

# Life in place or place in life?

The importance of daily activities and social networks for the emotional affective meaning of the village.



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# Preface and Acknowledgements

There it is. Finally the last words appear on the screen. More than a year has passed since the first words made up the sentences that would initiate the project that can proudly be called the magnum opus of me, a 25 year old student human geography and planning at Utrecht University.

The thesis follows the passion I developed of rural communities and their entanglement in the urban-rural dialectic from my bachelor at Wageningen University, and what I kept clinging on to in my urban research master. Watching it grow, not only in amount of pages, but also in my head also my passion for the project, the villages and the especially the people in it became more intense. I loved what I was doing and I loved each part of it, especially the moments of clarity and bright vision that hit me on occasion on the weirdest moments, even when I was more or less sleeping. It gave me the strength and courage to bring this thing to the end it deserves. Consequently, the blood, sweat and tears that have been spilled throughout the project – a car that wouldn't start on a freezing Thursday night 120 km from home, a door slammed in my face and the numerous cancellations of participating respondents – have never been worthy enough to demotivate me.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

In a time when we travel many kilometres every day, the place where we live grows ever more significant. It seems to have become one of the few locations, if not the only one that forms an anchor point in the restless sea of spaces and times that we move through. Even if we do not leave our home, the world seems to have changed; things have happened which immediately influences how we behave, how we look, how we think, who we are. We are forced to re-establish ourselves every time we walk out that door; every time we have become a new self when we pass it again, affected by the events we had come across. We seem only able to accomplish this in an environment that suits us, that brings out the best in us and invites us to develop into better versions of ourselves. For some it is attractive to enjoy the rush of the everyday life world, to live life to the max in an environment that changes radically every hour, every minute. For some the lights, the colours, the sounds and the smells make their life vibrant, intense. For some residing in this whirl of the elements that produce modern city life confirms their existence and establishes their being. For others all of this hassle on the contrary represents an uncontrollable surrounding in which they lose themselves, not being able to recognise what they are and what they stand for. For them the urban realm embodies a mess that drives them out of the city into the greenery, the silence and the timelessness of the countryside in which peace of mind can be found. The rural village in all of its stillness then becomes a heaven in which predictability governs the daily activities and the overall pace of life slows.

However, the circumstances in contemporary villages have changed in a profound sense compared to a few decades ago, and continue so to this day. Three societal processes seem to be the most important for the overall change of village populations. Firstly, because of increasing personal mobility it means that on a daily basis people are confronted with many different environments that can be demanding, such as urban milieus. Therefore people are in constant negotiation with their environment and carefully have to organize their activities in everyday life. That raises questions of why villages have an indiscriminate appeal to their inhabitants and why it works for them to stay there as they have to be willing to leave their home town every time they have to go shopping, enjoy theatres and even to buy groceries. Secondly, society-wide individualisation processes have profound effects as people's priorities change. These priorities are not confined to overarching issues in life such as a job or religion choice, rather, it shows in how and why on a daily basis people engage with other in their dwelling environment (SCP, 2006; 2008b). Especially for small villages this becomes apparent as diminishing interests in social contacts in the community is not only noticeable throughout the village in decreasing numbers of active community association members (SCP, 2008b), as more time is spent on personal interests and less on collective activities (SCP, 2006). Savage et al. (2005) add to this that local cultural conceptions, such as activities and values used to be place-based in the past, but it does not apply to the global world of today anymore.

Thirdly, social networks are increasingly delocalised (Neal & Walters, 2008) and less territorially driven in general (Bruhn, 2011), which means that the dwelling place does not always resemble the place where the social aspects of life are enacted. Villagers therefore may differ strongly from each other as some will have a strong social orientation on the village, while others may practically know nobody in the home village. This has everything to do with the second societal process in that currently shared interests are more than ever the basis for social relations instead of 'given' relations such as neighbourliness and other locally constitutive possibilities (Thissen & Droogleever Fortuijn 1999). At the same time, de Hart (2005) argues that also for those who are not socially oriented on the village where one lives; there remains a need for some form of



collectiveness, also on a local scale, which does not necessarily need to be expressed in face-to-face contact. Rather, such a form is expressed by the sensation the presence of others in a place and knowing that symbolic communities are present (Hummon, 1992).

In addition to these three developments, many villages in Western Europe are currently predicted to have a declining village population in the near future. Even those in relatively urbanised areas, such as in the Netherlands where throughout the country villagers feel enabled to commute to urban areas for their job (Thissen & Droogleevers Fortuijn, 1998). Yet, no research has been performed on how villagers actually perceive population decline and under which conditions they perceive it in this particular way. As it is both noticeable in the physical appearance of the village and in the overall affective atmosphere in the community, the – expected – experience of a population decline may indicate what aspects of the village are meaningful as they may become threatened to disappear (Manzo, 2005). Hence, this thesis attempts to foreground the reasons why dwelling in a village today is meaningful to its inhabitants.

A village as spatial unit has acquired a different meaning in an ever more mobile and individualised society, which has resulted in a rather heterogeneous village population as it has been subject to on-going urbanisation in both a physical and a socio-cultural way (Dordregter, 1998). Because of these processes villagers increasingly differentiate from each other in their perceptions and experiences of the village as they become influenced by different places and lifestyles (McIntyre et al., 2006). Therefore, because of their altered needs, also their expectations of village life have changed. In turn, this has effect on feelings of place attachment and belongingness as it now recognised these feelings seem to stretch with social network and activity patterns (Cuba & Hummon, 1993) and focus on specific elements encountered when performing daily activities and (Savage et al., 2005). Hence, this thesis attempts to come to better understanding how place attachment influences village inhabitants, as for most of them the village is not the central place where all facets of life are enacted and where their social relations predominantly live.

In the literature on meaning of places two main approaches exist: a place-based approach and a person-based approach. In a place-based approach the distinction between places that is the “underlying dimension” and that allows place meaning to grow (Gustafson, 2001). Massey (1994) emphasises the constantly changing interrelatedness between places in the becoming of meaningful. It develops by coming to know the particular place and building an affective bond with it (Tuan, 1974). This becoming attached to a place occurs when it satisfies fundamental human needs (Relph, 1976), such as the variety between excitement and stillness. These needs seem to be chiefly of social nature as research of Cuba and Hummon (1993) prove that more interaction in a particular place increases local attachment. This means that the community in place is of crucial importance for the meaning that becomes attributed to the place (Relph, 1976). However, the way knowledge accumulates and the bond grows then depends on the perceptual vantage point (Murdoch, 2003). This indicates that the place-based approach to place meaning is not sufficient (Manzo, 2005).

Rather, the second approach which is person-based seems better feasible (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). This approach uses terms such as “identity principles” – distinctiveness, continuity self-esteem and self-efficacy – to understand how place meaning develops (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996). Prohansky et al. (1983) claim that identification with places from which meaning emerges in a similar fashion as identification with places: a strong identification with a place would mean that it closely resembles parts of the self. Hence, personality determines whether places have the potential to become meaningful. However, following a relational approach, Netto (2008) argues that place meaning develops neither according to the place-based approach, nor the person-based approach. Rather, it is the combination of both elements of places and of people that play a role in an embodied sense.



According to Netto (2008) place meaning would be highly referential as meaning in general can be an event in our experience which makes the place in which it happens meaningful, while at the same time meaning it is an experience of references to things as different as the social and the material, and spaces and emotions. In his approach place meaning is an extension places can acquire especially from practices, as “spaces are – at least in part – as moving bodies do” (McCormack, 2008; 1823, emphasis original). The performance of acts in place produces meaning and in turn can induce their re-enactment as meaning develops with the reregistering of emotional states (Curti, 2008). In this sense meaning is not limited to consciousness, as firstly praxis is inherently embodied and therefore intimately connected to sensation and emotions. Secondly, sensation and emotions are intrinsic properties of meaning itself (Massumi, 2002). Subsequently, Manzo (2003) argues that emotional experiences in place are more memorable if they are shared with others. The meanings of places may then shaped by the – sociated – practices performed in them as they form associated networks, carrying symbolic communities and are related in other ways (McCormack, 2008).

This would mean that the meaning a village acquires in the lives of its inhabitants at least partially depends on the embodied daily activities that are performed in the village, but also how they relate to performances in other places in their lives. However, embodied experiential accounts of daily life activities in rural villages and their effects on places becoming meaningful have not yet been explored, despite the plead of Little and Lyeshon (2003) for an incorporation of the body in contributions to understandings of meaning giving to rural environments. Subsequently, the effects of emotions and affective atmospheres on place meanings are often ignored (see figure 1). Emotions here are regarded in accordance with theorizations of Thift (2004) as bodily subconscious drives born from memories in place that form associational relations with environments that are resided in on a daily basis. Affect is regarded as a force of potential interaction; an intensity that stems from outside bodies which do have an effect on them, expressed in emotions. It is an atmosphere that is collectively shaped but experienced on an individual basis, and constituted by the presence, performance and representation of others in a place. Hence, current literature lacks the embodied, socially experientially lived accounts of living in a rural village under the contemporary socio-spatial circumstances

Hence, to come to an understanding of how the village has become a meaningful place in an embodied sense this research will focus on what kind of experiences village inhabitants have gone through and which are prevailing on a daily basis: two aspects are important in this (see figure 1) . First needs be considered how praxis in place, both in the village and outside the village plays a role in this as experiencing different environments would lead to different conceptions of the village. Hence those with their orientation of their daily activities on the village would have different conceptions and therefore attribute a different meaning to the village compared to those who experience different environments than only the village on a daily basis. Second there needs to be shed more light on how the organisation of life is shared with others, and how the sensed presence of others plays a role. Again, not only does this apply to living in the village, but also outside it, as villagers who have a large share of their social networks in the village would perceive the village differently because they share more of their experiences with many people and they would feel the affective atmosphere in a pleasant way. Those who have their social network mainly located outside the village share their experiences in the village with only a few and perceive the affective atmosphere differently, possibly even in a negative fashion.

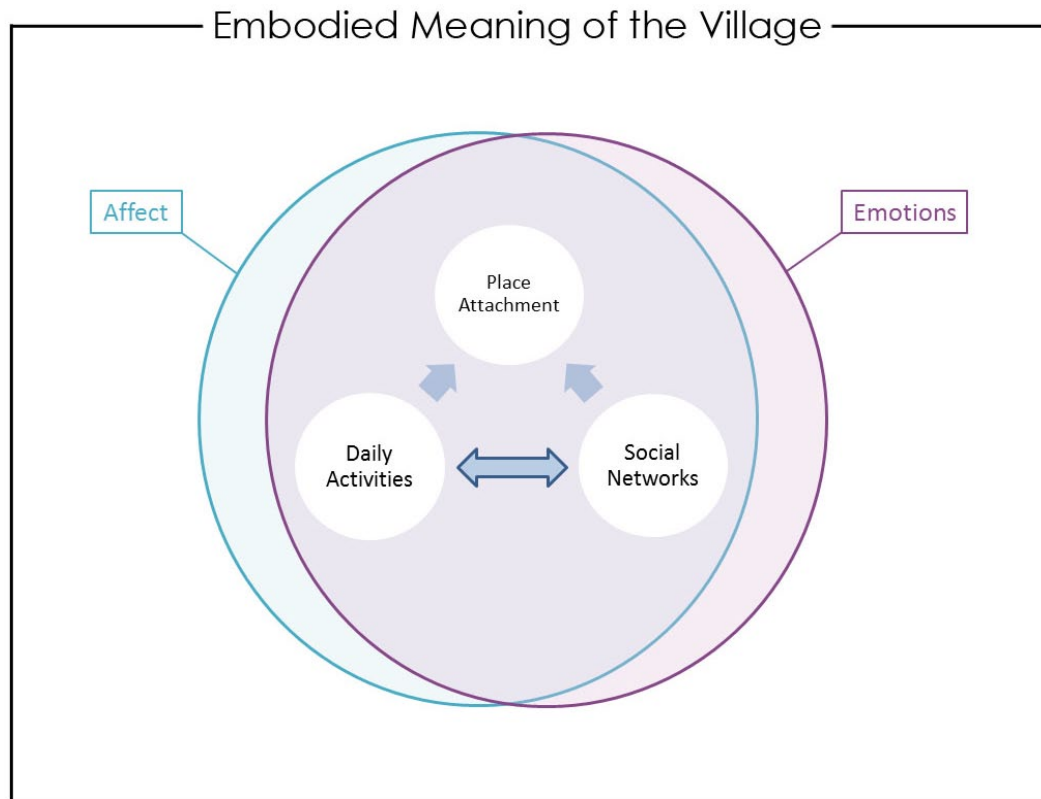


Figure 1: Conceptual model

Therefore this thesis incorporates the bodily aspects of residing in places, as well as the emotions that have become and are becoming associated with aspects in the village because of past experiences both in the villages, in other places and from a long time ago. Furthermore, an affective account of the life of a village must be created to capture his or her feelings of being among other villagers. The research questions are formulated as follows:

1. ***What is the importance of social networks of village inhabitants in the embodied meaning of their village in an emotional and affective sense and how does place attachment play a role?***
2. ***What is the importance of daily activities of village inhabitants in the embodied meaning of their village in an emotional and affective sense and how does place attachment play a role?***

This research can make an important contribution for policymakers and local governments in that it shows a comprehensive account of the embodied lives of the village inhabitants dwelling on the contemporary countryside. It may lead to the identification of elements of the village that are highly valued by villagers with certain lifestyles and sets expectations. This would not only provide motivations for strategies to improve the quality of the living environment of villages in accordance of their needs, maybe even targeted on specific groups of villagers who resemble in their orientation on the village. Subsequently, these motivations may also be used to attract a specific group of villagers. This would not only be beneficial to the community at large, but may also serve as a way to counter or at least slowing population decline and accommodate for the effects on the current villagers

The thesis is organised as follows: chapter 2 gives a literature overview regarding the contemporary countryside and the concepts of meaning, place attachment, social relations and daily activities. Chapter 3 will provide the thesis with a theoretical framework. Chapter 4 describes the research design and methodology for the empirical study. Chapter 5 presents the empirical results on the importance of social networks for the meaning one attributes to the village. Chapter 6 continues with the empirical results on the importance of daily activities for the meaning of the village. Chapter 7 present the conclusions, discussion and recommendations for future research and policy makers.







# Chapter 2: Literature review

The interesting new blend of village inhabitants in villages in metropolitan landscapes raise questions about the kind of influences a contemporary villager experiences in living his life there. In order to acquire a better understanding of the ways meaning is attributed to village environments, this chapter first attempts to bring together the relevant literature on contemporary villages, their heterogeneous populations and the predicted population decline some village await. Second, literature on place attachment is presented. Third, social relations in the village context are shed light on and fourth, an account of the research on daily activities and mobility is provided. The chapter ends with the chapter conclusions that give an early reflection on the research questions.

## 2.1 Villages on the Dutch countryside

A rather strong urbanization of rural villages is noticeable as people increasingly tend to see the countryside as dwelling domain instead of the production domain it used to be half a century ago. It marks the transition from a production landscape to a consumption landscape (Heins, 2004; Hidding, 2006; Cloke & Goodwin, 1993; Huigen & Strijker, 1998). Whereas agriculture used to be the most dominant land use type, not only visually, but especially socio-culturally, now the landscape is above all considered to be important in a visual sense, instead of being productive (Bunce, 2003). The uniqueness of villages on the countryside therefore altered from being rural compared to urban areas to being unique in their visual appearance, both by having specific elements in the scenery, such as the orchards in Somerset, UK (Cloke & Jones, 2001), and by a special collection of places that together form the specific synergy which gives it a unique character (Wylie, 2003).

The Dutch Social Cultural Planning Agency (SCP) attempted to capture the differences between villages and developed a classification of five different types of countryside and classified the whole of the Dutch countryside based on postal codes (see table 1 and appendix 1). The SCP (2008b) argues that villages should be looked at from a local perspective to come to grips with their embeddedness in the urban structures in addition to address density and physical features of the village environments to come to a better understanding of how village communities can be characterized. The method focuses on the age distribution, general wealth of inhabitants – e.g. education and income –, dwelling histories – e.g. the number of people who have lived there their entire life – and the daily paths of people which capture the orientation on the village and surroundings. Incorporating these differences sheds light on the overall character of the community and may therefore provide valuable insight into the position the village takes in the life of its inhabitants (Nielsen-Pincus et al., 2010).

In the closed countryside villages are incorporated who are chiefly located in the more peripheral regions of The Netherlands, furthest away of major roads and railways. They have a closed character as they have a relatively tight community and do not attract many tourists. Furthermore, the inhabitants leave the area less often than in other types and seldom visit a city. This type is represents the prevalent idea of a rural village. The villages in the rural countryside are chiefly located in the busier regions and do attract many tourists. The villages have relatively much amenities and facilities and appear more urban. The villages in the residential countryside are home mostly to families who often visit other places, they attract almost no tourists and are very likely to have no amenities. The villages in the elitist countryside are home to many seniors who have lived in cities before and often visit other places and cities. They are also located near cities and in close vicinity of natural areas and consist of relatively expensive housing. The villages in the urban countryside are typified as outskirts of small cities and have urban characteristics with relatively cheap housing and a high

address density. The inhabitants visit other places but cities not that often and only a third reckons to live on the countryside (SCP, 2008).

Savage et al. (2005) also developed a distinction between British neighbourhoods but focused on the origins of the sense of belonging. They performed a study in four Manchester neighbourhoods on how the living area is perceived, what exactly appeals people in these places and what kind purpose these areas seem to serve in

	<b>The closed countryside</b>	<b>The rural countryside</b>	<b>The residential countryside</b>	<b>The elitist countryside</b>	<b>The urban countryside</b>
<b>Area address density</b>	156	659	137	280	720
<b>Mean household income (x 1000 p/y)</b>	23	26	28	30	25
<b>Higher educated (%)</b>	25	24	29	35	27
<b>Import from urban areas / the city (% of import)</b>	18	26	26	35	26
<b>Trips by inhabitants outside the postal code area (% of all trips by inhabitants)</b>	65	53	87	80	77
<b>Trips by inhabitants in urban areas / the city (% of all trips by inhabitants)</b>	1	3	1	3	2
<b>Inhabitants that are convinced they live on the countryside (%)</b>	91	69	82	54	33
<b>Local social orientation (mean share of social relations living &lt; 1 km distance (%))</b>	37	37	36	19	28

Table 1: A selection of the variables per countryside type. From: SCP (2008b), translated from Dutch

the lives of the inhabitants. They found interesting differences between two pairs of neighbourhoods, which they called 'empty places' and 'full spaces'. Empty spaces were defined as "nice" spaces, sites conveniently located between other active spaces of work and kin", in which often somewhat wealthier residents enjoy the living area as pleasant and express a relatively low interest in the "innate qualities of the place" (Savage et al., 2005: 104). Full spaces are rather proximity-based living areas with a relatively strong cultural similarity between the inhabitants, in which they are often relatively strongly embedded in the local or regional social network. Although they also made a difference between 'magical' and 'functional' places, in the metropolitan countryside villages can be considered to be both, therefore in this study no such distinction will be made.

### 2.1.1 Heterogeneous village populations

In many recent village community studies comes to the fore that there is an increasing lack of volunteers who fulfil tasks for community associations, at school or at elderly homes (SCP, 2008b; Schnabel, 2004). At the same time, the motivation for shared activities, general interest in neighbours and other inhabitants decreased (De Hart, 2005). These are all effects of the on-going individualisation tendency in society that can be described as the privatization in more aspects in life and becoming more independent of others in making choices (Schnabel, 2004). This is not only limited to religion, partner choice or job, but also in everyday matters, such as travel mode choice and the kind and amount activities that are found appropriate to fit a day. This means that village inhabitants feel less obliged to attend village traditions and engage in village associations than a decade ago (SCP, 2008b) and village populations have become more heterogeneous.

At the same time, individualisation brings different needs for collectivisation. Schnabel (2004) argues that for an individualised society a form of collectivisation is required as everyone should have the same

chances and possibilities to shape his own future. De Hart (2005) adds to this, that nowadays there are new tendencies to be part of a collective and people feel the need to express some kind of collective identity that transcends the social network. He states that these outings need to be flexible and temporal and therefore general tendencies in village clubs is that often people are only willing to take on less or periodic tasks and do not want to carry much responsibility (SCP, 2008b). Villagers who are used to collectivist communities and whose past determines the future report therefore difficulties to live with villagers who arrange their life according to the new and different (Hogenstijn & van Middelkoop, 2008; Schnabel, 2004). Hence, the countryside became ever more a place where different people live with different intentions and where different experiences are possible (Bunce, 2003).

In the Netherlands from the 1970's onward villages had a constant in-migration of people from predominantly urban areas as cars and later on computers and the internet enabled people to live further away from job locations (Brunt, 1974). This had profound effects, not only on the material appearance of villages as they expanded in a rather rapid fashion, but also on the general character of the inhabitant groups as the villages became a typically middle class social civilian environment (Halfacree, 1996). The general priority before this period had been village-wide economic progression and was village expansion strived for because it would produce more tax incomes for the whole community. During that time villages were more of a communal unity and emphasis was mainly put on social coherence and being a community as that was considered the essence of the village and living on the countryside (Cloke & Jones, 2001).

The majority of newcomers represent higher educated families, of which at least one parent holds on to their job in the city (Hogenstijn & van Middelkoop, 2008). As they can afford living further away from their jobs, their priorities are more focused on an enhancement of their quality-of-life in their dwelling conditions than economic prosperity in life (Van Dam, 1995; Hogenstijn & van Middelkoop, 2008). Thus, they are especially sensitive for pleasant experiences in their dwelling environment, which balance with other elements in their life (Bunce, 2003). These primarily former urbanites put more emphasis on the importance of a visually pleasing village appearance (Hogenstijn & van Middelkoop, 2008; Van der Hoeve, 2004) and they tend to strive to keep the villages in the visual state at the time of their arrival (Abram, 2003). This means that the idealistic element in their motivation to dwell in a village may be relatively strong. Idealistic reasons arise from two different sources. One can be found in the everyday depiction of villages in the countryside as they appear in newspapers and on tv (Van der Ziel, 2008). The other one can be found in the concept of rural idyll (Simon et al., 2007) and because it is shaped by past experiences everyone has different conceptions of it (Bunce, 2003)

In general the rural idyll presents 'happy, healthy and problem-free images of rural life safely nestling with both a close social community and a contiguous natural environment' (Cloke & Milbourne, 1992: 359). The concept is a phenomenon that is found in urban areas (Mingay, 1989; Woods, 1998; SCP, 2008a), largely because it involves an urban-rural antagonism (Boyle et al., 1998). Christenson et al. (1983) even proposed the equation of 'ruralism' being 'antiurbanism', in which the rural is represented as an area where no urban problems exist: "the countryside became a place to retreat (often in the imagination) from an unacceptable or unbearable contemporary world" (Burchardt, 2002; 9). Although and maybe because the Netherlands is relatively heavily urbanised, the idea of rural idyll is still very much alive. Both researches of Van Dam et al. (2002) and the SCP (2008a) revealed that the main reasons for living in a village often directly stem from idyllic thoughts: Villagers interviewed by the SCP (2008a) tended to idealize village life as motivation for living in a small village, far away from everything, for its loving community and perfect conditions to raise children. Hence, villages increasingly became places inhabited by people with different backgrounds, priorities and purposes with each different and specific ideas of life in on the countryside.

