
The Frisian mienskip: who takes the lead?

A qualitative research on place leadership in improving liveability in the province of Fryslân

Master Thesis Socio-Spatial Planning

René van Schepen, s2599627

Supervisor: prof. dr. L.G. Horlings

University of Groningen – Faculty of Spatial Sciences

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Abstract

Mienskip became a frequently used concept during the event European Capital of Culture Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018. This 'renewed' concept of the Frisian community can be found in the rise of civic initiatives in the province, who take their responsibility in realizing certain ideas and needs regarding the liveability in their village. On the other hand, there is a certain governmental expectation towards the citizen involvement in the (local) spatial development. This thesis used this as a starting point to get an insight in how Frisian civic initiatives and governmental institutions take the lead in the improvement of the liveability in the province. After conducting a multiple-case study in four Frisian municipalities, there is tried to get an insight in the current course of events in Fryslân. In each case, a village coordinator and a member of a local civic initiative are interviewed to reveal the general relations between civic initiatives and governmental institutions in place-based development, place leadership and the mienskip. The following hypothesis, based on the theoretical framework, is being tested: *a coalition, consisting of civic initiatives and a governmental institution, use place-based development as a means to improve the liveability in their spatial area with the help of the mienskip.* The results of the multiple-case study indicated that civic initiatives take a more active lead in this process by their initiating role. Besides that, the municipalities have more facilitating role by means of their policy. Furthermore, the results indicated that both actors use place-based development in the improvement of the (local) liveability, but the results also indicated that there is no active coalition. Nevertheless, there is a certain co-production between the municipalities and civic initiatives which is expressed in the involvement of the local community, the mienskip, in this process.

Keywords: Place-based development, place leadership, liveability, civic initiatives, mienskip, coalition planning.

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Abbreviations

CI's	Civic initiatives.
CLLD	Community-led local development.
C2C	Cradle-to-cradle.
DOM	<i>Dorpsontwikkelingsmaatschappij.</i>
EU	European Union.
NGO's	Non-governmental organizations.
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.
SSA	Social Support Act.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Dutch province of Fryslân and its capital Leeuwarden were recently the center of attention as European Capital of Culture 2018 (Merk Fryslân, 2019). Cultural events were being organized in the city and across the province with the central theme “Iepen Mienskip” throughout the year: *“By bringing about change in the province, country and Europe in order to go from a community to an open community. By seeing the chances that appear and listening to new insights. By being flexible and adjusting without losing yourself”* (Merk Fryslân, 2019). The mienskip became a frequently used concept to promote the Frisian community by cultural events. But mienskip is not new; it is connected to the province of Fryslân for a long time. It stood for the resourcefulness of small Frisian villages in former times where communities had to bundle their strengths to prevent flooding. Mienskip is currently more used to describe the mutual connectedness of Frisians; the Frisian sense of community (Fries Sociaal Planbureau, 2016).

The Frisian sense of community can be found in the civic initiatives (CI's) of the province. The CI's are thriving in Fryslân, because of the rising amount of people who take their responsibility to realize certain ideas and needs, regarding the liveability in their neighbourhood or villages (Partoer, 2015). Therefore, CI's can be seen as an example of mienskip which deals with the current trends in the province as sustainability (Provincie Fryslân, 2018) and the ageing society (Fries Sociaal Planbureau, 2017). The rise of CI's in Fryslân fits in the national trend of decentralization, a governmental process which gives citizens more responsibility in the social domain in order to be less dependent on the welfare state. Moreover, the Dutch government encourages their citizens for active citizenship by policy (Verhoeven and Tonkens, 2013). The expected responsibility of the citizens will eventually increase when the *Omgevingswet* will be implemented in 2021. In this new environmental and planning act, the governmental institutions need to involve citizens more in the local and regional spatial development (Van Dalzen et al, 2017).

Citizens already have (in)direct influence on their living environment through CI's and this will increase when the earlier mentioned *Omgevingswet* will be implemented. This new act will probably change place-based development even further. Place-based development comprehends the use of the local capabilities and institutions to adjust spatial development and policies more to the local needs of an area (Hildreth and Bailey, 2014). This corresponds with the strategy of the European Union for more regional development (Barca et al., 2012). Place-based development asks for cooperation between the involved stakeholders like the government and citizens. This leads to co-production of both parties (Soares Da Silva et al., 2018) and can potential lead to the shift from government-led planning towards community-led planning (Meijer, 2018).

Moreover, co-production asks for a good cooperation between the stakeholders. Horlings et al. (2018) emphasizes that place leadership plays an important part in initiating and enabling place-based development. Place leadership is often referred as a cooperative and multi-level way of decision-making in contrast with the traditional top-down approach of leadership. According to Beer (2014), it can be seen as the ‘missing link’ in place-based development on sub-national level. In addition, governmental institutions have an important role in facilitating CI's. For example, through supportive rules sets and financial support for CI's. In this way, local governments could create a stimulating environment where CI's succeed to improve the liveability in their own neighbourhood or village (Bakker et al., 2012). Lastly, place leadership is assumed to be of great importance in setting these (in)formal rules sets and governing practices (Horlings and Padt, 2013).

This thesis focusses on how the earlier mentioned key concepts: place-based development, place leadership and mienskip takes place in the province of Fryslân. The question is how the Frisian governmental institutions and CI's cooperate in improving the liveability in the province. Also, because of the increasing presence of the community in spatial planning and development. These key concepts will be bundled in the following main research question: *How do civic initiatives and governmental institutions take the lead in improving the liveability in the province of Fryslân and how plays the mienskip a role in this?* Finally, the relationship between the Frisian community and place-based development gets attention; what is the influence of the mienskip on this whole?

1.2 Relevance

This thesis elaborates on the article of Horlings et al. (2018). According to this article, there is more research needed on the role of rural place leadership on place-based development in different institutional contexts. This thesis tries to indicate how place leadership leads to collective agency which results in *“mutually reinforcing processes of reflexivity and joint capacities built in collaborative activities, involving more actors over time”* (Horlings et al. 2018, p. 262). This will be done by conducting a multiple-case study research on place leadership which is focused on how Frisian civic initiatives and governmental institutions take the lead in improving and maintaining the liveability in the province of Fryslân. Besides that, the possible cooperation between both stakeholders could be an interesting example of coalition planning. De Jong (2016) refers to coalition planning as a necessary 21st century tool, where coalitions are needed to deal with (spatial) problems in the current dynamic world. This thesis will evaluate if the current course of events in Fryslân are a good example of coalition planning.

Concluding, the topic of this thesis lives among the Frisian society at the moment. Civic initiatives are a hot item in the province of Fryslân (Partoer, 2015; Fries Sociaal Planbureau, 2016). Partoer did research on the success and fail factors of Frisian civic initiatives where they summarized it as follows; *Minsken meitsje de mienskip* (People make the community). But Partoer did not linked their results to the concepts of place-based development and place leadership. Thereby, Frisian citizens are willing to participate in the development of the province. This became clear of the media attention this topic got in a series of articles in the Frisian newspaper the Leeuwarder Courant (De Vries, 2019)

1.3 Research questions

The main research question of this thesis is:

How do civic initiatives and governmental institutions take the lead in improving the liveability in the province of Fryslân and how plays the mienskip a role in this?

The following sub questions are being used to help answering the main research question:

- *What are the roles of the different actors in place-based development and how are these roles perceived in the potential coalition?*
- *How do the different actors express their leadership in improving liveability?*
- *What are the points of improvement for better cooperation between the civic initiatives and governmental institutions?*
- *How does the mienskip plays a role in place-based development according to the different actors?*
- *How do the different actors contribute to the mienskip?*
- *What are the strengths and downsides of the mienskip?*

1.4 Research goal

The aim of this research is to gain insights in the possible cooperation between CI's and governmental institutions about who takes the lead in place-based development. These insights will be gained by looking into the role of CI's and governmental institutions in this process of improving and maintaining liveability. The last year's attention to the mienskip will be used as reason to see what the connection is between the community and place-based development. This all we done by conducting a literature study and qualitative research. The literature study will give a theoretical background about the key concepts place-based development, place leadership and mienskip. In the qualitative research, semi-structured interviews are used to gain insights in the role of CI's, governmental institutions and the mienskip in this process. The findings of this thesis will give an overview in the current course of events, concerning the interplay between CI's and governmental institutions, in improving the liveability in the province of Fryslân.

1.5 Thesis outline

In chapter 2, the key concepts place-based development, place leadership and mienskip are being discussed in the theoretical framework. The used methodology to answer the main- and sub questions will be explained in chapter 3. The results of the multiple-case study are being discussed in chapter 4. In chapter 5, the findings of the multiple-case study will be linked to the used theories. In addition, an answer will be provided to the main- and sub questions. At last, there will be reflected on the research process in chapter 6.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the key concepts place-based development, place leadership and *mienskip* are being discussed. This will be done by reviewing relevant articles concerning these concepts. First, the development in planning practice will be shortly described to put the concept of place-based development into perspective. Second, the definition and significance of place-based development in improving liveability will be discussed. Followed by explaining the role of place leadership in place-based development. Lastly, relevant articles will be reviewed to dissect the *mienskip* and to relate this concept to place-based development.

2.1 Development in planning practice

2.1.1 Development in planning theory

To understand the significance of place-based development, it is important to have some understanding about the overall development in planning theory. In general, there has been a transition in planning theory from after the Second World War till now. This transition is explained in De Roo (2007¹) as the shift from a technical-rational planning approach to a communicative planning approach. In the technical-rational planning approach the government was in control and decided over formal planning and policies, and citizens were not involved in this top-down structure. Allmendinger (2009, p.50) emphasized that this approach of planning was based on the principle that it could be applied on “any situation where rational procedures for decision-making were appropriate”. This type of blueprint planning was a suitable option for Western European countries to rebuild quickly after the War in the 1950s and 1960s (De Roo, 2007¹).

The need for a more communicative planning approach came over time. Scholars as Faludi realized that the top-down approach was not the one-way solution to tackle the more complex spatial issues. He was besides an advocate of the technical-rational approach also critical on e.g. the systems theory. This theory was based on the idea that cities and regions were complex sets of connected parts and actors which could be controlled by planners (McLoughlin, 1969; Chadwick, 1971). According to these scholars, the interrelations in a city or region could be made quantifiable and attempts were made to translate these data into models. Subsequently, to make an understanding of the complexity of a city or region. However, cities or regions are not closed systems which are easy to predict (McLoughlin, 1969). Faludi (1987) criticized the systems theory, because it did not take the complexity and influence of other involved actors in planning practice into account.

The critique of Faludi on the systems theory was, among others, the prelude to a more communicative approach in planning theory. Therefore, the idea of a top-down planning practice got abandoned in the search to cope with the increasing uncertainty and complexity in planning issues. The communicative rationality was the response, and local or regional actors got more involved in the planning process (De Roo, 2007²). De Roo (2002) shows both approaches in figure 1. This figure visualized the shift in planning theory from a top-down planning approach, which is based on facts, to a bottom-up planning approach which is based on the interaction and values of involved actors. The “bulk of the issues” are representing the planning issues which are in need for one or another planning approach (De Roo, 2007²).

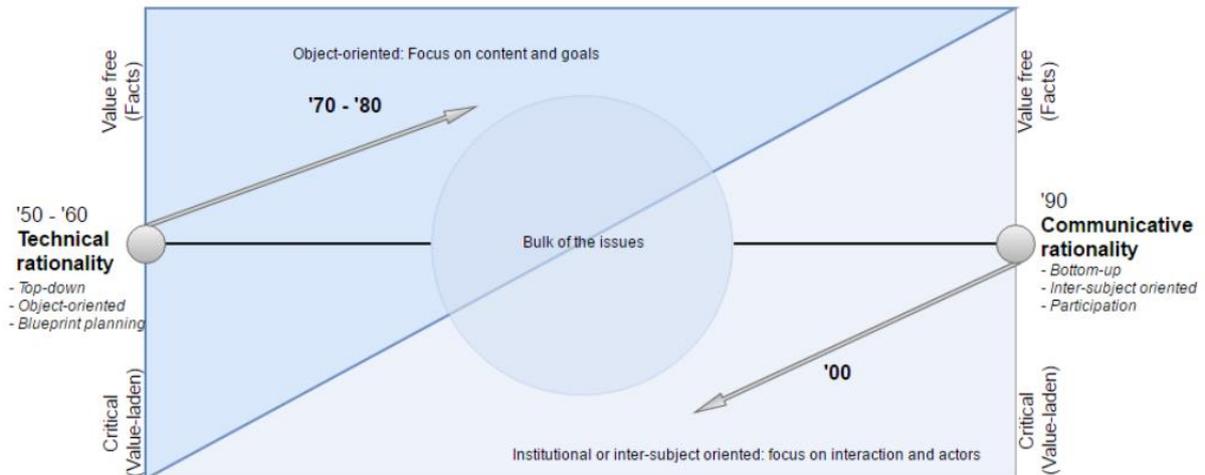


Figure 1: Development in planning theory over time (De Roo, 2002).

2.1.2 Development in Dutch (planning) policy

The development to communicative rationality can also be found in the development of Dutch (planning) policies. In general, Dutch citizens got more involved in politics and decision-making from the nineties. Kooiman (1993) described the changing interaction between government and society as a process called governance. This process included the sharing of tasks and responsibilities between the government and citizens and it was the introduction of new governing methods like co-production and public private partnerships. This corresponds with the characteristics of the earlier mentioned shift from top-down to bottom-up planning practices. Thereby, the Dutch government realized that the society could not be 'engineered' (*maakbaarheid*) by the government alone. It needed to be more democratic and accessible to citizens and, therefore, governmental tasks became more outsourced to society (SCP, 2001; Van Oenen, 2016).

This trend in Dutch governance continued in the years after the nineties. Verhoeven and Tonkens (2013) described the increasing responsibility of Dutch citizens in the light of the Dutch Social Support Act (SSA) which has developed since 2002. This often-called participation law implied that individual citizens needed to take their responsibility for making an active contribution to society. The government had a facilitating role in the SSA in, for example, supporting policymaking (De Klerk et al., 2010). Verhoeven and Ham (2010) expanded further on the role of the government in this search for active citizenship. Above all, the Dutch government was inspired by the Big Society agenda in the United Kingdom. This agenda embraced similar ideas of revitalizing the community by active citizenship. However, the Dutch government put more emphasis on the self-reliance of citizens. The earlier mentioned facilitating role can be found back in this government-steered stimulation of civic initiatives. People were not forced but stimulated and facilitated to behave as good citizens (Tonkens, 2009).

The Dutch government will put more emphasis on citizen participation in the upcoming years. Also, in the field of spatial planning due to the *Omgevingswet*. In this new environmental and planning act, local governments are obligated to give citizens a voice in the development of new environmental plans (van Dalssen et al., 2017). For example, the outlines of the spatial design will be set in a participative manner with its citizens. The underlying idea is that the *Omgevingswet* will lead to more citizen commitment and, therefore, to better environmental plans (van Dalssen et al., 2017). The implementation of the *Omgevingswet* is expected in 2021 (Rijksoverheid, 2019).

2.2 Place-based development

2.2.1 What is place-based development?

Place-based development fits in the trend of bottom-up planning practices and the definition includes the earlier mentioned aspects as the involvement of local or regional actors in the planning process. Place-based development comprehends the use of the local capabilities and institutions to adjust spatial development and policies more to the local needs of an area (Hildreth and Bailey, 2014). Bentley and Pugalis (2014) mentioned several aspects of the 'new' place-based paradigm for local and regional development. Key is to identify and utilize the growth potential of an area. In other words, to identify and utilize the human capital and innovative capacities, the capability of local institutions and the willingness of involved stakeholders of an area (Tomaney, 2010). In order to make place-based development work, Barca (2009) emphasized the vital role of institutions to guide this process. This can be achieved by promoting place-based policies which take the specific social, economic, cultural and institutional characteristics of an area into account (Barca et al., 2012).

Besides the similarities with bottom-up planning practices, place-based development has become of greater importance for European Union (EU) member states in the last decades (Horlings et al., 2018). This due to policies and development strategies like Europe 2020 which focuses on place-based approaches to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (European Commission, 2010). More recently, the European Commission promoted place-based development, under a different name, as community-led local development (CLLD) (European Commission, 2018). CLLD is in line with Europe 2020 and can be considered as a tool *'for involving partners at local level including the civil society and local economic actors in designing and implementing local integrated strategies that help their areas make a transition to a more sustainable future'* (European Commission 2018, p.8). This includes, for example, the provision of funding and knowledge by the EU.

But, the attention for local and regional development does not stand on its own and its origin is mainly based on economic reasons. Barca et al. (2012) state that place-based development got more academic and political attention through the consequences of globalization. Initially, economic geographers noted the uneven economic development between countries and, therefore, globalization brought the attention that place matters. International organizations like the World Bank and the OECD searched for solutions in place-based development to counter the effects of globalization. Eventually, the fundamental aspects of the place-based development policies were focused on tackling the problem of underdevelopment and social exclusion (Barca et al., 2012).

