should be non-profit. Secondly, the organizations should also be community-based. This was necessary because of the greater framework this thesis is embedded in, namely urban planning. Community organizations add qualitative value to their urban context and can help in urban

planning processes, this can thus be elaborated best by researching the connection between community organizations and their urban environment. An overview of the approached organizations is added in Table 1. The organizations were further narrowed down by their willingness and availability to participate in an interview to the five organizations outlined in Table 2.

Approached neighborhood / community organizations

Logan Square Neighborhood Association	Wicker Park Garden Club
Bucktown Community Organization	Ukrainian village Neighborhood Association
Chicago Grand Neighbors Association	Wicker Park Advisory Council
East Village Association	Bloomingdale Trail
Friends of Holstein Park	Winnemac Neighbors
Nobel Neighbors	Ravenswood Neighbors Association
Northwestern Settlement Organization	Ravenswood Community Council
Wicker Park Committee	Northcenter Neighborhood Association
Prairie District Neighborhood Alliance	Buena Park Neighbors
South Loop Neighbors Organization	Beacon Block Club
Greektown Chicago	Greater South Loop Association
West loop Community Organization	Avondale Neighborhood Association
Bridgeport Citizens group	The Avondale Coalition/ Rincon Family Services
West Bucktown Neighborhood Association	

Table 1: Approached neighborhood/ community organizations

3.3.4 Interviewed organizations

In Table 2, an overview is added of the interviewed organizations and their locations.

In Table 3, the locations of the neighborhoods featured in this thesis are indicated compared to Downtown, Chicago. The neighborhood organizations and their purposes will be further discussed and explained in the first paragraph of the next chapter.

<i>Name organization</i>	<i>Based in neighborhood:</i>	<i>Name representative</i>	<i>Date conducted</i>	<i>Place conducted</i>
Avondale Neighborhood Association	Avondale, Chicago	Emily T.	14 – 04 – ‘16	Coffee shop in Logan Square, Chicago
Buena Park Neighbors	Uptown, Chicago, Buena Park, Chicago	Lisa von D.	10 – 03 – ‘16	Coffee shop in Wrigleyville, Chicago
Chicago Grand Neighbors Association	West Town, Chicago	Lyn W.	10 – 03 – ‘16	Office in Downtown, Chicago
Rincon Family Services / Avondale Coalition	Avondale, Chicago	Angel R.	18 – 04 – ‘16	Office in Avondale, Chicago
South Loop Neighbors Association	South Loop, Chicago	Susan O.	03 – 03 – ‘16	Office in Downtown, Chicago

Table 2: Overview of interviewed organizations

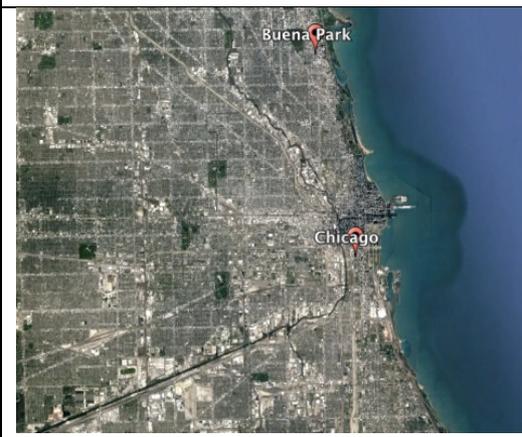
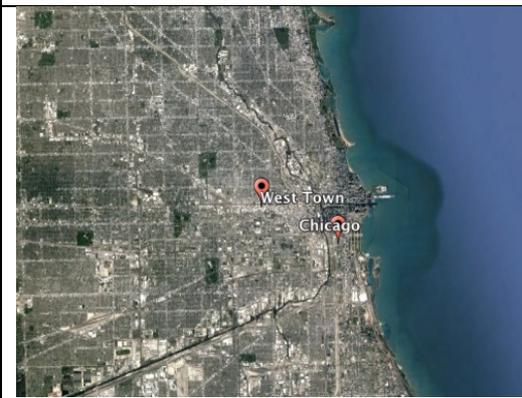
 A satellite map of Chicago, Illinois, showing the city's layout and Lake Michigan to the east. A red pin is placed on the northern suburb of Avondale, and another red pin is placed in the downtown area of Chicago. The labels 'Avondale' and 'Chicago' are visible on the map.	
 A satellite map of Chicago, Illinois, showing the city's layout and Lake Michigan to the east. A red pin is placed on the northern suburb of Buena Park, and another red pin is placed in the downtown area of Chicago. The labels 'Buena Park' and 'Chicago' are visible on the map.	<p><i>Location of Avondale, Chicago compared to Downtown Chicago. Source: Google Earth</i></p>
 A satellite map of Chicago, Illinois, showing the city's layout and Lake Michigan to the east. A red pin is placed in the South Loop area, and another red pin is placed in the downtown area of Chicago. The labels 'Chicago' and 'South Loop' are visible on the map.	<p><i>Location of Buena Park, Chicago compared to Downtown Chicago. Source: Google Earth</i></p>
 A satellite map of Chicago, Illinois, showing the city's layout and Lake Michigan to the east. A red pin is placed in the West Town area, and another red pin is placed in the downtown area of Chicago. The labels 'West Town' and 'Chicago' are visible on the map.	<p><i>Location of South Loop, Chicago compared to Downtown Chicago. Source: Google Earth</i></p>

Table 3: Locations of neighborhoods featured in this thesis

3.4 Research limitations

Due to the nature of qualitative research, ethical issues and challenges in qualitative research may be more pronounced than in other kinds of research (Hennink et al., 2011) Because qualitative research methods get in touch with perceptions, beliefs and feelings of people it is needed to establish a trust relationship with the participants in the interviews. The closeness, which is then obtained in this relationship, demands to keep the acquired information secure by making the data anonymous. Interviewees also might enclose information that is not directly connected to the research, which might be sensitive and thus must be kept confidential. Mitchell and Draper (1982) in Clifford et al. (2010) state that to behave ethical in geographical research requires that 'you and I act in accordance with notions of right and wrong – that we conduct ourselves morally' (p.35). According to Hay (1980) in Clifford et al. (2010) there are two practical arguments as to behave ethically while researching. Firstly, ethical behavior protects the rights of people involved in interviews. Secondly, ethical behavior helps to assure a more favorable climate for the continued conduct of scientific research. When not behaved ethically, it might occur that communities lose trust in scientific research and wish not to participate anymore in scientific research projects. Accumulated public trust may enable continued research without causing suspicion among the people who are the hosts of researches. The information gathered by interviewing the representatives from the organizations will thus be handled with care. Also because this research gets in touch with beliefs and perceptions of the participating representatives and does not use anonymous surveys, the obtained information will be handled fairly and in the process of examining the interviews words will not be twisted.