### 2.1.2 Declining village populations

The villages in the Dutch countryside have known several periods of growth and decline during the last century, and currently but especially in the following decade they have to cope with diminishing inhabitant numbers (Elerie, 2009), especially in the provinces of Friesland, Groningen (Hoogstra, 1998), Zeeland and Limburg (Drijgers & Kaagman, 2010). Mainly because non-commercial facilities such as libraries had been declining for several decades, many previously independent villages were annexed into one municipality (Hidding, 2006). In 2007 the national spatial policy aimed at stimulating regional functional cooperation between villages, such as shared usage of sports facilities. This 'municipal redivision' created possibilities to maintain enough support for existing facilities and stimulated concentration of specific facilities such as medical facilities and schools (Hogenstijn & van Middelkoop, 2008). In addition, also shops struggle to persist in their location in a village as becomes apparent in food stores whose number diminished with a staggering 25% between 2001 and 2009 (CBS, 2010b). Hence, for villagers this often means that their children can walk to school but that they had to carpool with other parents in order to get their children to soccer practice in a neighbouring village and do the groceries in a nearby larger town. However, despite the prevailing idea that decreasing amounts of facilities would stimulate and even cause population decline, studies have shown that almost all village inhabitants are willing to travel over a greater distance to get to the nearest shop (SCP, 2008a; van Dam, 1995).

Earlier research has shown that the decline of village inhabitant numbers can rather be explained by two factors concerning selective migration (RLG, 2002) First, a rather massive out-migration of rural youth who pursue higher education and more career opportunities in cities (Woods, 1998; Van der Hoeven, 2004) Often they do not return to the village or only when they become older and economic prosperity is not the first priority anymore (SCP, 2008a) Second, the diminishing importance of the agricultural labour market which caused a relatively high unemployment rate in the past, but also in the future, is expected to remain a major issue some villages have to cope with (RLG, 2009). Although some villages in the Randstad area have profited from the devolution of jobs (Van Ham, 2003); mainly commuter villages (Hogenstijn & van Middelkoop, 2008), in peripheral areas unemployed people have only two options: leaving village and family to find work elsewhere or stay and hope for finding a new job (Boelens, 2009).

A decrease in village inhabitant numbers for many villages does show in individual person statistics, but only minimally in household statistics (Elerie, 2009) as the mean household size is shrinking. Although this is considered to be more of an urban phenomenon, it develops at similar pace on the countryside (van Dam, 2010) in line with society wide individualisation processes and a decreased pressure to marry which results in a growing number of single member households (Bontje, 2010). In a village this does not necessarily manifest itself in houses being demolished, rather more dwellings become vacant for a longer period as less households can afford a dwelling on the countryside or even remain empty for extended periods. This becomes visible in the streetscapes of the village in an increase in for-sale signs. Presumably, this visualisation of the phenomenon and the disappearance of shops and other facilities have a negative effect on the meaning villagers attribute to their village as they may not like the lack of youth or always being confronted with the large amount of for-sale signs every time they go for a walk.



## 2.2 Place attachment

Place attachment is one of the most complex concepts in this thesis, as it is a concept that is easy to use, but hard to truly understand and therefore difficult to define (Shamai & Ilatov, 2005). For an overview of definitions, the articles of Giuliani and Feldman (1993), Raymond et al. (2010) and Scanell and Gifford (2010) are recommended. Derived from humanist geography, environmental psychology and community studies, place attachment here is defined as the psychological bonding process between individuals and their important places, constituted through behavioural, cognitive and affective dimensions. Place attachment knows a fairly short, but very intense history, initiated by humanist Yi-Fu Tuan and phenomenologist Edward Relph who introduced the concept of place in geography in the 1970s. He argued that in the globalizing world it would be increasingly difficult for people to bond with a place. However this was rejected by Tuan as a human being can only get to know the world through places and therefore remains untouched by globalization. 'Knowing a place' becomes 'growing attached to a place' with the term 'topophilia' which is defined by "the affective bond between people and place" (Tuan, 1974; 4, c.f. Cresswell, 2004). Most recent literature builds on this understanding, which has been developed further in close detail.

The home is the most essential place an individual can feel attached to (Cresswell, 2004; McIntyre et al., 2006). It arises from the concept of dwelling in that it means "to reside or to stay, to dwell at peace, to be content or at home in a place" (Urry, 2000: 131, c.f. McIntyre et al., 2006). According to Seamon (1979) the home is the most articulated 'place', where a person can be himself and have a little more control over what happens; "whose familiarity and security permits the person to recuperate for future ventures away from home" (Seamon, 1984: 758). Bachelard (1994) deepens this by stating that the home is the central point from where the understanding of all other places is framed. Heidegger's writing of the home as anchor of life of generations makes the home almost a sacred place (McIntyre et al., 2006). On the contrary, the home can also be understood in a more progressive and dynamic way, looking outward and being incorporated with a consciousness of the world outside the home; it should be viewed as an articulated node in a person's network (Massey, 2005).

That place attachment is a relationship to a place that can develop in accordance to very different places and situations is proved by the empirical research of Savage et al. (2005). It focusses on engagement with the local area from a comprehensive perspective in that they regarded the dwelling location as social, cultural and functional place. Subsequently, the outcomes are profoundly varied. For instance, they came across some people who reported not feel any kind of attachment at all: they claimed to be detached from their neighbourhood and only perceived the location of their house as instrumentalist, such as being close to the highway and their parents. One respondent felt that his home could be situated anywhere as he only felt attached to the stability of his family, his house and his job. However, most respondents combined instrumentalist with emotional relationships to their living area in which they concentrated on qualities of that place compared to other places they knew. They argue that instrumentalist motivations on location choice later on created a landscape in which various personal reference points grew. Savage et al. (90) conclude that people's sense of belonging then depend on the "ability to place oneself in an imaginary landscape".

The account of Relph indicates that attachment to places becomes part of the identity of a person, also acknowledged by Hay (1998) and Morgan (2010). Proshansky et al. (1983) agree with Relph, arguing that places are used in the shaping of identities, just as much as important others are. For instance, for an elderly lady in the study of Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996: 218) the presence of an old building acted as a symbol for her childhood because as a girl she had played in it; "the existence of a familiar building confirmed his/her existence as a young person". They also interviewed a woman who bought a new house after a divorce, which represented her independence and her new life as a single woman. Hence, she became attached to her new house in a certain way because it articulated specific parts of her identity. Cresswell (2004) adds that because the first thing people do with a place they are confined to become attached to is personalize it; to become familiar with it by enabling oneself to organize it to a certain extent in order to know the place in detail (Fullilove, 1996). Proshansky (1978) deepens this notion by stating that there are certain dimensions of the self, consisting of cognitions such as memories, preferences, thoughts and values that define the relation of identities to place. In turn, places seem to provoke specific elements of the self which appeal to the personal identity which enables growing attached to a place (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). In this way people "map their own biography" (Savage et al., 2005: 104).

Although place attachment may not be intensified by the duration of residence, most studies do emphasize that – emotional – experiences in place are of major importance (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Manzo, 2003). From a humanist point of view, being there very often and performing routine activities would strengthen that bond (Seamon, 1980, c.f. Cresswell, 2004). This would mean that someone who frequently walks, cycles or drives through the village, because he often attends community association activities or visits friends has a stronger attachment to the village. Nonetheless, Manzo (1994) asserts that especially the personally important experiences, such as the birth of a child or the successful start of the person's own company stimulates place attachment and creates place meaning: emotionally charged moments become vested memories in place (Hay, 1998; Morgan, 2010). The importance of emotions in developing place attachment is also emphasized in studies into feelings of belonging and rootedness (Hammit et al., 2006), sentiment about leaving (Unger & Wandersman, 1985), satisfaction with the area (Gerson et al, 1977), pride (Brown et al., 2003) and Relph's feelings of insideness (Hay, 1998). However, emotions and feelings in place attachment are not always positive, like traumatic experiences in childhood (Morgan, 2010) or displacement (Fullilove, 1996).

Regarding the village as meaningful spatial unit in a wider conceptual and theoretical scope allows for pinpointing what elements and aspects villagers focus on (McIntyre et al., 2006). Subsequently, the village must be seen as an idea that is created in the mind of its inhabitants. Although place attachment has been regarded from many perspectives that are very useful in this research, most studies treat place attachment in a static, rather one-dimensional fashion that is insensible to mundane experiences. Nonetheless, Relph (1976) and Proshansky et al. (1983) argue that place attachment also develops unconsciously. This means that the process of becoming attached to places is far more complicated as it may be more flexible and dynamic than previous studies have implied.

## 2.3 Social relations

It is often said that social relations are very important in the development of meanings of places and may even be more important than their physical appearances (Relph, 1976, Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001, Unger & Wandersman, 1985, Woldoff, 2002, Cuba & Hummon, 1993 and Fried, 2000). Relph (1976) argues that through the people that are present attachment to the place grows and meaning is created. Similarly, Hunter (1974, c.f. Scannell & Gifford, 2010) argues that the memories of a place largely consist of a 'symbolic community' which belongs to the representation of the setting. That this social dimension in place can be very strong is shown by Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) who interviewed widows that stayed in their house because it linked them to their deceased husbands.

According to community attachment literature a person's meaning of the place where he lives becomes most articulated through local social involvement (Cuba & Hummon, 1993). Their research indicates that the spatial area at which social contacts are held, determined the strength of identification with the village. Residents with social networks that exceeded the village did not identify with the village as strongly as people with large local social networks, as also has been approved by Theodori (2000) and research in Dutch villages (SCP, 2007; 2008b). Manzo (2003) argues that experiences are more memorable when they are shared with others because it deepens the emotional component in that place. However, the study by Savage et al. (2005: 87) pointed out that also people with small local social networks "presented emotionally charged accounts of their relationship to place". These people felt that they belonged to the community while being content with their outsider position. Also Blokland (2003) confirmed this social sense of belonging among residents of Hillesluis in The Netherlands who felt that just familiarizing with neighbours enriched the place meaning because it supported the opportunity to continue their own lifestyle. A respondent in the study of Savage et al. (2005) added that it requires some shared history to be part of a community and therefore he only feels part of the small community of his neighbours, potentially even because of a resemblance of the houses, which is particularly common in Dutch villages (Scannell & Gifford, 2010)

In almost all community research the school is appointed as vital in the shaping and maintaining of social relations in villages and neighbourhoods. Not only do schools function as a crucial element in creating temporal social relations by bringing and picking up children at primary schools in which the school yard becomes a focal place for waiting parents to interact (Savage et al., 2005), they also help developing stronger social ties by shared tasks at the school, such as being a lunch lady (Hankins, 2007). Kearns et al. (2008) add to this that school are valued highly in a similar fashion to Twigger-Ross and Uzzells (1996) identification processes because they are unique village features as some attended when they or even their children were young. Furthermore, Kearns et al. (2008) argue that schools also often function as gathering point for villagers, thereby supporting information exchange on community events and on personal circumstances such as sickness or death. However, respondents in the study of Savage et al. (2005: 59) reported to feel part of 'that community' but not 'the community at large'. Consequently, some villagers who moved in without school-going children felt a bit left out and experienced difficulties to achieve a sense of community.

According to Granovetter (1973) social networks consist of strong ties – emotionally intensive and reciprocal – and weak ties – substantially insignificant and negligible, typified as "us knows us" –, such as greeting people hardly knowing them as this is a habit in most villages (SCP, 2008b; SCP, 2006). He considers them equally important in the social experience of a place, as strong ties in a social network are important for social support and the weak ties have the potential to grow into strong ties, and are important for information gathering.

Nonetheless, as social networks are highly dynamic and contain more than only strong and weak ties, the strength of social relations will be signified according to notion of familiarity. It refers to a sense of knowing something; having some kind of acquaintance with it because of earlier experience (Kaika, 2004). Hence, it is applicable to social relations but also to other entities in the life environments. Familiarizing with someone presumes some sort of shared circumstances or interests which both applies to getting to know someone who also plays tennis on Tuesday nights and coming across someone while walking the dog. Feeling familiar to others would also apply to the symbolic community, illustrated by a sensed connectedness to – unknown – others by positing the self in relation to other villagers.

## 2.4 Daily activity patterns and mobility

Meaningful places are in a broad sense always related to mobility, ranging from long-term residential movements over many kilometres or just as a walk in the park, single movements or routine-based and from high speed closed-of movements to slow contemplative ones. Mostly in the fields of migration and place attachment literature scholars have explored connections between residential mobility and meaning in place (e.g. Gustafson, 2006; Lewicka, 2010). Some people would be more open to experiencing culturally diverse places and are said to be mobile at the cost of bonding with places (Hannerz, 1996, c.f. McIntyre et al., 2006). Savage et al. (2005) came across these 'transient' people who moved very frequently but were therefore better able to remark in detail how they enjoy in their current neighbourhood, and found evidence of attachments to several places for differing reasons, also approved by Barcus and Brunn (2010) and Gustafson (2001). Therefore, being mobile residentially enhances meanings of both the current home and other places of residence (McHugh & Mings, 1996; Gustafson, 2006). Others – locals – are suggested to be rather immobile and stay in the safety of their place, building a deep emotional bond with it (Hannerz, 1996, c.f. McIntyre et al., 2006). Hence, the – lack of – places where villagers have lived before are thus of importance to the appreciation of the current village.

Not only residential movement has been found important in the development of meanings of places, also daily movements seem to impact this. Some studies incorporating movements propose proximity maintaining behaviour as indicative of the intensity of place attachment (e.g. Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001); immobility would feed a sense of attachment to the home and migration would erode this (Barcus & Brunn, 2010). On the contrary, humanistic scholars argue that meaning in place develops through the dialectic relation between home and reach (Buttimer, 1980, c.f. Manzo, 2003), movement and rest (Seamon, 1979); a dialectic experience of place "balancing a need to stay with a desire to escape" (Relph, 1976: 42, c.f. Gustafson, 2006). Case (1996) and Prohansky et al. (1983) argue that routines outside the home support people to appreciate their home and home town better. Thus, residing in other places makes people more aware of what exactly they appreciate in the home (Manzo, 2003). Nonetheless, McIntyre et al. (2006) argue that the combination of mobility and rest and how this is important for meaning attribution to places differs significantly between individuals.

An important reason why there seems to be a difference between the meaning attributions to places is the difference in daily activities that are performed in these places. Daily activities can be described as the activities we do on a routine basis, whether they are daily or weekly. Examples can be; walking the dog, going to work, doing groceries and attending meetings of community associations. They can be acted out in specific places and/or on specific times, or within time spans or on a day of the week. Judith Butler developed a theory that specifically emphasizes the importance of action, praxis and behaviour in the signification of discourses and identity: performance theory. This theory that is heavily based on the power structures and dynamics of

Foucault assumes that identities are not a given but enacted and signified through the body (Butler, 1989). Identity is thus formed through the opportunities and constraints that exist in power relations and become apparent when practicing the activities that are produced by these opportunities and constraints (Butler, 1993). Hence, through these embodied activities places become stages of performance and it is through their material appearance that they become part of routines which gives them their meaning.

Rapoport (2009) shows that performing different activities in one place can lead to different perceptions of this place and therefore different appreciations. As all people are involved in their own unique web of relations one place fulfils different tasks for different people (Murdoch, 2003). Especially performing activities collectively on a routine basis, such as the rehearsal for a play, a party at the village square, but also stepping in the car to go to work at the same time as a neighbour who also goes to work, seems to give a relatively strong meaning as they are performed in collective intentionality (Searle, 1995, c.f. Rapoport, 2009). For instance, during a conflict in the Dutch village of Amerongen one group of elderly men belonging to the one group always used to sit on this specific stone bench and talk about the village and what strategy to adopt in the conflict. Both for them the bench became a place infused with the conflict and for others as the sheer sight of the bench already reminded them of the conflict. Hence, the activities performed by villagers in the village and in specific places in the village tend to be very important for the meaning that becomes attached to it. The meaning of the village is then likely to differ for villager who work at home compared to those who work elsewhere and only experience it in their leisure time.

## 2.5 Chapter conclusions

From the existing studies presented in this chapter several important aspects with regard to the research questions can be extracted. First, the increasing heterogeneousness of contemporary village populations seems to be largely caused by people with differing backgrounds who have more or less idyllic conceptions of the village and prefer more or less non-committal relations in the village as part of individualisation. Second, from the literature it also already becomes apparent that the emotional is very important in the shaping of the meaning of a place, not only through stronger emotionally charged experiences when sharing these performances with others in which for instance schools are important places, while villagers with small social networks form different emotional kind of accounts of meaning in place. This works in compliance with their residential history and the location of their daily activities that influence perceptions of the village, which makes the home a very important place in the development of the meaning of the village.

Third, the place attachment literature emphasized identification processes with the village that both influence the embodied daily activities and social relations. As through knowing the village in detail, experiencing it in relation to other places and performing routine activities and travels place attachment appears to grow as a result. Fourth, the literature suggests that indeed for the perception of declining inhabitant numbers the awareness in daily life is important, especially when it comes to the physical appearance of the village as villagers accept having to travel outside the village for their groceries. Lastly, the literature suggests that indeed it can be expected that the meaning villagers attribute to the village stems both from many different aspects of places and the person. However, most literature presented does not comprehend a relational approach, therefore in the next chapter a theoretical framework will be presented that provides social relations, daily activities and place attachment with a more referential approach also incorporating affect.





3

# Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

In this chapter a theoretical framework is proposed which will serve as the perspective from which the relevant existing literature presented in the previous chapter will be considered. In addition, from this framework several notions will come forth on which the empirical part of this research will be based and evaluated. First, relational space and Actor-Network Theory will be regarded in the light of life in a village. Second, phenomenology and subsequent postphenomenology will be put forward, also introducing the relational concept of embodiment. Third, affect and emotions will be presented as important factors in the process of meaning giving in relation to everyday life. The chapter will end with conclusions that will reflect on the research questions and give directions for the research design.

## 3.1 Relational space and Actor Network Theory

To understand the spatiotemporal contexts of people living in villages, the philosophical geographical notion of life in relational space seems interesting. Not only because the concept of meaning used here is relational, but also because it provides a better understanding of the interrelatedness of people and their environment than non-relational accounts of space. This is because in relational thought no division is made between the social and the spatial. First the notion of relational space is elaborated on. Second, Actor-Network Theory (ANT), a theory that has been developed based on relational space is proposed as a key theory in understanding how meanings regarding village environments are shaped.

### 3.1.1 Relational space

The notion of relational space is regarded as successor of notions of relative and absolute space as space is regarded not to be seen separately from objects because objects are space and space is objects. Consequently objects can only be seen in relation to other objects otherwise they would not have a *raison d'être*. Subsequently, they can only act in relation to other objects or spaces (Jones, 2009) and are they more perfect when other objects explain their state (Shaw, 1954). He argues that objects or spaces develop following their own will, and that they do that conform the processes of all other objects or spaces. This makes space not a totality because it regards the structure of space as an infinite stack of networks that (partly) overlap and constantly change form, size and direction. Foucault adds the notion of power to this as to give a sense of direction to networks (Murdoch, 2006; Amin, 2002). Space here consists of relations and interactions between relations and processes (Murdoch, 2006). These networks instantaneously form spatiotemporal relations through events that coincidentally take place at the same time and/or place (Jones, 2009).

Relational thought has brought about a non-substantive way of looking at space; instead of thinking in structure and permanence which is visible and has mass, relational thought argues for thinking in processes and flows, which are assumed and not visible (Jones, 2009). Therefore the village must not only be regarded in its spatial appearance, rather as an event in the past with potential in the future, community in itself and as discourse from the eye of the beholder that is crucial for his/her experience. Regarding distance is then not a metric matter but appeals to associations as our thoughts crisscross the globe in seconds, while we may not be aware of the landscape we currently reside in (Massey, 2005) or as we even actively close off from it (Callon & Law, 2004) by, for example, taking the car to go to work instead of the bus to avoid contact with others on the bus and with other villagers when waiting at the bus stop. Hence, the entities that make up



the place for us form conscious and unconscious relations with a myriad of earlier experiences and therefore the place becomes meaningful (Smith, 2001). Being in a place then allows relations between the self and the entities present to develop; extension of the self onto specific elements happens. This goes beyond identification with because it emphasizes agency and agency differentiation in related sets of experience that have been critical in the development of personal uniqueness (Bamberg, 2011). This added networked element allows for relating to non-human elements such as objects, ideas and affective realms, thereby extending personal heterogeneous networks and subsequently giving a better impression of the entities that are important in the meaning of the village.

The use of relational space has also yielded a growing body of critique. For instance, the apparent 'erosion of the local', as relational thought would neglect the uniqueness of places in regarding them only in relation to other places (Allen & Cochrane, 2007). Furthermore, relational thinkers seem to claim that all non-relational notions of space are static, which must be reconsidered according to Jones (2009) On the contrary, some territorial identities seem to be timeless and "embedded in the consciousness of inhabitants" (Amin et al., 2003, cf. Jones 2009; 497). This means that some relations are predefined and form unconsciously. Additionally, relational space implies an uncontrollable amount of relations between everything. Relational space can never be fully utilized because of its sheer potential, as spaces are made and unmade continually and relations within and among networks shift incessantly 'its [the theorization] exuberance can never be quelled' (Doel, 2007: 809) and bringing order is impossible (Murdoch, 2006). Therefore, the driving forces that direct the relations are important: especially experience through the body in relation to emotions and feelings. The third section in this chapter continues with the theorizations of these issues, but first Actor Network Theory is elaborated on since it uses relational space to deliver a useful tool to analyse the networked situations of the everyday.

### 3.1.2 Actor-Network Theory

In the late eighties the development of the relational actor-network theory (Hereafter referred to as: ANT) initiated as a protest on the power of science, by sociologists Bruno Latour, Michel Callon and John Law (Murdoch, 2006). The foundations of ANT take Foucault's approach to power distribution as starting point; that power is not centralized but everywhere and that within networks power is produced by all elements, which means that power always functions in a configuration; not in the actors themselves, but in the actual linkages that shape the network (Latour, 1986). Configurations come into being when spaces, discourses and knowledge assemble in a complex manner, co-evolve and together produce power until the network is more or less stabilized. These assemblages are thus very heterogeneous because of their physical, socio-cultural and temporal character as "any separation of the discursive and the spatial becomes almost impossible to conceive: knowledge is materialized in practice, practice is materialized in the body, and the body is immersed in modes of spatial organization that in turn 'perform systems of knowledge'" (Murdoch, 2006:56). Spaces and discourses should therefore not be seen separately as they compose each other (Murdoch, 2006). ANT then focuses on how elements such as a village or a city become involved and how power is redistributed in the network.