Since this thesis will only use place-based development in the context of socio-spatial planning, the definition of Hildreth and Bailey (2014) will be used to describe place-based development in the remaining parts of this thesis.

2.2.2 Importance of place-based development

To stress the importance of place-based development it is important to know more about 'place' itself. Also, with an eye on the possible relation between place-based development and liveability; how can place-based development lead to the improvement of livability of places? The meaning of place is frequently described in literature related to space and place. In the literature there is agreement that place is seen as a dynamic outcome of place-shaping actors and processes (Ingold, 2008; Woods, 2016) and a node in a wider network of places and relations (Massey, 2004, 2005).

Horlings (2016) acknowledges this by translating the given definitions of place in three points. These three aspects of place are especially relevant in *"the context of the much needed societal transformation toward sustainability"* (Horlings 2016, p. 33) First, place can be seen as a space of sensemaking. In this process, people give meaning and value to a place based on e.g. their own

experience, feelings and thoughts (Chapin and Knapps, 2015). Second, place can be seen as an arena of negotiation, where place-based debates and power struggles occur. This is, for example, a reaction of local citizens when a specific place-identity is in danger (Horlings, 2016). At last, place can be seen as a site of policy interventions. This last point is most related to place-based development and is focused on facilitating place-based policies to enhance bottom-up actors and processes (Leach et al., 2012).

The three mentioned aspects of place have in common that people are involved in the process of place-shaping. Place-shaping can be considered as a supporting process within place-based development and is often associated with sustainable development (Horlings, 2016). The author states that sustainable place-shaping connects people to place. This transformative agency of human actors in spatial planning helps to shape places to the preferences and needs of local citizens (Westley et al., 2013). Hence, the intervention of people or collectives leads to differentiated outcomes in places over time e.g. on a social and economic level (Gertler, 2010). Therefore, people have influence and power in the development of a place. According to Horlings (2016), the transformative power of people in sustainable place-making occurs in three processes. The first one is called re-appreciation and is associated with socio-cultural processes e.g. how actors use sensemaking to appreciate their place again. The second process is called re-grounding and is linked to ecological and cultural place-based processes which are influenced e.g. by other communities, technology and historical patterns. The last process is called re-positioning. This type of place-shaping is aimed on changing the current political-economic landscape of an area, which are shaped by globalization. Examples of repositioning are the creation of 'other economies' or non-profit cooperatives aimed at social or ecological goals rather than economic goals (Gibson-Graham, 2008). These processes of sustainable place-shaping are visualized in figure 2.

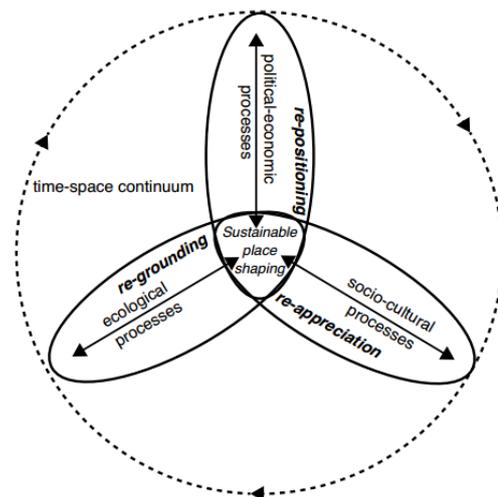


Figure 2: Processes of sustainable place-shaping (Horlings, 2016).

Looking at the given definitions, place-based development could be considered as a relative inclusive planning practice which includes some important assets of the meaning of place. It includes local and regional actors, who have the sense of place, to adjust the spatial development to local needs and, thereby, it could prevent that a place changes in an arena of negotiation.

In addition, place-based development can be associated with a place as a site of policy-intervention, because place-based development is focused to use and promote the intrinsic strength of a place through policy making. It is worth mentioning that this comparison is based on theory and not tested in practice. Although, it can be concluded that place-based development considers the importance of the different assets to shape places.

2.2.3 Relation between place-based development and liveability

As mentioned, place-based development includes local actors to adjust spatial development to the needs and desires of a certain place. The human factor of place-shaping in this process is related to the improvement of liveability in urban or rural areas. For example, Gallent and Wong (2009) emphasize how place-shaping is linked to the improvement of liveability in England. Key is the desire to create sustainable communities "that will last and that people want to live in and be part of" (Gallent and Wong 2009, p.354). The increasing resilience of a place or region, which is entailed in this process

(Taylor, 2012), could also have a positive effect on the liveability, because local actors can indicate the specific needs and desires in the process of place-based development. Nevertheless, the success of place-based development partly depends on the quality of the governmental institutions and about who takes the lead in this process (Rodríguez-Pose, 2013).

To get a better understanding of the relation between place-based development and liveability, it is important to define liveability in the context of place-based development. The definition of liveability is often described in literature and it differs in which context it is used. In Gielings and Haartsen (2016, p.577) liveability is described as follows: [liveability]... *“is commonly agreed to entail the degree to which the physical and the social living environments fit the individual requirements and desires”* (Pacione, 1990; Newman, 1999; Leidelmeijer et al. 2008). Additionally, Gough (2015) emphasizes the subjectivity of the concept and how liveability is related to the experienced quality of life in communities. Both definitions of liveability agree on the level of involvement of local citizens in place-making processes. Furthermore, Gielings and Haartsen (2016) made the distinction between urban and rural liveability. In urban context, liveability is seen as indication of the collaboration between residents in local communities to protect the quality of the direct living environment (Douglas, 2002; Wagner and Caves, 2012). In rural context, the influence of the strong local community sense, *Gemeinschaft* or possibly the *mienskip*, is in first instance considered to be important for the rural liveability. The *mienskip* will get more attention in section 2.4, but the assumption about the strength of the local community is not undisputed. There are indications that the importance of the local community sense becomes less appreciated, because residents appreciate other characteristics of the rural area, like the green and quiet environment, more than the community life on itself (Steenbekkers and Vermeij, 2013).

Given these definitions, the perceived liveability of a place can be divided in an objective and a subjective part. Lough et al. (2016) used this division by identifying indicators to make liveability measurable. The objective indicators of liveability are mainly physical and can be measured, e.g. the quantity of amenities or amount of organized activities in a specific place. The subjective part of liveability contains mainly social indicators which can be identified by asking the perceptions of residents about their local environment, e.g. the feeling of connectedness to the community or the perception of safety. These indicators can be used for policy purposes to improve liveability in certain places (Lowe et al., 2016). In addition, policies are increasingly used to make places more liveable and sustainable by promoting well-being and by facilitating the necessary services and amenities (Gough, 2015). Hence, place-based development could be used to improve liveability through policies from governmental institutions or through place-shaping by local actors.

The given definitions and indicators of liveability will only be used as a tool in this thesis and will not be used to measure the level of liveability in a specific place. Therefore, the indicators of liveability will be determined inductively, based on the outcomes of the qualitative research. This choice is made to put the intended outcomes of place-based development into perspective and to test the hypothesis how place-based development contributes to the improvement of the liveability. These intended outcomes to improve liveability will be divided in an objective and subjective part as mentioned in this section.

2.3 Place leadership

2.3.1 What is place leadership?

In the previous sections, the transition from a top-down approach to a more bottom-up approach in spatial planning has been discussed and what place-based development means in this process. Furthermore, the possible relation between place-based development and liveability is covered from

the theory. But how place-based development is operationalized has not been discussed yet. As mentioned, the quality of governmental institutions and who takes the lead in place-based development is relevant to its success (Rodríguez-Pose, 2013). Therefore, the importance and the role of the different actors in place leadership will be discussed in the following sections.

Place leadership is different than the top-down association of leadership by itself (Westley et al., 2013). In Horlings et al. (2018, p.250) the following definition of place leadership, based on various articles, is given: *“place leadership is often referred to as shared, cooperative or collaborative, because of the challenge to deal with a variety of stakeholders and vested interests in places. It has been referred to as multi-agency, multi-level and multi-faceted and shaped differently according to various institutional and cultural contexts. It can support knowledge networking across thematic, organizational and administrative boundaries”*. Hence, place leadership can be seen as a cooperative and multi-level way of decision-making in contrast with the traditional top-down approach of leadership. Furthermore, place leadership is seen as a missing link to enable place-based development e.g. on the sub-national level (Beer, 2014). When looking at the given definition of place-based development of Hildreth and Bailey (2014) it seems logical that one or another actor should take the lead in this process. Especially, to enhance the use of local capabilities and institutions in adjusting the spatial development to the local needs of an area.

In the following three ways place leadership could be considered as an important part of place-based development. One way to enable place-based development is by policy-intervention and place leadership is assumed to play an important role in (re)balancing the (in)formal rules sets and governing practices (Horlings and Padt, 2013; Sotarauta and Beer, 2017; Sotarauta et al., 2012). Second, place leadership is considered important in building collective agency between the involved actors and organizations (Roep et al., 2003). Collective agency implies, in this context, the ability of the involved actors to improve their cooperation in place-based development in a more beneficial way (Wellbrock et al., 2013). This is related to the last point, namely place leadership could play a guiding and facilitating role in the development of new strategies. This to make a process of transformation happen (Westley et al., 2013) and to help ‘think the unthinkable’ (Horlings, 2010). This could be helpful for developing new ideas related to place-based development.

As mentioned, place leadership has a cooperative character according to the given definition. For example, place leadership could appear in the cooperation between civic initiatives, governmental institutions, NGO’s or the private sector (Collinge and Gibney, 2010). The overarching idea is that the involved stakeholders need to learn to cooperate with each other. This process of ‘joint learning-by-doing’ helps by building collective agency, which is in turn necessary for effective institutional reform (Roep et al., 2003). Therefore, place leadership is often referred to as collaborative leadership (Collinge and Gibney, 2010) or shared leadership (Horlings and Padt, 2013). The latter requires, besides the traditional network skills like teamworking, also collective sense-making and storytelling (Sotarauta, 2002). These skills of creating and spreading new knowledge relates to the guiding and facilitating role of place leadership.

In the following two sections there will be tried to provide an insight in which way the different stakeholders contribute to place leadership. The involved stakeholders in place-based development have a certain role in the process and place leadership could be considered as an important part to shape it. Due its multi-level character, the involved stakeholders could have a different power or interest in the improvement of the liveability of a specific place. Which in turn could have an influence on the decision-making and outcome of the cooperation between the involved stakeholders. Since this thesis focusses on how civic initiatives and governmental institutions take the lead in improving the

liveability in Fryslân, the influence of NGO's and the private sector on place leadership will not be further included in the theoretical framework.

2.3.2 Role of governmental institutions

The role of governmental institutions in place leadership will be discussed as first. In the previous part, it is made clear how place leadership is considered as important for place-based development, but the precise role of governmental institutions in place leadership has not been made clear due to its multi-level and cooperative character. However, it can be assumed that governmental institutions could play a facilitating and guiding role in certain aspects of place leadership e.g. in policymaking and building collective agency.

Horlings et al. (2018) describes partly the role of governmental institutions in place leadership. The definition of institutions, based on Amin (1999) and Gertler (2010), is given in the article as *"both explicit and formalized sets of rules, such as regulations, laws and organizations, as well informal or tacit rule sets or taken-for-granted 'rules of the game', e.g. habits, routines and social norms and values"* (Horlings et al. 2018, p.249). Thereby, the right balance between formal and informal institutions is needed to facilitate place-based development (Rodríguez-Pose, 2013). However, only the presence of institutions in a region, the institutional thickness, is not sufficient. According to Henry and Pinch (2001), institutions need to create a collaborative setting where the reforming of the (in)formal rules sets is possible. Therefore, Beer and Lester (2014) speak rather about the institutional effectiveness instead of the institutional thickness of a region. In this way, governmental institutions can take the lead in creating facilitating and effective policies and rules sets for place-based development.

Another way in which governmental institutions can express their leadership in place-based development is through capacity building. As mentioned in part 2.3.1, place leadership is considered as an important part in building collective agency between the involved stakeholders and organizations. Wellbrock et al (2013) stresses this point in its article by stating the key role of facilitating public policy in raising collective agency. Governmental institutions are herein designated to take the lead in creating these facilitating policies in collaboration with involved stakeholders like local citizens. Capacity building can be considered as the skill of the involved government to guide this process in a beneficial and effective way for all parties. Hereby, should be thought about the enhancement of the skills and resources of local citizens to participate (Lowndes et al., 2006). This process of building capacity and collective agency is, therefore, in line with the principles of place-based development, because it uses the local capabilities and institutions to improve spatial development.

Regardless of how governmental institutions take the lead in place-based development, not all efforts lead directly to more community empowerment or even increased liveability; community development is considered as a non-linear process (Cleaver, 2004; Gilchrist, 2009; Hegney al., 2008; McIntosh et al., 2008). Skerrat and Steiner (2013) emphasized the importance to strengthen local communities but warn for a naïve attitude towards capacity building. Capacity building does not occur spontaneously and therefore it needs some sort of guiding of local authorities. The authors examined the reasons of non-engaging communities in Scotland and they identified that the complexity within these communities needs more attention in the process of capacity building. The reasons of non-participating citizens implied e.g. the lack of time, previous negative experiences, feelings of not being heard or in-community power relations which withheld them from participating (Skerrat and Steiner, 2013). In addition, the opposite side of the enriching and dynamic nature of a diverse community, like the presence of inequality and incompatibilities, should not be underestimated (Gilchrist, 2009).

2.3.3 Role of citizens initiatives

In first instance, the role of civic initiatives in place leadership is less clear as the role of governmental institutions. Civic initiatives are for example not responsible for the public policymaking. Nevertheless, they are part of place-based development and their influence will increase when the Omgevingswet will be implemented in 2020 (van Dalfsen et al., 2012). To find out how civic initiatives could take the lead in this process, it is necessary to explain the definition and motives of civic initiatives. This to give some background about the intrinsic motivation of these organizations to contribute to the liveability in their place or region of residence.

This thesis will use the definition of civic initiatives given by Bakker et al. (2012, pp. 397) where they are defined as: *“collective activities by citizens aimed at providing local ‘public goods or services’ (e.g. regarding the livability and safety) in their street, neighbourhood or town, in which citizens decide themselves both about the aims and means of their project and in which local authorities have a supporting or facilitating role”*. There are several motivations of citizens to get involved in civic initiatives (Soares Da Silva et al., 2018). For example, Horlings (2017) describes the renewed interest in the community, place and local identity. Thereby, the facilitating role of the government can be related to this renewed interest (Moulart et al., 2005; Horlings, 2017). Citizens can also be motivated by economic reasons e.g. in the form of local energy cooperatives (Oteman et al., 2014) or social enterprises which are at the same time beneficial for the owners as the society (de Jong, 2016). At last, citizens can be motivated for personal reasons to fulfill certain citizen needs and necessities (Baker and Mehmood, 2015) or out of an idealistic point of view to improve the quality of their place (Horlings, 2017).

Thereby, the rise of civic initiatives fits in the development which the spatial planning in the Netherlands underwent in the last decades. The role of civic initiatives in place leadership can be explained from this perspective of active citizenship. This perspective of active citizenship also refers to the emergence of civic initiatives. According to the used definition, it could be assumed that civic initiatives take the lead through place-shaping and the development of new ideas for place-based development. In other words, civic initiatives could have an initiating role in place leadership. This also refers to the mentioned points of section 2.3.1 in which place leadership could be considered as an important part of place-based development. Where governmental institutions could take the lead in supportive policymaking and capacity building, civic initiatives could be the initiators of place-based development. The findings of Horlings et al. (2018) indicate, among other things, that place leadership in general plays a key role in initiating place-based development, but the research does not relate this role specific to civic initiatives. Hence, this thesis will figure out if civic initiatives have a possible initiating role in place-based development through place leadership.

To help ‘think the unthinkable’, citizens need a certain level of influence in decision-making in order to realize their ideas and plans. Arnstein (1969) translated citizen participation in the scientific well-known participation ladder, see figure 3. In this model, the different levels of citizen involvement are arranged in eight ascending steps from non-participation till full citizen power. The lowest two levels are placed under the ‘non-participation’-category; citizens have no influence in this stage. The first step on the participation ladder, *manipulation*, stands for a misleading form of participation in which citizens think they have a certain influence in decision-making, but have no say at all. *Therapy*, the second step, indicates the way in which the opinion of participating citizens on decision-making gets steered by the leading stakeholder, e.g. the government. Hereby, citizens get

distracted from the actual, important matters and are tended to agree with the less important matters initiated by the powerholder (Arnstein, 1969). Then, the level of citizen involvement increases in the following rungs placed under ‘degrees of tokenism’. In this category of symbolic participation (Woltjer, 2000) citizens are being heard, but the policymakers are still in charge. On the third level, *informing*, citizens are only informed by the leading stakeholder, but there is little room for feedback on the specific decision-making from the community. One step higher on the participation ladder, on the *consultation* level, the opinions of citizens are consulted e.g. by surveys or consultation meetings. But according to Arnstein (1969), consultation is often used to keep up the appearance of citizen participation. Ultimately, the first form of relatively ‘real’ citizen involvement arises on the *placation* level. Here are citizens invited to take place in, for example, advisory boards, but the leading stakeholders are not obliged to take their advice into account. The upper three levels under the category ‘citizen power’ describe the actual influence of citizens on decision-making till full citizen control. At the level of *partnership*, citizens stand alongside the powerholder in decision-making and the responsibilities are divided between the stakeholders after negotiation. Therefore, citizens have influence on e.g. the outcome of planning decisions. When citizens have a more dominant power in the decision-making of a certain plan or program, then the citizen involvement can be scaled at the seventh level called *delegated power*. This also includes the situation of citizens having a veto right when the negotiations with the power holder does not lead to a solution for both involved parties. Lastly, on the eighth level *citizen control* comprehends the citizens’ power on decision-making without the interference of other stakeholders, like governmental institutions. This level of citizen involvement gets criticized by Arnstein, because it creates the same sort of power inequality in decision-making for the other involved stakeholders as the reverse situation where citizens have no influence at all.