As several research methods and research designs exist, for every method and design strengths and limitations can be formulated. Regarding case studies Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001) state that they are not 'generalizable in the conventional sense' (p.9). They state that there is no way to base, that specific data from a case study can be exemplar for a larger population. The case study used in this thesis will therefore not be used to generalize but as a starting point for compilation of new information regarding social media and neighborhood organizations and for possible further research. In-depth interviews will be used to examine the organizations more closely. Hennink et al. (2011) mention four main limitations, which might restrict in-depth interviews. Firstly, in-depth interviews are one-to-one. No feedback is possible from others. Feedback on interviews might strengthen and improve the research position in upcoming interviews and might obtain more information for the researcher. Secondly, skills are needed to establish a relationship with the interviewee and to use motivational probes. Also, it is required to listen and react to interviewees. As in-depth interviews normally last for about 45 minutes to one hour it is needed to be focused the whole interview. Thirdly, it is required to have flexibility regarding the change of topic order because interviewees might tell their story in a different order than before imagined. Fourthly, a lot of transcription is needed to fully understand the interviews in the period after the execution of the interviews so the results can be erected on

the quotes, which can be found in the transcriptions of the interviews. These limitations will be kept in mind in the process of interviewing and processing the data.

4. Findings

4.1 How are neighborhood organizations in Chicago structured and what are their purposes?

4.1.1 Introduction

On behalf of the empirical part of this thesis, representatives of five neighborhood organizations were interviewed about how their organizations work and how they use social media. With exception of the Avondale Coalition the presidents of the organizations were interviewed. In the next segment the organizations will be introduced by examining what their goals are and the activities they practice because of their goals. At the end of this section, a short conclusion regarding the findings in this section will be given. All information discussed about the organizations in this segment of this thesis is derived from the semi-structured in-depth interviews. All organizations are community-based organizations, more specifically neighborhood organizations. The only exception is the Avondale Coalition which is part of Rincon Family Services, which is a community-based organization which does; *'mental health, substance abuse treatment and DUI (driving under influence)'*. The Avondale Coalition is part of this organization and focuses specifically on the Avondale neighborhood where as the Avondale Neighborhood Association was founded as a neighborhood organization. In advance of this chapter it is needed to disclose that it was sometimes hard to get the right answers (focused on this particular research scope) from interviewees because of their mental framework. Their thinking and therein their answers about their use of social media might be influenced by their day-to-day practices with social media and positive and negative experiences with it. In the conversations it turned out that it was hard to keep the interview on track with the research questions as a focus, often the participants wandered off and started talking about other urban issues. Of course, useful information was obtained, regarding this research and an attempt was made to formulate their answers and experiences as concrete and clear as possible.

4.1.2 Avondale Neighborhood Association

The slogan of the Avondale Neighborhood Association is; *'Avondale Unites'*. Their main goal is to bring people together around common goals. They state that they try to *'connect people to politicians, keep up with what issues are happening in the neighborhood.'* Those 'issues' can be found in for example zoning changes and particular crime incidents. The Avondale Neighborhood Association does not primarily care only about zoning changes and crime, they also host events. Examples are a cleanup for Earth Day and a restaurant crawl. They do these things to make people *'appreciate the neighborhood and bring them together'* as told by their president. Including people in their organization through inviting them for social events might thus probably also interest them in more important issues like neighborhood crime. Temkin and Rohe (1998) state that neighborhoods with higher levels of social capital do not experience that much urban decline compared to neighborhoods with lower levels of social capital. The social

capital, which according to Putnam (2000) is created by participating in associations, created by the Avondale Neighborhood Association might thus be beneficial for the social state in which the neighborhood is in and might also link individuals from the neighborhood to the neighborhood association. This also relates to Bowles and Gintis (2002) who state that communities, and the organizations embedded therein, can address problems, like the neighborhood crime in Avondale, because those problems cannot be addressed and handled only by individuals acting alone or governments alone. This stresses the crucial roles of neighborhood organizations in their social and physical environment.

According to the Avondale Neighborhood Association the organization also tries to include different languages, ethnicities, incomes and ages because those various groups of people live in Avondale and they want those people to be proud of the neighborhood and want them having a voice when needed. The neighborhood has seen a transition from a primarily Polish neighborhood to being more *'Latino over the last years'*. The last step, according to the Avondale Neighborhood Association, has been the influx of white people and families into the neighborhood. Relating to this new influx of people in Avondale, the Avondale Neighborhood Association argues that they try to help to balance out the gentrification in Avondale by reaching out to both the people who have been there for a while and also to new people moving in. In this way they think to let the neighborhood *'change slowly with everyone'* instead of *'being flipped over'*. The Avondale Coalition also reaches out to people who do not speak English. An example is communication through social media in Spanish and Polish and a seminar they give on renting apartments in different languages. This might also include non-English speakers in wider decision-making about their neighborhood (Kearns, 2004).

4.1.3 Buena Park Neighbors

Buena Park Neighbors is a neighborhood organization situated in the south end of Uptown in Chicago. The main goal of their organization is according to Buena Park Neighbors to *'improve the quality of life for everyone in Buena Park'*. They have a membership due structure where people have to pay twenty dollars a year for their membership. Just like the Avondale Neighborhood Organization, Buena Park Neighbors also focuses on social activities like a *'clean and green'* (cleanup) and *'safe trick or treating'*, as well as their involvement in zoning and planning development. Regarding zoning and planning, Buena Park Neighbors are like other neighborhood organizations involved with the alderman of their ward and discuss planning issues with him. This corresponds with Bailey (2012) who states that community-based organizations, which are a part of the civil society, are becoming more assertive in their wish to participate in policies which might ultimately lead to better planning processes regarding the social and physical environment of neighborhoods.

Buena Park Neighbors state that a difference between them and other organizations lies in the fact that they are situated in an area with a *'really low crime rate'*. Crime and safety issues are

not big to them according to Buena Park Neighbors. However, the neighborhood did suffer a lot from problems like drug abuse and prostitution about twenty years ago. As they describe themselves, they were founded because of these issues and they see a big role of their organization in the transformation of the neighborhood as stated below. *'I think the people that founded it and were in it originally, were passionate about dealing with these specific issues and they did make a difference, they did a really good job, and therefore the neighborhood got nicer. And now it's more social and diverse compared to when it was founded.'* Adding up to the social activities they organize, they are also involved with local businesses. Buena Park Neighbors state that Buena Park is mainly a residential neighborhood but that they are aiming to attract businesses, an example is their wish to have a breakfast and lunch place in their neighborhood.