The theory aims at creating an understanding of how places as established areas are influenced by the network they operate in, and especially on the processes the other way around: how network formation produces localisation (Murdoch, 2006). In performing networks places become interlinked relationally and exist only, and are therefore perceived only from within the network. Murdoch even states that spaces are only just the effect of activities and practices in the network. Hence, places must be seen "as encountered, performed, and fluid" (Jones, 2009; 492). Similarly, time is relational which creates time-spaces that exist



according to the network they act in. Places become incorporated in multiple networks and subsequently a place is made up from differing time-spaces, or as Massey (2005) puts it: places are conjunctures of multiple space-times; everything emerges in 'simultaneity of multiple trajectories'. Therefore, the village is a place that is different for every person because everyone is engaged in different spatiotemporal contexts (Savage et al., 2005). Consequently, a village carries as many meanings as there are networks in which it is present. ANT can then bring to light how the practices of elements cooperating influences this meaning and accordingly give better insight in how places are perceived and how they relate to other localities (Murdoch, 2006).

Although networks can become stable after a while they stay dynamic in a sense because power and knowledge shifts continually as new elements are attracted to join the network. This joining process is orchestrated by the main actor who has the ability to compose elements into the network and is called translation. Translation is a persuasion process in which new elements become realigned to fit the goals of the network through agency. Agency is the capacity to act of an established element or actor and is formed by the network in which the actor functions, and leads to action (Murdoch, 2006). With the enrolment of new actors the associations in the network are realigned, making it more powerful (Latour, 1987). To keep the network in place, the main actor operates from the most important place: the centre of calculation. Latour argues that this centre consolidates the network with the help of 'immutable mobiles'; material artefacts that "become 'delegates', able to carry 'rationalities of rule' (...) out to all the localities enrolled in the network (...) [that] must also carry aspects of the enrolled localities back to the centre" (Murdoch, 2006: 65). In this sense the home of the village inhabitants is the centre of calculations, locations and routes in the village and other villages and cities become other enrolled localities and for example transport modes, telephones but also umbrellas become immutable mobiles. Extension of the self over elements of place should therefore be seen as continual and open-ended (Amin, 2004) and referential developments (Netto, 2008), as are meanings that come forth from this, both because of the system dependence and of the unpredictable temporality of human life (Gibson – Graham, 2000).

Actor network theory has raised quite some criticism. Here, only three of the most prominent accounts can be given. Firstly, Bingham and Thrift (2000) have criticized the theory for the lack of attention to study the cumulative effects of networks of spaces: because networks can only be fully grasped from within the network, any attempt to analyse a multitude of networks would mean that absolute notions of space must be used. Secondly, Murdoch (1997) raises the question of what is left of the geographical method if distance and proximity are replaced by association. Thirdly, the theory denotes a misplaced correspondence between human and non-human agency, because as human being we differ from things because we add intentionality to our behaviour, whereas non-human actors can only perform mere behaviour (Pickering, 1993). Latour (1997) responds to this that this is a misunderstanding and that actor network theory was never intended to serve as model for the social definition of a network or for human competence; it only provides networked actors in a purely semiotic sense. In this thesis ANT will be used as geographical method in accordance with actor network theory as proposed by Latour mainly in a semiotic sense and where possible in a spatial sense, as it may provide more understanding of how the places that are visited relate to the village. However, this thesis focuses on the organization of human lives in places and ANT cannot provide information on what meaning is produced in the network one is involved in. That means that bodily and affective and emotional negotiations with the surroundings remain obsolete. Subsequently, the theoretical framework will be extended with a post-phenomenological perspective.

## 3.2 Post-phenomenology and Embodiment

Closely related to actor network theory as relational concept to link time-spaces capturing both the human and non-human in a dynamic but tightly coordinated choreography, is the relatively new and still developing post-phenomenology. Post-phenomenology is an attempt to 'update' phenomenology to the current world in which human behaviour and meaning giving. This subchapter first gives a brief explanation of the concept of embodiment, second, it focuses on phenomenology and third, it explores how post-phenomenology emerged from this and investigates how it can be useful in gathering knowledge on how meaning is attached to a village.

Before we proceed to the contribution of post-phenomenology to this project, first a brief elaboration on the concept of embodiment will be given. Embodiment has been an intricate part of phenomenology since Maurice Merleau-Ponty presented his version of phenomenology in the 1964 with his book *Phenomenology of Perception*, in which he theorizes the 'lived body' (Longhurst, 2007). Lorimer (2005) notices that in recent years congruence came into existence between phenomenologists and feminist, cultural and nonrepresentational geographers on spatial registers of the body, since in the nineties there has been an increase in theorizations of the body and embodiment in human geography. From a feminist geographical standpoint the use of embodiment puts emphasis on the politics of the body because they argue that it is through the body that people experience the world (Rose, 1993; Nast & Pile, 1998; Davidson et al., 2007; Longhurst, 2007; McCormack, 2008). In this thesis the concept is important for the valuable information it gives on bodily and therefore imaginably reactions to living in a village as a way of the Heideggerian being-in-the-world (Seamon, 1982)

Embodiment is the concept to indicate how we as individuals essentially relate to the world in place. We all have bodies, so we all have similar experiences, but also all bodies are unique and therefore the way we experience the world around us is unique (Nast & Pile, 1998). Through our senses we build a relationship with what is out there, producing meaning by the way the body senses the places we move through, subsequently we map our world through our senses (McCormack, 2008). Also connections between places grow as you have similar or opposing experiences in them (Anderson, 2004). For instance, when you are in the train and you suddenly smell the scent of the Old Spice perfume, you immediately start thinking about the apartment where your grandparents used to live. Places that you visit regularly not only become infused with meaning of the experiences you have had there, but also become strongly related to other aspects of life (Nast & Pile, 1998). Furthermore, as our experiences in familiar places grow, the body becomes capable of imagining connections between places, such as familiar environmental milieu's (Nast & Pile, 1998), and as such you are more prepared to what you might experience.

Further elaborations on how the body and embodied geographies are presented in the sections on phenomenology and post-phenomenology and thereafter in a more extensive fashion in the section on affect and emotions. This subchapter will now continue with a phenomenological perspective on meaning production in villages.

### 3.2.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology became recognized as a geography tradition as an answer to the spatial analysis era in which methods from the natural sciences were applied in social geographical inquiry. The early geographical phenomenologists who stemmed from empiricist movements in philosophy emphasizes the everyday experiences of everyday life are the key to getting to know the world and not abstract accounts of social life that claim universality (Smith, 1998). Schütz adds to this that in the intentional communication with

the outside world, as with other people and spaces, to grasp what is experienced we become conscious of the phenomenon, and through this intentional interconnectivity and subsequent interpretation, meaning is produced (Smith, 1998; Cresswell, 2004). Edward Relph directed intentional consciousness of experience towards place. He states that “consciousness is not just something, but something in its place; “the only way humans can be humans is to be in place” (Relph in Cresswell 2004, p18-25). According to Merleau-Ponty (1963, in Seamon, 1982) a place resembles a network of relations and which are dialectically related and have intrastructural tensions that appeal to modes of the human consciousness and experience (Giorgi, 1981, in Seamon, 1982). For example, when someone enters a room he has never been in before, his experience becomes determined by the elements in that room that he already has experience with through familiarity; the elements remind him of situations in the past. Hence, phenomenological geographers are interested by the felt experience and how the essence of place constitutes and are constitutive of it (Lea, 2009).

The connections between people and place and between places are also shaped by the dialectics of insiderness and outsiderness; “Through different degrees of insiderness and outsiderness, (...) human experiences take on different qualities of meaning and feeling” (Relph, 1976 in Seamon, 1982: 133). In this phenomenological sense a city – but also another village – with all of its strangeness represents the realm of outsiderness, and the village one lives in the realm of insiderness. Parts of the village that an inhabitant hardly or never visits can also be typified as areas of outsiderness. Feelings of insiderness in a place grow through daily performances, especially routines in it. Viewing it from different angles by being mobile in and between places allows relations with the material and discursive environment to take shape and truly come to know it (Seamon, 1982). These multiplying relations then appeal to our identity which produces meaning. Nonetheless, as in relational theory no duality exists, from now on phenomenological insiderness and outsiderness will be regarded as areas of differing familiarity; areas that more or less accommodate the extension of the self in that place. This also includes the felt or perceived presence or absence of familiar people in the environment.

### 3.2.2 Post-phenomenology

Post-phenomenology emerged mainly from the hands of Don Ihde in the nineties and he is still establishing his practice of ‘nonfoundational phenomenology’. Its philosophy is based on Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology and his philosophy of experience and consciousness, the hermeneutic phenomenology of Heidegger and Ricoeur, and the bodily existential phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty (Ihde, 1993). He made the fusion with philosophy of technology which seems more rightfully adapted to the world of today in which we are surrounded by technologies that touch our lives on virtually every aspect, have the capacity to influence our behaviour and world vision and alter our manifestation as human being (Ihde, 2008). Although Ihde puts special emphasis on the transcendence of self by technological devices (Adams, 2007), in geographical thought post-phenomenology became especially interesting for the way it decentres the experiencing subject in a trans-human way (see Wylie, 2006).

Post-phenomenology has developed to its current philosophy by following a sequence of focus points. Firstly, it brought an “‘extension’ of perceptual and bodily intentionality into the smaller and larger ‘worlds’ which were revealed through science and its instruments” (Ihde, 1993) Phenomenological experience is confined to the direct environment; ‘dasein’ in which bodily experience is only possible by being in the vicinity of something (Ihde, 2008: 7; 1993). In post-phenomenology experiencing at distance has become only part of the possibilities, while it remains a partial perception (Ihde, 2003). Second, in line with the previous point, following other postmodern theories, such as ANT, postphenomenology has a more thorough relational and reflexive character, in which the Cartesian body-subject separated from its sensation – ‘the body sees something’ as three elements – changed into the lived body in which sensation is vested – ‘viewing’ as one

elements (Ihde, 2008). This intensified relational notion also gave rise to another usage of the concept of extended embodiment.

Whereas in phenomenology the body relates to an object because of the praxis that becomes possible, post-phenomenology recognizes the coming into being of something more than the sum of parts when humans and objects join practice (Ihde, 2008). Similar to ANT and beautifully captured by Law (1992: 3): "People are who they are because they are a patterned network of heterogeneous materials. If you took away my computer, my colleagues, my office, my books, my desk, my telephone, I wouldn't be a sociologist writing papers, delivering lectures, and producing "knowledge". I'd be something quite other." Law aims at the heterogeneity of the networks; the emphasis is on the importance of objects besides people that become apparent in the constitution of the sociologist. Ihde (2003; 2008) argues that this extra dimension that comes into existence is directed symmetrically from the human and the objects; thus objects can never be neutral. For example, when a villager almost always travels by car, he may do that to create a distance between him and the world outside. The fusion of him and the car then becomes the intention to shield himself from the world. Hence, the materiality of objects and the life world in general is crucial in meaning attribution to places (Ihde, 2008; Jackson, 2000). Then extending this line of thought beyond the body, for places it works just the same, the combination of localities that is experienced would create meaning. Residing in a village with multiple other places someone visits regularly or has ever consciously visited in the past, produces the unique and temporal meaning it carries. Understanding of the experiences in these other places may consequently give an impression of how this meaning is constituted and how other places influence it.

Post-phenomenology and phenomenology have been criticized on a number of topics, amongst which one major point of critique is important here. In both phenomenological and post-phenomenological inquiry the focus has always been on the consciousness in experience and the intentionality of behaviour and that partly suggests that human beings act exclusively according to a will. However, cultural (Lorimer, 2005), feminist (Davidson et al., 2007; Anderson & Smith, 2001; Rose, 1993) and nonrepresentational (Thrift, 2004) geographies pressure the importance of going beyond intention and incorporate the influence of emotions and affect in meaning giving and behaviour (Pile, 2009). Following an embodied register of spatial experience to develop more understanding of how the un- or preconscious affects the meaning inhabitants, this thesis will continue with the working of emotions and affect.

### 3.3 Affect and Emotion

In this section the specific approach of emotions and affect in this thesis is put forward and how it relates to acquiring more understanding of meaning giving in villages. Herein emotions and affect will be used largely in combination, following Curti (2008) who claims that the two phenomena cannot be understood properly if they are separated, but also by keeping in mind that there are crucial differences between the two phenomena (Massumi, 2002).

#### 3.3.1 Emotions

The call for the engagement of affect and emotions in geography closely followed the uprising of the call for embodied geographies, mainly in the late 1990's and the first half of the previous decade from feminist geographers (Pile, 2010), such as Rose (1993), Anderson and Smith (2001), Thien (2005), Sharp (2009), Davidson et al. (2005) and Davidson and Bondi (2004). Their argument concerns the neglect of emotions in geography while it is a crucial "set of relations through which lives are lived and societies are made" (Anderson & Smith, 2001: 7; Sharp, 2009) They plead for an account of emotional geographies as a way of doing, being and knowing, and thereby focus on bodily experience, while emphasizing the use of a relational first person emotional account (Bondi, 2005). Davidson et al. (2005) claim that emotions have been wrongly envisioned as entirely internalized forces. Thrift (2004) agrees while stating that the source of emotions often arises from somewhere outside the body in the environment, hence, regarding it relationally emotions are always associational spatial.

Massumi (2002: 28) states that an emotion is the remembrance of an already felt state, which suggests that emotions create attachment to the self in that they connect to past selves in place (see also Wylie, 2009). Jones (2005: 208) argues that "memory is not just a retrieval from the past or of the past, it is always a fresh, new creation where memories are retrieved into the conscious realm and something new is created". Emotions glue together the pieces of past experiences (Haviland-Jones & Kahlbaugh, 2000, cf Curti, 2008). Hence, the symbolic importance of these places stems from emotional associations: "the feelings they inspire of awe, dread, worry, loss or love" (Davidson et al., 2005: 3). This directly implies the significant effect of emotional engagement with a place, and it means that routines in post-phenomenology are never pure repetitions as they are embodied performances and the present emotions partly determine the experience. For an inhabitant the village is infused with emotions as he/she enacts his/her life there, therefore nonrepresentational literature (e.g. Thrift, 2004; Thrift & Dewsbury, 2000; McCormack, 2003) emphasizes performativity in everyday praxis (Sharp, 2009). Then place meaning is not a matter of individualised emotions, such as shame, hatred, grief and pride, rather emotions must be considered as capable of directing intensities (Bruno, 2002 cf. Thrift, 2004) – affect – "understood as the richly expressive/aesthetic feeling-cum-behaviour of continual becoming that is provided chiefly by bodily states and processes" (Thrift, 2004: 60).

### 3.3.2 Affect

Affect as it is an emerging concept in geographical thinking can be described as a “virtual synesthetic perspective anchored in (functionally limited by) the actually existing, particular things that embody them” (Massumi 2002: 35–36); a sensible “unqualified intensity” (Massumi 2002, c.f. McCormack, 2003); as a sense of “push in the world” (Thrift, 2004: 64) and something that can only be sensed (Hemmings, 2005). The ‘virtual’ for Massumi (2002), refers to “the pressing crowd of incipencies and tendencies... a realm of potential” (McCormack 2003, 495, emphasis original). Affect acts “beyond memory” (Curti, 2008: 108): it is an autonomous force because it is not incarcerated in the body through memories as does not depend on the attachment to the self, but to encounters or possible encounters with other bodies. Thus, affect in a place alters with the presence, representation and performativity of other bodies: McCormack (2008: 1823, emphasis original) describes this change as “spaces are – at least in part – as moving bodies do. This means that if many people are present, the meaning of that place changes for everyone present. Subsequently, for someone often visiting such a place with many others, the meaning he attributed to it differs from someone who does not visit this place with others present or not at all. In a village this would come down to, for example, differing meanings that are attached to the community centre for someone who visits the place for meetings on a regular basis, compared to someone who does not participate in any village activity and therefore never visits the centre. Space-time therefore consists of realms of affect; when time passes and space is crossed a person enters and leaves these realms Deleuze, 1997 c.f. Hemmings, 2005).

Affect is very much related to emotions in the sense that affect gives direction to emotions in places and can recall other emotions and memories, and in turn emotions can influence the affective atmosphere (Thien, 2005), according to Katz (1999) in an indirect and non-reflexive sense. It can be regarded as a way of thinking that generates realms or spaces in which emotions are linked and which constitute certain contextualized behaviours (Thrift, 2004). Emotional response to affectively perceived environments change fluidly with encounters of new spatiotemporal spheres. Jones (2005) adds that this is a process that partly proceeds through conscious associations and partly through unconscious associations. Sedgwick (2003, cf. Thrift, 2004) identifies desire being an unconscious intensity as a driving force when reacting to affect in a place. This would mean that reasoned behaviour only partly can explain why some people crave knowing and meeting with many people in the village. Similarly, not recognizing a need for familiarizing with other inhabitants then also stems from not only conscious decisions, but also from things people are not intrinsically aware of, but have other origins of desire, and can be related to other aspects in life. Subsequently, the meaning villagers attach to their village depends on a complex process of part conscious, part unconscious retrieval of past affective events. This process never finishes as more memories are created and therefore it remains a dynamic process (Curti, 2008) in which the meaning of the village is always emerging and becoming (Thrift, 2004).



### 3.4 Chapter conclusions and hypotheses

From the theoretical framework it further becomes clear that the literature that performing daily activities in places and social relations are strongly related in the processes of meaning giving in a village. Using a relational approach to the identification processes to elements in the village, its population, events in life and personal needs that became highlighted in chapter 2, we can now understand it as the extension of self onto these elements that are somehow related. It proves to be a fruitful approach because it goes beyond the division of spatial and social worlds and engages with the life-world in events. Thereby it also incorporates discourses and emotional memories associated with aspects of and elements in the village, which shape expectations of how their life can be acted out in a village environment. In part from this context the village comes to be experienced in a certain way as the emotional memories form associations with the village environment. The meaning of the village would then be depended on sets of associations that suit the needs related to daily life. These expectations may then also influence the way affect is experienced in the village. Apart from the encounter of for-sale signs, a population decline in a village is presumably sensed through affect in that it may be less strongly present than experienced as comfortable which may provoke negative emotions and therefore affect the meaning of the village. In turn, as affect in places in the village and in other environments provokes certain emotional associations, the meaning of the village will indeed be shaped by these experiences and is very much related to – shared – performances in daily life.

Residing in different places performing specific activities is therefore expected to play an important role in the appreciations of specific elements in the village as activities outside the village would somehow find a balance with the activities performed outside the village. It is therefore highly probable that people who reside in other environments on a daily basis enact different activities outside the village, in many ways opposite to those in the village. This appears to be influenced by the differences in environment in that urban environments are dynamic and contain many unfamiliar elements, while the village environment is presumably experienced as stable and still. This means that people residing in cities on a daily basis appreciate other elements in the village than people who remain in the village on a daily basis. The relational emotional approach taken in this thesis shows that these differences have everything to do with daily performances being shared with familiar or unfamiliar others. Therefore it is highly probable that people who know little to no other villagers attribute another meaning to the village than people whose social network is almost entirely situated in the village. This would be because of the lack of shared social experiences in the village that is expected to in turn influence their general orientation on the village in making use of amenities and facilities in the village. Hence, the empirical part of this thesis will be based on different orientations socially and spatially on the village and their importance in the creation of meaning of the village





4



# Chapter 4: Research Design

**In this chapter the methodology of the research is discussed. In the first section the focus will be on the operationalization of the main concepts – daily activities and social relations infused with notions of place attachment – from the perspective of the theoretical framework. The second part presents the two villages that correspond with the type combinations proposed in the introduction as locations of the empirical research. In the third section the way the respondents were recruited will be provided and in the fourth part the preparation and conduction of the interviews will be explained.**

For the investigation of the production of meaning of a village for an inhabitant from the perspective of the theoretical framework proposed in the previous chapter, several issues need to be taken into account. To come to a better understanding of the separate and combined contribution of social networks and daily activities, the empirical part of the research must first of all focus on differences between, hence villagers with specific socio-spatial characteristics are required. The theoretical framework emphasizes the relations in life histories; not only demonstrable relations that seem obvious to the beholder but also seemingly unrelated occurrences on the emotional and affective level. Events that have happened a long time ago, but do not have to be inextricably related to the village itself may have an influence on the way the village is currently given meaning to. Therefore, the human being in his particular network system needs to be focussed on because it visualizes the life world of an individual village inhabitant in the purest sense.

Equally important is the embodied experience of the daily environments. To raise more understanding as to what villagers encounter on a day-to-day basis and how that influences the meaning of the village, a clear image of the everyday life of these people needs to be shaped. To reconstruct such an image the research methods adopted should bring to the light what places in the village they experience, both on a daily and on a more irregular basis. The methodology should incorporate the comparison people draw between the village and urban environments as rural-urban dialectics literature suggests. Especially if a difference would be made between people who experience both environments on a daily basis and people who experience only the village on a daily basis. Then it becomes more visible what elements in both environments are appreciated and avoided. The empirical part of the research should therefore make clear on what aspects the comparison is focussed. Operationalizing this comparison then comes down to focussing on earlier embodied experiences with both city and village environments

As embodied experiences are strongly influenced by natural aspects such as the weather, the seasons and the day and night time cycle, and environmental aspects such as distances and the morphology of the landscape, in addition to available travel modes, it is apparent that detailed accounts of inhabitants' days are necessary to gather. Highlighting the presence of emotions in particular sites in the village may give clues to how the village is experienced while residing in it or moving through it. For instance, someone may have experienced how his efforts into the organization of a local village on a meadow adjacent to the village paid off with many positive reactions. His association with that particular site may therefore be positively articulated.

Creating embodied registers of inhabitants only in a physical spatial dimension covers only part of embodied experiences. Therefore the methodology should also encompass the communities that are present in these places and which other people accompany the respondents in their daily activities. The social interactions in

a place are one of the most important elements in extending the self onto that place as memories involving other people have the potential to become very strong ones. For that a division needs to be made between village inhabitants who regularly interact with other village inhabitants in the village and ones who have limited interactions with others as they do not have many strong ties in the village.

For a decline in a village population to become noticeable and possibly affect the meaning that people attribute to their village, the focus is put on the everyday village life, because this will become most visible in the streetscapes. The investigation of this phenomenon will therefore be aimed at the embodied effects of the visibility in the streetscape and effects on daily life patterns in the light of amenity usage and in dealing with the alteration of the community as more elderly people and fewer youngsters will inhabit such a village. Furthermore it is thinkable that such a development provokes negative feelings about citizenship in a village as of the idea that other people are leaving the village as it would be an unattractive place to live. Of course there is no way to investigate current feelings with regard to declining population numbers as process is relatively new and not profound yet, hence it only presents the possibility to assess how it is assumed to influence meaning giving to village environments. One way to provoke thoughts about how something may affect them in the future is to present them with a scenario (Börjeson et al., 2006). It both gives an impression of their awareness of the forecasted decline in inhabitant numbers, and by presenting them an image of possible visible effects, an assessment can be made about the feelings that are assumed to arise. In addition, presenting respondents with a potential future image of a current streetscape, accompanied by statistical developments in demographic changes reveals the priorities in their life in the village that become threatened and therefore gives additional information on what aspects of the village is valued in inhabitants' lives.