Since this thesis is not focused on analyzing the precise level of citizen involvement, the participation ladder will only be used as an indicator. This model is chosen to place the allowed level of citizen involvement in place-based development which is given by the relevant governmental institution. This will be done to determine the role and position of civic initiatives and the mienskip in a potential coalition with a governmental institution. In the end, civic initiatives need some level of involvement in decision-making to translate their ideas and plans into place-based development.

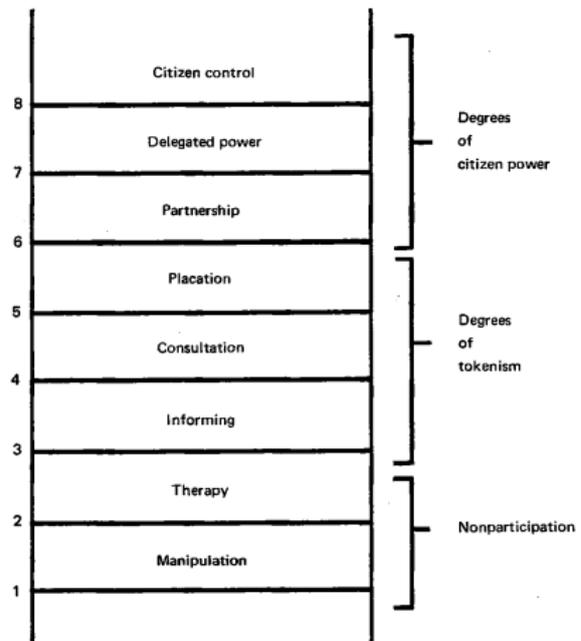


Figure 3: Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969).

2.3.4 Coalition planning

As already briefly mentioned in the introduction, coalition planning is seen as a necessary tool to deal with upcoming (spatial) problems in the current dynamic world. Coalition planning itself is defined as the collaboration of governmental, business and civic actors, in which they are considered as equal, in order to produce *creative solutions for complex problems* (De Jong 2016, p. 264). It is also seen as a bridge between individual and institutional approaches. This to work together to a set goal in which the different perspectives of the involved stakeholders are used to support the necessary decision-making in the form of *roles, rules and responsibilities* (De Jong 2016, p. 263). The central point made in this article is how the interplay between the different actors works. For this thesis it is interesting to see how a possible coalition between a governmental institution and civic initiative works in increasing the liveability of a certain village or area. Also, because of the similarities with the cooperative character place leadership.

How such potential coalition looks like in the province of Fryslân is difficult to predict from forehand. However, De Jong (2015) described a spectrum of three different coalitions in which the different roles and interplay between the different actors are explained in general. Figure 4 gives an overview of these coalitions. In the first coalition, the *directive coalition*, one actor has a clear leading role in realizing a certain goal with the other involved actors. This typifies the hierarchical character in which e.g. the municipality often has a stronger position than civic initiatives. Further, this coalition is characterized as institutional where mutual agreements, deadlines and trust are considered as important. Infrastructural projects are often carried out by a directive coalition (De Jong, 2015). The *collective coalition* differs from the first one, because in this coalition the different actors are equal to each other and work in consultation to realize a shared ambition. Therefore, there is no question of stakeholders in collective coalitions, because they are considered as shareholders in this partnership. According to De Jong, this type of coalition offers possibilities for governmental institutions. They can take on a facilitative or partnering role in this process, which might can be interesting with an eye on the described decentralization. Other characteristics are the shared responsibilities and that each actor makes its own contribution for achieving the mutual ambition. Therefore, it is expected that this type of coalition will be used more in urban planning (De Jong, 2015). The last coalition called the *connective coalition* assumes a more spontaneous way to realize a certain ambition. In this example, one or more initiators with a certain ambition motivate others to join. This is in contrast with the other coalitions, because these coalitions work from an already existing or a specially created arena of involved stakeholders. Connective coalitions are often linked to local, bottom-up initiatives in which everyone can participate and contribute with their knowledge, skills or creativity. Governmental institutions play often a facilitative role in these coalitions by providing them with the lacking skills and money (De Jong, 2015). Given these points of the spectrum, the three explained coalitions are only a theoretical indication and therefore an actual coalition could have the characteristics of all three coalitions.

Thereby, the descriptions of the described coalition have also some common ground with Arnstein's theory, namely the level of citizen involvement corresponds with the participation ladder. The citizen involvement in the directive coalition can be placed at the placation level of the participation ladder, because the leading actor makes the decision despite the participation of other stakeholders. The collective coalition relates the most to partnership, because the actors in this coalition are considered as equal shareholders in this collaboration. The citizen involvement in the last described, connective coalition can be placed between the delegated power and citizen control level. Although, the fact that citizens are in control of achieving their goals and ambitions, the government interferes in some way in their coalition by their facilitative role.

At last, what becomes clear of these sections about place leadership is that the collective effort of the involved actors, regardless of their role, is important to achieve certain goals and ambitions. For example, in enabling place-based development by using the strength of civic initiatives and the *mienskip*. A possible way to use the strength of civic initiatives and the *mienskip* is by involving them through the following principle in Van Dalfsen et al. (2017): *samen denken, samen besluiten, samen doen, samen leren* (think together, decide together, act together, learn together). This principle is designed for government officials to determine in which way and in what degree the civil society gets involved by the government in order to create more public value. In this context public value stands for the way how the government contributes to the society by deciding in favor of the common interest (Moore, 1995, in Van Dalfsen et al. (2017)). The different components will be explained shortly to determine, after the qualitative research, how the current cooperation of the (possible) coalition between the governmental institutions and civic initiatives looks like. *Samen denken* implies how the government and society think and discuss together about possible guidelines or policies, for example in consultation meetings. *Samen besluiten* stands for the shared decision-making of the possible plans and how these get realized. *Samen doen* stands for how the government and society act together to realize these plans with the goal to create more public value. At last, *samen leren* stands for the evaluating phase after the cooperation so that both the government and the society can learn of this former process to improve a potential cooperation in the future.

Coalition planning could be used to give insights in a potential cooperation between the government and civic initiatives. This theory could also be used to provide insights in the abstract roles in the collaboration of place-based development. This to make the responsibilities of the involved stakeholders clear in a potential coalition and about who takes the lead in place-based development. Although, Beer and Clower (2014) warn that place leadership is not obvious. A lack of leadership could exist in communities, or coalitions, due to the absence of the right resources and human capital (Sotarauta, 2009). This indicates the importance of capacity-building in this process, to prevent the risk of the absence of (place) leadership in a community.

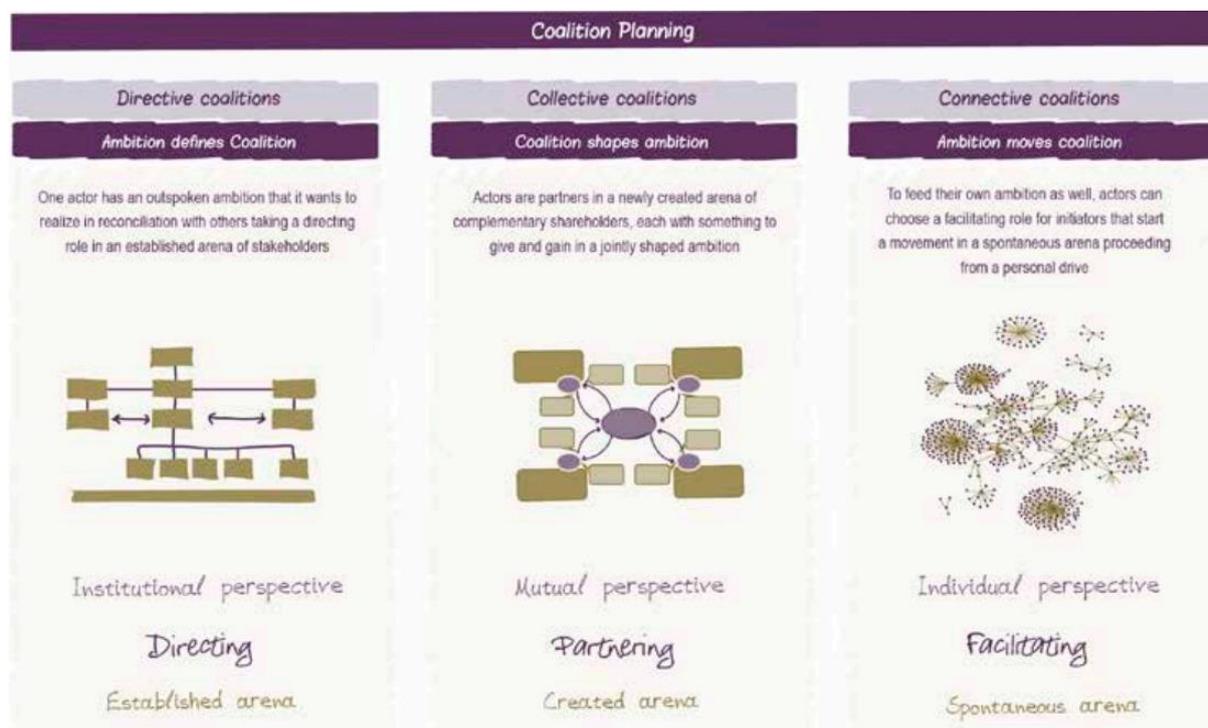


Figure 4: The spectrum of coalitions (De Jong, 2015).

2.4 Mienskip

2.4.1 What is the meaning of mienskip?

In the first chapter, the definition of mienskip was briefly mentioned by referring to the slogan of the European Capital of Culture event in Leeuwarden and Fryslân of last year. The mienskip was described as the Frisian sense of community and the mutual connectedness between Frisians (Fries Sociaal Planbureau, 2016). In the same report, participating panel members were asked what they understood of the word '*iepen mienskip*'. The word *iepen* means in this context the perceived openness of the Frisian community to other people or other parts of the Netherlands. The following three characteristics were mostly considered as part of the *iepen mienskip*: the willingness to help each other, openness to other people and the will to collaborate. Noteworthy, the panel members characterised the *iepen mienskip* less as something typical Frisian or unique to the province: 80% included "willingness to help each other" and 40% included "unique to Fryslân" to *iepen mienskip* (Fries Sociaal Planbureau, 2016).

Mienskip or the *iepen mienskip* is, on itself, not a concept which is frequently described in scientific literature, but the mentioned characteristics about the Frisian sense of community have some common ground with the following concepts; community, social cohesion and social capital. All three concepts are in some way interrelated with each other and therefore there will be tried to give a general explanation of this complexity. First, it is important to have some understanding of the concept community. A community could be spatially defined as a group of people living in the same area. Communities could also be defined by their common interest, values and identity related to their specific spatial location (Rydin, 2014). Finally, Matthews (2014) refers to place-based communities as communities which are rich in history and collective memories. These aspects contribute to feelings of place belonging and place attachment of the community.

Van Kempen and Bolt (2009) tried to define the complexity of social cohesion. In their article they summarized social cohesion as followed: "*social cohesion comprises shared norms and values, social solidarity, social control, social networks, and a feeling of belong to each other through a common identity and a strong bonding with the place one lives*" (Kearns and Forrest, 2000, in Van Kempen and Bolt, 2009, p.458). Although, this definition gives an idea of social cohesion it does not mean that all different aspects reinforce each other. An area with like-minded people, or community, does not automatically lead to more social contacts and a feeling of belongingness to that area, as Van Kempen and Bolt (2009) mention in their article.

The last related concept to mienskip is social capital. Although, many definitions of social capital exist (Rydin, 2014), this thesis will use the following definition of Putnam (2001). Putnam described social capital as the social features in a community, like the existing norms and values, mutual social trust and the quality of the social networks. Thereby, Putnam makes a distinction between bridging and bonding social capital wherein bonding social capital often gets referred to the social features within a community and bridging social capital as the social features between communities. These features are not tangible but exist in the community itself and the presence of social capital is considered as relatively important in enhancing the collaboration and the viability of a community (Putnam, 2001; Rydin, 2014). Therefore, social capital can possibly be seen as a means to reinforce social cohesion, for example in a sense that people are more willing to help and cooperate with each other. Rydin (2014, p.27) refers to this as the presence of mutuality: "*the sense of having a common purpose and may relate to a broad, general sense of the desired future or a more specific project or initiative*".

2.4.2 Relation between mienskip and place-based development

After the attempt to translate mienskip by related theoretical concepts, it is important to put mienskip in the context of place-based development. As described in section 2.2.1, the local civil society needs to be considered as a part of place-based development, or CLLD, according to the European Commission (European Commission, 2018). Therefore, the relation between mienskip and place-based development will be described in this section to see what the possible role of the mienskip could be in place-based development.

One way how mienskip could play a role in place-based development is by active citizenship. As described in section 2.3.3, citizens already play a role in the improvement of their villages or neighbourhoods by participating in civic initiatives. In other words, citizens take the matter in their own hands in improving the liveability. This relates to the presence of mutuality in a community to work together on a shared, desired future of a specific place. Thereby, the community, as the local actors in place-based development, indirectly indicates the specific needs and desires of the village or neighbourhood to the governmental institutions.

However, some conditions need to be met to enable active citizenship in communities. Governments can facilitate and guide citizens or communities by place leadership, as already mentioned in section 2.3.2. But communities can also be 'activated', from the inside, by active citizens who take the lead. In Van der Pennen and Schreuders (2014) the role of active citizens in the Netherlands is discussed. This article refers to these active citizens as 'everyday fixers' (Hendriks and Tops, 2005). These citizens are characterized by their drive, dedication and their ability to bring people and resources together. Besides that, everyday fixers become often the informal leaders of the community who share the local knowledge with governmental or political stakeholders (Yannow, 2004, in Van der Pennen and Schreuders, 2014). Therefore, these everyday fixers of a community could be considered as important local actors of place-based development.

Active citizenship and the above-mentioned characteristics of everyday fixers have some similarities with the presence of social capital in a community. Rydin (2014) states that the presence of social capital in a community could be seen as an enabling factor for collective action and she explains this by mentioning four different aspects. These aspects are based on the findings of Ostrom (2000) on social capital. First, the relationships between the people of a community creates a certain common identity and this common identity gets preserved by the social contacts within the community, or the bonding social capital. Second, social control can be seen as a beneficial outcome of social capital. In this manner, the community ensures that the members of the community behave according to the existing norms and values and fulfil the shared goals of the community. Third, social capital can ensure that people get involved in activities for the common purpose and, also, stay involved because of the social and positive association of these activities. Lastly, communities with social capital are often considered as networks with a strong density of relationships between people. This could have a positive effect on the communication between people and it simplifies the way of making agreements within the community due to lower transaction costs.

Summarizing, the mienskip could play a role in place-based development through the strength of the mienskip itself. This depends mainly on the presence of the following aspects in a community according to the mentioned literature: social cohesion, collective action and social capital. The three aspects are interrelated, because of their similarities, and cannot be seen as completely separate aspects. This might be interesting for policymakers in the context of place-based development. As Horlings (2012, p.140) mentions, when leadership, aimed at social capital, is combined with strong and coherent collective governance, this could function as a driving force for rural development.

2.4.3 Negative sides of *mienskip*

Besides the positive connotations of the *mienskip*, there are also possible negative aspects of the *mienskip* which also needs some attention. For example, the governmental emphasis on active citizenship and the self-reliance of citizens could have a negative effect on the volunteers of a community (Gieling and Haartsen, 2017). In their article they mention the importance of volunteers in a rural population and the shadow sides of it. For example, volunteering cannot be seen as something obvious. It is often seen a lifestyle choice (Nakano, 2000; Holmes, 2014) and it is, therefore, linked to the sorts of citizens who have the time and will to volunteer. Morgan (2013, in Gieling and Haartsen, 2017) suggest that they are often middle-aged, educated citizens of a higher social class. Besides that, the pressure on these volunteers is increasing due to the governmental emphasis on active citizenship. Volunteers in rural areas can experience the pressure to volunteer. On the one hand, because there are less people to execute the increasing voluntary tasks and, on the other hand, these tasks have to be carried out to provide the necessary services to the community (Tonts, 2005; Timbrell, 2007, in Gieling and Haartsen, 2017).