4.1.4 South Loop Neighbors Organization

The South Loop Neighbors Organization was founded in 1997 out of concern about a potential development of an empty plot in historic Printers Row, an area just south of the Loop in Chicago. According to South Loop Neighbors Organization it took 10 years to be able to stop the building on the empty plot, with the result of a small park existing on this plot instead of a tall building. Years later they dropped the historic name and expanded their footprint. According to themselves, their primary goal is the concern about the development of buildings. Thus, the organizing of social activities is not their primary goal, unlike Avondale Neighborhood Association and Buena Park Neighbors. Their engagement in the development of buildings in their area lies partly in their involvement with their alderman's office as pictured in the following quote. *'We are very involved in the alderman's office. That's our government connection. When we have a complain we go to the alderman's office.'* Their involvement in their urban context is also visible in the engagement they have with the police department and their involvement in citizen action groups and other neighborhood organizations, like the Greater South Loop organizations. They state further that their organization tends to attract older retired people who describe themselves as empty nesters, something the previous discussed organizations did not mention. This might point to the fact that the demographics in the area their organization covers tend to be a little older.

4.1.5 Chicago Grand Neighbors Association

Chicago Grand Neighbors Association was formed in 2001 because residents in the area of the boundaries of Chicago Avenue and Grand Avenue were not able to join the East Village Association, another neighborhood organization, because this organization did not extend their boundaries to the south. A group of neighbors came together then and formed the neighborhood association for the purpose of *'having a forum for the residents'* and having a voice with their alderman, something previously seen in with the organizations discussed in this chapter. As Teorell (2006) argues that political participation of people can be seen as a political discussion which is aimed on the formation of opinions, this *'forum for the residents'* might,

because of its advisory nature, be a good way to let the wishes of residents resonate in policies regarding the urban environment in which the residents attached to Chicago Grand Neighbors Association live in. The representative of Chicago Grand Neighbors Association stated that their alderman respects the different community groups who have formal associations within his ward. In the late 1990s, according to Chicago Grand Neighbors Association, there was an alderman in charge who did not listen to his residents and was allowing developers to build high multi-unit housing. This was something the residents did not agree with and therefore led to the formation of the Chicago Grand Neighbors Association, a move which might have benefitted their voice in the changing dynamics of their environment.

Because of the voluntary nature of the organization Chicago Grand Neighbors Association, they state that attempting to erect committees committed to something other than zoning issues have not led to much success. An example is the *'clean and green'* also mentioned by Buena Park Neighbors, which has not had much success because they *'need to have other people help and organize and coordinate it'*. The voluntary nature of this organization might imply that their purposes mostly lie on issues in their neighborhood, which they think of as just as Important like zoning and planning issues. According to the organization, there is one thing the organization has excelled at, namely the formation of a sub-group of the Chicago Grand Neighbors Association focused on the use of green space as community gardens. Empty lots within the boundaries of the neighborhood were used and the people interested in these community gardens erected their own spin-off organization solely focused on gardening so they could manage their own money.

4.1.6 Rincon Family Services / Avondale Coalition

The Avondale Coalition is a part of Rincon Family Services which is a community-based organization which organizes, according to themselves, coalition meetings and does *'substance abuse prevention among youth ages 11 to 18'*. Rincon Family Services does *'mental health, substance treatment, DUI'*. The organization is based in Avondale like the Avondale Neighborhood Association, but has a different focus that lies more in substance abuse prevention than on neighborhood problems like zoning and planning issues. It was included to see which purposes an organization which also has roots in its community but which has different priorities has, and how they use social media in their connection with these roots. Adding up to their offer of mental health services to Avondale and their part in creating community capital (Hancock, 2001) herein, is their involvement in Avondale, which is visible through the social events they organize. Examples are events like barbecues, block parties and basketball games for Avondale's youth. They see schools as important factors in the neighborhood through which they can disseminate their information. Different from the previous discussed organizations, is the focus of the representative from the Avondale Coalition on face-to-face contact with neighborhood residents which is demonstrated in the following quote: *'I'm going to every meeting I can, and participate in everything that is going in the*

community, like I know the community, and the community can know me. So, that kind of makes you feel like that politician'. That's also the reason he visits schools to see trends developing in the neighborhood so he can directly react to these trends. How this face-to-face contact can exist next to their use of social media will be elaborated further on in this chapter.

4.1.7 Conclusion of chapter 4.1

The sub question discussed in this segment of chapter 4 is; *'How are neighborhood organizations in Chicago structured and what are their purposes?'* By examining transcriptions of semi-structured in-depth interviews held with representatives of five neighborhood organizations their structure, activities and purposes has been elaborated which might influence how they reach out to residents involved in their organizations.

First, the main goals and purposes of the organizations spoken with described with quotes from their representatives are for example; *'we want to bring people together around common goals'* (Avondale Neighborhood Association), *'improve the quality of life for everyone in Buena Park'* (Buena Park Neighbors). The organizations are all community-based non-profit organizations deeply tied to the neighborhood their members come from. A recurring motive is that they want to bring people together to deal with a common problem. The resurrection of the South Loop Neighbors Organization is a good example. To fight the development of high-rises and the disappearance of a small park they formed this community organization. Another common problem that led to forming a neighborhood group is described by Buena Park Neighbors. The trigger to the foundation of their organization is the drug use and prostitution problems the neighborhood had to endure about 20 years ago. The following quote supports this; *'It was founded because the neighborhood had a lot of problems at that point. There was a lot of drug use and prostitution. It was a shady neighborhood and so a bunch of concerned citizens came together and really made a difference. So that's how it got started.'* Clear is that the main focus of the organizations is on maintaining the neighborhood they live in with considering a wide array of aspects.

Second, not all discussed organizations use the same activities to maintain this state of their neighborhood. Whereas Buena Park Neighbors, beside caring about planning issues, also organize more social-oriented events like concerts in the park, safe trick or treating and the assemblage of Easter baskets for disadvantaged children, Chicago Grand Neighbors Association tend to focus more on keeping intensive contact with the alderman of their ward to keep up with zoning changes and planning issues.