## 4.1 Location: the villages

The comparison of all combination between villagers in all five village types and community characterizations is impossible for the time and resources given, only the potential difference between two extremes in the combinations will be studied. From the types in the classification of the SCP certain priorities must be formulated to make a choice of two types from which two villages can be distilled. A distinction should be made between a countryside type that is perceived as truly rural in a communal unity sense – thus being 'full' – and one that is perceived to be rural in a predominantly visual sense – thus being 'empty'. Furthermore, the villages that are chosen should differ in the amount of people who have lived in cities before, and on their general orientation on the village and its community or on cities and surrounding areas. Lastly, one should be expected to decreasing inhabitant numbers in the near future. Concluding from these notions one village should be chosen in the elitist countryside and one in the closed countryside.

### 4.1.1 The elitist, empty countryside: Wolfheze

Wolfheze is a small village of 1760 permanent inhabitants (CBS, 2011), as one of the six villages in the municipality of Renkum, located in the province of Gelderland (see figure 2 and 3). It does not have an articulated centre, but its heart can be appointed as the area south of the train station. It is directly surrounded by forests which give way to grasslands and in the south west the Doorwerthse Heide is situated. In the far north the A12 was developed and in the south Wolfheze is grazed by the A50. On the other side, at 4km distance one can find the village of Doorwerth and at 5km distance south east of Wolfheze, Oosterbeek, a town is located. Furthermore at close distance smaller cities such as Ede and Wageningen can be found, but the city most related to Wolfheze is Arnhem at 10km distance.



Figure 2: The location of the province of Gelderland in the Netherlands



Figure 3: The location of the municipality of Renkum in Gelderland

The village is divided by the railway in the north and south area. The north area can be characterized by a somewhat denser structure with slightly smaller uniform houses, with larger houses on the north edge of the Duitsekampweg. Along the Wolfhezerweg Het Schild, a centre for visually handicapped elderly is situated. Its inhabitants (150) are not part of the research. The south eastern residential area is the oldest part and can be characterized by its spacious lane structure with villas and semi-detached houses. In this part also the church, the elementary school and community centre 'De Burcht' can be found. In the south west part of the village the Gelderse Roos, a psychiatric institute, is situated. Residents on the property of the Gelderse Roos (400) are excluded from the research. Although it differs in its appearance from the rest of the village, it is accessible and many villagers make use of the area, also because the site features some amenities that are made available to the regular village inhabitants. Apart from these amenities Wolfheze still has a very small retail shop in the railway building that is mostly aimed at tourists, a restaurant, a small sports park, a garden centre, a camping and a garage (Gemeente Renkum, 2007).





Figure 4: Wolfheze. Source: Google Maps 2011

## Short history

From as early as 800 A.D. people have been living in the area that now belongs to the village of Wolfheze (means: Wolves' forest), which is called Oud-Wolfheze (English: Old-Wolfheze), but until the beginning of the 19th century the build-up area had not been constant. The village area of today became permanent with the construction of the train station in 1845 and the central Wolfhezerweg one year later. In 1906 the Association of Christian Care taking of Insane and Neurotic people (Dutch: Vereniging tot Christelijke Verzorging van Krankzinnigen en Zenuwlijders) bought 86 ha, south of the train station and placed a building which was replaced by a bigger one in 1911. Nowadays this is the Gelderse Roos institution, renamed as Pro Persona during the study period. Also 1911 the home for single blind people – the predecessor of Het Schild –, north of the train station was built. The village community consisted only of employees of the two institutions and some business men at that time. In World War I, between 1915 and 1917 a camp for German internees was set up, of which the Duitsekampweg (English: German camp road) still reminds today. From 1920 onwards the village started to grow into its current appearance with farmhouses and bungalows, transforming the village into a lively community, still with many of the inhabitant working at Pro Persona (Wolfheze.nl, 2011).



### 4.1.2 The closed, full countryside: Beegden

Beegden is a small village of about 1800 permanent inhabitants and is since 2007 one of eight villages in the municipality of Maasgouw in the province of Limburg (see Figures 5 and 6). Before 1991 Beegden had been an independent municipality, but with the municipal reorganizations at that time it became part of the municipality of Heel, together with Heel, Panheel and Wessem. After another reorganisation in 2007 it became part of the current municipality of Maasgouw. Beegden knows a long and rich history of village associations which are facilitated in community house 't Leuke. Beegden is surrounded by crop fields, except in the north adjacent to the village the Beegderheide is situated, in the west a man-made lake called 'De Lange Vlieter' can be found and east of the village at 500m the river Meuse flows. At 3km distance to the north east Horn is located and at 1km distance to the south Heel. Both villages have many amenities residents of Beegden use. Across the Meuse at a distance of 8km the city of Roermond is situated.



Figure 5: The location of the province of Limburg in the Netherlands



Figure 6: The location of the municipality of Maasgouw in Limburg

Unfortunately no future demographic data are available for the villages themselves; only for the whole municipalities they can be requested. According to CBS statistics between 2008 and 2025 the inhabitant number of municipality of Renkum is predicted to grow between -2.5% and 2.5% and between 2008 and 2040 this remains to be the case. The inhabitant number of Maasgouw on the other hand will shrink with more than 5% between 2008 and 2025, and also between 2008 and 2040. Additionally, the CBS statistics predict that in the period 2008-2025 the amount of households will also grow between -2.5% and 2.5% (Renkum) and between -10% to -2,5% (Maasgouw). This growth rate remains stable for Renkum between 2008 and 2040, but drops even further for Maasgouw to below -10% (CBS, 2009). ABF Research also develops prognoses and their calculations largely agree with the CBS statistics in that they expect Renkum inhabitant numbers to shrink for 0.2% until 2025 but grow with 0.9%. However, inhabitant numbers of Maasgouw are predicted to shrink with 6.2% until 2025 and with a staggering 13.2% until 2040. This will be expressed in the profound changes in the current demographic situation, as becomes visible in figure 8.

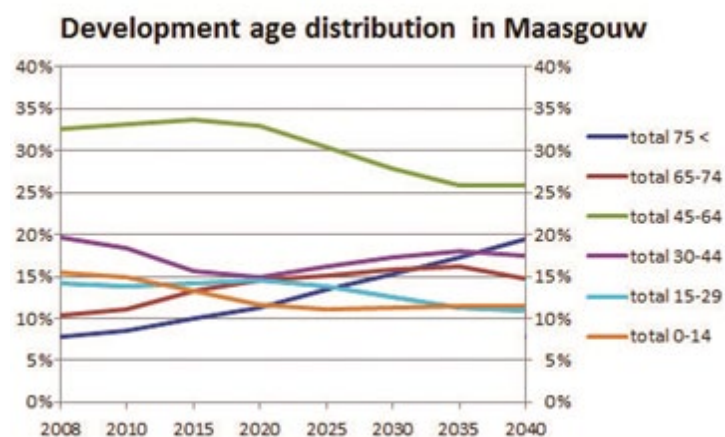


Figure 8: The development in age distribution in Maasgouw. Source: Primos Prognose 2009



Figure 7: Beegden. Source: Google Maps 2011

## Short history

Documents from the 13th century indicate that Beegden was first known as a Roman settlement (GemeenteMaasgouw.nl, 2011) which developed along the trail of the 'Heerbaan' (or 'Heirbaan': Heir = army, Baan = road, hence: army road) between Tongeren and Nijmegen (Atlas1868.nl, 2011). The historical centre of Beegden was built along the Nieuwstraat – Abelenstraat -Dorpstraat. The well-preserved former farmhouses dating from the 18th and 19th century along these roads still present today indicate an agrarian past (Gemeente Maasgouw, 2010). A building characterizing the history of Beegden is Huize Beegden, a farm part of the premise of a fifteenth century mansion next to the Heerstraat in the direction of Heel. The mansion does not exist anymore, but the old farm will become the centre of the newly planned residential area 'Krijtenberg' (GemeenteMaasgouw.nl, 2011). The central point in Beegden is the St. Martinus church, which was demolished by the Germans in WWII and rebuilt after the war (GemeenteMaasgouw.nl, 2011). In 1856 the St. Lindert Molen was moved to its current location at the edge of the Beegderheide from its previous location in Panheel (Wikipedia, 2011). Some of these buildings now serve as tourist attractions. Half of the amenities that are currently still present in the village are located in these streets, such as the Atep, a restaurant and a grocer. The other half is located on the village square west of the Heerbaan – now Heerstraat –entailing a flowery shop and a snack bar. Also here the community house and the St. Martinus elementary school can be found. These developments were part of the new residential area developed right after WWII consisting of detached, semi-detached and row houses. Characteristic of a large share of the somewhat older houses is the fact that they are built on a gentle slope and have the garages and basements built exceeding ground level.

## 4.2 Respondent recruitment

To find the village inhabitants in Beegden and Wolfheze that meet the prescribed characteristics questionnaires were made. 65 Questionnaires were sent to the equal amount of households, addressed to one inhabitant of whom no names or backgrounds were known to the author. The address choice of these households happened in a completely random fashion by the use of Google Streetview to make sure that questionnaires were sent throughout the village, not only addressing a few streets in a section of the village. The letters consisted of an introductory letter, a printed version of the questionnaire and a signed and stamped return envelope. In the introductory letter also the option of filling out the questionnaire online was given. Both in Wolfheze and in Beegden one questionnaire was sent to a building that was not a dwelling, leaving 128 potential respondent addresses. From Wolfheze 32 written and 3 digital questionnaires returned, of which 5 were unusable because they were incomplete or name and address were not filled out. From Beegden 16 written and 3 digital questionnaires returned, of which 3 were unusable. The response rate from both villages summed up was then 42% which is well above average (Bryman, 2008)

The questionnaires consisted of a general part asking about the household situation, education and the willingness to participate in a follow-up interview. Place attachment was addressed by a 5-point Likert scale with 14 items dealing with subjects like related to place attachment. A 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree', was an appropriate method to use as it registered intensity of feelings (Bryman, 2008). For daily activities and the orientation on the village in general open questions were posed which concerned the use of facilities and amenities and the job location. For social networks in and outside the village respondents were asked to fill out a table about the location of their eight most important others. In addition was asked if they considered themselves part of the social network in the village, if they were up to date the latest news in the village and what size they would consider their network in the village to be compared to outside the village. For an example of a questionnaire, see Appendix 2

From the usable questionnaires the process of purposive sampling could be initiated. From them 16 respondents were selected; eight from each village. The sampling went in accordance to the profiles presented below. Concerning social networks, the eight important others were typified on being located predominantly locally or far away, respondents were checked on their consideration of being part of the local network or not, and their attachment to other villagers. For the focus on daily activities the location of the job was either in a city or in the village, and the amenity, facility and leisure time locations were mainly in the village (if possible) or outside. For place attachment the focus was put on the amounts of agreements to statements in the Likert scale (they were all formulated in a positive fashion) and the general tone of the whole questionnaire. The inhabitant profiles respondents had to match resulted in the following characteristics:

### Wolfheze:

4 respondents with a small local social network (daily social orientation exceeds the village)

- Of which 2 are commuters (having a full-time job in the city)
- Of which 2 work at home or elsewhere in the village; who are stayers

4 respondents with a large local social network (daily social orientation is on the village)

- Of which 2 are commuters (having a full-time job in the city)
- Of which 2 work at home or elsewhere in the village; who are stayers



**Beegden:**

4 respondents with a small local social network (daily social orientation exceeds the village)

- Of which 2 are commuters (having a full-time job in the city)
- Of which 2 work at home or elsewhere in the village; who are stayers

4 respondents with a large local social network (daily social orientation is on the village)

- Of which 2 are commuters (having a full-time job in the city)
- Of which 2 work at home or elsewhere in the village; who are stayers

Unfortunately, in Beegden only one interviewee in the category of small local social networks who are stayers could not be found within the available time.

## 4.3 The interviews

The main goal for the interviews was gathering knowledge on how people fitting the profiles organized their life in the villages. From the relational point of view the respondents must be understood by taking perspective of their social reality and everything that constitutes it. Therefore an interview approach with an interpretivist epistemology was adopted. A structured way of data collection would limit the options of the interviewer to adopt the world view of the interviewee and get at least a partial impression of his or her identity (Bryman, 2008). Using an interpretivist approach for the interview means that first personal information needs to be supplied which serves as a base for the specific information that must be gathered. To cover a respondent's daily activities a diary is adopted, addressing his place attachment and emotional and affective engagement with places in the village an emotional value map has been developed and to get a better understanding of the most important people in his life a social contact scheme was made.

### 4.3.1 Diary

To become more acquainted to way the village is embedded in the life its inhabitants a diary had to be completed to specifically address the daily activities the respondents are involved in. Time geography states that it is required to follow people through time and across space to understand the grounds of the choices people make become more apparent. For instance, someone drives a car to work to avoid getting wet because of the rain, which is possible because both he and his wife have a car. The emphasis here is on the embodied presence in the village, which enables the inhabitant to carry out a certain message. An example could be a woman who often walks her dog through the village which makes her appear approachable to others, especially to other dog owners. A diary can give insights in the way people perceive the village, as it presents a clear perspective of the kinds of other environments respondents experience on a daily and weekly basis, which may influence the perception of the village and therefore its meaning. Furthermore, a diary may reveal if and how respondents are only functionally mobile in the village or also see other parts of the village in leisure time. The diary consisted of an instructions page, five sheets for the respondent to daily fill out and two extra sheets in case one sheet per day proved not enough to write down all trips. See figure 9 for a filled out diary.

A diary has several advantages over only asking villagers for their spatial routines. A diary can often give a more accurate representation of the actual behaviour than people's memory of the details of their daily activities (Bryman, 2008). Another advantage a diary has is the appearance of priorities in daily life that might already give an indication why the interviewee enjoys living in this village environment and how that relates to certain choices. For example a man who always runs for half an hour in the forest down the road before going to work, may need some quietness and lonesomeness before engaging in his busy job being



constantly in close contact with lots of people. Using diaries to assess respondent's daily activity patterns has also several down-sides. Firstly, there is a high risk of taking an extraordinary week, which gives a different impression than what would be considered a 'normal' week. Secondly, a diary may be regarded as intrusive as respondents cannot choose the information they put in as freely as they can in an interview. Thirdly, filling in a diary takes time and dedication as it has to be updated constantly. Lastly, a diary fails to capture the relational dimension of being in places; it cannot register the places respondents think of or long for when residing in another, nor can it capture the emotions that are felt then and there.

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**VERPLAATSINGS- EN ACTIVITEITENDAGBOEK**

Als u niet genoeg heeft aan het onderstaande schema, kunt u verder gaan op één van de extra schemavellen.

Uw naam: [redacted] De dag van de week: vrijdag Datum: 4-3-2011

De locatie van uw werk (mits mogelijk) Straatnaam + Nummer + Plaats: [redacted]

Vertrek-tijd	Aankomstlocatie <small>Wat is de bestemming van uw verplaatsing? Instellingen: naam + plaats Personen: straatnaam + plaats</small>	Manier van reizen				Gezelschap <small>Met wie onderneemt u de verplaatsing? Bijv.: kinderen, kind, partner, collega's, vader</small>	Hoofdactiviteit <small>Met welke reden onderneemt u de verplaatsing of wat doet u op uw aankomstlocatie?</small>	Nevenactiviteit <small>Welke andere locatie bezoekt u tijdens de hoofdactiviteit?</small>									
		lopen	fiets	auto	OV			supermarkt	drogist(e)r	postkantoor	Schoonheid-Instelling	markt	bibliotheek	kleedwinkel	andere winkel	bekende	Anders
8:00	Werk Ede		X			-	werken										
12:00	lunchen	X				collega	lunchen	X									
12:45	werk	X				"	werken										
17:00	Thuis		X			-	Thuis home eten										
18:30	Spaarschool Oudek			X		partner	spaanen										
20:15	Thuis			X		partner	Thuis home										

Figure 9: A Friday in a filled out diary from an inhabitant of Wolfheze (in Dutch)

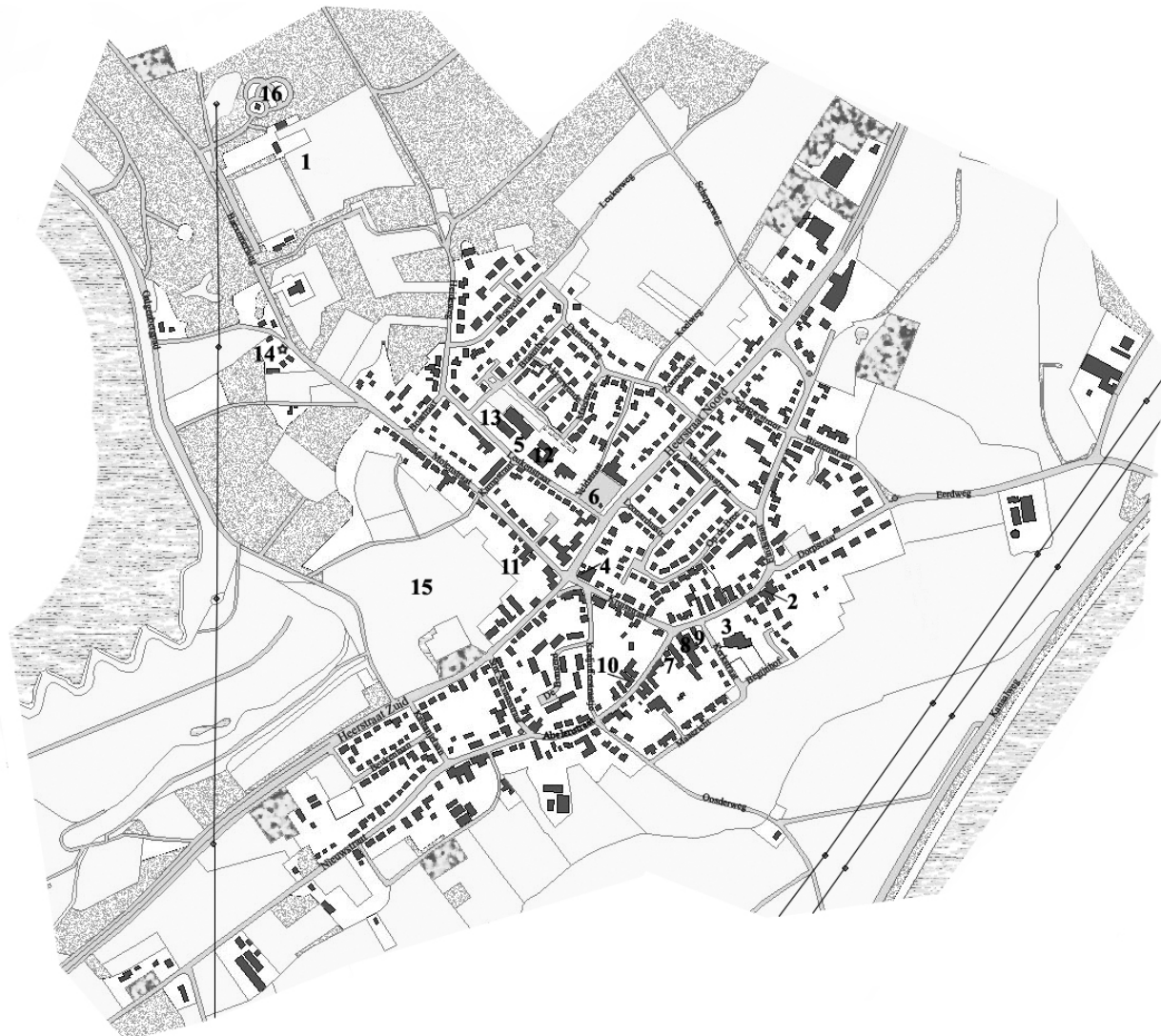
### 4.3.2 Emotional value map

As was claimed somewhere else in this chapter, it is very difficult to capture a sense of emotional attachment to a place in empirical research. However, the proposed distinction between single events and routines can be operationalized by introducing an emotional value map, which is based on the practice of mental maps, in which people can draw in their personal associations with places in the village (Walmsley & Lewis, 1993). The method used here acts upon the affective component of the appraisive response of a respondent to the village environment, which entails the emotional reaction to place: "it may be a response of the heart as well as the mind, the realm of attitudes, feelings, beliefs" (Pocock & Hudson, 1978; 68). The aim was to shed more light on specific events that were somehow related to specific places in the village and serve as a placed articulation of the past.

The respondents were provided with a black and white A3-sized map of the village in its direct surroundings and a red and blue pencil. With the red pencil they were asked to mark three places which they had positive associations with and with the blue pencil three negative associations. The maps were made with GIS data, using ArcGIS and edited in Adobe Photoshop. Analysis was done by digitalizing all associations in Adobe Photoshop, which were then classified on (1) the element type; buildings, areas and spots, (2) the content; the site being a representation of (an) event(s) or of other people, or if other people played a major role, (3) the occurrence of the association; singular, irregular or on routine basis and (4) the feeling; recalling








memories or as a bodily reaction to the environment. All association selections were cross-checked per inhabitant profiles and per village. Nofilled out map is included as the address of a respondent is identifiable on the map. See Figure 10 for the map respondents of Beegden received.

## Emotionele waardenkaart en routes door het dorp



## Beegden

### LEGENDA

-  Gebouw (woning of bedrijfsgebouw)
-  Kruis of kapel
-  Weiland
-  Bos
-  Boomgaard
-  Water
-  Weg of parkeerplaats

### NUMMERUITLEG

1. Sportpark Op Schatte
2. Atep
3. St. Martinuskerk
4. Café Ut Praothoes
5. Gemeenschapshuis 't Leuke
6. Frituur
7. Jan Delissen groente, fruit en zuivel
8. Café Kegelhal Casino
9. Bakker Adams
10. Café 't Jachthuis
11. Spar
12. Basisschool Sint Martinus
13. Gymnastieklokaal
14. Sint Lindertmolen
15. Nieuwe uitbreiding Krijtenberg
16. Begraafplaats Senserhove

Figure 10: Emotional value map of Beegden, with in the bottom middle position the legend and in the bottom right corner the explanation of the numbers on the map, existing mainly from amenities (in Dutch).



### 4.3.3. Social contacts table

This part is designed to get a deeper understanding of the important others of a respondent and how he or she balances contact with them. It shows the general tendency of feeling the need to engage in social activities in relation to be alone or with a family member. Not only shows the table where the other persons live, in a city or on the countryside, it also shows the spatial extent to which the network reaches and that relates to the social orientation of the village. In line with this is the implication of the frequency of contact; intense contact with someone living in a city may have an influence on the way the village is perceived. If the important others stem from a long time ago, this may mean that opinions are more valued. Not filling out the scheme totally or filling out groups of people may mean that the respondent could not make a choice and has many people that he values highly. On the contrary, it can also mean that the respondent cannot appoint eight people he thinks are worth mentioning in the table. See figure 11 for a filled out table

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BLAD 1

**Sociale netwerken**

In de enquête die u eerder heeft ingevuld, heeft u ook een schema ingevuld met de voor u belangrijkste personen. Hieronder staan deze personen nogmaals genoemd. De door u opgegeven woonplaats is al ingevuld. Om zicht te krijgen op uw communicatiepatronen, is meer informatie nodig over uw contact met deze personen. Aan u de vraag of u het schema verder in wilt vullen. Het ingevulde, grijze schema dient als voorbeeld.