Further, the presence of social cohesion and social capital in a community could lead to exclusion. Social cohesion at neighbourhood level is linked to strong ties within a community, the bonding social capital, but the risk of weak ties with other neighbourhoods or communities exists. This can be explained by the lack of bridging social capital, because neighbourhoods are more associated as a source of bonding social capital (Burns et al, 2001, in Van Kempen and Bolt, 2009). Thereby, the risk on social exclusion within the community exists. The group of active citizens within a community is not always a representation of the whole community and, therefore, it does not always represent the common purpose of the community (Rydin, 2014).

2.5 Conceptual model

The conceptual model, based on the discussed theories and concepts in the theoretical framework, is visualized below in figure 5. For this thesis, it is assumed that civic initiatives and governmental institutions collaborate in a, yet to be determined, coalition and that they take part in place-based development. The definition of place-based development is used to see how this coalition uses place-based development to improve the liveability in the province of Fryslân. Thereby, it is assumed that both stakeholders have a certain role in this process and dependent on their role they will take the lead in a different way. The possible improvement of the liveability can be subdivided in an objective and subjective part. This depends on the shared goals and ambitions of the coalition. At last, the mienskip will be seen as a part of place-based development wherein the mienskip could have a reinforcing effect on the outcomes of place-based development due to the presence of social capital, social cohesion and collective action in the specific community.

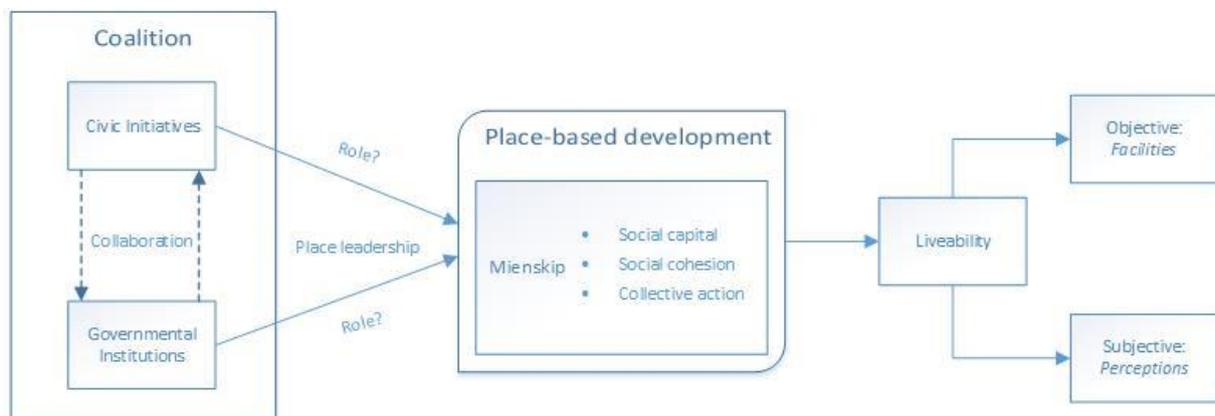


Figure 5: Conceptual model.

3. Methodology

This chapter describes the used methodology to find an answer on the main question:

How do civic initiatives and governmental institutions take the lead in improving the liveability in the province of Fryslân and how plays the mienskip a role in this?

First, the research strategy will be discussed. This includes the consideration of the qualitative research approach and the used research strategy. Then, a section will be spent to describe the data collection, data selection and how the collected data is being handled and analyzed. At last, the position of the researcher and the ethical considerations concerning this research will be reflected.

3.1 Research strategy

3.1.1 Research approach

For this thesis, a combination of a literature study and a qualitative research is used to answer the main- and sub questions. Sayer (1992) described the differences between an extensive and intensive research approach. In this book, the connection between the research question, type of research method, research philosophy and related limitations of the research approaches are explained. An intensive research approach is based on the ‘how, what or why’ type of research question. Therefore, this research approach is aimed on an in-depth examination and interpretation of a certain case to answer the research question. This research approach is often carried out by qualitative analysis to discover the connection between certain mechanisms (Sayer, 1992). In contrast, an extensive research approach is focused on how representative a certain feature is in a population. This type of research approach is often carried out by large scale questionnaires or samples to test the representativeness of that specific case (Sayer, 1992).

An intensive research approach fits most to this thesis, because of the need to identify the deeper underlying reasons and connections between civic initiatives and governmental institutions to answer the main question. Therefore, the choice is made to conduct a qualitative research to discover these underlying reasons and connections to see how both stakeholders take the lead in improving the liveability. The limitations of this research approach are that the discovered relationships between the different stakeholders will not be entirely representative for the whole province of Fryslân (Sayer, 1992). Consequently, an extensive research approach and/or a quantitative research is not considered as appropriate. The earlier mentioned underlying reasons and the perceptions and opinions about the mienskip or liveability, that will come forward during this research, are more difficult to retrieve and translate in numbers or statistics.

3.1.2 Case-study research

The qualitative research consists of a multiple-case study in four Frisian municipalities. Due to the scope and duration of this thesis it is not possible to gather the data about place-based development, place leadership and the mienskip of all Frisian municipalities. Therefore, these four municipalities are selected to form a general overview of the current situation in the province. Besides a municipality, each case is complemented with a local civic initiative. Case studies are considered as a useful way to gather detailed information and to reveal general relations between both stakeholders, but the danger of generalization needs attention of the researcher (Harvey, 1969; Flyvbjerg, 2006). In order to form a general overview of the province about the earlier mentioned topics, it is important to view these topics from different (spatial) perspectives. Hence, the selected cases are approximately located in the

north, east, south and west of Fryslân. Besides the geographical variety, the municipalities differ in size. Flyvbjerg (2006) refers to this case selection as a ‘maximum variation in cases’ and is used to see if the different circumstances of the cases will lead to different outcomes of the qualitative research. The selected cases are visualized in figure 6 and the specific case selection will be explained further in section 3.2.2.

Thereby, case studies are an appropriate research method when the context matters in a research (Yin, 2003; Gagnon, 2010). The latter is important, because the context is essential in this thesis. Place-based development, place leadership and the mienskip are connected to place, and thus the context, and therefore each of these concepts could differ in another context. Therefore, this multiple-case study is also used to see if these concepts are being handled or occur differently in the four selected cases. And, ultimately, to reveal the possible relation between civic initiatives and the Frisian governmental institutions in how they take the lead in improving the liveability and how the mienskip plays a role in this.

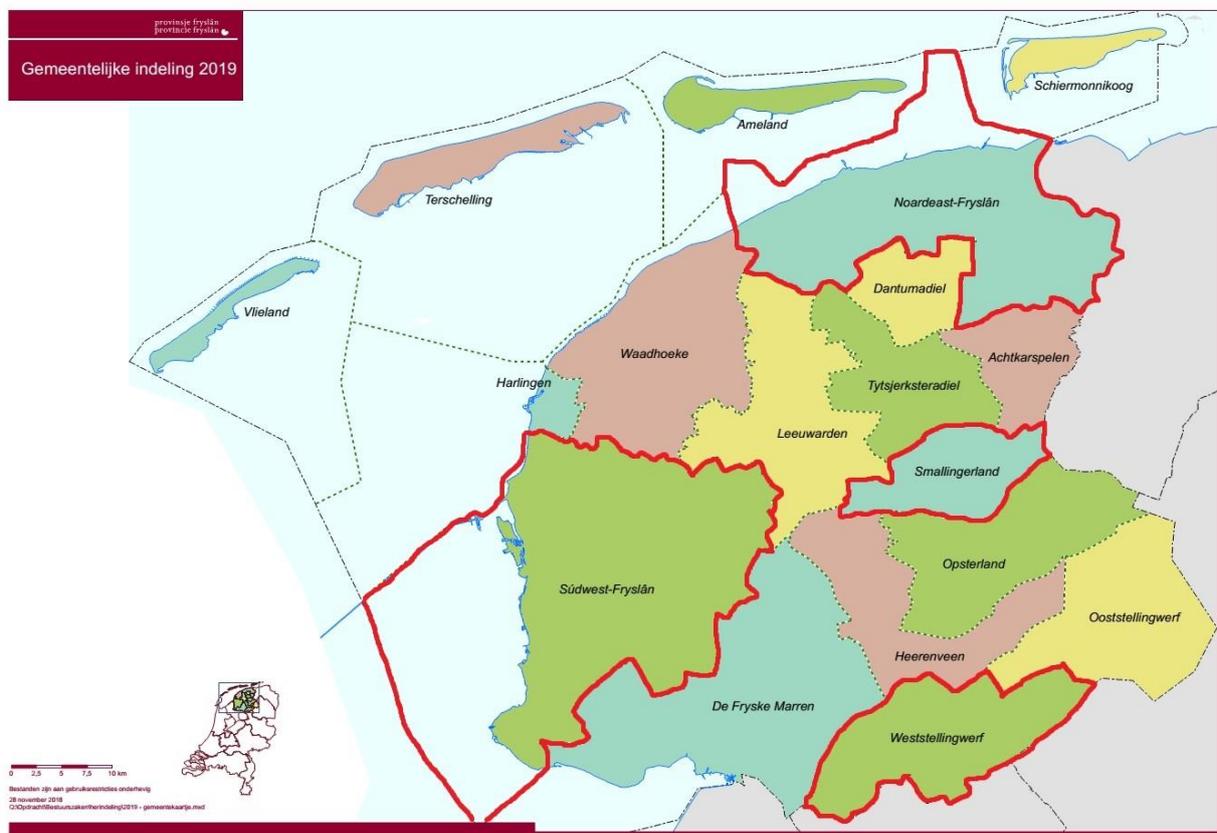


Figure 6: Edited municipal lay-out of the province of Fryslân with the selected cases highlighted in red (Province of Fryslân, 2019).

3.1.3 Units of analysis

Yin (2003) emphasizes the importance to define case studies. The following points, the units of analysis, are used to define the multiple-case study of this thesis. The spatial boundary is the province of Fryslân and the theoretical scope is tied to the discussed literature on the following key concepts; place-based development, place leadership and mienskip. At last, the timeframe is set on the duration of this thesis, namely November 2018 till August 2019.

3.1.4 Research strategy

Summarizing, the research strategy is visualized in figure 7. The theories and concepts described in the theoretical framework are translated in the conceptual model, which leads to the following hypothesis: *a coalition, consisting of civic initiatives and a governmental institution, use place-based development as a means to improve the liveability in their spatial area with the help of the mienskip*. This hypothesis is tested through the multiple-case study in the province of Fryslân. After analysis of the semi-structured interviews, the results are being discussed and the main- and sub questions will be answered in the conclusion. Given these points, there will be reflected on how the hypothesis, derived from the theory, corresponds with the real-life situation.

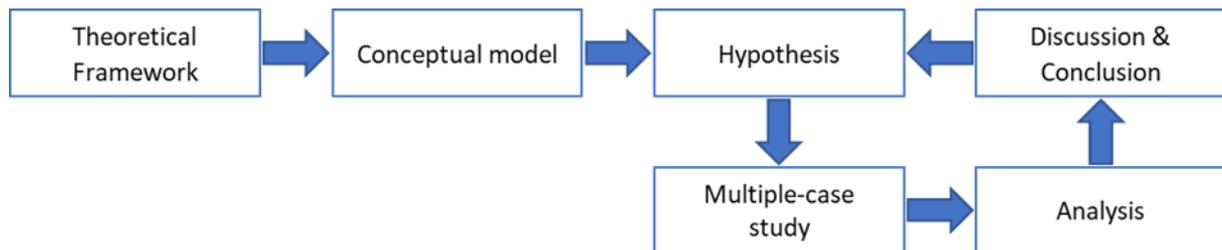


Figure 7: Research strategy.

3.2 Data collection and analysis

3.2.1 Data collection

Literature study: The first part of the data collection consists of a literature study. In addition, other sources such as reports, policy papers and websites were used. The key theories and concepts of place-based development, place leadership and mienskip are discussed in the theoretical framework. Yin (2003) stresses the importance of theory development as an essential step in conducting case studies. In this thesis, the theoretical framework and the conceptual model serve as a lens for the case study.

Semi-structured interviews: The second part of the data collection consists of semi-structured interviews with members of civic initiatives and municipalities. According to Longhurst (2010), semi-structured interviews are useful to get an insight in opinions, emotions and complex behaviours. Hence, the choice is made to conduct semi-structured interviews to retrieve these opinions, emotions and complex behaviours and to reveal the general relations between civic initiatives and governmental institutions in place-based development, place leadership and the mienskip. Focus groups were not considered due to the scope and duration of this thesis. In the relatively small timeframe of the data collection, it was not practical to invite multiple civic initiatives or government officials from the different cases to a neutral location. Besides the practical side, the location of the interview is also considered as important to make sure that the participant feel comfortable during the conversation (Denzin, 1970; Valentine, 2005). Therefore, the interviews were being held at the locations the participants suggested, like the town halls or homes of the participants. Each of the participants are interviewed individually, except in the case of the municipality Noardeast-Fryslân. In that case, a second village coordinator joined at the beginning of the interview.

The questions of the semi-structured interviews are based on the conceptual model in section 2.5. Therefore, the three parts of the semi-structured interview are adjusted to answer the different parts of the conceptual model. The interview guides can be found in the appendices B and C and are the same for the civic initiatives and governmental institutions, except on a few details in the introductory questions. The first part of the semi-structured interview is focused on the role of the concerned stakeholder in place-based development; how is place-based development used in the policies or place-shaping to improve the liveability and how do they take the lead in this process? The role of the mienskip in place-based development is being questioned in the second part. And in the third part, the

questions of the semi-structured interview are designed to find an answer and to reveal the (potential) coalition and relationship between civic initiatives and governmental institutions in place-based development. Lastly, policy documents of the different municipalities are used as preparation for the semi-structured interviews. The used policy documents are described in table 1.

3.2.2 Data selection

The research population consists of Frisian civic initiatives and governmental institutions. The choice on municipalities as governmental institutions is based on their direct involvement with the local community. Municipalities are, among other things, responsible for the local spatial development as in zoning plans and the maintenance of the public space (Rijksoverheid, 2019). In this way, municipalities are directly involved in topics of (local) spatial development, liveability and the mienskip and therefore the most suitable governmental institution to interview for this thesis.

The selected participants are members of civic initiatives and village coordinators of the selected municipalities. These participants are being interviewed to understand how they take the lead in the improvement of liveability through place-based development and what the role of the mienskip is in this process. A village coordinator is a civil servant and operates as the facilitator and contact person for villages and civic initiatives (Gemeente Weststellingwerf, 2019). Besides that, village coordinators guide the local development and therefore they have the knowledge about the covered topics of this thesis. Further, each of the selected civic initiatives differs in their goals and ambitions towards liveability. This variation in civic initiatives gives the opportunity to analyze the hypothesis from different points of view. Table 1 gives an overview of the four cases of the qualitative research, including the function of the participants and the date of the interview.

The village coordinators are selected by snowball sampling (Atkinson and Flint, 2001). Through already interviewed village coordinators, other village coordinators were being contacted for an interview. This accelerated the process of making an appointment. The civic initiatives were selected through the website www.netwerkduurzamedorpen.nl and by their media attention in Frisian newspapers and television. Netwerk Duurzame Dorpen is a national network of villages and civic initiatives where they can share their ideas and knowledge about the (sustainable) improvement of the living environment (Netwerk Duurzame Dorpen, 2019). This website is a project of Doarpswurk which stimulates and facilitates Frisian initiatives and villages in improving the liveability in the province of Fryslân (Doarpswurk, 2019). Besides that, the media attention of certain civic initiatives ensured their relevance during the timeframe of this thesis. The description of the selected civic initiatives will be given in small text boxes and can be found in chapter 4.

Municipality	Participant	Function	Date interview	Policy document
Noardeast Fryslân	1 - 2	Village coordinators	20-6-2019	<i>Trochpakke! Mei elkoar foarút</i>
	3	Member of Werkgroep Twirre	1-7-2019	
Smallingerland	4	Village coordinator	29-5-2019	<i>Hoofdlijnenakkoord Bestuursperiode 2018-2022</i>
	5	Member of It Werflân	10-6-2019	
Súdwest-Fryslân	6	Village coordinator	13-6-2019	<i>SWF ontwikkelt en verduurzaamt</i>
	7	Member of Ús Hôf	11-6-2019	
Weststellingwerf	8	Village coordinator	28-5-2019	<i>Weststellingwerf, de kracht van Samen en Doen</i>
	9	Member of Toekomstwonen.nu	28-5-2019	

Table 1: Overview participants.

3.2.3 Data analysis

After the data collection, the semi-structured interviews were transcribed and coded for the data analysis. Each interview has been recorded with a voice recorder and transcribed direct after the interview. Subsequently, these transcripts are coded with help of ATLAS.ti. This coding software is designed for qualitative data analysis and is equipped with tools to simplify coding (ATLAS.ti, 2019). The transcripts were coded using an open and axial coding method. *“Axial coding can be part of the open-coding process, but it allows the researcher to follow a particular category for a while as a way of testing its relevance”* (Strauss, 1987, in Cope, 2010, p.446). This implies that the axial codes are based on the key concepts of the theoretical framework (deductive) and will be complemented through open coding. These inductive codes originate from the opinions of the participants. This results in a coding scheme which will be used to write out the results and, in the end, to test the relevance of the conceptual model. The coding scheme can be found in appendix D.