Third, the connections the interviewed organizations have with residents of their neighborhood and other organizations like schools (Avondale Coalition), the city council and the alderman's office (e.g. South Loop Neighbors Organization and Chicago Grand Neighbors Association) offer

them opportunities to create and maintain social and community capital which can be used to be of support to their urban context and environment.

Last, another goal one of the organizations has is to *'balance out the gentrification'* (Avondale Neighborhood Association). The demographics of the neighborhoods are diverse. Where as the Avondale Neighborhood Association describe Avondale as a neighborhood which had a big influx of new immigrants of Latino descent and see more white families moving in because of this gentrification, the South Loop Neighbors Organization describe the demographics of their neighborhood more as *'Empty nesters, they're retired people whose children have moved out of the house. And instead of moving to Florida, they have always loved the city'*. This perception of the presumed demographics of their neighborhoods and the demographics of their own neighborhood organizations might also imply and influence their view and practices of the use of social media in their everyday practices in these organizations. This will, among other things, be further examined in the rest of this chapter. In Table 4 the differences and similarities between the examined neighborhood and community organizations are briefly summarized.

Differences between neighborhood/ community organizations	Similarities between neighborhood/ community organizations
Not all organizations and neighborhoods have the same demographics in terms of age and ethnic background. This might influence their views on their organization, their neighborhood and their use of social media in their everyday practices.	The organizations examined in this thesis are all non-profit organizations with strong ties to the neighborhood they are situated in.
Not all organizations use the same activities to maintain their neighborhood. For instance; the Buena Park Neighbors, Avondale Coalition and Avondale Neighborhood Association tend to put their focus more on social events, while Chicago Grand Neighbors Association and Chicago Grand Neighbors Association focuses more on planning and zoning affairs.	They all have a wish to bring people together around a recurring problem. For instance; high rise development, neighborhood crime or drug abuse. They all put effort in the maintenance of their urban context, the neighborhood.
Not all organizations have connections of the same strength with other organizations or authorities. For instance; The Avondale Coalition wishes to have strong ties with local schools and businesses, the South Loop Neighbors Organizations seems to have stronger ties with their local alderman and local government.	The connections the neighborhood and community organizations have are all used in the formation of social capital and community capital.

Table 4: Summary of differences and similarities between neighborhood and community organizations

4.2 Which opportunities and difficulties can the use of social media have for neighborhood organizations?

4.2.1 Introduction

Introduction and research scope

In this section the findings concerning the second sub question will be presented. The second sub question is; *Which opportunities and difficulties can the use of social media have for neighborhood organizations?* The findings will be presented by using the interviews with the representatives from the neighborhood and community organizations and related theories from the theoretical framework. First, the opportunities social media can have for neighborhood organizations will be discussed. Secondly, the difficulties social media can have for neighborhood will be discussed. Lastly, a conclusion will be drawn, relating to the findings in this section, to answer the second sub question.

As seen in the introduction by the reference of the 2003 study by Hampton, it's not a new trend that Internet supports neighboring. The trend that organizations use social media is a younger trend (Jiang et al., 2016). All of the interviewed organizations do use social media in their practices; some organizations use more platforms than other organizations. Facebook is used among all organizations and this is also still the main form of social media used by the organizations. The only exception is that Chicago Grand Neighbors Association only uses the group-function of Facebook whereas the other organizations have a 'normal' Facebook page for their organization. The goal of this thesis is not to research which platforms work best for the organizations but to evaluate their use of social media in their day-to-day business and as a whole to research what the opportunities and difficulties of this use are. Also this thesis does not try to give an extensive quantitative overview of organizational use of social media, but rather tries to discuss this topic in-depth to generate feelings and meanings regarding this topic. In this section the opportunities and difficulties social media might have for neighborhood organizations will be elaborated by examining the interviews and by comparing the interviews with the theoretical framework. In the next part of this thesis, the difficulties social media has for the organizations will be further examined. This being a quite experimental study all findings are based solely on the researched literature and the interviews conducted for this thesis and these might differ when researched in another urban context or with other research methods.

4.2.2 Which opportunities can the use of social media have for neighborhood organizations?

Availability social media

One of the opportunities the use of social media by non-profit organizations might have is that it is free for its users. Costs that might come with the maintenance of expensive websites might be evaded. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) argue that organizations do not need that much know-how to use websites on the Internet as strategic and interactive tools. Avondale Neighborhood

Association affirms this; they state that maintaining their organization's Facebook page is quite easy because it is freely available for their phone. Their representative stated that despite her limited accessibility to a computer she could maintain their social media platforms because of the easy and free accessibility to the social media networks through her mobile phone; *'So, now I can, if I see something in the neighborhood, I can take a picture of it and post it'*.

Participation and the interactive nature of social media

The interactive nature of social media can enhance participation (MacAfee and De Simone, 2012, Lovejoy and Saxton, 2012). Chicago Grand Neighbors Association mentions an example of this enhancement of participation in neighborhoods and therefore enhancement of social capital and community capital. For instance, in their Facebook group people will start social conversations about crime issues. Another example that started a conversation on social media is a water leak in the neighborhood, where people shared that *'the water was turned off for our block'*. This is a clear example of an easy purpose a Facebook group can have by enabling residents of a neighborhood to talk to each other and try to bond over the same issues and problems. Another example is neighborhood issues relating to crime, which are discussed on social media. Avondale Neighborhood Association argues that they try to take a humanitarian approach to an example they mention about homeless people living under a viaduct in their neighborhood. People also discussed this on their Facebook page, which started a conversation about this topic. This might lead to opportunities on handling and coping with this problem, which might open up a conversation about neighborhood affairs. Starting a conversation like this on social media might also be a difficulty for neighborhood organizations, which will be further examined in the next paragraph.

Further, the Avondale Coalition mentions one of the functionalities of social media namely; live streaming. When people involved in the Avondale Coalition cannot make it to a physical meeting they can use the live streaming features of GoToMeeting to attend it digitally. Where as Chen & Li (2017) state that social media can create channels through which people can interact with weak and strong ties that are spatially scattered, live streaming meetings might help organizations in the process of the formation of social capital, by enabling people who are physically absent to attend meetings through a digital channel.