**VOORBEELD**

Functie	Woonplaats	Hoe ontmoet (mits van toepassing)	Hoe organiseert u contact in persoon (face-to-face)?	Hoe vaak?	Hoe heeft u elektronisch contact (of per post)?	Hoe vaak?	Reden bezoek
Partner/vriend	Wageningen	Begon dezelfde studie, werd na 3 jaar een relatie	Spontaan afspreken en ongeorganiseerd (elkaar tegenkomen op straat)	2 keer per dag en wekelijks	Bellen, smsen, e-mailen	4 keer per week, meerdere keren per dag en wekelijks	Relatie in stand houden en leuke dingen doen
Opa van vriendje	Beesl	Via vriend	Doet schoonfamilie; via familiebijeenkomsten	2 keer per jaar	Post	2 keer per jaar	Verjaardag en kerst vieren
Vriendin	Utrecht	Brugklas, middelbare school	Week van tevoren een afspraak maken	2 keer per jaar	Berichten via sociale netwerksites en E-mailen	Maandelijks en 10 keer per jaar	Bijkletsen

**De voor u 8 belangrijkste personen**

Functie	Woonplaats	Hoe ontmoet (mits van toepassing)	Hoe organiseert u contact in persoon (face-to-face)?	Hoe vaak?	Hoe heeft u elektronisch contact (of per post)?	Hoe vaak?	Reden bezoek
Partner	Beegden	met mijzelf	dagelijks - ontbijt - avondeten - meerdere momenten	dagelijks	nut	nut	nut
dochter	Beegden	nut	- ontbijt - avondeten - verschillende momenten	dagelijks	nut	nut	nut
dochter	Beegden	nut	- maaltijden - etc.	dagelijks	nut	nut	nut
vriend	Baarto	middelbare school	- vooral bellen - afspraken ibo dingen samen doen	2 wekelijks	bellen, sms, e-mail	2 wekelijks	Relatie in stand houden - elkaar helpen - leuke dingen doen
vriendin	Baarto	vakantie	- vooral bellen	1 wekelijks	bellen sms e-mail facebook	2 wekelijks	- Relatie in stand houden - elkaar helpen
moeder	Baarto	nut	- vooral bellen - aanwippen	maandelijks	bellen	2 wekelijks	Relatie beleving
vriend	Baarto	Middelbare school	- vooral bellen - e-mail - hypes	2 wekelijks	bellen - hypes	maandelijks	- Relatie - beleving
vriend	Baarto	jeugd	- vooral bellen - e-mail - aanwippen	maandelijks	bellen - sms	maandelijks	- Relatie - beleving

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Figure 11: Example of a filled out social contacts table by an inhabitant of Beegden (in Dutch)

#### 4.3.4 Interviewing the respondents

The interview guide could be made after the completion of the table, map and diary, also incorporating the questionnaire. Semi-structured interviews are most suitable for searching for the possible relationship between a person's attachment to the place, social networks in and outside the village and the activities undertaken on a daily basis. A semi-structured interview allows for acquiring personal information that does not always surface in a structured interview (Bryman, 2008). For a number of reasons this is more advantageous in getting a detailed account of the perspective of the interviewee. For example, a semi-structured interview allows for follow-up questions more than more structured interview styles. This gives more opportunities to engage deeper in the life world of the interviewee. Another reason is that while the interview takes place events at first seem insignificant for the interviewee to mention may be arrived at later. Using semi-structured interviews has also downsides as it makes comparing respondents harder. Furthermore, it is almost impossible to memorize or distinguish relevant events that had have been important in the development of the meaning of the village, if the interviewee is aware of their influence at all.

The interviews were carried out at the homes of the interviewees, taking from one hour up to two and a half hour. The interview guide had four 'themes'; the first being the answers in the questionnaire about place attachment, the second was concerned with the diary, the third with the social contacts table and the fourth focussing on the emotional value map. Nonetheless, the interviews did not follow an order, only for the inhabitants of Beegden the subject of the decreasing village population was addressed at the end of all interviews. The interviews were taped with a digital recording device and transcribed using Dragon Naturally Speaking and Microsoft Office Word. After that they were coded in MAXQDA<sup>1</sup> and afterward analysed on relations within the life of the interviewee an in comparison with the others with the same profile, and in comparison with all others in the village. The next two chapters are subdivided into recurrent themes in the interviews.

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1 See Appendix 5 for the used codes in MAXQDA



Respondent	Sex	Age	Household composition	Years living in Wolfheze	Experience with living in cities	Occupation	Form of employment	Location of occupation	Social network specification
Rebecca	F	27	Lives by herself	27	A short period in one city	Nurse	Fulltime	Arnhem	Nationally located, mainly city-oriented
Martijn	M	43	Lives with his partner	15	Several cities in NL and one abroad	Consultant	Independent: project based: fulltime or none	In different cities in the Netherlands	Nationally located, village-oriented
Antoon	M	65	Lives with his partner	17	Several cities	Freelancer/Consultant	0 – 15 hours per week	At home in Wolfheze	Nationally located, mainly village-oriented
Virginie	F	78	Widowed: lives by herself	23	Several cities and one abroad	Pensioner	n.a.	n.a.	Nationally located, mainly city-oriented
Gerben	M	57	Lives with his partner	25	One city	Doctor	Fulltime	Ede and Veenendaal	Nationally/provincially located, oriented on cities and villages
Nina	F	51	Lives with her partner	23	Two cities	Teacher	Part-time	Apeldoorn	Nationally located, city-oriented
Chantal	F	49	Lives with her partner and son	18	None	Secretary	0 – 15 hours per week	At her office in Wolfheze	Provincially located, oriented on both cities and villages
Linda	F	44	Lives with her partner and son	4	One city	Police officer	Fulltime	At her office in Wolfheze, or in nearby villages	Provincially/nationally located, mainly village-oriented

Table 2: Respondents from Wolfheze

Respondent	Sex	Age	Household composition	Years living in Beegden	Experience with living in cities	Occupation	Form of employment	Location of occupation	Social network specification
Jeanne	F	42	Lives with her partner	10	Two cities	Management advisor	Fulltime	Roermond	Provincially located, oriented on both cities and villages
Willemien	F	49	Lives with her partner and child	11	Born and raised in a city	n.a.	Part-time	Roermond	Almost exclusively located in and oriented on Roermond
Hilde	F	52	Lives by herself	33	None	n.a.	Part-time	In her office at home in Beegden	Regional/provincially located, mainly city-oriented
Simon	M	46	Lives with his partner and children	16	Several cities	Operational coordinator at the Police	Fulltime	Roermond and differing places in the region	Locally/regionally located, oriented on Beegden
David	M	52	Lives with his partner and children	28	Two cities	Independent (musician, teacher)	Fulltime	Different places in the region	Locally/regionally located, village-oriented
Jacques	M	62	Lives with his partner	62	None	Pensioner	n.a.	n.a.	Almost exclusively located in and oriented on Beegden
Theo	M	63	Lives with his partner	34	None	Pensioner	n.a.	n.a.	Locally located, oriented on Beegden

Table 3: Respondents from Beegden





5



# Chapter 5: Results Social Networks

The results concerning the social networks of the respondents in relation to their life in the village will be put forward in this chapter. The chapter is divided in themes that show the difference in experiences between people with large social networks in Wolfheze and Beegden and the ones with small social networks in both villages. First the social networks of all respondents will be characterised, second the results regarding community life and social rootedness will be shown. The third section provides insights about special places in the villages. Fourth, social life in the city as perceived will be presented. Fifth, opinions from the respondents concerning the potential population decline will be given. The chapter closes off with the chapter conclusions.

## 5.1 Social network characterization

It is important to come to an understanding of how the – lack of – social networks of all respondents relate to the villages of Wolfheze and Beegden, as it begins to show what role the village plays on a social level and how these networks suit the social needs of the respondents.

For Jacques (62, has a large social network in Beegden) the village is his social network, as his social network is not only highly localized in Beegden and some other villages in the area, he speaks of the village as a large group of familiar people. He regards and subdivides this group into smaller groups he knows from his work for a number of village associations currently and in the past. Hence, his activities in the village pretty much determine who he knows and who he is involved with at one point in time when he focusses more on work for, for instance, the community band. For example, a year later he would be more involved with the soccer club. His social network in Beegden thus consists almost exclusively of villagers who are active in at least one community club, which makes it a large group with very similar intentions about life in a village. Apart from village activities he engages with neighbours and some villagers who he knows from child- and young adulthood.

Also for Theo (63, has a large social network in Beegden) the villagers are the village. He explains why he did not tick the box ‘completely agree’ on the statement: *‘I know the village inside out’*, by admitting that he does not know who lives where exactly in the village, which he blames on people moving and not being involved in the soccer club. Similar to Jacques (62, has a large social network in Beegden), Theo seems to regard his social network as the community at large to which he strongly identifies as he often involves ‘the opinion’ of the community when he speaks of the village and its issues. Hence, people who are not part of his social network are not involved in associations, and are therefore entirely left out of his world that is Beegden. Besides the contacts he gained from village associations he knows very little others as his engagements with others is entirely based on the activities the village offers him instead of him finding others with similar interests outside these clubs. Therefore, both Jacques and Theo can be seen as villagers that are collectivists instead of individualists.

David (52, has a large social network in Beegden) on the other hand, is a profound individualist as he lets his general interests determine which villagers he meets and become part of his social network. He states that he always searches for people who are in one way or the other interesting for him, which goes beyond sharing certain activities, opinions or life situations but can learn him something because of their difference from him:

*I find that really pleasant, that human-to-human stuff... In the beginning I really didn't like one person, but gradually I learned to respect him as he is and now I can communicate with him in a very pleasant way, despite the fact that he is totally different from me. I recognize that I learn something from the way he regards things in life.*

**- David (52, has a large social network in Beegden)**

He actively searches for new social elements in the village and let his unfolding interests determine if he wants to remain engaged in a community association or not. This makes the village a colourful and dynamic social place for him, opposite from Jacques (62, has a large social network in Beegden) and Theo (63, has a large social network in Beegden) search for like-minded people.

Simon (46, has a large social network in Beegden) hinges in between the individualism of David and the collectivism of Jacques and Theo as his social network is chiefly located in Beegden as he is a member of many community associations due to his wide interest and willingness to help others with activities. Also because he has children of various ages he came into contact with many other villagers via the elementary school in the village, of which some invited him to join in community clubs. Apart from this, he actively searches for villagers with whom he shares interest and often takes initiative to engage in activities based on these interests. Additionally, his social network in Beegden is fairly large because of his public roles in both his job as chief police officer and the municipality in particular, which brings him often in contact with many other villagers. Hence, in Beegden, villager with large social networks are profoundly collectivists, but the two who work outside the village are more individualistic although they both are drawn to at least the idea of knowing many people in the village.

In part, similar to David (52, has a large social network in Beegden) social network, the large social networks of the respondents in Wolfheze mostly seem to be based on very personal decisions to engage or not to engage with other inhabitants in certain ways. This more individualized attitude Nina (51, has a large social network in Wolfheze), Gerben (57, has a large social network in Wolfheze), Linda (44, has a large social network in Wolfheze) and Chantal (49, has a large social network in Wolfheze) seem to have still brought them to become involved in certain village activities. Apart from the neighbours it is found to be difficult to come in touch with other villagers without attending village activities or joining village clubs. However, the motivations to engage in these kinds of activities for the respondents from Wolfheze are not just to have a good time and because other villagers are members too, rather they give detailed motivations about why they find it necessary to become involved in these associations.

The motivations for shaping a large social network in the village are mainly stemming from the image they have of how social life in a village should be and how they with their abilities can add to that, unlike the respondents with a large social network in Beegden who seem mainly motivated by the collective opinion of having to engage in village clubs. For instance Nina (51, has a large social network in Wolfheze), who at the time that her daughter was young organised all kinds of activities for children, because her daughter went to a school outside Wolfheze. She reckoned that it was important that her daughter also had friends in the village, and because she reckoned that children in the village did not have enough opportunities to play in an organised fashion. Therefore she and another mother in the village established a playground and a weekly crafts club for children and she was one of the initiators of Sint Maarten (a Dutch religious celebration, predominantly for children). Currently she is not involved in many village clubs and activities, partly because her job takes up most of her time and energy, and partly because her daughter grew up and moved to a city for her education.



Apart from this motivation for establishing a large social network in Wolfheze that is driven by specific personal needs, within the respondent groups with large social networks in Wolfheze there is an interesting difference between the reasoning behind forming and maintaining this large social network. Respondents Nina (51, has a large social network in Wolfheze) and Linda (44, has a large social network in Wolfheze) both have clear visions of what their motivations for such a large local social network are. They both regard being part of a village community and knowing who lives in their immediate surroundings as an integral part of living in a village. Nina explains that this comes forth from pursuing a sense of safety which she did not have in the cities she had previously lived in, but did have when she grew up in a large village. Hence, from these earlier experiences she developed the idea that a village is the only place that can give her this sense of safety as she knows and trusts many people in the immediate surroundings of her house. Linda's motivations for having a large social network in the village were born from regularly encountering embodied experiences with criminality in the cities she worked. Although she regards these experiences as valuable for her work experience, she wants to exclude every aspect of violence in the place where she dwells. Because of these rather extreme experiences in the urban milieu it is very likely that she searches the opposite in an opposite milieu and became sensitive to the social atmosphere in a village community. When she explains her vision of Wolfheze she states the following:

*Wolfheze is a village where people are involved with each other, people know one another, many activities, the social involvement is very strong here. People look after each other. That is very pleasant.*

**- Linda (44, has a large social network in Wolfheze)**

Hence, for both women their experiences in earlier urban dwelling milieus had a large effect on how they view living in a village: in the light of the disappointingly uninvolved community in the urban milieu, they seem to glorify the warmth of the community in a village. By creating and maintaining a large social network in Wolfheze, it allows them to hold on to this vision. For them the village represents a loving social environment that they can trust, built up with the public places where they have experienced social events and with the homes of people that confirm and strengthen this vision.

Also Gerben (57, has a large social network in Wolfheze) seems to be able to identify with many people in Wolfheze, as his social network has become relatively large because for a very long time he has worked for the psychiatric institute in village. Even when he did not yet live in Wolfheze, a large part of his social network was located in Wolfheze, although he familiarized with many of them only on the premises of the institute. After moving to Wolfheze he became interested in the village community outside the institute to acquire "the village feeling". Hence, his idea to further extend his social network in Wolfheze also came forth from a vested idea about the dwelling in a village. Similar to Nina (51, has a large social network in Wolfheze) he has been attending social gatherings, but only strongly linked to his own interests. As he currently works outside the village, his social network in Wolfheze slightly contracted and nowadays it consists of people who he likes because they have shared interests and have a similar outlook on socializing in a village.

Respondent Chantal (49, has a large social network in Wolfheze), on the contrary, did not develop a large local social network because of specific ideas of social life in a village caused by bad experiences in cities as she has only lived in villages before. For her having a large social network in the village is not only something that she was used to, but became especially interesting as she found out that the people in Wolfheze are not such yokels as the people in the village she grew up in. It resulted in a large social network from initially the people in the street who, she argues, know each other help out one another. She enjoys socializing with them by sharing meals and other activities. She even attends yoga classes with a group of women, mostly mothers, in the street. Later on, her social network grew because her working hours enabled her.

She organises her job in Wolfheze in such a way that it allows her to bring and pick up her son from the elementary school in Wolfheze and occasionally perform tasks there. It resulted in her becoming part of a group of befriended mothers with who she regularly undertakes activities such as going to the movies. Her large social network thus seems to be stemming from an urge of familiarizing with villagers, mostly women, who share their care for their children and live in close vicinity. Hence, Chantal's large local social network is not the result of the pursuit of a general idea about social life in a village, rather it is the result of her feeling enabled to identify intensely with the villagers from Wolfheze.

On a general level the villagers with a small social network did not show a conviction of ideas about having to know many people in a village, not only because they consider other elements in their current life as more important, such as their family and job, but also because Jeanne (42, has a small social network in Beegden), Willemien (49, has a small social network in Beegden) and Hilde (52, has a small social network in Beegden) at the moment cannot identify with many others in the village as for them the communal lifestyle is too strongly present. The three women explained that living according to this dominant lifestyle does not fit with the life phase they currently find themselves in. For Willemien this life phase means that she needs this sense of stillness in the surroundings of her home now because her children have just moved out. She needs the village because "everything is stiller and less hectic because nothing really happens in the village". For Hilde having a different life phase is motivated twofold. On the one hand, she is strongly focused on her job that takes up a lot of time and energy and which she prioritizes over having social contacts in the village because it motivates her very much in life. On the other hand, she hesitates to enlarge her currently small social network because just a decade ago she had a large social network in Beegden as a result of her active attitude towards school and community activities, but because of a series of events she cannot identify with her younger self anymore. She explains:

*... but I have some sort of history here. At first I was more outside-aimed and now I am far more aimed towards the inside. And that has a negative influence on my motivation to turn to the outside world again because you have to process a lot and because you become another person.*

**- Hilde (52, has a small social network in Beegden)**

This has resulted in her feeling difficulties with making public appearances in the village again knowing that she is a different person as others remembers her. Hilde thus feels uncomfortable to restore and renew her social network in Beegden because she seems to regard the other villagers as a group with a collective memory of who she used to be while having to deal with individuals of who she thinks she needs to explain herself to and which causes painful memories to resurface again.

Jeanne's (42, has a small social network in Beegden) social relations in the village only entail a friend who regularly takes care of her dog and some people who she comes across when walking the dog, as she attempts to remain disengaged from community life by keeping contact with the bare minimum of villagers. She denotes her lacking interest in the community at large as "the way I momentarily live my life". Spending time alone and only with her husband gives her the peace of mind she needs after a pressing workweek. The free time she does have, she spends on her hobbies such as cooking and reading and she does not feel an urge to go to social gatherings, not with friends outside the village and even less with other inhabitants of Beegden. Furthermore, she indicates that she feels burdened to make new friends in Beegden as she experienced the atmosphere in her birth-village elsewhere in Limburg as being:

*Oppressive; everyone knows who you are, everyone reckons to know everything about you. If you are somewhat smarter then you don't fit in properly. I felt forced to be a member of all associations. These are not very good memories; I rather like to have a more anonymous life. I have that in this village.*

**- Jeanne (42, has a small social network in Beegden)**

If she would make new friends in Beegden, they would have the potential to put pressure on her to engage in village life. Hence, with the every encounter with familiar people in the village she *'runs the risk'* of familiarizing to such an extent that she feels obligated to spend more time and energy in community associations than desired. Other villagers thus represent more than just one person but a whole collection of community associations.

For the respondents with a small social network in Wolfheze it seems to work the other way around as community associations are regarded as not at all important for their social life in the village. None of the four corresponding respondents mention these village clubs and their members as motivation for their small social network in Wolfheze. Both Antoon (65, has a small social network in Wolfheze) and Virginie (78, pensioner in Wolfheze) regard themselves as different from others in the village to such an extent that it prevents them from identifying with them. Antoon explains how his high education puts up a barrier between him and others:

*I am part of the academic world, I've been a professor and all... and then... yeah.... Then here you find that your neighbour can only talk about trees and such [laughs] so that may have become a bit of a problem yes.*

**- Antoon (65, has a small social network in Wolfheze)**

That this is a disappointment for him is apparent because his main motivation to move to Wolfheze was to find a rich social life containing many people he could identify with. Apart from the fact that Virginie (78, pensioner in Wolfheze) feels perfectly happy with her small social network in the village, she does mention that she feels excluded from the community because many other villagers are affiliated with the psychiatric institute and she is not. These feelings arise most strongly when she sits in the medical ward on a weekly basis:

*I think that that is the most important clan in the village. They all know each other and help each other. I have the feeling that if you are not involved with the Foundation, you have a hard time becoming included. The Foundation is really important in this village; you really can't get inside it. They are all just very nice but if you are at the medical ward, they all talk about this person and that person of the Foundation, so it's a small circle, or rather I think that over half of the village is connected to the Foundation*

**- Virginie (78, pensioner in Wolfheze)**

Hence for Virginie this medical ward represents a place that confirms her exclusion from at least that part of the community, which she perceives as an important subgroup of the whole community. Because furthermore she has only limited contact with other villagers apart from a few neighbours and friends, this is the only moment of contact with other villagers.

Martijn (43, has a small social network in Wolfheze) was the only respondent who did not show interest in other villagers apart from one of his neighbours. Hence, unlike Antoon (65, has a small social network in Wolfheze) and Virginie (78, pensioner in Wolfheze) he is not bothered with identifying with other inhabitants from Wolfheze and does not feel excluded by them in any way because he mentions that he has other motivations than social ones to live in Wolfheze or a village in general. His social network in general consists only of very good friends, which means that the interactions with villagers that are mostly based on greeting and will not develop in a friendship if no extra time and effort are spent. Friendships in Wolfheze that he deems valuable are thus absent, as one of his close friends that he met in Wolfheze over a decade ago, moved to one of the surrounding villages.

Another respondent, Rebecca (27, has a small social network in Wolfheze) also has a small network in the village and similar to Antoon (65, has a small social network in Wolfheze) and Virginie (78, pensioner in Wolfheze) she cannot identify with other villagers, but similar to Martijn (43, has a small social network in Wolfheze) she shows little interest in them. However, unlike Martijn, for her this is not motivated by a general lack of interest in other human beings, but because her past social network in Wolfheze has moved out: in her childhood she had plenty of friends in the village, but as she grew up all of them moved to other places for their education or jobs. In contrast to this, Rebecca had the opportunity to buy her parent's house as she found a job in Arnhem. Hence, her current social network in Wolfheze consists of her parents who moved to another house in Wolfheze and some neighbours.

## 5.2 Community life and orientations on other villagers

For all respondents is Beegden linked very strongly to its community associations both in positive senses as in negative ones. Being a member of at least one but preferably a number of associations is considered something to be very proud of in the very least, while some even see it as a "lifestyle" Theo (63, has a large social network in Beegden) or something that exceeds personal needs, as part of one's responsibility if you want to live there. Being part of community life is such a dominant discourse in Beegden that it is regarded as a marker of 'good citizenship' by the majority of the respondents from Beegden, for a number of reasons. One reason is the characterization of an 'authentic' or 'real' Beegdenaar as a person who is an active member of many village associations, both in boards and otherwise assisting where possible, besides being born and raised there. He is regarded to have the 'right' attitude and considers no task to be as too much.