The data analysis will be divided in two groups: from the point of view of the four municipalities and the four civic initiatives. This choice is made to reveal differences in the opinions between these types of stakeholders. Therefore, it is not needed to analyze the results exclusively per case. The four separate cases will only be analyzed to see if there are relevant differences between the municipalities, as explained in section 3.1.2.

3.3 Ethical considerations

Awareness to ethical behavior is needed while performing a (qualitative) geographical research (Hay, 2010). Therefore, a letter of consent has been composed to inform the participants about the research and to point out the rights of the participants, see appendix A. For example, the participants were allowed to pause or stop the interview at any given time. Thereby, the participants remain anonymous. Longhurst (2010) stated the importance of assuring the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants while conducting semi-structured interviews. In the letter of consent, permission is asked to record the interview. Confidentiality is needed to handle the collected data safely and therefore the recordings are deleted after transcribing the interviews. After transcribing, the transcripts were sent to the participants to give them the possibility to check their statements.

In the end, as an originating Frisian and native speaker, some attention is needed to the position of the researcher. Therefore, chances are that the participants will acknowledge the researcher as insider. The most important advantages and disadvantages of the insider-outsider debate are summed up by Holmes (2014). Possible advantages are the understanding of the culture and language. This might help in asking the right questions and to be more trusted by the participants. These advantages have also a downside, namely the possibility exists that the researcher will be unintentionally biased due to his connection with the culture. On the other hand, chances are that the participants assume that the researcher, as an insider, has more knowledge about the subject than an outsider. Therefore, the possibility exists that possible important, considered as generally known, information will not be shared by the participants.

4. Results

First, the perceptions of the participants towards liveability and the perceived liveability in their municipality or village will be discussed. Second, the roles of the different actors in place-based development will be discussed. Thereafter will be explained how the different actors take the lead in the improvement of liveability. In the fourth section will be checked whether there is a collaboration between the municipalities and civic initiatives, how this collaboration is expressed and what the possible points of improvement are. In the last section, the role of the *mienskip* will be discussed from the point of view of the participants. How do they contribute to the *mienskip* and what are the strengths and downsides of the *mienskip* according to the participants?

4.1 View on liveability

4.1.1 Municipalities

First, a few questions were asked about liveability to find out what the village coordinators understood by the concept. In general, liveability is seen as a broad concept which can include many things according to the village coordinators. The Dutch word *containerbegrip* (catch-all term) was often used to indicate the difficulty of defining liveability. Despite the difficulty, the village coordinators used a similar combination of both objective and subjective indicators to define liveability, such as the presence of facilities and services (objective), a good overall appearance of a village (subjective) and that residents feel at home and comfortable in their own village or city (subjective). This became, for example, clear by the following statement of the village coordinator of Súdwest-Fryslân: *“What is liveability? Your perception of liveability could differ from my perception. For me, liveability is the whole of facilities, good roads and accessibility, opportunities to meet each other, to exercise and facilities for the elderly. In that way. It is an incredibly broad concept and, in that sense, it is difficult to describe in concrete terms”* (Participant 6, 2019). Thereby, this statement also indicates the relativity of liveability. According to the village coordinator of Smallerland, the perceived liveability could also differ on a spatial scale. For example, the retail provision of a place, the disappearing of a local ATM machine or the placement of a picknick table in a neighbourhood could influence the local perception of liveability.

Some village coordinators experienced difficulties in describing the current liveability in their municipality, because of the broad interpretation of the concept. The village coordinator of Weststellingwerf also indicated the difficulty to get insights in the needs and desires of all the different groups within the municipality. For example, the needs and desires of residents with care-related problems. The municipality of Weststellingwerf considered this as a priority to help this group e.g. to become active again in the community. Nevertheless, all interviewed village coordinators are, in general, positive about the current liveability in their municipality. In this context, the village coordinator of Smallerland mentioned how the municipality financially contributes to the local liveability, for example, by facilitating certain request of citizens like the placement of the earlier mentioned picknick table. Some village coordinators pulled it further by stating that Dutch citizens in general have little to complain when it comes to the liveability: *“I think that we have, in general, little to complain about the liveability in the Netherlands. Of course, there are always things that could be improved, and I must say that we are all working hard on that here within the municipality Súdwest-Fryslân”* (Participant 6, 2019). The village coordinators of Noardeast-Fryslân were more specific about the current liveability by mentioning the vitality of the local community: *“That mienskip, that everyone is talking about, has been here for years and that is not something new. I am impressed by what they*

are all doing; that is incredible. In the field of energy, in the field of everything. Then we are really talking about small villages without a lot of financial support” (Participant 1, 2019).

During the interviews, the village coordinators also spoke about possible threats to the future liveability of villages. The decline in volunteers is, for example, considered as one of the possible threats. Further, the population decline in rural areas and the ageing society were considered as possible threats. For example, the village coordinators of Noardeast-Fryslân mentioned the actuality of population decline by discussing the possible consequences of the closure of primary schools in their municipality. One village coordinator stated that when these small local primary school closes, the chance exists that families with children move out and that these villages have more difficulty to attract new families. The other village coordinator knew from experience that the closure of a local primary school does not immediately have a negative impact on the liveability. According to that village coordinator, young families consciously chose, in some cases, for villages without a primary school e.g. for the space and quietness of that specific village. The village coordinator of Smallerland recognizes this in the case of the closure of shops: *“You don’t want to lose what you already have. This also applies, for example, to an ATM or a village shop. Only, it’s the market that decides [...] And that’s not up to a municipality, but at the same time you also see people moving to certain villages because of the peace and quietness” (Participant 4, 2019).* However, most of the village coordinators emphasize the importance of sport clubs or community centers to the liveability of a village. Therefore, the goal of the municipalities is to maintain these facilities. This will be discussed further in section 4.2.1.

4.1.2 Civic initiatives

In general, the same objective and subjective indicators were mentioned by this group of participants. The participants stated that the liveability of a place could be defined by a combination of both indicators. However, the objective part of liveability is more seen as a condition to make a place livable. The participant of Ús Hôf summarized it as follows: *“Yes, liveability... that is as broad as possible. It is a bit of mobility, a sense of community, naoberschap and I think that the mienskips idea also can be considered as a part of liveability. I think that’s the most important and then you actually have all kinds of conditions to make something livable” (Participant 7, 2019).* Nevertheless, the presence of facilities and shops is seen as something important to the liveability of a place but is not seen as essential. For example, the member of It Werflân thinks that the presence of many shops or facilities in rural areas is no longer realistic nowadays. Thereby, the given quote of Ús Hôf indicated the importance of the subjective indicators to liveability. The other participants also mentioned the importance of social cohesion, the sense of community and the feeling of living comfortable in a place as subjective indicators more often than the objective indicators of liveability.

Further, the members of the civic initiatives are in general positive about the current liveability in their village. Most of the members described the current liveability from the point of view of their civic initiative. For example, the member of Werkgroep Twirre described the current liveability by mentioning the state of the characteristic landscapes in Noardeast-Fryslân and the member of Toekomstwonen.nu compared the current liveability to the perceived presence of social cohesion in the community. It was notable that the current liveability was not described in detail by the members



Figure 8: Case description Werkgroep Twirre.

of the civic initiatives, like the given answers of the village coordinators, but subsequently they indicated the possible threats to the liveability in their villages.

These mentioned possible threats were similar to the ones mentioned by the village coordinators e.g. population decline, the ageing society and closing of facilities. Notable, was that some members of the civic initiatives mentioned the consequences of these possible threats. This became, for example, clear in the interviews with the members of It Werflân and Werkgroep Twirre. The participant of It Werflân thinks that loneliness can occur among the elderly people in the village and the member of Werkgroep Twirre foresees the possible, negative consequences for the biodiversity of the rural landscape because of the placement of solar parks. These expressed concerns can be found back in the goals and ambitions of these civic initiatives to maintain the liveability in their village or living area.

4.2 Place-based development

4.2.1 Role municipalities

According to the village coordinators, municipalities mainly have a facilitating role with regard to the improvement of the liveability. This facilitation is, in general, meant to stimulate the bottom-up improvement of the liveability by giving grants or professional help through the guiding of village coordinators, but the municipalities do not actively facilitate citizens. This becomes clear during the interview with the village coordinator of Weststellingwerf. This village coordinator indicated that the municipality expects initiative of their citizens and villages when the desire exists to increase the local liveability, especially if this village already meets the used quality standards for the public space. However, the municipality is open to ideas of the community and is willing to facilitate these ideas within their possibilities. This approach regarding the improvement of the local liveability is similar to the role of the other municipalities. But according to the village coordinators of Noardeast-Fryslân, they take, in some cases, a more active role when certain villages are in need for more help: *“If we see that things are going difficult, then we will step in and try to help and then we will ask ‘what problems do you encounter?’... then we take a different role. In principle, we have a stimulating role and sometimes we are a little more active if things are not going well”* (Participant 2, 2019).

All four municipalities have a more or less specific name for their policy regarding the maintenance and improvement of the liveability. For example, the municipalities Súdwest-Fryslân (*Kernenbeleid*) and Smallerland (*Omgevingsgericht werken*). Weststellingwerf described their approach in its coalition agreement *Samen en Doen*. However, the village coordinators of Noardeast-Fryslân indicated that they have no specific (village) policy yet, because of their recent merger between the northeastern municipalities of Dongeradeel, Ferwerderadeel and Kollumerland. Although, their approach towards the improvement of the local liveability comes partly forward by their project DOM (Dorpsontwikkelingsmaatschappij). Nevertheless, the following policies agree on the fact that they are adjusted to the local characteristics in the municipalities. For example, *Kernenbeleid* is adjusted to the 89 different *kernen* (villages and cities) of the municipality. This policy takes the size of certain villages into account e.g. in the amount of grants for community centers. Another example are the drop-in meetings which the municipality Smallerland organized for their citizens to find out what the typical *Smallerlander* entailed. These results were then used to adjust their (upcoming) policies. Lastly, the village coordinator of Weststellingwerf mentioned that their policy is, in that sense, less adjusted to the local characteristics: *“We do have some differences in the municipality in terms of character and identity of certain villages [...] But each in their own way, they are active with their village and organize everything. So, it is not that we have a specific policy for each specific village. However, in the case that something comes up in a certain village, then we have a tailor-made approach in how we deal with it. We do not have a standard approach”* (Participant 8, 2019).

In general, the different policies are aimed to maintain the current liveability and to involve citizens as much as possible. The ways how the municipalities involve the mienskip is described in more detail in section 4.5.3. Furthermore, the village coordinators of Súdwest-Fryslân and Weststellingwerf mentioned the importance of maintaining the current network of community centers. However, only if this is feasible and if there is enough support from the community. In addition, the municipalities have available funds to stimulate citizens or to provide them with necessary help in order to improve the local liveability, like the example of DOM: *“We call it DOM and it is intended to activate people in the village to think about the current liveability in the village and to take targeted action. The board of DOM stands, in principle, separate from the local interest group. So, the local interest group is for the representation of the village interests and the execution of certain activities and DOM focuses mainly on initiatives like, for example, a local village garden or the construction of a walking path. That kind of things and these are aimed at improving the livability of a village. DOM is financially supported by the municipality, so they can request financial support when they, for example, need to hire an expert for advice”* (Participant 1, 2019)

According to the village coordinators, it is difficult to speak of a tangible result of the municipal policies towards liveability. Also, because a possible improvement of the local liveability is hard to measure. However, the village coordinators notice that the current place-oriented policies have a positive impact on some areas. The village coordinator of Súdwest-Fryslân noticed, for example, relatively more engagement of the citizens, because of the several drop-in meetings the municipality organized. The village coordinators of Noardeast-Fryslân and Weststellingwerf were, on the other hand, more detailed and gave some examples where their policy had a positive impact in a couple of specific villages in terms of appearance, realized ideas and citizen engagement. The village coordinator of Weststellingwerf summarized this by mentioning the results of a place-specific development: *“A community center has been realized in [place X], partly financed by the municipality, and where you can see that a lot of things are currently happening there, which makes a positive contribution to such development. You can create the preconditions and can offer the possibilities, but ultimately the residents must take the step themselves. That arises slowly and that is something for the longer term”* (Participant 8, 2019).

4.2.2 Role civic initiatives

In the first place, civic initiatives can be considered as the initiators in the improvement of the local liveability. This initiating role became clear, among others, according to the following quote from the member of It Werflân: *“Together with fellow board members we had the idea: the current community center does not longer meet to the requirements. That was true and everyone agreed. Something had to happen and that is how we started to think about what we would want and what was possible”* (Participant 5, 2019). This initiating role comes also forward in the founding of the other civic initiatives. For example, Toekomstwonen.nu was initiated by a couple of local interest groups who collectively decided to take measures in order to cope with the consequences of the local, ageing society. This also applies to Ús Hôf and Werkgroep Twirre. According to the involved members, both civic initiatives initially started from a more sustainable perspective in terms of their community supported agriculture or the improvement of the local biodiversity. But, the



Figure 9: Case description It Werflân.

participant of Ús Hôf emphasized that sustainability and liveability are closely linked together: *“We mainly have a sustainability goal and not so much a liveability goal, but the one is closely linked with the other. It is a form of social sustainability and it is to develop a new form of community sense and to find a new balance in the way we treat each other. We are trying to do something against consumerism. That is a bit of social cohesion, but also economic development”* (Participant 7, 2019).

Secondly, the civic initiatives have an implementing role. After the initiating phase and the determination of the perceived threats to the liveability, the civic initiatives take action to implement their ideas and ambitions. In addition, the goals of the civic initiatives are mainly aimed on improving the subjective liveability. For example, by organizing activities in the community center to stimulate the social interaction and cohesion in the village, like It Werflân. Toekomstwonen.nu also organizes activities, but then specific for elderly people. In the first place, to enhance the social interaction, but also to inform the elderly about themes related to ageing. Their goal is to raise awareness on these topics in order to ensure that the local elderly can live longer independently in their own home. On the other hand, Werkgroep Twirre mainly organizes meetings to stimulate and inspire other citizens to join their movement. Lastly, the goal of Ús Hôf is mainly to promote a form of social sustainability by means of their self-harvest garden; by growing organic crops for their members of the local community as countermovement against consumerism.

In addition, most of the interviewed participants indicate that the goals and ambitions are adjusted to the local characteristics. This can be found back, among others, in the origin of Toekomstwonen.nu and It Werflân. Because the civic initiatives are mostly aimed on improving the local liveability, the results of the activities and efforts of the civic initiatives are more tangible than in the case of the municipalities. Thereby, these results of the civic initiatives are in some cases more tangible than the other. They differ from the rising amount of organized activities in the community center (It Werflân), organized information markets (ToekomstWonen.nu) till the sowing of flower mixtures (Werkgroep Twirre). The following quote illustrates a result of the strength of Werkgroep Twirre in Noardeast-Fryslân: *“we just try to inspire others and to do as little as possible ourselves, because it has to come from the bottom-up. You now see initiatives which sow municipal roadsides with flower mixture. Therefore, people have contacted the municipality themselves and have taken action on this matter”* (Participant 3, 2019). This stimulation and inspiration of the local community can, therefore, also be seen as a role of civic initiatives in the improvement of the local liveability. However, in some cases civic initiatives have a greater reach than the local area they are based. According to the participant of Ús Hôf, their civic initiative also attracts interested people from other (Frisian) municipalities, because their self-harvest garden attracts certain people with the same ecological principles: *“Our sustainable objective is our priority and that attracts a certain kind of people”* (Participant 7, 2019).

4.3 Place leadership

4.3.1 Point of view municipalities

The village coordinators of Noardeast-Fryslân and Súdwest-Fryslân mentioned how the attitude of the government, in general, has changed over the years. According to these village coordinators, the attitude changed from a government that decided for their citizens to a government that involves its citizens more into their decision-making. Furthermore, all village coordinators indicate that the municipalities use this ‘new’ style of governance in the improvement of the liveability. This is, for example, expressed in the facilitation or stimulation of municipalities to increase the citizen involvement. Weststellingwerf tries to stimulate the community by giving room to initiatives in their policy and regulations and by facilitating these initiatives through offering them their expertise and required knowledge. On the other hand, Smallingerland tries to involve their citizens as much as

possible by means of their *Omgevingsgericht werken*. The goal of this policy is to ensure a certain citizen support for the municipal decision-making: *“The fact that the municipality now works in an environmental-aware way means that you pay attention to all people who are involved in one way or the other. And with that you hope that you have done well, despite the fact that you do not have a 100% coverage”* (Participant 4, 2019).