Specific geographical dissemination of information and social media

The Avondale Coalition argues that social media applications like Facebook and Everyblock allow them to target a specific neighborhood in their pursuit to disseminate their information. Facebook, as well as Everyblock and Nextdoor allow their users to target a specific neighborhood. However, in Facebook this is a paid feature, compared to it being free on Everyblock and Nextdoor. This relates to the honeycomb of social media by Kietzmann et al. (2011). According to Kietzmann et al. (2011), users can form specific communities to create overview by setting membership rules and protocols in this case a geographic boundary which is set to disseminate information goal oriented. Because of the specific audience that can be

reached by using these features, which target specific geographical locations, it might help organizations to narrow down their dissemination of information to a specific audience. The use of social media might become more effective through this feature.

The Avondale Neighborhood Association describes a different kind of specific geographical dissemination of information about Avondale and their organization, for residents of their neighborhood. They used DNAinfo, an online newspaper that *'offers hyper local news'*, distributed both digitally and as a physical local newspaper, to publish an advertisement. She further states that she put out this advertisement on this medium to get their *'name in the hands of people who don't use Facebook'*. This way of announcing information might be a helpful addition to solely relying on digital mediums. Also it might be inclusive to residents who do not use social media and still depend on older mediums.

Presence and visibility and social media

The Avondale Coalition stress the importance of face-to-face contact in the expansion of their network; *'The face-to-face always. In my line of work I put it first. My face-to-face, my building relationship is first. However, but the bombarding of my social media comes as support'*. Organizations that use social media appear to be more transparent than organizations that do not use social media (Harquail, 2011, in Attouni and Mustaffa, 2014). Also, Bashir and Aldaihani (2017) argue that the use of social media by an organization can provide them an increase in their online presence, which might enhance their overall presence and visibility. The representative from the Avondale Coalition endorses this further by saying that when he meets people face-to-face he asks them to grab their phone and asks them to start following their social media networks. This more aggressive form of dissemination of their social media might foster their publicity to the wider public. About using different forms of social media by their organization and the wish to start using new platforms their representative states; *'I always keep an open mind, especially when we are targeting young people and therein something else. I'm using Facebook. Young people are not on Facebook, they're using Twitter. So if I'm not doing Twitter, if I'm not doing Instagram, then I have lost the youth that I'm trying to target. So this right here is to keep our goals, engage and inform.* Kietzmann et al. (2011) argue in their earlier mentioned *'honeycomb of social media'* that relationships on different platforms differ because of the specific nature of different social media platforms. Younger people might have different desires and opinions of social media platforms than older people.

Thus, targeting different audiences, for instance younger and older people, via different social media platforms might offer organizations the possibility, just like the geographical boundary feature, to reach younger people, more specifically with Twitter or Instagram opposed to the older crowd to which Facebook might appeal more. This opportunity of reaching a broader and more targeted audience might require commitment to maintain all these different forms of social media, which can be hard for organizations whose board members are only part-time available. The demographics of a neighborhood and therein the neighborhood organization

might also matter. Social media might be less appealing to older people in general and, as seen before, younger people might have other preferences to which social media platform they use as opposed to older people. These implications will be further examined in the next paragraph. The desires of residents regarding the types of social media used by neighborhood organizations might be an interesting follow-up study to this thesis.

4.2.3 Which difficulties can the use of social media have for neighborhood organizations?

Introduction

In the theoretical framework, a lot of literature has been discussed about the opportunities social media might have for neighborhood organizations. In literature there has not been a lot written about the difficulties that come with use of social media by neighborhood organizations. As has been seen in the previous paragraph, there are quite some ways in which the use of social media, in the organization's day-to-day business, offers them opportunities. In the remainder of this chapter the difficulties that come along with the use of social media, according to the conducted interviews, will be examined.

Hypotheses about use of social media by neighborhood / community organizations

Two hypotheses about the use of social media by neighborhood organizations have been made at the end of the introduction to this thesis. The first hypothesis deals with if neighborhood organizations are coping in a good way with social trends in quantitative and qualitative changes of the use of social media. The second hypothesis deals with if neighborhood organizations use social media as the primary form of communication. As supported by Johnson and Haleboua (2015), not all residents from a certain neighborhood might use social media. Communication to neighborhood citizens via social media might thus be selective because only residents involved in social media might get involved in neighborhood business. These hypotheses and other issues concerning difficulties tied with the use of social media will be further examined in this paragraph.

Social capital, face-to-face contact and social media

Social media can facilitate the generation of social capital as has been elaborated in the theoretical framework by examining literature by among others, Ellison et al. (2007). The representative from the Avondale Coalition argues that in order to disperse information about his organization he prefers face-to-face contact above the use of social media. He states that *'they really have to get to know us so they know what we are doing and to build that relationship with people. If it interests them they will come to our meetings Like, I say when you talk with someone, you get a feel for them. And, social media, you get some information, if you want to come out, you come out. When you come out you feel kind of lost. But if there is that little touch of a person shook your hand and gave you information and gave you his card, it makes it a little bit better.'* In the process of creating and maintaining social capital by reaching out to neighborhood contacts, face-to-face contact might thus be a better method for certain

organizations opposed to using social media as a method for the formation of social capital by reaching out to neighborhood contacts and getting in touch with new contacts. When new contacts are met in person, social media might help the organization to keep in touch with them and can therefore maintain social capital.

Positive and negative behavior of residents on social media

One of the difficulties that arise by using social media in a neighborhood context is the 'yelling' and 'trolling' of local residents on the neighborhood organization's social media pages. The Avondale Coalition says they do not get a lot of negative responses on their social media platforms. The representative assumes the mainly positive responses, on their social media platforms, stem from their supporting role in the neighborhood as a prevention and education counseling office. He further states, regarding social media use by other organizations that 'if we were a different organization and we were liable for zoning changes, we allow it, or we allowed them to build a school, and we have nothing to do with that. We're not in it you know.' How residents behave on social media might thus derive from the type of organization that utilizes social media for certain purposes, this will be further discussed in the next paragraph.

Further, the Avondale Neighborhood Association argues that 'social media is so tricky when it comes to neighborhood stuff'. Neighborhood meetings regarding, for instance, a zoning change, can attract, according to their representative, 'a weird group of people'. The same issue is apparent on their social media platforms, where on their Everyblock there is a lot of yelling and yelling about yelling. Also the South Loop Neighbors Organization has to endure people 'trolling' their posts on Facebook. Board members from this organization try to generate activity by regularly posting stuff on their Facebook but to a certain degree as supported by this quote; 'I'm trying to not post too much about something because trolls will come out of the woodwork. There are these crazy people, I don't know who they are and where they come from. If you try to go on their Facebook page there is nothing there. I find that there is a lot of dishonesty and negative behavior out there.' As Macafee and De Simone (2012) state, the difference between traditional and digital media lies in the participatory nature of digital media. Digital media involves thus both consuming, participating and producing. Whereas neighborhood residents have free access to the organization's social media platforms, they can engage in the way they want which can also be by expressing themselves in a negative way. The South Loop Neighbors Organization further states that they think that the people who are reading their Facebook page are not actually from their neighborhood.