Another reason is that being involved in many community clubs is a display of pride in the village: caring for associations such as the community band and the soccer club is regarded to show an overall concern for the village because they form an essential part of the identity of the village, the image about the overall quality of life and the strength of the community, as it is broadcasted to other villages, according to Simon (46, has a large social network in Beegden). When he is asked why Beegden is special to him he immediately ties it to the community characteristics of another village he used to live:

*Well, we have lived in another village before this one, where my wife was born. (...) there was a whole other nature of the people. There was also a community band that played at a high level and if it had won a price... really different: the bus would stop and everyone would go home immediately, while here all bars are visited and they all have a party. That was very solemn there, there you didn't see the drive that they have here. Different needs. There you didn't the harmonization that you have here: a very different feeling we had there, but we didn't do it there as well... it just wasn't inviting to do so. Also, nobody there would approach you to do this or that*  
**- Simon (46, has a large social network in Beegden)**

Furthermore, 'bad citizenship' in Beegden is something that is by some found to be an issue as some people are never part of a village activity and often do not even attend one. Jacques (62, has a large social network in Beegden) experiences that an increasing number of people buy a house in Beegden but are reluctant to become active in community association. He is not very happy with this:

*I think that if you dwell somewhere, you shouldn't only dwell there but also live there. With living I mean that you merge with the bigger picture of that village... you don't need to exceed it, but you have to join it, and with that I mean that you become part of the community life, the social life and if someone asks you: "can you please do this for me?" that you just do that if you can and don't say: "well, I don't feel like doing that, while you actually can".*  
**- Jacques (62, has a large social network in Beegden)**



He and Theo (63, has a large social network in Beegden) carry out this opinion most strongly and show the least understanding of why not everyone would want to be involved in village associations. They only seem to regard arguments based on time space constraints why people can have not to join as valid. They thereby completely surpass emotional motivations, such as the need to find peace of mind (Jeanne) feeling the urge to keep personal and family matters private (Willemien) and just not feeling able to cope with the demands that accompany it (Hilde). As the social networks of both men are almost solely made up from people who are active members of associations and presumably share their opinion, the platform to create understanding is virtually absent. Both men devote many hours per week on tasks for various community associations. Jacques spends almost all of his time on board functions and writing texts when he does not babysit his grandchildren and for Theo fulfilling his tasks has even become a fulltime job. Both men make themselves wanted and even indispensable but nonetheless, they do have slightly differing reasons as for Jacques participating in community life comes naturally, for Theo too, but it seems to stem out of personal necessity. He is not born in Beegden and despite his enormous effort to know Beegden thoroughly he is still told that he is not an authentic villager, which gives him the feeling that he needs to prove himself, even after living in Beegden for 34 years.

While David (52, has a large social network in Beegden) does participate in a number of community associations, he rejects the idea that villagers should participate in community associations just because they live there. The difference for him is that he is member of some based on his own interests, skills and available time and energy:

*I do understand that people would feel obligated to participate in the community, but I, my wife and my children don't feel it like that in that way. We follow our own path: making your own choices, and if that makes you less popular... but you can be yourself and in this village you can have your place. However, I do see people who can easily be influenced, but that is not something relevant for me.*

**- David (52, has a large social network in Beegden)**

He does not feel like a 'real Beegdenaar', not even a 'Limburger' as he calls himself a 'Berliner' emphasizing his broad interest in all the world has to offer and does not want to limit himself to acting according to ideas of being a good citizen of a territory, such as a province or village. This very individualistic attitude brings other inhabitants to state their opinion that he will never be a 'real Beegdenaar' as well. He also mentions regularly encountering stubbornness of exactly those villagers who do regard themselves as 'real Beegdenaren', as they do act according to the collective rules of being an established inhabitant of Beegden. He recalls one incident of coming across a group of these people when his band acquired municipal permission to rehearse in the new community building:

*Very soon nine bands also wanted to rehearse there and one of them consisted of a boy from Horn [neighbouring village], so what do you get: "there are strangers, young people, smoking, alcohol" [he quotes a fellow inhabitant] and the person who said it held a cigarette and a glass of beer in his hands. That kind of issues... (...) Especially the influx of other people is interesting for me. That has created the negative association, that this small stronghold is still in place, that I still haven't been able to breach it.*

**- David (52, has a large social network in Beegden)**

David does assign very positive properties to the community at large, such as showing interest in fellow inhabitants, accepting others the way they are as these are typically individualistic values, but he feels hindered by some people who attempt to impose certain collective values on him. Therefore Beegden has two faces, because he feels happy that others welcome him so warmly while at the same time seem so caught up in their own ideas.



Picture 1: The community building of Beegden, 't Leuke. Source: [www.gemeenschapshuis-tleuke-beegden.nl](http://www.gemeenschapshuis-tleuke-beegden.nl)

The respondents with a small social network in Beegden seem to be sensitive to this strong message Jacques and others proclaim. Hilde (52, has a small social network in Beegden) in particular as in the past she used to be engaged in multiple community associations but because of personal circumstances she does not feel capable enough to continue doing that, despite the fact that she would really want to. She struggles to divide her time and precious energy between her personal needs to both mentally comfort herself by doing the job she loves to do, and physically relax as her body cannot cope with doing both at the same time. It makes her feel that she is partly incapable to live up to the expectations of other villagers. This seems to put even more pressure on her because she used to be involved in the community clubs and she may even have had, or still has, an aversive opinion about not engaging in community life as well. This makes her especially aware of the fact that she does not do it. Like respondent Nina (51, has a large social network in Wolfheze) and Chantal (49, has a large social network in Wolfheze) from Wolfheze she is forced to make careful assessments between different priorities and especially, where to draw the line to avoid become overloaded with work.

Another respondent, Willemien (49, has a small social network in Beegden) is also aware of the dominance of the tendency to engage in the public social networks. When she just moved in members of a community association welcomed her and her family and in the conversation also asked if she or the other members of her family were interested in becoming members of local clubs. She also quickly came to perceive other villagers as gossipy, something she wants "to keep away from as far as possible" as she does not want to share everything with everyone. Therefore, she takes good care of what exactly she tells the people with who she regularly talks. For instance, she mentions that she would never tell it to the woman next door if she would have problems with her children. Her strong awareness of her being incapable to control which information will reach which people and how they will reflect on it became apparent to her when a family member passed away. She had not told anyone about it, but still she received a condolence card from the neighbours, as apparently they had read it in the paper. Another irregular routine she experiences is what happens as she visits the flower shop in the village:

*[points at her emotional value map] Oh, yeah, there is the flower shop with [name], I visit it quite often; there is also much gossip. Then you just stand there and then: "Oh, and that lady has this and that" and then I think like: "yeah, that just doesn't interest me for one bit". It's not because I say something, but they just tell everything; I don't have to react to it, it just goes on and on.*

**- Willemien (49, has a small social network in Beegden)**

This makes the flowery shop a substitute for a community site, such as 't Leuke which she tends to avoid, as she hears about villagers she does not know. The sheer fact that this woman just tells everything about everyone to random people makes her very cautious about how to engage with other inhabitants. However, she also recognises that information about her that goes around in the village as gossip is not necessarily linked to her as in Beegden she often comes across people who do not know who she is and do not know where she lives. She finds that very valuable because provides a sense of protection as uncontrolled information and opinions about her is not centred around her as embodied person. Nonetheless, she does enjoy having occasional chit-chats with other villagers. She especially relished going to the supermarket when it was still there on Saturday mornings. So, it seems that she would like to have a little more relationships with other villagers, but because she fails to find more people with whom she can bond more thoroughly and of who she can be sure that they will not share her stories with the rest of the village, she limits her chats to some neighbours. Hence, similar to David (52, has a large social network in Beegden) she balances her individualistic ideals with the needs she can only fulfil on a collective manner.

For the respondents with a small social network in Wolfheze community associations are not considered part of their life at all as they are not involved in them and they do not report feeling any pressure to be so. Only for Antoon (65, has a small social network in Wolfheze) they were in the past, as he did participate in a number of village associations but because he found difficulties working with some people he decided to withdraw from the clubs. On the contrary of the situation in Beegden, he experienced that it were especially villagers that would be considered as the 'real Wolfhezenaren' that seemed reluctant to cooperate in an initiative. This opinion is shared by Nina (51, has a large social network in Wolfheze) who also stated that she had difficulties convincing especially these older people who were born and raised in Wolfheze to support her initiatives and cooperate in a non-obstructive way. Hence, this seems to be a completely opposite opinion about 'real villagers' compared to those in Beegden.

Antoon (65, has a small social network in Wolfheze) regrets not having more friends in the village than the ones he has today as his attempts to make familiarize with neighbours for instance, often failed as these people were not interested in expanding their social network in general he presumes. The several bad experiences both with the community associations and the community at large, stand in sharp contrast with the time he lived in a neighbourhood in Arnhem where he had a large local social network and where he could very easily bond with other inhabitants. Living in a village seemed at the time therefore very attractive: "Gee, such a village seems interesting, doing a bit of social stuff and the like". Because his expectations were very high, the bad experiences in Wolfheze disappointed him even more.

Martijn (43, has a small social network in Wolfheze) also experiences an emotional distance to the community of Wolfheze because he strongly disagrees with him being a 'real Wolfhezenaar'. Unlike Antoon, he never had the intention to engage in community clubs or with villagers in general apart from the possibilities the village offers to take away time space constraints, such as enabling him to play sports at walking distance. This activity happened to involve other villagers, but otherwise he would not have interacted with

others than his neighbours. He is very conscious of his feelings of not being bound to the village, which demonstrates a way of dwelling without any sense of rootedness as he opposes his attitude to the one of a 'real Wolfhezenaar', similar to both Rebecca (27, has a small social network in Wolfheze) remarkably and Gerben (57, has a large social network in Wolfheze)

*A real Wolfhezenaar would never leave Wolfheze, at least, that's my opinion and If I would find a house tomorrow, somewhere in the rural areas of Bennekom [small town west of Wolfheze] for instance, then I would put this house up for sale and then we would go there... so, I am not bound to Wolfheze. I can find it somewhere else as well, so no, I don't feel like a real Wolfhezenaar... I dwell in Wolfheze...*

**- Martijn (43, has a small social network in Wolfheze)**

On the contrary respondents with large social networks in Wolfheze, such as Gerben (57, has a large social network in Wolfheze) are very content with the community and the way they can cooperate with others. As he does not always have the time or energy to be actively involved in village activities he is happy that he does not feel pressured in any way to be so. Presumably, he can better understand and accept that other villagers are not always equally willing to take on tasks for a village association, as he sometimes shares their situation and feelings. For Chiel, it is exactly that freedom of adapting to the moment that he very much appreciates in the community:

*I just like the permissiveness here. With the people that I know here in the village I feel connected... Not that they turn up on each other's doorstep all the time, but that... the people who I come across I feel connected to in some way and therefore you talk to them. [...] We feel very connected to them, but not extremely, no. The atmosphere is just right, yes...*

**- Gerben (57, has a large social network in Wolfheze)**

Other respondents with large local social networks have similar opinions. Nina (51, has a large social network in Wolfheze) and Linda (44, has a large social network in Wolfheze) mentioned that members of community associations would sometimes turn up at new people's doorstep to invite them to become a member of a community association, but both emphasized the friendly, unpressured approach. Only Chantal (49, has a large social network in Wolfheze) expressed feeling slightly pressured when she just moved in to take on tasks as she perceived to have an "image" of a person willing to do them, but stated to quickly feel free to reject them when she did not feel like doing them. From the previous section, it appeared that Nina (51, has a large social network in Wolfheze) is mainly active because of idealist and safety reasons, driven from her own needs to fulfil what elements are missing according to her. However, she is also active in community clubs because she feels the urge to know as many people around her as possible and she reckoned that via these clubs it would be easiest:

*Author: Why did you join the [a certain village association]?*

*Nina: When we moved in here, ah well... you know no one but everyone knows you when you come here as a stranger. It is a very small village and all shops were still here, so I always met everyone there, but now the shops have gone, so nobody knows each other anymore and that was a reason for me to... because yeah, I live here and you whine like: "they don't do this, they don't do that" and then I think like: "yeah, it's worthwhile to make yourself useful". I find that people should do more with each another."*

**- Nina (51, has a large social network in Wolfheze)**

For her, the best way to feel at home was to become familiar with many people and lose the identity of being a stranger, at least according to her own standards. Nonetheless, knowing them is not enough for her as she feels that to a certain extent she needs to be aware of how others are doing. For instance, she felt really bad about not knowing that one of the people in the street had become ill some time ago.



## 5.3 Special places in the village

Some places in the village have acquired special meanings in the lives of villagers, which extend beyond the realm of the place itself but influences more aspects of the lives of individuals. One of such places is mentioned by Gerben (57, has a large social network in Wolfheze). Four years ago he drove his car around the corner on a street in Wolfheze, not noticing an elderly man who he hit and who later on died of his injuries in the hospital. He remembers the event vividly and still feels guilty of what happened, despite of the sheer bad luck that caused the accident. The emotional connection with the place partly remains very intensive because the family of the old man confronted him a few times and expressed their anger and grieve openly to him and others. Members of the family used to live three houses down the road – a place he also marked as a negative association – and until they moved passing the house sometimes up to a few times a day became an emotionally challenging experience.

The meaning of some places in the village is not as clear cut as Gerbens emotional associations caused by a singular event. For instance a spot marked by Hilde (52, small social network in Beegden) which represents the memorial of a very close friend of her who passed away. It is a sad place, but she regards it as positive because it makes the memories of this person more alive and she also often came across mutual friends there, something she found pleasant as then they could talk about her. Although it happened quite a long time ago, it is still a very important place for her, as she explains:

*Not a day goes by without me thinking of her. The memory is very lively... but.... Your life also changes if someone dear to you passes away. It gets a special meaning... I don't know...*

**- Hilde (52, has a small social network in Beegden)**

While she initially associated the place solely with her friend and her death because the place had no other meaning to her before, through the years it also came to represent the change her she made as a person. Thus, the meaning of the village in which the site is located became deepened by the localised memorial site onto which she completely extended herself by adding her personality change. Adding to that, Beegden as a whole represents the memories of her friend which they spend together in the village.

Also Virginie (78, pensioner in Wolfheze) has a very special place in Wolfheze. She and her husband often visited the natural surroundings outside the village, chiefly because the beauty of the Wodan's oaks, which is a set of very old, oddly shaped trees which that are cultural-historical highlights in the area (see picture 2) that struck her husband time and time again. After his death a few years ago, she appointed the Wodan's oaks as a memorial place for her husband:

*That is a very beautiful tree trunk, and that's where we scattered his ashes. I visit it regularly. It came to this because we walked there very often and he would stand still there, he found it so incredibly beautiful, that trunk.*

**→ Virginie (78, pensioner in Wolfheze)**

She found it such a pure representation of him that she decided to directly connect her husband with the oaks by scattering his ashes there and feel his presence when visiting the place.



Most of the respondents from Wolfheze, both with a small and a large social network indicated their disappointment in that there is no obvious centre in Wolfheze where they can meet each other. Mostly because almost all of the shops have gone, but also because the one café has been closed down after a period in which most respondents perceived it as involved in criminal activities and therefore not attractive. Besides, there is a kind of community home but it is only used by the respondents with a large social network as they sometimes attend meetings there. It seems to be a place that is regarded as unimportant in the lives of the respondents, and is only used when they organised something themselves or when they need to be there for some other reason, such as a job-related event. The respondents with a small social network did not mention it at all and then as Rebecca (27, has a small social network in Wolfheze) argues, “it often happens that you just don’t see anyone, when driving through Wolfheze”. Hence, interactions appear only at a few village parties, when specifically arranged and accidental meetings on the streets and when working in Wolfheze. It seems to strengthen the notions of the village as a de-peopled place, which is a disappointment for Virginia (78, pensioner in Wolfheze) who states that because of this her attachment to the village decreased. For Nina (51, has a large social network in Wolfheze) this was an important reason to join village clubs to retain that sense of contact with other villagers.

Only the elementary school in Wolfheze is found to bring villagers in touch with each other, as Chantal (49, has a large social network in Wolfheze) explains: “when you are often on the playground of that school, you enter that small world (78, pensioner in Wolfheze) Wolfheze then becomes a larger circle as it were”. Also Gerben (57, has a large social network in Wolfheze) recognizes the importance of the school in being integrated in the community as he perceives less social pressure than could be the case because his children went to school in another town – similar to many other villagers – and therefore perceives a larger emotional distance to the people affiliated with the school. In Beegden, this is indeed the case as almost all villagers send their children to the village school. Here many villagers meet each other and it is also here that most people become involved in community activities as parents are often invited to attend them and their children join, for instance, the youth community band like all of their classmates. Simon (46, has a large social network in Beegden), David (52, has a large social network in Beegden) and Hilde (52, has a small social network in Beegden) all stated that is was the way they became active in community life. Theo (63, has a large social network in Beegden) reckons that via the school it is easiest to recruit families for the clubs and in this way ensure their future existence. Willemien (49, has a small social network in Beegden), however, was not too happy with it as she found that the taught values were too conservative and outdated which too strongly contributes to the typical rural parochialism and collectivism.

Apart from the school which excludes villagers without attending children, in Beegden there are relatively many places where inhabitants can meet up or at least come across each other in an unorganized way, despite that according to Theo (63, has a large social network in Beegden) many of such places have already been closed down, such as a casino-like bar and at least two shops. He reckons that these places are very important as they create the possibility for like-minded people who search for a little contact with each other. For him, these places represent a deeper contact with the village as he knows virtually everyone who visits for instance the bar and talks about issues in the village that are equally as interesting for the others present. Being in these places strengthens the collective discourse on being active in village associations and adds to the citizenship. For Jacques (62, has a large social network in Beegden) and the other respondents with a large social network, the community home is the most defined place for these purposes and represents the spirit of Beegden most purely as all clubs and activities are in one way or the other related to it, “because that it the central point, where everything comes together”. The respondents with a small social network indicate that this is the place they avoid going most strongly, Willemien (49, has a small social network in Beegden) and Jeanne (42, has a small social network in Beegden) even acknowledge that they have never been in the building as that place is strongly associated with negative feelings and emotions.

## 5.4 Urbanity and the city

A topic that frequently arose when describing life in the village was the opposition with life in a city, especially with the human aspect. Respondents from both villages reported to perceive the city as impersonal and anonymous. Quite often, it was considered as a negative feature, as many villagers from both villages seemed to appreciate to reside among a small group of people that are connected to them by sharing the same living space; in the city the unfamiliarity of the people present seems to cause mental unrest. This was especially the case among inhabitants of Beegden who either have never lived in a city and the ones with a large local social network, such as Theo (63, has a large social network in Beegden) who argues that in cities it is difficult to meet people as there people often do not know who are their neighbours and the people in the streets. He places emphasis on the size of the city that he reckons is too large to create social coherence because nobody knows each other, especially in the new neighbourhoods, where any form of collectiveness is absent. Jacques (62, has a large social network in Beegden) agrees with him and also Simon rather cherishes his social boundedness in the village, than living amongst strangers. He adds to this that he rejects living there also because he wants to determine for himself if he wants put something on the wall instead of being forbidden to do that as is the case with his sisters who live in a city "I'm someone who likes to be independent". Hence, he emphasizes the restrictions of a city, while others seem to be held back because of the unruliness.

The respondents from both villages with small social networks in the village did not have such a strong social opinion about social life in a city and some were even more approving about it than social life in the village. Antoon (65, has a small social network in Wolfheze) did regard urban environments as more accessible social realms, as he reckoned that it is easier to find interesting social contacts there than in village, while Rebecca (27, has a small social network in Wolfheze) found that it was easier to talk to strangers there than in Wolfheze and Hilde (52, has a small social network in Beegden) takes this even further by stating that



Picture 3: The innercity of Roermond. Source: user 'skyscraper-city' via <http://www.skyscraper-city.com>

she experiences the impersonality and anonymity of a city as something positive, as a welcome alternation of life in the village. This is predominantly the case because she feels that the villagers in Beegden know her past and condemn her and enforce social values on her, while in unknown people in a city do not know her and therefore do not judge her.

Willemien's (49, has a small social network in Beegden) opinion differs from others because she has lived her whole life in Roermond (see picture 3) and her whole social network is also situated there. Moving to Beegden brought along changes in her social network that she did not always like because she has experienced a barrier between her and some people in her social network, as the spatial distance between her and her family also became an emotional distance. With the passing of her father she recognized that her mother more often contacted her brother if she needed something while before she always called her. Hence, for Willemien Roermond is a place that partly represents her loved ones and her difference from them as she now lives in a village. However, she is convinced that moving to Beegden was the best thing to do for her as it gives her the peace she needs as in her job she interacts with a lot of people. Remaining aloof from the community in Beegden is another way of finding social stillness around her.

## 5.5 Declining village populations

Inhabitants of Beegden with a large social network in the village report feeling strong emotions when thinking of possible population shrinkage in the village. Three of them, Simon (46, has a large social network in Beegden), Jacques (62, has a large social network in Beegden) and Theo (63, has a large social network in Beegden) show much concern and mention to think about this issue quite frequently. On the contrary, inhabitants of Beegden with small social network in the village mention to experience difficulties when attempting to imagine what would happen exactly and how it would affect their life in Beegden. They reacted rather light-hearted to the issue and do not seem to feel concerned, mostly because in their imagination the phenomenon can basically only threaten them personally when they decide to move out because it may cause trouble when selling the house:

*And then still, also we have to get rid of the house at one time. I don't want to worry about that though, because otherwise we would already have to sell it if I'm worried that we wouldn't be able to. And already at the moment many houses are up for sale that they can't get rid of. Where does that leave our house then?*

**- Willemien (49, has a small social network in Beegden)**

Thus, villagers with small social networks in the village regard the phenomenon as consequential predominantly for themselves and worry about elements directly related to their needs. On the contrary, three villagers with large social networks in Beegden reacted considerably different as they showed far more concern about the consequences for the village as a whole, or more specifically, for the community as a whole. Because they regard the community associations as very important, if not vital for the quality of their life in Beegden, their concern is most strongly directed at maintaining the number of members and active members in general. Especially because they know that in other villages community clubs of over 160 years old have vanished in the recent years, simply because not enough volunteers for the boards could be found. Beegden still does have a relatively large number of clubs and they regard that as a pull-factor to attract new people. Therefore Simon, Jacques (62, has a large social network in Beegden) and Theo (63, has a large social network in Beegden) feel that there is a need to attract young families and make the village appealing enough to retain the current young people, but worry over the high prices of the houses. The possibility of not being able to attract enough people to continue with their village associations is perceived as a direct threat to the liveability in the village as for them living in Beegden is intimately bound up with these clubs, as they perceive the clubs and the active community at large as part of the identity of Beegden. David (52, has a large social network in Beegden) was the only villager with a large social network who did not seem to worry about the prediction that the village population shall shrink, as his concern is not directed towards the village clubs. Rather he sees it as a challenge:

*No, I don't really care. These are developments that have been going on for decades. I believe in the strength of the individual. If someone can't sell his house, many often point their finger at the municipality, like they have to do something about this. People should take their own initiatives. For instance, we have already build steps so that if one of us can't walk anymore we make it into a slide.*

**- David (52, has a large social network in Beegden)**

David seems to perceive population decrease not as a problem, but more as something others have to adapt to and find solutions for themselves to remain feeling good about living there. He is focussed on his house and family and does not think of how it would affect the community or the identity of the village. Hence, he is less occupied with the constraints but rather seeks for new opportunities.