Besides the positive effects and results of this policy, named in section 4.2.1, there are some related barriers to this governance style. It is, for example, difficult to arrange plans or make decisions which are fully supported by the whole community, like participant 4 already indicated. Further, the village coordinators of Weststellingwerf and Noardeast-Fryslân mentioned that the municipality possibly needs to take a more active or guiding role when the supply of ideas or initiatives from the community stops or is not sufficient enough. According to these village coordinators, this could be explained by the difficulties citizens experience in requesting grants or reaching the right organizations or professionals. Besides these barriers, it must be taken into account that civic initiatives consist of volunteers. Either, there could be difficulties in attracting enough interested volunteers or, in some cases, the driving force behind the initiatives stalls after the fulfillment of the specific need or desire. Lastly, not all policy areas lend themselves for citizen involvement: *“If you take spatial planning... Citizens often find the laws and regulations in that policy area difficult, but these are, for example, needed to protect the neighbor. Not everything is possible in that sense. People can want anything, but another should not suffer from it”* (Participant 6, 2019).

Nevertheless, the village coordinators are relatively positive regarding the current municipal role. This municipal role is also perceived as the role which municipalities, in general, have to adopt in the improvement of the local liveability. Hence, the municipal facilitation towards citizens is considered as an important task. On the one hand, to provide the conditions for citizen involvement and, on the other hand, by providing the necessary facilities and services. Furthermore, one village coordinator of Noardeast-Fryslân thinks that this facilitation needs to be increased when certain villages need more guiding: *“As municipality, we must be very alert to our role and responsibility when a village needs help. Every village is different, and one village is much more capable in realizing things than the other”* (Participant 2, 2019).

4.3.2 Point of view civic initiatives

In section 4.2.2, it became clear that civic initiatives predominantly have an initiating and stimulating role in the improvement of the liveability. This is also the way how civic initiatives take the lead in this process. According to several interviewed members, civic initiatives needs to be considered as the driving force behind these developments. For example, by making other citizens aware about the subject where the specific civic initiative is concerned, like Toekomstwonen.nu. Or like the participant of It Werflân mentioned, by ‘simply’ organizing activities for, and in consultation with, the community. On the other hand, Ús Hôf see themselves more as an inspirator by their pioneering role. This to inspire people to join the self-harvest garden as member and, therefore, let them contribute to the sustainable cause of the civic initiative. Thereby, Ús Hôf also offers training programs to local interest groups of interested villages. Werkgroep Twirre takes the lead in a similar way by inspiring and



Figure 10: Case description Ús Hôf.

stimulating other citizens to come with their own initiatives to improve the biodiversity in Noardeast-Fryslân.

In some ways, the driving force of civic initiatives could be hindered. One frequently mentioned barrier is the difficulty in attracting interested citizens e.g. other local interest groups or new volunteers. For example, the member of Toekomstwonen.nu indicated the difficulty of involving other local interest groups in surrounding villages. Although, this goes well in most cases there are, in some cases, local interest groups which have other priorities. Furthermore, the recruitment of volunteers is a specific focus of It Werflân. This is important, because the community center runs on volunteers to make the organized activities possible. In addition, the existing municipal policy, rules and regulation could also be considered as a barrier in some cases. As the member of Ús Hôf mentions: *“I can imagine that you cannot adopt special laws for these types of small pioneering initiatives at once, but if the local government, at provincial and municipal level, offers room for pilots through the creation of exceptional situations... that would help enormously”* (Participant 7, 2019).

The main goal of civic initiatives is to be a driving force in the improvement of the liveability e.g. when the municipality does not act on that matter. The participant of It Werflân emphasized that the involved persons of civic initiatives must have the right knowledge and skills to implement their ideas in order to be successful. The earlier mentioned inspiring role of civic initiatives is also considered as important to take the lead in the improvement of the local liveability. Lastly, the member of Werkgroep Twirre thinks that, after intending a meeting for farmers, it is important that civic initiatives cooperate with each other: *“If you want that the province or municipality listens to you... then I think it is advisable that people should join an ongoing initiative, instead of the emergence of too many initiatives. Anyway... I don't expect that personally in this area, because I think it's a very positive development. In any case, find each other and make sure that there is not too much fragmentation”* (Participant 3, 2019).

4.4 Coalition

4.4.1 Point of view municipalities

Municipalities work together with different types of stakeholders in the improvement of the liveability. Besides the community, these stakeholders vary from the province and other (semi-) governmental organizations, like the water authority, to housing corporations and healthcare organizations till local schools and sports clubs. All village coordinators indicate that the composition of the involved stakeholders depends on the specific situation: *“This ranges from the civil affairs desk to the people who maintain the greenery here. The municipality just has a broad working field. As a village coordinator you must know something about all working fields including the collaboration partners”* (Participant 2, 2019). On the other hand, it can be derived from the interviews that the village coordinators cooperate most with the community in the form of local interest groups. This will be further explained in section 4.5.3.

Furthermore, the municipalities mainly have a reactive and advising role in a potential coalition with the community. According to the village coordinator of Weststellingwerf, the municipal role depends on the ambition and the involvement of the community: if needed, the municipality can take a more guiding role. This reactive role is supported by the following statement about the role of village coordinators in Súdwest-Fryslân: *“In a manner of speaking, we are always standby. So, if something is going on... then they can sound the alarm bell and we are ready”* (Participant 6, 2019). In addition, the village coordinators of Noardeast-Fryslân emphasized the advising and connecting role of village

coordinators in this process. For example, by connecting the involved stakeholders with each other and to ensure that they come to a certain decision.

The community can be considered as a collaboration partner of the municipality, but this collaboration is not entirely equal in terms of the distribution of power. All village coordinators state that the community gets involved e.g. by drop-in meetings, focus groups or regular meetings between local interest groups and village coordinators. The results of these meetings are then included in the specific decision-making. However, the final responsibility of the decision-making lies with the municipality, or more specifically at the municipal council. As the village coordinator of Smallingerland emphasized, this process is uniform for all municipalities. Further, the village coordinators of Noardeast-Fryslân mentioned that the collaboration, in some cases, can be used to learn from each other by means of *regiotafels*. These meetings are being organized for the local interest groups of the different villages so they can use these meetings to share their experiences with each other. In this way, the villages also have a network opportunity. The earlier mentioned connecting role of the municipality becomes clear in this example.

The village coordinators consider the current collaboration with the community as positive. Although, they also indicated that there is room for improvement. The village coordinator of Súdwest-Fryslân thinks that the aftercare for an accomplished project of a civic initiative can be improved: *“In that sense, we are involved from the start, but at the moment those ideas are facilitated with a financial contribution... then we often lose those ideas out of sight. The aftercare could perhaps get more attention in a sense of ‘you have implemented a project over here; how are things going now?’ [...] Maybe, a year later, you can ask the same question again and whether the project has delivered what they expected and what the effects are”* (Participant 6, 2019). In addition, the village coordinators of Noardeast-Fryslân and Weststellingwerf mentioned that the further citizen involvement requires a, some sort of, shift within the municipal organization. For example, the consultation moments with local interest groups are often in the evening, because these volunteers generally have a job during the day. This requires a different way of working. Nevertheless, Weststellingwerf currently works together with certain villages to develop *Omgevingsvisies*, environmental implementation programs, to indicate what the role of the municipality is in the development of these villages and what the residents can expect e.g. in financial support. As a final point, the village coordinators of Smallingerland and Weststellingwerf mentioned that the use of digital tools can improve the facilitation towards citizens. For example, that citizens can fill in a form online or in the following way: *“There are digital tools that you can use, because we can never join every meeting and also residents do not always have that need [...] Then it would be nice that resident could be able to follow that project online and that they can give their input at set times. In a manner of speaking, about the color of the paving stones. That you can choose or make suggestions and you can think along in a positive way and stay involved”* (Participant 8, 2019).

4.4.2 Point of view civic initiatives

Civic initiatives work together with a wide range of stakeholders in the improvement of the liveability. Besides the municipality and the community, these stakeholders are foremost related to the specific subject or activities of the civic initiative. For example, Toekomstwonen.nu worked together with Blij(f) Wonen; a specialized project which advises elderly in finding solutions to live longer independently in their own homes. It Werflân works together with the other users of the multi-purpose center, like the school and the day care. And to give another example, Ús Hôf works together with other local, sustainable food partners. Another important and relevant stakeholder for the civic initiatives is the province by means of their *lepen Mienskipfûns* program. In this way, the province gives financial support to civic initiatives who are engaged in the improvement of the liveability. Furthermore, the civic initiatives consider themselves as an equal partner in the collaboration with these involved stakeholders.

TOEKOMSTWONEN.NU
CASE DESCRIPTION

“ToekomstWonen.nu is an initiative group of representatives of the local interest groups from four villages: De Hoeve, Oldeholtpade, Nijeholtpade, and Oosterstreek.

Toekomstwonen.nu is concerned with the theme ‘live longer independently at home’. Here we think of the own home and living environment: the own village.

We want to encourage (future) seniors to seek early solutions and measures to live safely and comfortably in their own home and that their village offers sufficient opportunities for mutual support, to meet each other and recreation”
(ToekomstWonen.nu, 2019).



**toekomst
wonen.nu**

Figure 11: Case description ToekomstWonen.nu

According to the interviewed members of the civic initiatives, the collaboration with the municipality is mainly expressed in thinking together. However, the collaboration between both parties was not explained into detail by the slogan *samen denken, samen besluiten, samen doen, samen leren* (Van Dalfsen et al., 2017). This can primarily be explained because there is no active collaboration between civic initiatives and municipalities at the moment. For example, the collaboration with the municipality started recently in the case of Werkgroep Twirre, because this civic initiative has been founded since the beginning of this year. In the other cases, the civic initiatives have more an informing and initiating role towards the municipalities, as the interviewed member of Toekomstwonen.nu summarizes: “*We have always said: ‘we are ambassadors and we plead for the people who want to age safe and comfortably, but we are not the executives’. Others have to pick it up and get things going, but we can give the necessary push or signal to it*” (Participant 9, 2019). But in some cases, there is more collaboration between civic initiatives and the municipality than only thinking together. For example, in the case of It Werflân. The idea for a new community center and the building of the new multi-purpose building, according to the cradle-to-cradle principle, was for the greatest part initiated and organized by the community. The municipality was more involved in terms of funding and control over the construction process. Although both actors had different tasks and responsibilities, there was consultation through a designated official of the municipality.

However, the interviewed members mentioned that the cooperation with the municipality, in general, is positive, they also indicated some points of improvement. There is mainly room for improvement in the given room to civic initiatives in the current policies. The goodwill of the municipalities gets perceived, but policy wise this is not always the case as the quote of participant 7 in section 4.3.2 already stated. Also, the municipal involvement towards the civic initiatives could be approved. According to some interviewed members, it would be beneficial to the mutual collaboration when the municipal policymakers would familiarize more into practical issues of civic initiatives. This could be solved when there is more contact between the municipality and civic initiatives.

4.5 Mienskip

4.5.1 Definition of the mienskip

In general, the mienskip gets associated with the (sense of) community of a certain place and, thereby, it was several times indicated that no mienskip is the same at village level. Both the village coordinators and members of the civic initiatives agreed on these points. In addition, almost all the participants reacted skeptical on hearing the word 'mienskip'. On the one hand, because the word is perceived as a catch-all term. And, on the other hand, because the concept is excessively used in the last period. Other frequently named aspects of the mienskip were the presence of social cohesion and the presence of active and inventive citizens.

Furthermore, some specific aspects about the local mienskip were being mentioned in the interviews. The member of Toekomstwonen.nu considered the feeling of belonging to a certain village as an important aspect: *"Yes, that is very characteristic of this region and also of Fryslân. I think this is especially true in places where people are able to meet each other. So, where it is not large and anonymous, but where it is still small in scale"* (Participant 9, 2019). This got confirmed by the village coordinator of Weststellingwerf which also emphasized the vitality of the association life in the municipality. Besides the fact that many activities are being organized by these associations and (sports) clubs, the village coordinator noticed a general decline in active members. The village coordinator attributes this to the idea that a greater amount of people does not want to commit themselves anymore to an association or local interest group. In addition, it was also notable that both the village coordinators of Noardeast-Fryslân and Werkgroep Twirre mentioned the collective power of their mienskip. According to them, this comes forward in the collectiveness in organizing village festivals and during the shipping disaster of MSC Zoë at the beginning of this year; a big part of the local community cleaned up the mess at the coast caused by the lost shipping containers. The collectiveness of the mienskip was also mentioned by the village coordinator of Smalingerland. According to the village coordinator, a couple of villages in Smalingerland are characterized by yearly organized village festivals or theatre plays.

Lastly, the member of It Werflân mentioned an interesting historical aspect of the local community. According to this participant, the mienskip of Rottevalle has always been an inventive community which are open to new ideas. This was one of the reasons why the Americans selected Rottevalle as an example village for its Marshall Plan after the Second World War: *"That was very innovative at the time and that is the culture that prevails here in the village. That is also how I experienced it myself when I came to live here, but that is also what you will hear in the village since we were working on the community center in the sense of 'we were an exemplary village in the past and we are that currently because of the cradle-to-cradle construction'. So, that is what belongs to the people who live here"* (Participant 5, 2019).

4.5.2 Perceived role in place-based development

The village coordinators primarily mentioned the participative role of the mienskip in the improvement of the local liveability. Not only, because the municipality partly depends on the good ideas and willingness of the community on this subject, as the village coordinator of Weststellingwerf indicated. But also, because the mienskip has to fulfill a participative role in this process to stay engaged: *"In any case, to stay involved. By any means, because one can do more than the other. And to do it collectively, because together you make the society"* (Participant 2, 2019). In addition, the village coordinator of Smalingerland mentioned the importance of a mienskip who thinks along: *"We work for our mienskip and we are actually employed by our mienskip; to do it as well as possible for the people who live here. [...] We also find it very pleasant that we have involved citizens at the table and that they literally think*

along, for example, about the design of a street.” (Participant 4, 2019). The village coordinator of Súdwest-Fryslân agreed on this participative perspective, by indicating that the improvement of the local liveability is an interplay between the mienskip and the municipality: *“It is of course no one-way traffic and this interplay is precisely what makes this work beautiful. In our field we have a lot of contact with local interest groups and that they come to us with ‘we have a plan; can we talk about it and what is point of view of the municipality?’”* (Participant 6, 2019).

Furthermore, the answers of the interviewed members of the civic initiatives did not differ a lot from the village coordinators. They also mentioned the participating and engaging role of the mienskip. On the one hand, this engagement can be expressed by joining civic initiatives. For example, by volunteering for the community center, in the case of It Werflân, or by organizing events in the self-harvest garden of Ús Hôf: *“I foresee that an annual village event will take place in our garden at a certain point in time. That could be a Diner en Blanc, an annual dinner or we can also simply be the supplier of the products [...] It is certain that activities are going to take place here, because they already take place and people visit us when open days are organized”* (Participant 7, 2019). On the other hand, the mienskip can show their engagement e.g. through participating in organized drop-in meetings. According to the participants of Toekomstwonnen.nu and Werkgroep Twirre, it is important that the community make their voice being heard at the municipality; *“The resident is the one who has the most experience with how things work. What you like or don’t like. And if you don’t like it, then you should try to find support for it with others and you must also indicate this in the sense of ‘we would like it to be different or see improvement in it’.”* (Participant 9, 2019). According to all participants, this is also the way how the mienskip currently contributes to the local liveability; by showing their engagement and offering their time, skills and knowledge. This comes forward in the attendance of the inspiration evenings of Werkgroep Twirre, the willingness of the community to help elderly people in the case of Toekomstwonnen.nu, the volunteers of It Werflân and the interested people for the self-harvest garden of Ús Hôf.

Additionally, the mienskip makes a relative major contribution to the local livability according to the interviewed village coordinators. As one of the village coordinators of Noardeast-Fryslân summarized: *“Without the mienskip, there is no liveability”* (Participant 1, 2019). According to the other village coordinators, the positive contribution of the mienskip is mainly expressed by citizen involvement. This could be in the form of volunteers, despite the earlier mentioned decline in number of volunteers, or by the present knowledge or skills in a village: *“In many villages, every profession is pretty much represented, and everyone has their own expertise. You have the implementers, but also the thinkers [...] The trick is to find those people and several villages are more skilled in it, than other villages”* (Participant 8, 2019). This is in line with the findings of the civic initiatives.

Lastly, the members of the civic initiatives and the village coordinators had difficulty in mentioning the negative sides of the mienskip. All participants associated the mienskip, in first instance, with positive aspects. As the participant of Werkgroep Twirre indicated: *“In any case, there are always people who are an exception to the rule. I think that will not change in the future, but I think the approach should be that the majority of the mienskip will have a positive effect on the liveability”* (Participant 3, 2019). However, some possible negative aspects of the mienskip came forward after asking more specific questions. For example, certain individuals within the mienskip could hinder the improvement of the local liveability. The village coordinators of Noardeast-Fryslân referred to the self-perceived mayors of a village, who give orders to the municipality and know everything better. This could have a negative impact on a potential collaboration. Besides that, the member of It Werflân mentioned that the ‘old guard’ of a village could be a limiting factor, because in some cases this group still lives in the past and are not open to new ideas. The village coordinator of Weststellingwerf recognizes this point, but also

sees that this group gradually gets replaced by other residents in local interest groups: *“That specific club is getting smaller and new ideas are being created, because other people are being added to the board. And that there is a more supralocal view of ‘what happens in our surrounding area’ and ‘how can we find each other and make use of it?’ In terms of facilities, but also in consultation between villages of ‘how can we collaborate together if necessary?’”* (Participant 8, 2019). And as final point, the interviewed member of Toekomstwonen.nu referred to a possible opposite side of the social cohesion in a community. According to this participant, a certain social control could develop in small communities, because the residents know each other too well. This could be perceived as oppressive for elderly who need help. But overall, these negative aspects of the *mienskip* are mainly an exception on the rule according to all participants.