Additionally, the representative also states that she thinks that if people really have questions about anything in particular they will have a look at the website, because social media 'is certainly not the best place to get information about the neighborhood from us'. All of the interviewed organizations still use email as the medium to send their weekly or monthly newsletter. Whereas social media might seem a good medium to disseminate information and to start a conversation about neighborhood topics, it seems that sometimes a discussion is

started on social media, that includes yelling, trolling and negative behavior regarding neighborhood issues. It also appears that neighborhood organizations might not have enough confidence in social media to totally rely on it to disseminate information regarding neighborhood issues.

Web-based organizational software and social media

Buena Park Neighbors state that they are in the process of moving their membership to a web-based organizational software tool called Wild Apricot. Their representative states that it is a full service for community organizations which is related to their website and their members and is used as a link between the organizations, its members and its website. Social media might not give them all possibilities Wild Apricot can give them for their daily business, which might mean that even when social media is free, it can not replace all current programs they already have been using for connecting their organization to their members. Social media might be an addition, which plays a supporting role, to already used software.

Maintenance of social media

The maintenance of social media platforms is an issue apparent by some of the interviewed neighborhood organizations. Because social media platforms need maintenance and board members have to put effort in this to do this maintenance. Chicago Grand Neighbors Association states that they do not want a Facebook page instead of a Facebook group; *'Here again, it gets down to people. Members and people wanting to only use it but not manage it. And it is the administrative side of things that those of us who sit on the board. If there is somebody who is willing to volunteer and take a job of administrating something then we would figure out a way to do it'*. It seems that this organization actually wants more involvement in social media but that the administrative side of social media does not appeal to them. The representative from Chicago Grand Neighbors Association further argues that not all of their board members are actually on Facebook, so that's another difficulty that arises with this maintenance of their social media. The representative from South Loop Neighbors Organization underlines this also more or less; *'I think that if I could find somebody that had the interest and know-how to utilize it better. I have board members who use Facebook but I have yet to find a person who is geeky enough or has enough time I don't need help, I just need somebody to do it.'* To the question if they wanted to use other forms of social media in the future added to the ones they already have been using, the representative from Buena Park Neighbors answered affirmative. Her biggest concern was her own assumed limited capability regarding use and maintenance of her social media platforms. She continued that she would be; *'overjoyed if someone from the community who is more fluent with that stuff and wants to do it. I just can't do it.'* The demographics of a neighborhood and therein the membership of a neighborhood organization might be a difficulty for the neighborhood organizations. People who do not or assume they do not have the capabilities to use social media in a useful way, might be anxious to handle this maintenance themselves and might rely on other involved members of their organization who might be absent when needed.

Neighborhood demographics and social media

Both the representatives from Chicago Grand Neighbors Association and South Loop Neighbors Organization state that the demographics of their organizations are pretty old. For instance; the South Loop area, according to South Loop Neighbors Organization, is populated by a lot of 'empty nesters' that are retired people whose children have moved out of the house. An implication of this might be that when a board of a neighborhood organization is made up of 'older people', who might not be that engaged with digital media like social media, it might mean that it is hard for them to keep up with new social media trends and that the maintenance of their social media platforms is something they need help with, which they do not have easy access to. Not only might the demographics of a neighborhood affect the ability of the board to maintain their social media platforms. Another implication that can be made relates to previously mentioned Johnson and Haleboua (2015), which is when the demographics of a neighborhood are made up of older people, like in the previous examples, it might be hard to disseminate information via social media because of its exclusive nature. Not all younger and older neighborhood residents might be engaged in the same social media platforms. Only the residents who have certain social media platforms might thus get involved in the neighborhood organization. Buena Park Neighbors further conclude that they think that they do not use social media that effectively. They hope that a volunteer in the organization will help them in the future to get involved in platforms like Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat to get a broader range of citizens involved. She also hopes that she will get more feedback from their members about how they utilize social media. The Chicago Grand Neighbors Association states that she believes that Facebook and e-newsletter are two ways of communicating with the public. She also wishes that there was a non-electronic form of communication to reach out to older Hispanic people in their neighborhood, who do not necessarily use Facebook. She further also realizes that this would be to expensive and time-consuming for their organization.

4.2.4 Conclusion of chapter 4.2

Whereas the open conversation that is possible on social media might enhance participation, it can also be a difficulty for neighborhood organizations. The Avondale Coalition experiences mainly positive behavior on their social media platforms because of their role as a neighborhood supporting organization. Avondale Neighborhood Association and the South Loop Neighbors Organization also encounter negative behavior on their social media, regarding neighborhood affairs. People can speak freely on social media without someone filtering these reactions and this can lead to people yelling, trolling and negative behavior.

All five interviewed organizations still rely on their websites and emailed newsletters to inform their members and the wider public, the interactive abilities that social media offers are just partly used. By using social media as a non-profit neighborhood-based organization, a specific targeted audience can be reached, in this case residents from the neighborhood they are based in. It might help them to specifically disseminate information, but also might lead to people

from other neighborhoods interacting with the residents and organizations in a negative way, because the geographical boundaries of neighborhood are not that strictly maintained online.

Live streaming meetings, which is already carried out by the Avondale Coalition, might help organizations in connecting to residents who cannot attend physically. Because of demographic differences among neighborhoods it might be hard to target all residents with the same social media platform. Different social media platforms might be used for different purposes, for instance using GoToMeeting for live streaming and using Facebook for reaching out to citizens about planning issues. Different social media platforms might also be used to target specific age groups, like the Avondale Coalition is doing. However, not all organizations might have the know-how on how to use different social media platforms and its different features to the fullest extent. This might be due to their voluntary nature and their mostly older membership, which might explain the reason they still use more traditional forms of media. In Table 5 a brief summary of the opportunities and difficulties social media might have for neighborhood / community organizations is given.