## 5.6 Chapter conclusions

The respondents with a small social network in the villages appear to find it difficult to identify with other villagers in general, not only because they view themselves as different from the others in lifestyle, opinion and interests, but also because they are more individualistic and do not need to feel part of a group to enjoy living in a village, especially in Wolfheze this was the case. In Beegden these respondents often perceive other villagers not just as individuals but also as opinionated group, who are regarded almost exclusively as a source for new social relations. The unease that has come forth from this situation expresses itself in an increase in the emotional distance between them and other villagers. Thereby personal relational boundaries are put up that are highly dynamic as they shift according the bodily position both in relation to specific strongly affective spaces in the village – which they tend to avoid, such as the community building –, and the bodily presence of other villagers who impersonate the strong communal discourse, that is sometimes enhanced by the objects they carry such as club leaflets.

As those with small social networks in both villages showed the strongest individualistic tendencies, a more anonymous social life in a city was regarded relatively appealing compared to those with a large social network in the village, because in an urban environment there was no need to put up and maintain boundaries. The village appears to become more meaningful for them as their emotional experience of the village then becomes inherently limited by personal or household issues. The absence of emotional display of others in the village allow for a greater focus on the self. This also explains that this group did not show concerns about the future population decline apart from possible difficulties when selling the house. Hence, for the respondent group with a small social network in the villages attachment to the village-place does not incorporate its community at large, only a few good and stabile social relations: this allows them to maintain their boundaries between them and the unfamiliar village group. Not being part of it may even seems to strengthen the bond between the self and the village as they seem to exclusively focus on why they do belong in the village. The awareness of the elements of the village that they do appreciate and fall within the boundaries appears to fuel the meaning they attribute to their village, also because the village environment is often – subconsciously – compared to the environments of social relations elsewhere.

On the one hand, the respondents with large social networks in the village do not put up boundaries; in fact, they actively search for elements in the village that for them represent the communal discourse in both villages. On the other hand they are selective in choosing which people to engage with in the village as they do feel the need to be part of a group of like-minded people in the place where they live: being involved in a group seems to be more important than the activities performed. Hence, they are selective in shaping their social network in a different fashion compared to those who know very few villagers. This has to do with differing ideas about bonding with the village as collectiveness is regarded as a way to feel more immersed in a place: for those from Beegden this is the essence of Beegden itself. Population decline in Beegden is thus regarded as a direct threat to the quality of life in Beegden, as community clubs would no longer be sustained. For those in Wolfheze it is more the idea of living in a village that appears as an importance aspect in the meaning villagers attribute to their village, which not necessarily aimed at the essence of Wolfheze. This is mainly the case because in Wolfheze, in general the villagers are more individualistic, also those with a large local social network.

In this respect social life in a city is largely rejected by those with a large social network in the village because it lacks a sense of solidarity which prevents them from sensing and bonding with the place. This appears to be chiefly due to the strong difference of perceiving affect in the village and not or less in an urban environment, as the village is a concentration of places that are associated with familiar people and shared events. Through the affective atmosphere these people can easily recall pleasantly emotionally charged memories. For this group feeling attached to a place therefore seems to be intricately connected to the community there as it provides the village with meaning. It confirms the appointment of Beegden as relatively 'full space' and Wolfheze as relatively 'empty space' terms coined by Savage et al (2005) on the matter of embedded local social networks, indicating the degree of cultural similarity, which subsequently seems relatively low in Wolfheze and relatively high in Beegden.







6



# Chapter 6: Results Daily Activities

With this chapter the results will be shown of the role of daily activities in the development of the meaning of the village for its inhabitants. First, the village as spatial discourse is presented. Second, the home and the view will be elaborated on. Third, concerns being mobile in the village. Fourth, the natural places surrounding the village is put forward. Fifth, urbanity and the city is shed light on and sixth, declining village populations will be brought to the fore. The chapter closes with conclusions.

## 6.1 The village as spatial discourse

In the previous chapter it became clear that on a social course the village as a whole is regarded in many different ways. Similarly, on a physical, instrumental level and on opinion matters, also great differences among the respondents who have a fulltime or part-time job in a city and respondents who work in the in the village or are retired came forward.

In the stayers group the differences between the discourses of the villages were remarkable as all respondents had their own style of speaking of the village and mentioning different aspects of it. In Wolfheze on the one hand there is respondent Virginie (78, pensioner Wolfheze), who speaks of the village as “that there [makes a swift hand gesture]” which is unbounded, undefined and remaining rather vague. The village as physical realm has very little importance for her: “I’m here for the nature, furthermore there’s nothing”, although she does mention she likes to cycle through the streets. Furthermore, apart from the few amount of friends she does have, she only visits the medical ward on the premises of the psychiatric institute. Especially after most amenities had disappeared she has been regarding Wolfheze almost solely linked to her husband and the landscape, almost deprived of people as ‘occurrence’ that seems happen outside her home.

On the other hand, Antoon (65, works part-time at home in Wolfheze) mentions Wolfheze in a far more detailed sense. He emphasizes the presence and especially the lack of amenities, facilities and natural attributes when speaking of the village. He expresses his village discourse as realm of options: the more options available, the better the place becomes to live in. These options seem to have come to be defined over past experiences with the villages and cities he used to live in. Furthermore, he has a clear idea about what living in a village should be like and firmly assesses his actual life in Wolfheze by means of these expectations. Besides, he was the only respondent who specifically named places in the village based on their physical appearance: he identified two places as ‘ugly’. Every time he passed these locations it filled him with anxiety as he regards them as elements that are out of place, things that do not belong in his vision of the village:

*There, it’s just always a terrible mess... the other day I asked someone who lives close by; what’s all that about? (...) Have you seen that house there already? With all of that Belgian mess around it, and children’s toys, and all curtains closed and... (...) Well, I think that it’s a disgrace that it looks like that, I mean, every time you pass it you get annoyed!*

**- Antoon (65, works part-time at home in Wolfheze)**

From the quote it also becomes clear that the negative association is not only due to the physical appearance of the place but also the lifestyle that he seems finds not fitting his discourse of the village. A similar element in the village is a newly planned village area that “may even contain social housing”, and furthermore he reported feeling negative emotions when passing by a new building on the premise of the institute (see picture 4). These ugly places seem to contribute to disturb the development of his attachment because they



Picture 4: One of Michiel's ugly places, a new building of the psychiatric institute. Source: Google Maps 2011

retract his attention from the aspects in the village that he does appreciate. Consequently they become negative spots in the village that may well contribute to the meaning he attributes to the village in negative way. It thus seems that he holds a strong physical discourse of what the village should be like, apart from the strong social dimension (see previous chapter) in his discourse of an enjoyable village.

Chantal (49, works part-time in her office in Wolfheze) also speaks of Wolfheze as detailed spatial area but also as a lifestyle that suits her well after being moved there, without it having too much influence on her life. She is very aware of the elements and dimensions that are important to her. Apart from her social life, she seems particularly fond of the size and scale of Wolfheze, which gives her a sense of control:

*... but I love a small village, the stillness that a small village can offer me, because if I want to go to the city then that's always possible, and then I'd rather come back home in the stillness and search for the hustle than the other way around; that you have to search for the stillness. That is the beauty of a smaller whole, you know. I'd typify myself as a villager.*

**- Chantal, (49, works part-time in her office in Wolfheze)**

Typifying the village as a 'smaller whole' in such a way indicates that the village is part of all elements in life that make her feel happy. She is very aware of how living in Wolfheze helps her live the life she wants to live as she regards this as far more important as living close to shops or than the physical dimensions of Wolfheze. Similar to Chantal also Linda (44, works fulltime at her office in Wolfheze) regards Wolfheze mainly as a lifestyle, but heavier invested with the social dimension. Apart from this, she speaks of the village mainly in terms of her everyday activities and worries, such as the lack of amenities and facilities but also the natural surroundings which she uses to walk her dogs. In her statements on the village as physical entity the fact that she also works there is expressed heavily because she describes Wolfheze mainly in professional terms; the problems she faces due to the spatial set up of the village and its attributes, such as the psychiatric institute and the elderly home.

In Beegden the stayers showed some differences in their style of mentioning the village but also some remarkable similarities. Jacques (62, pensioner in Beegden) speaks of the village as the entity that sustains the community and the lifestyle that is closely connected to it and appears to be very important for him, as was proven in the previous chapter. At the same time is this lifestyle based on the materiality of Beegden and is it shaped by the facilities where villagers can meet up. The details of the physical appearance are however far less important to him as he does not make value statements about the looks of places in the village; only

if they are of historical value, such as the old dykes that used to be situated along the river Meuse. For him knowing the history of the village and recognizing it in the current village landscape means knowing and therefore appreciating the village today.

Theo (63, pensioner in Beegden) has a strong discourse on what a village is and how it should be. Similar to Jacques (62, pensioner in Beegden) his idea of a village is that it is a lifestyle that entails the community, and that its physical appearance should resemble a materialised community with some specific places that articulate the presence of the community in a very strong fashion, such as the village squares and the café. In addition to that, he speaks of a village as such Beegden as a living milieu that in its physical appearance has to meet several standards in order to successfully feel as a village, such as a very spacious set-up, being situated in very close proximity to natural places and preferably containing only a few new buildings.

Similar to Theo and Jacques, Hilde (52, works part-time at home in Beegden) is very aware of how the village plays a role in her life and how that influences her. She even mentions perceiving the village differently in her 'two lives'. In the first one Beegden resembled the current predominantly socially infused lifestyle of Jacques and Theo, while after a series of events she speaks of the village as a living environment in which other villagers do not play such a major role anymore. Instead, she speaks of the village as an environment she can enjoy because of its natural properties and their sensory experiences:

*Currently the village life is one of enjoyment of the surroundings, nature, the view, the freedom, of the forest nearby and the garden.*

**- Hilde (52, works part-time at home in Beegden)**

In her discourse of Beegden thus physical, but also other sensory appearances of the village have become very important. Furthermore, despite her decreased physical fitness the presence of amenities and facilities do not seem important, but the presence of new people does.

For Gerben (57, from Wolfheze, works fulltime in two cities) Wolfheze is not merely a discourse; he appears to regard the village mainly as a population and a concentration of buildings amongst which his house is located. The physical appearance of the village is of minor importance as well as the idea of living on the countryside. Instead he focusses on its central location among the places where he lives his life such as his job, shops, sports facilities and the homes of his daughters:

*For us this is the central point, for me as well because I feel good here, in this house and in the natural environment and in the garden. And you are located close to the train and close to the major roads. Yes, I think of this as an ideal place, to go out and about from here.*

**- Gerben (57, from Wolfheze, works fulltime in two cities)**

Furthermore, he states that the distances from Wolfheze to shops and other facilities are very similar to living in neighbourhood on the outside of a city. Hence the lack of amenities in Wolfheze is not an issue for Gerben. He only seems to worry about the yard being too big when he and his wife grow older.

The discourse on Wolfheze Nina (51, from Wolfheze works part-time in a city) expresses merely focuses on the character of the population, and her personal public lifestyle in the village and specifically incorporates her role in community associations. She seems to regard this as part of her life, but separates it from her professional life and family and friends outside the village. The jurisdictional boundary of Wolfheze also seems to be incorporated in the way she organizes her life inside and outside the village: she balances her activities inside the village on the basis of the amount of effort she has to make outside it:

*I haven't worked for a while and after that I worked in (...). and (...). and now in(...). And then it become even more difficult to maintain it all [her activities for community associations], but the previous year I engaged in [one of the village associations] and then you quickly become part of public village life again. In the year that I didn't work I gave courses at home.*

*I had that sort of period as well, that I worked, came back home in a rush, and you couldn't care less because you are busy enough: "I am not in the mood to talk to every Tom, Dick, and Harry" and I don't.*

**- Nina (51, from Wolfheze works part-time in a city)**

Furthermore, she shares Gerbens opinion about the centrality of Wolfheze and how convenient that is. On the contrary, Martijn (43, from Wolfheze, works periodically fulltime in cities) is not interested in the centrality of the village: for him this is even a weak point of Wolfheze as he would rather live far away from everything. Nonetheless, Wolfheze seems sufficiently tranquil as he typifies it as "friendly and sedate". He finds his embodied experience of the village most important as he explains:

*I just find it very pleasant to work hard during the day and then, if you like, give energy to the assignment, to the people, to the company, and then when I come home in the evening I find it very nice to regain energy and for me that often is in a calm environment where in the evenings I can hear the birds whistle or when I see a squirrel run through the branches.*

**- Martijn (43, from Wolfheze, works periodically fulltime in cities)**

He seems to assess the village by, and speaks of it in terms of his embodied needs of the moment and currently the features of Wolfheze match these needs as it changes very little visually and his attention is not distracted by all other kinds of stimuli, such as other people. For Martijn, Wolfheze seems to be the surroundings of his home, the realm he passes through to continue his daily life in other places. When he is in-between jobs he stays at home or visits friends and family, which means that also in these periods he is not involved in the village as well: not in a community association and not physically in other places of the village. Martijn does not relate the village to his identity as he thinks of himself as a citizen of the world: loose from all territories. Hence, in this regard Wolfheze is nothing more than a dwelling environment and nothing holds him there if he finds another dwelling environment that better suits his needs. He emphasizes that he dwells, and not lives in Wolfheze

For Rebecca (27, works fulltime in a city) it works the other way around. Wolfheze as a sensory environment seems to be of no importance at all. She is just used to Wolfheze because apart from living in Arnhem for a short period, Wolfheze is the only place she has lived so far and calls it "a safe nest". She states only to be interested in the people who she still knows, i.e. her parents. Furthermore, only the house she lives in makes Wolfheze an attractive place to live. Unlike Martijn, Rebecca regards Wolfheze mainly in terms of its current, and presumably even more, its past population. In addition, she did not mention the physical appearance of the village and any facilities or amenities, and although after her yearly period of several months not living in Wolfheze she cannot identify any changes. This suggests that Rebecca's discourse is merely concerned with the idea of Wolfheze which has a strong basis in the past and does not seem to touch upon the current situation in such a way that it has any importance for her in daily life. This idea of the village is very private as she only focuses on her childhood and early adolescence memories and the dominant role her family plays in them, which makes Wolfheze an intricately personal realm.

The respondents from Beegden differ quite a lot from the respondents from Wolfheze, but also some remarkable similarities show, especially when it comes to the integration of lifestyle in the discourse of the village. In close resemblance to Martijn (43, from Wolfheze, works periodically fulltime in cities) David (52, works fulltime outside Beegden) searches for a dwelling environment which suits his needs, although for



David this does entail both a social lifestyle and physical environment. Especially the embodied sensory experiences play a major role in determining the quality of his surroundings: the first time he visited the village he stood amazed by the kindness of the people and that emotion seems to have been so strong that it lasted through the years and still largely determines the way he speaks of Beegden:

*Author: Why did you move to Beegden?*

*David: In the early days I used to often go motorcycling with friends and one of these friends had a girlfriend who lived here. Once this friend brought her along because there was the yearly village fair, and just driving through the village, that atmosphere, the village I just loved it. And I have remembered that until today. Later on I had to drive through this village and then there was a fishmonger. I asked him for directions and he was so friendly while doing so, and for me that friendliness is coupled with Beegden.*

**- David (52, works fulltime outside Beegden)**

This friendliness and interest for each other the people in Beegden seem to have, produces a pleasant social dimension of the village, which makes a perfect combination with the stillness of the villages as physical appearance and which he needs because of his busy job. Furthermore, in resemblance to Gerben (57, from Wolfheze, works fulltime in two cities) and Nina (51, from Wolfheze works part-time in a city), David emphasizes his appreciation of the central location of Beegden in Limburg as compared to The Netherlands in general: "for me, this is the centre of the universe". Clearly the locations of his job have an effect on the place he lives in as he appreciates it more or less by the daily distance he has to overcome. Hence, David's discourse of Beegden is strongly based on what role it plays in his daily life in an embodied sense.



Picture 5: The flowering trees Tom appreciates. Source: Google Maps 2011



Picture 6: Old buildings in the Abelenstraat. Source: author

Simon (46, from Beegden works fulltime in a city) is the second respondent from Beegden who mentions to find it important that he lives in a village that is close to Roermond and easily accessible by cars and by public transport. Presumably, this has to do with his children who all still live at home. In addition to that he expresses his worries regarding the decreasing amounts of amenities and facilities in similar fashion as Theo (63, pensioner in Beegden) in the previous chapter, as he puts emphasis on the independence of the population, his priority on shopping in the village and the importance of "social bonding" in the village, which shows that he also has a strong idea of how life in a village should be. In addition to this lifestyle aspect of his discourse of the village, he experiences and appreciates Beegden for its physical appearance which he intimately connects with embodied notions of the village:

*[points at map] That's the Beegderhei, I find that very beautiful, it gives energy. Those are the routes I take when I walk the dog. (...) Walking this path I enjoy very much. I walk through the Abelenstaat because of the old building that are situated there. At the moment I love walking because of the beautiful flowering trees, that's only once a year. And also the route along the cows of a friend of mine, then I really enjoy walking there. In the winter the heaters are turned on and the fireplaces, that's such a nostalgic scent. That firewood has such a nice smell to it!*

**- Simon (46, from Beegden works fulltime in a city)**

Hence, Tom's discourse of the village is a holistic as it includes many dimensions which indicate that he focuses his life strongly on the village and appreciates everything it has to offer him.

On the contrary, Jeanne (42, from Beegden, works fulltime in a city) regards Beegden as not important for her life: "I don't need the village to live my life as I want it to live". As she has actively chosen to not engage in community life, the village lifestyle means fairly little to her. She only really appreciates the embodied sensory experience of Beegden: the stillness of the surroundings of her home and the vicinity of nature as she often visits it to walk her dog and to relax from her demanding job in Roermond. However, the physical appearance of the village itself is not important for Jeanne:

*Author: Can you explain why Beegden is not special?*

*Jeanne: It's not special in my life, but it also doesn't really differ from other villages in the area (...) it's not more beautiful than other villages. Wessem, for instance, has a prettier historical centre, is also nice, but here nothing really stands out. I got here more or less by accident, it's close to Roermond.*

**- Jeanne (42, from Beegden, works fulltime in a city)**

In her discourse of the village the embodied sensory aspects of daily life predominantly from her home thus seem to be the dominant dimension, while lifestyle aspects are virtually absent.

Also Willemien (49, from Beegden works part-time in Roermond) mentioned that above all, she needs stillness in her dwelling domain and she can achieve it because of the stillness in her physical and social environment. Adding to that is that Beegden grants her the possibility of a change in her lifestyle from urban to her current more rural one, which was possible because her large backyard allows her to grow fruits:

*I can appreciate that of such a big garden in such a village. There are many houses with large gardens. Such as fruit tree... yeah I really like that. There's a bucket with cherries [points at bucket] and I want to make jam out of them. Yes, you really become a peasant woman! I've never done that before.*

**- Willemien (49, from Beegden works part-time in Roermond)**

To some extent she enjoys this new lifestyle, as growing her own food introduces a kind of rural romanticism in her life, but it also reminds her of the bad sides of the community of Beegden, for instance the constant gossiping. This makes her very aware of which aspects of the village she appreciates and which not. Also because initially she did not consider Beegden as an option to look for a dwelling: "I don't see myself living in a village!" Apart from the new lifestyle that is heavily based on rural romanticism she adopted, an occasional chit-chat and a special feature of her dwelling seem to be important aspects of the village for her. Unlike Jeanne (42, from Beegden, works fulltime in a city), Willemien expresses the inconvenience of not having many shops or a cash point in the village, and also she does not speak of the village in a particular embodied fashion.

On the contrary to all other respondents who work in a city, she cannot appreciate Beegden for its centrality for two main reasons. One is that she perceives Beegden as isolating even as her whole social network is located in Roermond. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this feeling has a much to do with the accessibility as with the imagined distance to Roermond. The other reason is that she is used to having everything closer by because she has only lived in cities before: “if you live in a city it’s all just a little bit easier”. Having to leave the village when in need of something as ordinary as cookies because you forgot it in the supermarket, means having to go to a lot of trouble to get it:

*For instance, a few hours ago I thought: I need cookies. So my youngest son went for them but forgot them. So I texted my oldest son: bring cookies! And he hadn’t read my text so I had to go to Heel [adjacent village] to purchase cookies!*

**- Willemien (49, from Beegden works part-time in Roermond)**

## 6.2 The home and the view

In Chapter 2 Seamon stated that the home is the most essential place for a person. This subchapter will provide the results on how the respondents perceive their home in relation to the village. The home proves to be part of the village in differing fashions, as some respondents clearly regard their home as a retreat and have put up boundaries to retain the realm of the home from the realm of the village, while others regard their home as part of the village to such an extent that boundaries between the public and the private are virtually inconceivable. The latter is the case with respondent Jacques (62, pensioner in Beegden) as he literally defines the concept of dwelling as engaging in community activities. It especially becomes apparent in his everyday interactions with villagers, as he uses his home to welcome them into for club meetings and when they drop by unannounced for a chit-chat multiple times a day sometimes. Furthermore, his home is also the place where he executes his tasks – which are almost exclusively for community associations – anytime it suits him best on that day. His home therefore seems to have become infused with the village itself. The only division between the village and his private life is the fact that he has a room in his house in which he performs his tasks, he mentioned off-record. However, it remained unclear if he organised this according to principles with regard to putting up some kind of barrier, or according to the convenience of having all of the paperwork within a hands reach.

That the community associations have always been very important for Jacques (62, pensioner in Beegden) becomes apparent as he could not settle during the nine months that he and his wife have lived in another village. Every weekend he and his wife went back to Beegden because they always attended many activities, but also because:

*Here in Limburg we have a saying: you are a potato and a potato you can’t transplant. I am such a potato... I think I couldn’t get used to somewhere else. (...) When we were fully furnished there, we already knew that we wouldn’t stay there for long, so we focussed on finding houses on the other side of the Meusse. We found this house and therefore we wended up here again and never left it.*

**- Jacques (62, pensioner in Beegden)**

He organized his life according to his social life in Beegden, as he has so many experiences in the village that he cannot envision having a life somewhere else. The feeling of not wanting to live somewhere else has been strengthened by the fact that his family has lived here for many generations. Therefore, for him Beegden is intricately interwoven with the symbolic community.

In many regards does Theo (63, pensioner in Beegden) act very similar to Jacques in spending of time and effort on his tasks for community associations and his usage of his home for these purposes. However, he

has more clearly demarcated his private from the public domain, both in time and in space. In time, the demarcation between his public and private realms is pronounced in the fact that Theo uses each meal his wife cooks in the home every day at the same time, no matter what activity he is engaged in at that moment. In space because he does his activities for the community clubs in the office he constructed in a cottage in the backyard which can be reached without going through the home. If he is not required elsewhere in the village he works there and receives community members. The boundary is only breached by a telephone line that used to transfer calls that are meant for him but his wife inside the house answers. This way, his house remains a retreat from the village in all of its facets, while his office has become a kind of halfway house that instantaneously connects him to the village on all levels.