4.5.3 Ways of involving and contributing to the *mienskip*

Both the municipalities as the civic initiatives try to involve the *mienskip* in several ways to keep them engaged in the improvement of the local liveability. Overall, it became clear that the village coordinators have, because of their role within the municipality, relatively much contact with the local interest groups e.g. by consultation meetings or by means of focus groups. The municipal goal is to serve the general public interest and, in that way, a representative part of the *mienskip* at village level gets involved. Further, the village coordinator of Smallerland gave the example of how residents are getting involved when construction work takes place in their streets. From the perspective of *Omgevingsgericht werken*, the municipality and the residents think together about the possible, further implementation of the residential area. This is a similar protocol as the other municipalities apply. Other ways of involving the *mienskip* are by organizing drop-in meetings or walk-in sessions. At the moment, the municipalities of Noardeast-Fryslân and Súdwest-Fryslân actively use this method in the context of the *Omgevingsvisie*. The village coordinators of Noardeast-Fryslân described this by mentioning their recent project called *Oanheakker*: *“With a converted shack, we are on our way to different villages to organize several walk-in sessions where people can simply drop by. There, we can talk about ‘how do you want that your villages look like in ten years’ and ‘which role do you see for the municipality and what can you do yourself in this process?’”* (Participant 2, 2019). Besides that, the village coordinators perceive this as an accessible way of involving the totality of the *mienskip*. Nevertheless, the village coordinator of Smallerland noticed a possible consequence of the increasing involvement of the *mienskip*: *“I sometimes notice that people are a bit tired of all the things that come their way, but I also notice that where our residents are concerned directly... they do come in action”* (Participant 4, 2019).

On the other hand, the civic initiatives in this research mainly involve the *mienskip* by organizing activities. For example, Werkgroep Twirre organize inspiration evenings and with help of social media they try to inspire more people: *“... the people who were present could devise or choose a homework assignment themselves. Then, they went home with these assignments, the feedback took place through us and then we shared this on social media. What you get is a kind of wildfire of more people who are going to make a contribution by themselves and hopefully become more involved in the Omgevingsvisie”* (Participant 3, 2019). Further, ToekomstWonen.nu organizes information markets and coffee mornings for the elderly, It Werflân organizes activities for the *mienskip* with help of volunteers of the village and Ús Hôf tries to involve the local community by means of open days and markets. Thereby, the local community can also become a member of the self-harvest garden. However, some members of the civic initiatives mentioned difficulties to keep the *mienskip* engaged. The earlier mentioned problem of attracting volunteers is also discussed here, but the participant of It Werflân is content with the recent growth in (young) volunteers: *“The great thing about such a younger group is... it’s a different group than the group of volunteers who already were involved in the community*

center. Those are often the older people of the village. And in that way, you get in touch again with the younger people and their wishes” (Participant 5, 2019). Besides that, the member of Werkgroep Twirre emphasized that the connection with the mienskip is important to keep them engaged. For example, a number of people do communicate their results of the ‘homework assignments’, but there are also people who do not respond afterwards. The participant indicates that this is a point of improvement for the civic initiative.

Moreover, the municipalities and civic initiatives try to contribute to the mienskip by involving them in the improvement of the local liveability. But according to the participants, there are differences in how both actors specifically contribute. As mentioned in former sections, the municipal policies, in this context, are mainly aimed on providing the necessary facilities and conditions for citizen involvement. The municipal contribution can be further expressed by financial support, in the form of grants, or by professional facilitation of the village coordinators. The municipalities of Smallerland, Súdwest-Fryslân and Weststellingwerf contribute in both ways. Noardeast-Fryslân contributes preliminary by village coordinators, because there is, besides DOM, no specific policy yet for financial support since the municipal merger at the beginning of this year. Furthermore, the village coordinators of Súdwest-Fryslân and Smallerland specifically indicate that the municipal contribution is also aimed on enhancing the community sense. As the village coordinator of Súdwest-Fryslân emphasized this by the following statement: *“Our Kernbeleid is mainly aimed at stimulating the citizen involvement and the community sense by facilitating and, where necessary, supporting the people in this. If they can manage it themselves, that’s fantastic. But that is our priority, to foster, where possible, the sense of community”* (Participant 6, 2019).

Lastly, all participants of the civic initiatives indicated that they try to positively contribute to the social cohesion of the (local) mienskip. As the member of Ús Hôf summarized: *“Yes, I think that any form of association or initiative contributes to the sense of community. There is no doubt about that, but that does not mean that it is directly associated with the village”* (Participant 7, 2019). This participant also refers here to the greater reach of Ús Hôf. Besides that, the positive contribution to the social cohesion comes mostly forward in the following statements. First, the member of It Werflân explained this by mentioning the interplay between the community and the community center: *“As a community center you cannot do it alone and it is nice if others want to organize something and that we as community center can help with it. Then they know where to find us for the next time and that we are open to these ideas”* (Participant 5, 2019). And second, the member of Werkgroep Twirre had the idea that the first inspiration evening brought the community together: *“They also really had the feeling of togetherness on that evening, because they all had the same intention to contribute to the local liveability. Until now, they couldn’t do much with their intentions. So, for example, there was an artist who had been collecting plastic for a long time and turned it into works of art. That kind of people suddenly found like-minded people on that evening and that reinforces each other, so that’s nice”* (Participant 3, 2019).

4.6 Overview

In this section, a summary will be given of the results. This will be done by a schematic overview which is based on the main- and sub questions of this thesis. This overview can be found in figure 12, see page 42. In this overview, the different aspects will be shortly answered per participant and, in this way, the similarities and differences between the participants are being shown:

	Noardeast-Fryslân		Smallerland		Súdwest-Fryslân		Weststellingwerf	
	Village coordinator	Werkgroep Twirre	Village coordinator	It Werflân	Village coordinator	Ús Hôf	Village coordinator	Toekomst Wonen
Role in improvement liveability	Facilitative, stimulating	Initiating	Facilitative, stimulating	Initiating, implementing	Facilitative, stimulating	Initiating, implementing	Facilitative, stimulating	Initiating
Specific policy	Partly by DOM		<i>Omgevingsgericht werken</i>		<i>Kernenbeleid</i>		<i>Samen en Doen</i>	
Goals in improvement liveability	Subjective: DOM is meant to facilitate citizens	Subjective: increase local biodiversity	Objective: providing the necessary facilities	Subjective: improve social cohesion of the village	Objective: maintain the necessary facilities	Subjective: Social sustainability	Objective: maintain the necessary facilities	Subjective: Improve social cohesion for local elderly
Expression leadership	Building collective agency, capacity building	Initiator of new ideas/strategies, inspire others	Building collective agency, capacity building	Initiator of new ideas & implementing ideas	Building collective agency, capacity building	Initiator of new ideas, implementing ideas, inspire others	Building collective agency, capacity building	Initiator of new ideas/strategies
Expression cooperation (van Dalssen et al, 2017)	Mainly <i>samen denken, samen leren</i>	Mainly <i>samen denken</i>	Mainly <i>samen denken</i>	All aspects; construction of new community center	Mainly <i>samen denken</i>	Mainly <i>samen denken</i>	Mainly <i>samen denken</i>	Mainly <i>samen denken</i>
Points of improvement for better cooperation	Further municipal facilitation	Contact with municipality	Use of digital tools to improve municipal facilitation	Contact with municipality	The aftercare for civic initiatives; <i>samen leren</i>	Policy-wise; more room to pioneer	Use of digital tools to improve municipal facilitation	Communication with municipality
Perceived role mienskip in improvement liveability	Participative and stay engaged	Participative	Participative and as critical thinker	Participative and engaging	Participative	Participative	Participative	Participative
Ways of involving the mienskip	Consultation with local interest groups, <i>Oanheakker</i>	Inspiration evenings, social media	Consultation with local interest groups, drop-in meetings	Organize activities with and in consultation with mienskip/volunteers	Consultation with local interest groups, drop-in meetings	Self-harvest garden, open days, markets, training programs	Consultation with local interest groups, focus groups	Information markets, coffee mornings
Contribution to mienskip	Facilitative and financial by DOM	Improve social cohesion	Financial and facilitative	Improve social cohesion	Financial and facilitative	Improve social cohesion	Financial and facilitative	Improve social cohesion
Strengths local mienskip	Collectiveness	Collectiveness	Collectiveness	Inventiveness	Inventiveness	Association life	Association life	Social cohesion
Possible negative contribution mienskip to liveability	The self-perceived mayors of a village			The 'old guard' of a village			The 'old guard' of a village	Social control

Figure 12: Overview results.

5. Discussion and conclusion

In this chapter, the results of the multiple-case study will be linked to the used theory. This will be done by discussing the results in the light of the conceptual model, which is derived from the theoretical framework, see figure 5 (p. 23). The results will be discussed per sub question, which will ultimately lead to an answer on the main question:

“How do civic initiatives and governmental institutions take the lead in improving the liveability in the province of Fryslân and how plays the mienskip a role in this?”

5.1 Place-based development

“What are the roles of the different actors in place-based development and how are these roles perceived in the potential coalition?”

According to the village coordinators, the municipalities mainly have a facilitative role in the improvement of the local liveability. This is mainly expressed by municipal policies or approaches to stimulate the bottom-up improvement of the community by financial support or by facilitation of the village coordinators. In addition, it can be argued that municipalities use place-based development according to the definition of Hildreth and Bailey (2014). According to the results, the municipalities use local capabilities, in the form of the community, and in certain cases the policies are adjusted to the specific characteristics of the area. Following the characteristics used by Barca et al. (2012), it can also be argued that the municipal policy of Smallingerland (*Omgevingsgericht werken*) keeps the local cultural characteristics into account by their place-based policies. Thereby, it can be said that Súdwest-Fryslân adjusted their *Kernenbeleid* to the local demographic characteristics by keeping the size of the villages and cities into account e.g. in the financial support for community centers.

According to the members of the civic initiatives, the civic initiatives mainly have an initiating role in the improvement of the local liveability. This is mainly expressed in the implementation of the ideas and projects of the civic initiatives. Thereby, it can be argued that some civic initiatives support place-based development by place-shaping (Horlings, 2016). The ‘place-shaping’ of Werkgroep Twirre have some similarities with re-grounding, because the participant referred to the characteristic rural landscape and by the ambition of Werkgroep Twirre to improve the local biodiversity. In addition, Ús Hôf have similarities with re-positioning. In this way, it can be argued that Ús Hôf tries to change the current political-economic landscape by means of their self-harvest garden to do something against consumerism.

As a final point, it became clear that the current roles of both stakeholders are perceived as appropriate in the potential coalition. In section 4.3.1 it was discussed that the village coordinators perceive the current municipal role as the role municipalities, in general, have to adopt in the improvement of the local liveability. In addition, the interviewed members of the civic initiatives agree on that point, which is mentioned in section 4.3.2. The civic initiatives see themselves, in general, as a driving force in the improvement of the local liveability. For example, when the municipality does not act on that matter.

5.2 Place leadership

“How do the different actors express their leadership in improving liveability?”

From the interviews it became clear that the municipalities of this multiple-case study do not actively take the lead in the improvement of the (local) liveability. However, by means of their (place-based) policies they try to facilitate and stimulate citizen involvement as much as possible e.g. by *Kernenbeleid*, *Omgevingsgericht werken* and *Samen en Doen*. In this way, the municipalities create a collaborative setting to facilitate place-based development. This is in line with the discussed literature of Henry and Pinch (2001) and Beer and Lester (2014) in section 2.3.2. In addition, it can be argued that the municipalities of this multiple-case study try to raise the collective agency in this process by building capacity. For example, by means of guidance by village coordinators or, in the case of DOM, by financial support to hire expert knowledge. This is in accordance with the findings of Lowndes et al. (2006), which indicated the enhancement of skills and resources of local citizens to participate. Nevertheless, in some cases the municipalities take a more leading role when villages need more guiding e.g. in Noardeast-Fryslân.

To the contrary, the results showed that the civic initiatives of this multiple-case study take a more active lead in the improvement of the local liveability. On the one hand, by initiating and implementing their ideas (e.g. It Werflân and Toekomstwonen.nu) and, on the other hand, by stimulating and inspiring other people (e.g. Ús Hôf and Werkgroep Twirre). Furthermore, the personal and social motivations of the interviewed member to get involved in these civic initiatives have similarities with those described in section 2.3.3 by Baker and Mehmood (2015) and Horlings (2017). This became, for example, clear by the statements of the members of It Werflân and Ús Hôf in section 4.2.2. These participants decided to contribute to the (local) liveability from their personal and idealistic motivations.

5.3 Coalition planning

“What are the points of improvement for better cooperation between the civic initiatives and governmental institutions?”

Although, the village coordinators are in general content with the current municipal facilitation, they do see the further municipal facilitation as a point of improvement. For example, to involve the citizens even more by using digital tools (Smallingerland and Weststellingwerf). Or, as the village coordinator of Súdwest-Fryslân mentioned, that more reflection with the civic initiatives is needed about their accomplished projects. This aspect of learning together (*samen leren*) has similarities with the described slogan of Van Dalzen et al. (2017). Furthermore, it is mentioned by the village coordinators of Noardeast-Fryslân and Weststellingwerf that the further citizen involvement needs a certain shift within the municipal organization. This was not explained in much detail in this thesis, but this could be an interesting subject for further scientific research.

The members of the civic initiatives also mentioned a few points of improvement. First, there is room for improvement in certain policies e.g. in the creation of exceptional situations for (pioneering) civic initiatives. This became clear according to the statement of participant 7 in section 4.3.2. Second, there is room for improvement in the contact between the civic initiatives and municipalities. It can be argued that the reason for this problem depends on the current facilitative role of the municipalities. According to the village coordinators, they have mainly contact with the local interest groups of the village in order to serve the general public interest. However, there is certainly contact between both

stakeholders by means of the (financial) facilitation, but the results indicated this is seen as point of improvement for a better cooperation in the future.

5.4 Role mienskip in place-based development

“How does the mienskip plays a role in place-based development according to the different actors?”

According to both actors, the mienskip plays a participative and engaging role in the improvement of the local liveability. Both actors involve the mienskip in several ways e.g. by drop-in meetings (Noardeast-Fryslân, Smallerland and Súdwest-Fryslân) or by organized activities of the civic initiatives. Although, the involvement of the mienskip is mainly restricted to thinking together (*samen denken*), because of the general applied municipal decision-making. This was described by the village coordinator of Smallerland in section 4.4.1. Besides that, the village coordinator of Súdwest-Fryslân mentioned that not all policy areas lend themselves for citizen involvement. Therefore, it can be argued that the current citizen involvement can be placed between the ‘placation’ and ‘partnership’ level (Arnstein, 1969). The opinions, desires and needs of the mienskip, regarding the improvement of the (local) liveability, are considered in the municipal decision-making, but the final decisional power lies with the municipal council at the moment.

5.5 Contribution to the mienskip

“How do the different actors contribute to the mienskip?”

From the interviews it became clear that the municipalities mainly contribute to the mienskip by involving them in the improvement of the (local) liveability. This is expressed by providing the necessary facilities and conditions for citizen involvement. More specifically, the municipalities of this multiple-case study contribute in the form of financial and facilitative support. Thereby, the village coordinators of Smallerland and Súdwest-Fryslân mentioned that their municipal policy is also aimed on enhancing the community sense in their municipality.

In addition, all the members of the civic initiatives indicated that they try to positively contribute to social cohesion of the mienskip. For example, by organizing open days for the local community (Ús Hôf) and coffee mornings for the local elderly (ToekomstWonen.nu). Moreover, this positive contribution became mostly clear in the cases of It Werflân and Werkgroep Twirre, because the given statements in section 4.5.3 indirectly referred to a certain presence of mutuality in the local mienskip (Rydin, 2014). These statements indicated a sense of common purpose and desired future in the local community by means of the community center and the inspiration evenings.

5.6 Aspects of the mienskip

“What are the strengths and downsides of the mienskip?”

The perceived strengths and downsides of the mienskip are displayed in figure 12. Most notable is that these correspond with the different aspect which are discussed in the theoretical framework. Thereby, there are no specific differences discovered between the cases. Lastly, the interviewed members of the civic initiatives can be considered as the ‘everyday fixers’ of the mienskip (Hendriks and Tops, 2005), because they try to engage and stimulate the local community. Therefore, these participants can be considered as important local actors of place-based development, because their drive and personal ambition brings the people and resources in the community together by means of the civic initiatives.