Opportunities of social media for neighborhood / community organizations	Difficulties of social media for neighborhood / community organizations
Almost all social media is freely available and does not need expensive maintenance compared to Web 1.0 technologies like websites. Maintenance can also be executed on mobile devices.	The interactive and participatory nature of social media might enable residents to express their opinions, which can lead to both negative and positive behavior. Neighborhood organizations deal with urban problems and some of them have to endure negative behavior on their social media platforms.
The interactive nature of social media can enhance participation. Residents can have a conversation on social media about a certain topic, which might lead to solutions regarding neighborhood problems. Live streaming meetings can also offer organizations the opportunity to enable residents to attend a meeting digitally when they are physically not available.	Social media platforms cannot replace current programs, organizations already use for their daily business. Social media might be an addition, which plays a supporting role, to already used software concerning membership administration and information dispersion.
Information regarding neighborhood affairs can be geographically dispersed for a specific audience with social media applications like Facebook and Everyblock, so that residents can be addressed regarding a certain topic, which needs attention.	Social media platforms require maintenance. When people in organizations do not have the know-how or time to do this it might be hard to sustain the state of their social media, to renew the information on those social media platforms and to innovate by expanding their online presence to new social media platforms that might appeal other audiences.
Social media can offer neighborhood and community organizations an increased online presence, which can enhance their overall presence and visibility (Bashir and Aldaihani, 2017). When residents are met by neighborhood organizations in person, social media can be used to keep in touch with them and therefore maintain social capital.	The demographics in neighborhoods might play an important role in the qualitative and quantitative use of social media platforms. Organizations which are made up of an older demographic might use social media in a different way by using it and reaching out to the community then younger organizations. Using social media to reach out to people might also be exclusive as to people who do not use social media (Johnson and Haleboua, 2015).

Table 5: Opportunities and difficulties of social media for neighborhood / community organizations.

5. Conclusion and discussion

In the previous chapter brief conclusions to the sub questions of this thesis were given. In this chapter, the main question of this thesis will be answered. The results will also be briefly discussed in this chapter. In the next chapter, the work done in this thesis will be reflected upon.

Following the conceptual model (see: *2.5 Conceptual model*), communication through social media might facilitate the formation of social capital and community capital. The benefits of the formed social capital and community capital, in turn flow back to the residents, organizations and urban context. The theoretical framework and conceptual model see social media thus mainly as an opportunity for neighborhood organizations. In the findings, difficulties regarding social media use also have been determined. Regarding the found theories in the theoretical framework, the one thing that stands out is the possible opportunities social media, a Web 2.0 technology, might have for non-profit organizations. Non-profit organizations were not able to use Web 1.0 technologies as a 'strategic, interactive organizational communication and stakeholder engagement tool' (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012, p.2). The organizations still rely on old digital methods of disseminating information like websites and newsletters via email. These old methods might not offer the organizations an easy and interactive way of getting feedback about how they operate. Whereas a website is part of the public face of the organization, social media, a Web 2.0 technology, might help them to strengthen this public face according to literature as described by Macafee and De Simone (2012). They state that the difference between traditional media and digital media lies in the fact that digital media allows users to easily participate and also produce information compared to older methods with little to no possibility for interaction. Furthermore, a little know-how is needed on how to create these interactive websites with feedback options and discussion boards (Lovejoy and Saxton, 2012), social media usage can save nongovernmental money because they are available for free (Raja-Yusof et al., 2016) and social media can provide organizations the possibility to be more visible to their target audience (Bashir and Aldaihani, 2017), to name a few of the opportunities of social media use by non-profit organizations, compiled in the theoretical framework.

Organizations have to have the know how to use social media to its full extent as a stakeholder –management tool, otherwise it will not be used to what's it's capable of. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) already provided this hypothesis in the reviewed literature. Considering the finding, seen the interviews, that not all organizations from the case study have the know-how and support to use the social media to its fullest extent, because of their voluntary nature and mostly older membership, this hypothesis can, looking at these handful of cases be assumed. The organizations try to be the link between residents of their neighborhood, local other organizations like schools, and in the case of the neighborhood organizations, the local government, with the ultimate purpose to maintain the quality of life of the neighborhood they live in, as has been seen in the first paragraph of the results of this thesis. If the functionalities

of social media like *conversations* and *presence* (Kietzmann et al., 2011) are not used to its full extent because of incompetence of the organizations, the effectiveness of the use of social media might be questioned. As seen in the case of Buena Park Neighbors, organizations can also rely on other web-based organizational software tools to reach out to its members and residents. Social media platforms might, in this case, play a supporting role to other platforms. Another finding of the examination of the interviews is the fact that the open conversation that can be started on social media platforms can trigger both positive behavior, like the example of Chicago Grand Neighbors Association where a helpful conversation was started about a local water leak, as well as negative behavior, like the aforementioned 'yelling' and 'trolling', in the case of the Avondale Neighborhood Association and the South Loop Neighbors Organization, by people who might not even live in the same neighborhood as where the organizations derive from.

Further, the finding that not all organizations use the same activities to achieve their goals might also implicate their attitude towards social media. When communicating with members of the neighborhood organizations and local residents about a social activity, social media might be frequently used. However, when communicating with their members, the neighborhood organization might not use it that often for uses which align with their vision and purposes, for instance, actually using it for planning practices or to evaluate physical changes in their urban neighborhood context.

Lastly, one of the key findings is that demographic differences in neighborhoods seem to influence the communication neighborhood organizations have with their members and wider public in their neighborhoods. This relates to demographic differences both within neighborhoods itself as in neighborhood organizations. Neighborhoods and their neighborhood organizations might have older demographics and this might influence how they use social media. As shown in the examination of the interviews the organization's older board members have trouble with using and maintaining their social media platforms. The organizations also might not have the know-how about how they should use social media and which social media platform for targeting different age groups and in this way expand their involved public. The reason for this might also lay in their voluntary nature. This might affect their target audience involved in the organization and it might exclude people who do not use social media or social media platforms not used by the neighborhood organizations. In process of forming social capital and community capital by communicating in the neighborhoods, the use social media by organizations might be one of the approaches. The Avondale Coalition states that face-to-face contact is a better approach for them by reaching out to neighborhood connections while the Chicago Grand Neighbors Association wishes for a non-electronic form of communication to people who are not that engaged in social media.

To use social media effectively in the context of neighborhood organizations might need more effort than previously assumed. The interviewed organizations were quite clear about goals and purposes they have. However, they mostly spoke about their practical, technical and positive and negative experiences regarding social media use in the context of their daily business. Information and insight about how neighborhood organizations really pursue their goals and purposes by effectively using social media was only until a certain degree obtained. The importance of the use of social media as a free, mobile and user-friendly communication medium for neighborhood organizations to their target audience, the local residents cannot be denied. Nonetheless, social media as a complete replacement for the way neighborhood organizations are communicating to their public might seem at this point too excessive. Social media might therefore be a useful and welcome addition to the already used means of communication, because of its ability to generate social capital through the communication between people in the network of a neighborhood organization. This in turn benefits the organization itself, the local residents and the local urban environment they are both situated in. Social media might be used as a medium to maintain existing relationships in neighborhoods, which also maintains the social capital in those networks, which include residents and local neighborhood organizations. Social media, used by neighborhood organizations, might have the capability to replace older and more obsolete technologies like text-messaging and calling like Chen and Li (2017) describe in the near future. As of now it is but one of the means neighborhood organizations can use to pursue their goals and purposes.

Regarding the above-mentioned conclusions of this thesis, a couple of implications for practice can be formulated. By reaching out to possible new members and neighborhood residents, social media can be a useful tool for neighborhood organizations. When a resident has become familiar with an organization, social media can be used to keep the residents informed and can maintain a relationship and therefore the social capital in those networks. Attention should be paid to neighborhood residents who do not use social media. When only social media is used by the formation of social capital through the dissemination of information and reaching out to neighborhood residents, exclusion of non-users might be possible. By reaching out to local residents and new possible organization members, attention should also be paid to demographics. Different social media platforms might have age-specific different user groups. Neighborhood organizations need to take the social media preferences of their target audience in mind in the process of disseminating information to local residents. This might mean that neighborhood organizations have to diversify the information they spread on their range of used social media platforms so that the right information is published on the right platform with a certain audience in mind. Last, neighborhood organizations should take into account that maintenance of social media platforms might take a fair share of time, when an organization wants to use social media to its full capacity. Putting up relevant information, which triggers active participation of local residents, might need somewhat social media platform specific knowledge and experience.

This study, being quite an experimental study, has researched a not often researched field of study, namely how neighborhood organizations use social media in their day-to-day business. One of the key articles that has been used to conceptualize the problem statement of this thesis is Johnson and Haleboua (2015). They did not only focus on the opportunities social media might have for non-profit organizations but also focused on the difficulties social media might yield. As has been seen in the results and conclusion, there have almost been as many difficulties as opportunities of social media discovered in the evaluation of the interviewed organizations. The role demographics play in how neighborhood organizations function might need further research. As has been pointed to, neighborhoods with older residents might have other preferences regarding social media platforms than younger neighborhoods. Ethnic differences in and between neighborhoods might also play a role in the preferred form of social media used by their local neighborhood organizations. This is something that has not been found in this thesis because the neighborhood organizations, which are interviewed, derive from neighborhoods, which can be typified as already gentrified or gentrifying neighborhoods with mostly the same ethnic diversity and population structure. Another point of interest for future research might be the role social media platforms, including live-streaming features, can play for non-profit organizations. By using live streaming platforms in meetings, organizations might reach a larger target audience and it might ease members to be more actively involved because physical presence in meetings is not longer required.

6. Reflection

In this section of this thesis, there will be reflected on the work that has been done to come to a conclusion regarding my problem statement. It was complicated to narrow my focus down to a certain scope to research. First, I wanted to make a comparison between the use of social media by neighborhood organizations in the Netherlands and in the United States. However, after researching the situation in the United States, it seemed to be elaborate enough and could also provide me with a lot of information. That's why I took a couple of neighborhood organizations in Chicago as a descriptive case study to research their evaluations of social media use.

The focus at the beginning of this thesis was more focused on how neighborhood organizations contribute to neighborhood renewal. Neighborhood organizations in the United States are actors in planning processes because of their deep involvement in their ward. They are more involved and have a bigger role than neighborhood organizations in the Netherlands. Neighborhood organizations in the US are also thoroughly involved in neighborhood change. In Chicago a lot of neighborhoods were gentrified over the last 50 years, in which the neighborhood organizations had their fair share of involvement. A couple of the organizations interviewed in this thesis were also founded because of certain changes in their environment and they wanted make themselves heard. Only focusing on these neighborhood organizations and how they use and evaluate social media use thus provided enough information to process in this thesis and to justify the chosen research object.

In this thesis a handful of semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to research the feelings and meanings representatives of neighborhood organizations had about the use of social media. Because there was not a lot known about the use of social media by neighborhood organizations this more exploratory method was chosen. More interviews could maybe have been conducted to see if other organizations had other opinions about social media use. On the other hand, the interviews elaborated in this thesis already provided me with an overflow of information, which was relevant for this thesis. In the process of interviewing the representatives, and reviewing the obtained information received from the organizations, a few things stood out. The mental framework the interviewees had, was different compared to mine. They were really focused on the positive and negative sides of their social media use and wanted to know if I could provide them with information to improve this use. The interviewees mainly talked from a technical perspective and mentioned not that often, what social media really meant for their organizations. Further, it was hard to keep the interviews on track. The interviewees talked very passionate about their neighborhood and their organization and also provided me with other information that was interesting but not focused on this thesis' research scope. Lastly, it was quite difficult to extract the right information from the transcripts, because of the semi-structured way of asking questions in the interviews. The organizations each had, in a way, their own point of view and focus, which they preferred to talk about.

Using a focus group in further research might provide insight about how people within an organization think differently about social media. Through this method, interviewees might also complement and correct each other, which might lead to nuanced answers. At the start of the process of writing this thesis I also wanted to conduct a social media analysis of the platforms of the neighborhood organizations. However, because I was interested in how the organizations evaluate their social media use, the social media analysis was not executed because that was focusing more on the content, such as the amount of likes and their activity on the platforms.

Regarding the organizations I contacted (Table 1 in 3.3.3) I got a quite low response rate, which might be due to the voluntary nature of the boards of the organizations. The representatives from the boards of the organizations, interviewed for this thesis, were on the other hand very kind and provided me with a lot of information about their organizations. It was quite hard to arrange the interviews because of the limited availability of the interviewees. Because I did not live in Chicago at the time, but in Champaign-Urbana, my travel time to and from the interviews was quite long. The executed interviews provided me however with sufficient information to base my results and conclusion on. The process of writing of this thesis also took some time because I was doing another master at the same time. From January 2016 until April of 2016, I was taking part in the NEURUS program in Champaign-Urbana in Illinois, at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. After these couple of months abroad I came back to the Netherlands to finish my two masters. The master of education in the field of geography required both an internship and another master thesis, which took me quite some time to complete until the summer of 2017. After that I started working to further finalize this thesis.

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