5.7 Conclusion

In the previous sections, the sub questions are being answered and these, indirectly, answered the main question. According to the results, the civic initiatives of this multiple-case study take a more active lead in the improvement of the liveability by implementing their ideas and by stimulating other citizens. On the other hand, the municipalities have a more facilitative role by means of their policy to make citizen involvement possible in this process. And, according to both actors, the *mienskip* mainly has a participative role and both actors try to involve the *mienskip* as much as possible in the improvement of the local liveability.

The following hypothesis, based on the conceptual model, is tested in this multiple-case study: *a coalition, consisting of civic initiatives and a governmental institution, use place-based development as a means to improve the liveability in their spatial area with the help of the mienskip*. It can be argued that both actors use place-based development in the improvement of both the objective as subjective liveability. However, it can be stated that there is no coalition between both actors, as being mentioned in the theoretical framework, because they do not actively work together at the moment. Nevertheless, the civic initiatives get facilitated by the municipalities by means of village coordinators and financial support. On the other hand, it became clear that the municipalities are open to cooperation and involve the community in thinking along in the improvement of the (local) liveability. In that sense, there is a certain co-production which is expressed in the organized drop-in meetings, walk-in sessions and focus groups.

6. Reflection

The scope of the thesis expanded gradually during the process of writing this thesis, even though the subject was framed from the beginning. The concepts of liveability, place-based development, place leadership and mienskip are broad in theory, but the concepts turned out to be more complex than initially thought. As a consequence, the semi-structured interviews became more extensive, in terms of questions, to cover the different topics. This may have been at the expense of the deepening of this thesis, but this broader scope offered the opportunity to describe a general overview of the current course events regarding the improvement of the liveability in the province of Fryslân.

In addition, the conducted qualitative research was perceived as an informative experience. The semi-structured interviews brought me, as researcher, to different places and corners of the province. Besides that, it offered the opportunity to meet interesting people and professionals who are ambitious in making Fryslân a(n) (even) better province to live in.

Finally, it was interesting to notice a certain skepticism about the concepts of liveability and mienskip. Both within the municipalities and at the civic initiatives. Although all participants are very engaged with these topics, there is a danger that the community could turn against these topics when these concepts will be excessively used in the upcoming years. And with the eye on the upcoming implementation of the *Omgevingsvisie*, that is precisely what should be prevented. Hence, the contribution of this thesis for the planning theory and practice is that the further involvement of the community is perceived as a positive development, from the perspective of the interviewed civic initiatives and the village coordinators. But, that the further implementation of the *Omgevingsvisie* needs a certain adaptation period and is (still) something for the longer term.

Appendix A

Example letter of consent – translated in Dutch

Datum: _____

Beste meneer/mevrouw,

Bij deze wil ik u alvast bedanken voor uw bereidheid om deel te nemen aan mijn afstudeeronderzoek. In dit onderzoek wordt de rol van Friese burgerinitiatieven en overheidsinstanties onderzocht in het verbeteren van de leefbaarheid van onze mooie provincie. En hoe de mienskip een rol speelt in dit proces.

In dit interview worden vragen gesteld over hoe u als burgerinitiatief/gemeente betrokken bent in het verbeteren van de leefbaarheid in uw woonplaats/gemeente. De vragen zullen op een semigestructureerde manier gesteld worden, zodat bepaalde onderdelen eventueel extra aandacht kunnen krijgen tijdens het gesprek. Het interview zal ongeveer tussen de 30 en 45 minuten duren.

Door middel van dit formulier vraag ik uw toestemming voor het opnemen van dit interview. De geluidsopname zal alleen als hulpmiddel gebruikt worden bij de verwerking van het interview en zal daarna worden verwijderd. Het transcript van het interview kan nadien, ter goedkeuring, aan u verstrekt worden.

Ten slotte wil ik u op de volgende punten wijzen:

- Dit interview kunt u op elk gewenst moment onderbreken of stoppen;
- Uw gegevens worden vertrouwelijk behandeld en zullen uitsluitend gebruikt worden voor dit afstudeeronderzoek;
- Uw deelname aan dit interview kan, indien gewenst, geanonimiseerd worden.

Bij verdere vragen kunt u contact opnemen via onderstaande gegevens.

Met vriendelijke groeten,

René van Schepen
Tel. nummer/E-mailadres.

Master student Sociale Planologie,
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.

Handtekening:

Appendix B

Interview guide civic initiative – translated in Dutch

Inleidende vragen:

Kunt u in het kort iets over uzelf vertellen?

Kunt u in het kort iets vertellen over het burgerinitiatief?

- Hoe bent u betrokken geraakt bij dit burgerinitiatief?
- Wat is uw rol?

Waarom bent u betrokken bij dit burgerinitiatief?

- Wat is uw motivatie?
- Wat zijn uw idealen?

Rol burgerinitiatief

Wat verstaat u onder de term leefbaarheid?

Hoe ervaart u de leefbaarheid van uw woonplaats op dit moment?

- Kunt u een voorbeeld noemen?

Wat zijn de ambities en doelen van dit burgerinitiatief met betrekking tot het verbeteren van de leefbaarheid?

- In hoeverre zijn deze doelen/ambities afgestemd op de karakteristieken/kwaliteiten van deze gemeente?
- Objectieve leefbaarheid (bijv. faciliteiten) vs. subjectieve leefbaarheid (bijv. gevoel).

Hoe probeert u als burgerinitiatief de doelen en ambities ten aanzien van de leefbaarheid te bereiken?

- Kunt u een voorbeeld noemen?
- Zijn deze projecten afgestemd op de behoeften van deze plek?

Wat is het resultaat van deze projecten met betrekking tot de verbetering van de leefbaarheid in uw woonplaats?

- Kunt u een voorbeeld noemen?

Op welke manier neemt dit burgerinitiatief het voortouw (*the lead*) in het verbeteren van de leefbaarheid in uw woonplaats?

- Hoe kan dit verbeterd worden?
 - o Wat zijn de huidige condities?
 - o Zijn er obstakels?
- Op welke manier zouden burgerinitiatieven in het algemeen het voortouw moeten nemen in het verbeteren van de leefbaarheid?

Mienskip

Wat verstaat u onder het woord mienskip?

- Is dit wel of niet kenmerkend voor deze plek/regio?
- Zou dit in andere woonplaatsen anders zijn?

Hoe wordt de mienskip betrokken bij dit burgerinitiatief?

- Op welke manier?
 - o Mond-tot-mond, media, online (social media), activiteiten, vergaderingen etc.
- In welke mate?
- Hoe kan de mienskip meer betrokken worden?

Op welke manier draagt dit burgerinitiatief wel of niet bij aan de mienskip?

- Voelen mensen zich meer verbonden met elkaar?
- Leidt het tot meer onderlinge connecties in de gemeenschap?

- Zorgt dit burgerinitiatief voor meer betrokkenheid van de mienskip in uw woonplaats?

Op welke manier draagt de mienskip wel of niet bij aan de leefbaarheid van deze woonplaats?

- Betrokkenheid of steun vanuit de mienskip?
 - o In welke vorm? Vrijwilligers, specifieke kennis, contacten etc.
- Draagt de mienskip negatief bij aan de leefbaarheid? Kunt u een voorbeeld geven?

Wat zou volgens u de rol van de mienskip moeten zijn in het verbeteren van de leefbaarheid in uw woonplaats?

Samenwerking met betrokken partijen.

Met wie werkt u als burgerinitiatief samen bij projecten ter bevordering van de leefbaarheid?

Op welke manier werkt u als burgerinitiatief samen met deze partijen?

- Wat zijn de verschillende rollen in deze samenwerking?
- Op welke manier uit deze samenwerking zich?
 - o Samen denken, samen besluiten, samen doen, samen leren (van Dalfsen et al., 2017).

Hoe verloopt de samenwerking met deze partijen?

- Wat zijn de positieve en negatieve punten?
- Hoe kan dit verbeterd worden?

Appendix C

Interview guide village coordinator – translated in Dutch

Inleidende vragen:

Kunt u in het kort iets over uzelf vertellen?

Kunt u in het kort iets vertellen over uw rol binnen de gemeente?

Rol gemeente

Wat verstaat u onder de term leefbaarheid?

Hoe ervaart u de leefbaarheid binnen uw gemeente op dit moment?

- Kunt u een voorbeeld noemen?

Wat is het beleid van de gemeente met betrekking tot het verbeteren van de leefbaarheid?

- Wat is de rol van de gemeente hierin?
- Op wat voor manier en in welke mate uit dit zich?
- In hoeverre is dit beleid afgestemd op de karakteristieken/kwaliteiten van deze gemeente?
- Wat zijn de ambities en doelen van deze gemeente?
 - o Objectieve leefbaarheid (bijv. faciliteiten) vs. subjectieve leefbaarheid (bijv. gevoel).

Hoe probeert de gemeente de doelen en ambities ten aanzien van de leefbaarheid te bereiken?

- Kunt u een voorbeeld noemen?
- Zijn deze projecten afgestemd op de behoeften van deze plek?

Wat is het resultaat van deze projecten met betrekking tot de verbetering van de leefbaarheid in uw gemeente?

- Kunt u een voorbeeld noemen?

Op welke manier neemt deze gemeente het voortouw (*the lead*) in het verbeteren van de leefbaarheid binnen uw gemeente?

- Hoe kan dit verbeterd worden?
 - o Wat zijn de huidige condities?
 - o Zijn er obstakels?
- Op welke manier zouden gemeenten in het algemeen het voortouw moeten nemen in het verbeteren van de leefbaarheid?

Mienskip

Wat verstaat u onder het woord mienskip?

- Is dit wel of niet kenmerkend voor deze gemeente?
- Zou dit in andere gemeenten anders zijn?

Hoe wordt de mienskip betrokken door de gemeente?

- Op welke manier?
 - o Mond-tot-mond, media, online (social media), activiteiten, vergaderingen etc.
- In welke mate?
- Hoe kan de mienskip meer betrokken worden?

Op welke manier draagt deze gemeente wel of niet bij aan de mienskip?

- Voelen mensen zich meer verbonden met elkaar?
- Leidt het tot meer onderlinge connecties in de gemeente?
- Zorgt de gemeente voor meer betrokkenheid van de mienskip?

Op welke manier draagt de mienskip wel of niet bij aan de leefbaarheid in deze gemeente?

- Betrokkenheid of steun vanuit de mienskip?
 - o In welke vorm? Vrijwilligers, specifieke kennis, contacten, initiatieven etc.

- Draagt de mienskip negatief bij aan de leefbaarheid? Kunt u een voorbeeld geven?

Wat zou volgens u de rol van de mienskip moeten zijn in het verbeteren van de leefbaarheid in deze gemeente?

Samenwerking met betrokken partijen.

Met wie werkt u als gemeente samen bij projecten ter bevordering van de leefbaarheid?

Op welke manier werkt u als gemeente samen met deze partijen?

- Wat zijn de verschillende rollen in deze samenwerking?
- Op welke manier uit deze samenwerking zich?
 - o Samen denken, samen besluiten, samen doen, samen leren (van Dalfsen et al., 2017)

Hoe verloopt de samenwerking met deze partijen?

- Wat zijn de positieve en negatieve punten?
- Hoe kan dit verbeterd worden?

Appendix D

Coding scheme

Municipalities	A
View on liveability	A1
Objective indicators	A11
- Schools	A111
- Shops	A112
- Facilities	A113
- Infrastructure	A114
- Community centers	A115
- Internet connection	A116
- ATM	A117
Subjective indicators	A12
- Comfortable living area	A121
- Social cohesion	A122
- Social interaction	A123
- Vital society	A124
- Overall appearance of a village	A125
Current situation	A13
- Positive in general	A131
- Active citizens	A132
- Active local interest groups	A133
- Good appearance	A134
Threats to liveability	A14
- Population decline	A141
- Ageing society	A142
- Closing of facilities	A143
- Decline in volunteers	A144
Place-based development	A2
Role	A21
- Facilitating	A211
- Stimulating	A212
- Guiding	A213
- Reactive	A214
Policy	A22
- Specific policy	A221
- No specific policy	A222
Goals towards improvement liveability	A23
- Objective liveability	A231
- Subjective liveability	A232
Adjusted to local characteristics	A24
- Social	A241
- Economic	A242
- Cultural	A243
- Institutional	A244
Results	A25
Place leadership	A3
Current role	A31
- Rebalancing (in)formal rules/practices	A311

- Building collective agency	A312
- Development of new strategies/ideas	A313
- Capacity building	A314
Barriers	A32
- Policy	A321
- Rules	A322
- Grants	A323
- Citizen support	A324
- Capacity of the citizens	A325
Points of improvement	A33
- Policy	A331
- Rules	A332
- Grants	A333
Ideal leadership role	A34
- Similar to current role	A341
- More guiding role	A342
- Less guiding role	A343
Coalition	A4
Stakeholders	A41
- Province	A411
- Local interest groups	A412
- Housing corporations	A413
- Social welfare organizations	A414
- Healthcare organizations	A415
- Water board	A416
- Forestry commission	A417
- Schools	A418
Role in coalition	A42
- Facilitative	A421
- Guiding	A422
- Advising	A423
- Reactive	A424
Expression of collaboration	A43
- <i>Samen denken</i> (think together)	A431
- <i>Samen besluiten</i> (decide together)	A432
- <i>Samen doen</i> (act together)	A433
- <i>Samen leren</i> (learn together)	A434
Current collaboration	A44
- Good points	A441
- Negative points	A442
- Points of improvement	A443
Mienskip	A5
Aspects of the mienskip	A51
- Community sense	A511
- Vital association life	A512
- Place attachment	A513
- Totality of village life	A514
- Active citizens	A515
- Inventive citizens	A516
- Collectiveness	A517
Perceived role in place-based development	A52

- Participative	A521
- Engaging	A522
- Critical thinker	A523
Contribution mienskip to liveability	A53
- Positive	A531
- Negative	A532
Ways of involving the mienskip	A54
- Consultation with local interest groups	A541
- Drop-in meetings/walk-in sessions	A542
- Focus groups	A543
- (Social) media	A544
Contribution to the mienskip	A55
- Room for citizen involvement	A551
- Financial support	A552
- Providing facilities	A553
- Village coordinators	A554

Civic initiatives	B
View on liveability	B1
Objective indicators	B11
- Schools	B111
- Shops	B112
- Facilities	B113
- Mobility	B114
- Community centers	B115
- Internet connection	B116
- Economic vitality	B117
- Collective activities	B118
Subjective indicators	B12
- Comfortable living area	B121
- Social cohesion	B122
- Social interaction	B123
- Overall appearance of a village	B124
- Mutuality	B125
- Sense of community	B126
- Healthy living area	B127
Current situation	B13
- Positive in general	B131
- Good social cohesion	B132
- Perceived loneliness among elderly	B133
- Technological backlog	B134
Threats to liveability	B14
- Population decline	B141
- Ageing society	B142
- Closing of facilities	B143
- Decline in volunteers	B144
- Loneliness among elderly	B145
- (Chinese) solar parks	B146
- Technological backlog in rural areas	B147
Place-based development	B2

Role	B21
- Initiating	B211
- Implementing	B212
Goals towards improvement liveability	B22
- Objective liveability	B221
- Subjective liveability	B222
Place-shaping	B23
- Re-positioning	B231
- Re-appreciation	B232
- Re-grounding	B233
Personal motivation to get involved	B24
- Renewed interest in place	B241
- Economic motivation	B242
- Social motivation	B243
- Idealistic motivation	B244
Results	B25
Place leadership	B3
Current role	B31
- Initiator of new ideas/activities	B311
- Implement new ideas/activities	B312
- Inspire other citizens	B313
Barriers	B32
- Policy	B321
- Rules	B322
- Grants	B323
- Building citizen support	B324
- Attracting volunteers	B325
Points of improvement	B33
- Policy	B331
- Rules	B332
- Grants	B333
Ideal leadership role	B34
- Similar to current role	B341
- Inspire other civic initiatives	B342
- Unite with other civic initiatives	B343
Coalition	B4
Stakeholders	B41
- Province	B411
- Municipality	B412
- Housing associations	B413
- Doarpswurk	B414
- Netwerk Duurzame Dorpen	B415
- Senior associations	B416
- Blij(f) wonen	B417
- Friese Milieufederatie	B418
- Schools	B419
Role in coalition	B42
- Initiator	B421
- Inspirator	B422
- Shareholder	B423
Expression of collaboration	B43

- <i>Samen denken</i> (think together)	B431
- <i>Samen besluiten</i> (decide together)	B432
- <i>Samen doen</i> (act together)	B433
- <i>Samen leren</i> (learn together)	B434
Current collaboration	B44
- Good points	B441
- Negative points	B442
- Points of improvement	B443
Mienskip	B5
Aspects of the mienskip	B51
- Community sense	B511
- Vital association life	B512
- Place attachment	B513
- Social cohesion	B514
- Active citizens	B515
- Inventive citizens	B516
- Collectiveness	B517
Perceived role in place-based development	B52
- Participative	B521
- Engaging	B522
Contribution mienskip to liveability	B53
- Positive	B531
- Negative	B532
Ways of involving the mienskip	B54
- Activities	B541
- By volunteers	B542
- Membership	B543
- (Social) media	B544
Contribution to the mienskip	B55
- Improving social cohesion	B551

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