Hilde's (52, works part-time at home in Beegden) home also serves as a retreat from the village as she feels isolated from it because of the many emotional events that have taken place in the past. Her home acts as her private realm where she is at peace with her medical condition and where she does not have to feel guilty for not engaging in community associations but also where she has lived through some very important moments in her life. The comfortable separation from the rest of the village her home offers her also puts her in social isolation as she changed her job to one she could do at home because of her medical condition. Subsequently, she misses being surrounded by people as she used to. Furthermore, the home is very important for Hilde for its uniqueness because of the personal freedom it offers her, such as gardening and making bonfires in the backyard, both as a private practice and as shared activity with someone dear to her. She reckons that in a city this would probably not be allowed and therefore she enjoys it even more.



Picture 7: View on the Meusse. Source: Google Maps 2011. Perspective taken does not correspond with Hilde's actual view for privacy reasons.

Thus for Hilde, the home is a very meaningful place infused with contradictory feelings and emotions and of which its quality is highly dependent on the moment. In addition she is very much attached to her views, not only in the backyard which she meticulously cares because it is filled with memories of people, but also the view from the front of her house to which she is very attached and almost seems to have become part of her personality. As a piece of stability in all she has lived through, her view did not change and when it did, she took a piece of a tree to memorize it. Her view is aimed at the river Meuse hence allowing her to look far away and the typical vegetation in front of it makes seasonal changes very noticeable (see picture 7). In addition, off record she mentions that it is often a very lively and dynamic view which invites her to spend hours just looking out the window, for instance with high water levels when the ships seem to float on the dykes. In the



light of the village not being what she needs it to be, are her garden and the view from her home extensions of her home, in this way enlarging it spatially, and therefore presumably also in its meaning.

This kind of enlargement of the home by regarding the view from it as being part of it is also recognisable in Virginie's situation as she also regards her home as separate from the village. Also, she refers to her home as a 'spot', which is more or less an unbounded place which indicates that the walls of her house are not necessarily the borders of her home. As her house is surrounded by greenery on all four sides of her detached house and she came to live in Wolfheze because of the natural surroundings, presumably the green points where her views halt form the boundaries of her home. The spot most certainly also comprehends the Wodan's oaks because apart from her house, that is the only place in the village she has a strong emotional bond with: "I think that if I could bring this spot with me I would be happy everywhere". Very similar to the widow in the research of Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) Virginie's house is a strong representation of her deceased husband. When asked why she does not want to live in Oosterbeek where she has some friends and where most of the facilities she uses are located she answers:

*Because this house is the house where my husband passed away and therefore it is also a bit the property of the children. We have lived together here for twenty years and the children still have their room here, so it is still something that belongs to us and that is what's most important for me... for myself but especially for the children because this is their home. (...) The memory of my husband is still lively here and therefore there's no discussion about me going to a service flat... this is ours.*

**- Virginie (78, pensioner Wolfheze)**

Because her home is so important for her and her children, it does not matter that the village remains almost meaningless. The meaning of her home thus exceeds the village and is shared with her important others; a thought that she always carries with her. The lack of attachment and associations allows her to completely focus on the memory of her husband, when asked what Wolfheze means to her: "peace, just peace".

For Antoon (65, works part-time at home in Wolfheze) it seems to work the other way around. The house he pursued was the initial reason why he came to live in Wolfheze as it was and still is perfect for him. It appears to be very important for him in comparison to the village for various reasons: it allows him to organize his work and other activities, while also granting the space needed for his wife to do her activities, and providing them the freedom for meeting up for coffee and spontaneously deciding to go for a walk or do the groceries. Working at home is not only more efficient for him than working in an office in Arnhem, due to his medical condition. Furthermore, his home in terms of his house is very important for him because apart from disappointments from other inhabitants, he also feels let down by the immediate surroundings of his house. For instance, he is uncomfortable when walking or cycling on the street in front of his house in the dark, because of regular burglaries of surrounding dwellings and because of constant noises from the highways, railway track, chainsaws and lawn mowers. Thus, for also Antoon his home has become a retreat, with the walls of his house representing the boundaries to the village, while at times the village breaches them.

For respondents who work in cities, the home is defined differently. Rebecca (27, works fulltime in a city) and Martijn (43, from Wolfheze, works periodically fulltime in cities) seem to have similar but also very different ideas of home in the village, and coming home. For Martijn, his house and in particular his gardens who provide him with a "green wall" as view at the back side, are his home and he only seems to enjoy living in Wolfheze because he adjusted the house in such a way that it suits his and his wife's needs: he is very much home centred. This is supported by the intensity with which he shows interest in the influences of the village and beyond that enter his house, such as the noise from the A50 highway and the railways. It is because of the noise he reads regional papers to avoid missing out on information about local government decisions,

which is also the only reason why he reads them. This suggests that he enjoys dwelling even more when he is least aware of what happens outside the home, which gives it a sense of placelessness but strengthens the sense of homeliness. Rebecca (27, works fulltime in a city) is equally focussed strongly on her home as it provides her with stability and stillness in her rather instable life as it is the house she knows best as she has lived there her entire life. Furthermore, her strong focus on the home also appears from the way she has moments of reflection of the day and her life when coming home

However, Martijn also feels at home at a larger geographical area, while for Rebecca her house is her only home. The difference can be explained by the difference in dwelling experience; Martijn has lived in many other cities and village, both in the Netherlands and abroad, while Rebecca has only lived in Wolfheze and a few years most days of the week in Arnhem and the last few years abroad during the summer. Especially the fact that Martijn had lived in many other parts of the Netherlands may contribute to the way he feels he comes home at a 40 km distance from Wolfheze, based on landscape features:

*What I often do is driving to Ede-Wageningen railways station and transfer to the train there to go to work and especially if I come back I just love to drive over the Ginkelse hei [heathland west of Wolfheze] this way... So if I arrive at Ede-Wageningen railway station it feels like coming home. And while driving my car I have something similar, if I pass Zeist and I come back this way on the A12 [national highway] then I have the feeling of coming home. Then you can see more trees, it's somewhat quieter on the road... and that peacefulness and spaciousness and the greenery, I find that very beautiful, very pleasant.*

**- Martijn (43, from Wolfheze, works periodically fulltime in cities)**

Hence, Martijn seems very much aimed at the physical features of the landscape with which he can identify and make him feel at home, while Rebecca identifies more with places infused with memories.

Also in Beegden this opposition between respondents who do not want to be aware of the village inside their home and some that feel fine about being aware of the village. For instance for David (52, works fulltime outside Beegden) enjoyment from living in a village is not confined to having a nice home with a nice view, but especially being aware of the village from the home:

*That is just nice about the village, the details make the difference. For instance just now, because I'm just sitting here and then I heard a friend talking just outside the door, because: 'how did it go?' And from the conversation I understood that he had undergone surgery and then I think: that is just great! That you just come across someone right on the street and that someone just asks: 'how did it go?' And that the other also tells about it. (...) That is just great! The world goes by at your eyesight and: 'hey, how are you?'*

**- David (52, works fulltime outside Beegden)**

For him especially being constantly aware of the surroundings of the home reminds him of the values in life that he finds important, and intensify his enjoyment of living in Beegden. On the contrary, Jeanne (42, from Beegden, works fulltime in a city) states to especially appreciate the house that she purchased with her husband for its obstructed viewing angle from other houses and its decentred location from the perspective of the village. The following quote shows even better that Jeanne focuses strongly on her house, although she does seem to consider its location in relation to the village and natural areas as a specific feature:

*For me this is just a piece of land on which my house is located, on a nice piece of land close to nature, that comes in handy while walking the dog and to relax. Aside from that, I might as well dwell in Horn if there would have been a house with such a great location as this one has. Or in Swalmen, or in Neer [nearby villages]...*

**- Jeanne (42, from Beegden, works fulltime in a city)**

## 6.3 Being mobile in the village

As was stated in chapter 3 the way villagers move through the village, as well as with what motive, is very important in determining how they experience the village physically. Being mobile in the villages is for all respondents that work in the village or are retired done by cycling or by walking to the chosen destinations, which for some are on a routine base, while for others other factors determine their occurrence. For instance, Chantal (49, works part-time in her office in Wolfheze) is on a daily basis very mobile in Wolfheze as she brings and picks up her child from the elementary school in the village and works in between elsewhere in the village. Walking or cycling her child to school she does for several reasons. First, the school is located almost on the route from her home to her work, therefore dropping him off works out most efficient with her daily work schedule. Her working hours have finished by the time the elementary school is out for lunch, for which she picks him up and goes home to have lunch together, after which she brings him back again and engages in other activities. The second and third reasons are shown in the following quote:

*I also bring him to school and pick him up again and bring him and pick him up and you would probably think, he can do that by himself, but that Wolfhezerweg [the main street that traverses Wolfheze from north to south] is so busy and dangerous, and he always has to cross it and sometimes he still just makes estimation errors on how fast the cars are approaching and that stretch of road is only 30 km/h. But because it leads into a stretch of roads where you are allowed to drive 80 km/h, everyone goes faster than 30 km/h there and at 8:30h everyone is in a rush. Hence I don't really like that road. And my son, he doesn't feel comfortable nearby that shop [at the railway station] with all of those clients [of the psychiatric institute]*

→ Chantal (49, works part-time in her office in Wolfheze)

This movement is thus very important for her because its occurrence of four times per day, it more or less regulate all other activities during the day because of the fixation in time and spread through the day. In addition, it is important because during the movement she regularly feels emotional due to the troubles she faces with the staff of the elementary school as she regularly disagrees with its policy:



Picture 8: Dangerous crossroads in Wolfheze in the direction of the elementary school. Source: Google Maps 2011

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addition, it is important because during the movement she regularly feels emotional due to the troubles she faces with the staff of the elementary school as she regularly disagrees with its policy:

*Well, sometimes I cycle to the school sulking or I cycle from the school, nonetheless, it is what it is [...] It just depends on the mood I'm in and how the atmosphere at school was, but I guess that every parent will experience that, going to and coming from school sulking.*

**- Chantal (49, works part-time in her office in Wolfheze)**

Therefore, for Chantal not only specific locations are important parts of Wolfheze as they represent the safety and unsafety of her child (see picture 8), also the route itself has become important as its scenery and the pace at which it is passed are a constant reminder of the difficulties she faces regarding the school. She only walks and cycles through the village as she states to only use her car to distribute a booklet from a community association on a monthly basis. This means that seeing the village almost exclusively happens at a slow pace while being exposed to weather influences. The latter is important because she is one of the few who regularly experiences the village from the uncomfortable position of walking or cycling through the rain, unlike for instance Linda (44, works fulltime at her office in Wolfheze) who also on a routine basis during her job moves through the village by bicycle or on foot. The difference with Chantal is that Linda is not bound by the strict time the school has set, because she states to only survey Wolfheze in good weather conditions.

Also Virginie (78, pensioner in Wolfheze) only uses her bicycle in Wolfheze when the weather is acceptable as she does enjoy cycling through the lanes and viewing the scenery of the village. However, in the winter cycling has become too uncomfortable and also when her health disables her from moving around in Wolfheze, which means that she experiences especially the small low-traffic streets in the village with all of her senses only when feeling good and when it is sunny and warm outside. Adding to this is the fact that furthermore she only views the village from the comfort of a car and then it are only the main roads she sees. That the barrier her health puts up for Virginie is a significant one is proven by the fact that at the moment of the interview her health was not good enough to cycle for longer than fifteen minutes, which prevented her to visit the Wodan's oaks.

Antoon (65, works part-time at home in Wolfheze) also is a villager who is able to choose his moments of moving through the village, because apart from the few appointments he has in the village, his primary motivation to walk or cycle through Wolfheze is of a leisurely kind as well. Apart from long cycling trips, using a bike in the most mundane sense he regards it as a luxury of not having to use his car to go to a destination, which are often places where he does not drive his car:

*... but then again, I enjoy cycling in the village, I find that... and on such a tennis course, I find that lovely, that you just can go by bicycle... without a car.. yes!*

**- Antoon (65, works part-time at home in Wolfheze)**

The village is thus a very important area regarding the way he experiences his immediate surroundings twofold; first because other areas where he cycles and walks are unknown and not part of his everyday realms, and second because all other everyday realms he experiences indirectly from the inside of his car, which reduces the experience to a visual one. Thus, when he cycles or walks through the village in sunny and warm weather, he expects the scenery of the village to be of high aesthetical quality, also because he has had good experiences with high quality surroundings in previous living milieu. Subsequently, the high aesthetical demands he poses are not always met which has resulted in him being annoyed by certain locations in Wolfheze, as was mentioned earlier on in this chapter. Similar to Virginie does Antoon experience the quiet streets of Wolfheze with all of his senses mainly in good weather and the main roads only visually



also in bad weather. This results in a split image of Wolfheze of an area – the main streets – that is well-known, ordinary and high variable and an area – the rest – which is always beautiful and carefree with here and there an ugly place.

For three of the respondents in Beegden moving through the village also has become a routine activity, but unlike Chantal (49, works part-time in her office in Wolfheze) not set on particular times. Jacques (62, pensioner in Beegden), Theo (63, pensioner in Beegden) and Simon (46, from Beegden works fulltime in a city) regularly distribute leaflets or collect money for community associations they are engaged in, which takes them everywhere in the village. This means that they not only easily become aware of small physical changes in the village, but also that while walking or cycling they come to know where other inhabitants live. In addition is moving through the village for them not just an activity without further importance, but it is also a social event, as Theo illustrates:

*Here, you almost can't walk by other people without greeting them. That is just not done, it is not appropriate because you just know that other person, you have to.*

**- Theo (63, pensioner in Beegden)**

For the three men, moving through the village thus never is an act of purely fulfilling a task or enjoying the scenery of the village but is always full of potential to engage in interactions with others. On the contrary, for Hilde (52, works part-time at home in Beegden) moving through the village is often more of an activity to enjoy the surroundings close to her home or going for a quick grocery without social interactions because coming across someone familiar may lead to a conversation while being uncomfortable as of her medical condition. Moving through Beegden then becomes an activity which can hardly be controlled as she can never know who she comes across. This can not only be painfully physically but also make her uncomfortable mentally if she would come across someone who is not a friend of her but is acquainted with her history in the village. Consequently, she almost never visits the area northwest of the Heerstraat and only visits a store if she has forgotten a product or to pick up a package and when she needs to go to the doctor or her therapist.

One of the respondents from Wolfheze, Rebecca (27, works fulltime in a city) stood out from the others because she uses her car for going anywhere. Within the village most people walk or cycle, but Rebecca acknowledges to be used to her car to such an extreme extent that she even uses it to visit her parents who live a few hundred metres away. This seems to be in strong congruence with her wish to not engage in the village from her home, in addition to the fact that she cannot identify with other villagers and avoid having to interact with them. Driving her car in the village then gives her emotional distance to others villagers. Jeanne (42, from Beegden, works fulltime in a city) pursues a similar tactic of not having to come in contact with other villagers, as she stated to only walk her dog in the village in the evenings when it is too dark to walk in the woods and with bad weather. Presumably it also limits the possibility to come across people with who she feels obliged to have chitchats as in the dark she remains unnoticed and because the situation prevents others from interacting for she is a woman. Hence both women use tactics to avoid unwanted interactions with other inhabitants of the village by using circumstances that manipulate the physical distance to others in ways that are unappealing to engage in a conversation for those potential others.

For Willemien (49, from Beegden works part-time in Roermond) this is different because in her household there is only one car and it is in use by her husband whose is located at greater distance then her job. Therefore Willemien always walks en cycles almost everything. In the village she therefore has many chats with many people, which she really enjoys as these conversations are very superficial and she can easily

about them by arguing that she has to go. Furthermore, she thus also is very aware of weather influences and the cycles of the moon. She negotiates these elements by taking a bus when it rains in the morning and arranging her working hours in such a way that she does not start in the morning when it is still dark. In the evenings it does occur that she has to cycle through the dark which she does not like at all because she feels isolated and vulnerable. On the contrary, David (52, works fulltime outside Beegden) only cycles when he goes somewhere in Beegden such as the tennis court and when the weather and temperature are good. Hence, for him cycling is not a necessity as it is for Willemien, but purely recreational and highly bound to the village as he only does that in the village because he always takes many things with him when going somewhere for his jobs. Similar to Antoon (65, works part-time at home in Wolfheze) he regards cycling as a kind of freedom as he does not have to leave the house with much stuff, which allows him to enjoy both the stillness in the village and the peacefulness of cycling, hence in a sensory and bodily sense.

## 6.4 Natural places surrounding the village

All respondents who work in the village or are pensioners mentioned to feel very positive on the abundance of natural areas in close vicinity to their home and all of them also frequently visit these places. Although the reasons slightly differ among this group for which they enjoy walking or cycling in the forests, meadows and heath lands, the main benefit seems to be for relaxation of the mind, as simply by being out of sight of the home and into nature seems to take away stress and enhance focus of the respondents. Remarkably enough, almost all commuter respondents with small social networks did not visit these places on a regular basis, which may be explained by their strong focus on their home which allows them to recuperate from a busy day and extend the self onto enough. Similar to Martijn (43, from Wolfheze, works periodically fulltime in cities) for Virginie (78, pensioner Wolfheze) the natural surroundings were the primary motive to move to Wolfheze as she feels that she belongs in the landscape that surrounded her in her childhood;

*In addition I always hated to live in the polder because I am born in (...) and I have always wanted to return to the forests. I am a real forest person, I really enjoy it! [...] And actually, I've always wanted to live in the vicinity of Arnhem: that would be perfect because you are not far from the west but nicely in the forests and close to a city.*

**- Virginie (78, pensioner in Wolfheze)**

Presumably, walking or cycling in forest and heathlands other than at the Wodan's oaks recalls memories of her husband and the times they shared time there. This makes it also likely that walking or cycling in these areas is an act of connecting to her husband and feeling closer to him. It would deepen the meaning of the natural surroundings with a more strongly articulated rootedness.

Apart from his home, for Antoon (65, works part-time at home in Wolfheze) the natural surroundings also were a motive to move to Wolfheze and he still likes to make long walks to discover new beautiful areas. For him the natural surroundings are also visually very important as certain sightings give him a strong emotional experience of which some even touch upon being felt as spiritual:

*If you, and that may sound a bit mystical, but if you come cycling out of this street here [points at a location south east of Wolfheze], then you suddenly enter a stretch of forest (...) you suddenly get this very open feeling, and a cycling path runs down here and that goes all the way to a nature area.. so when I first came here, I thought 'Gee! How beautiful it is here!' and all that.. If you cycle here you have a chance of coming across a deer, so that is just a piece of freedom, I would say.*

**- Antoon (65, works part-time at home in Wolfheze)**

He enjoys these moments of small surprises and sometimes he visits these natural places to experience them in special weather such as during snowfall or when it is foggy, or to experience the landscape changing colour with sunrise and sunset, to capture its beauty in a photograph. Hence, for Antoon, visiting natural areas is not a passive act that he does whenever he has the time, but actively searches out moment to view it in its most beautiful form. Furthermore, visiting nature is a social activity as he often makes long walks with his wife to enjoy the scenery while having conversations. The addition of the interaction with his wife heightens the pleasure of walking through nature as it adds to transforming a sheer movement to a walk with added depth and meaning. Sharing concerns in combination with the view over the natural landscapes allows for strengthening the bond between Antoon and his wife.

Similar to almost all stayers in Beegden, also Theo (63, pensioner in Beegden) often walks or cycles with his wife with sunny weather, which are one of the few activities he shares with his wife as she is not engaged



Picture 9: A view of the Beegderheide. Source: [www.beegderheide.nl](http://www.beegderheide.nl)

in community associations. Apart from the meals they share, and visiting friends and family, going for walks or cycling tours in natural areas are the only moments in their daily life they seem to share. Hence, in the village outside the home these areas are basically the only areas which they visit together and where they share thoughts and concerns. Theo was not very specific about it, but it is possible that part of the bonding between Theo and his wife thus occurs in these areas. This may mean that similar to Antoon and his wife, for Theo and his wife these areas have a more profound meaning as temporarily they become part of their private realm where he can enjoy a short break from his public life in the village. When on such walks they thus seem to be in their own private bubble. Furthermore, the presence of the natural areas (see picture 9) is something that he needs in order to feel well in general, but here in comparison to being in the city:

*You should see how far away I can look! I cross the street and I find myself in the middle of the Beegderhei [heathland north of Beegden], here I have space. I had the same in my birth village, huge forests surrounding the village. You are free when you cycle here and there [in a city] you are stuck between the houses, every time you have to search for a little greenery, and chaotic and not nice...*

*Back in the days when I returned home from work and crossed the bridge over the Meuse, it always seemed like I suddenly got more air. I've always had that feeling.*

**- Theo (63, pensioner in Beegden)**

Theo clearly needs to be aware of the vicinity of nature to feel well. The second quote even shows that he as a person seems to become as cramped as the space he is in at that moment, as if the lack of openness causes him a lack of room and air and the buildings limit him. (See picture 10) Even a short visit to his son who lives in a newly built neighbourhood in a city, proves to be difficult for him as he cannot feel comfortable, knowing that nature, which he remarkably calls “the safe area” is not on the other side of the road as at his house. It means that Theo considers build-up areas that are too cramped as hostile in some way as they make him literally “unhappy”. Then walking or cycling in nature is an activity for him to feel comfortable again after having to be in such a cramped place. Natural areas are thus very important for him in such a manner that they may also act as a retreat where he can feel free and extend himself onto, instead of surrounded by walls that limit him. Freeing some time in his days for going on a quick walk is something he pursues with great care, opposite of many other activities as he states that he often wears no watch because he likes the days to be spontaneous.



Picture 10: Crossing the bridge over the Meuse in the direction of Beegden. Source: Google Maps, 2011

Very similar to Theo (63, pensioner in Beegden) David (52, works fulltime outside Beegden) has to feel being in close vicinity to nature which seems very important for him to enjoy dwelling in a place. David ties a time limit to reach a natural place from his home:

*I have lived in (...) and Roermond for a while and that was not very pleasant. I really have to be in nature within a short amount of time, such as 5 minutes. And peacefulness, that is also very important for me because I find myself in many 'non-peaceful' moments. Five minutes that way [makes hand gesture towards the east] and you are amidst the meadows, and stillness I find very pleasant. It is not situated in the village but I do find it important that from the village you are surrounded by stillness, by nature, as opposite from my work.*

**- David (52, works fulltime outside Beegden)**

He clearly mentions the absolute opposite the place where he dwells must be, compared to the busy place where he works. The stillness, space and greenery or at least the idea of these properties of the village than allows him to revive and cope with his work environment. The fact that both men who have their homes influenced by the village, are very sensitive to the nearness of nature may point at natural areas being an extension of their home and private realms, because both men often visit natural places with direct family members – David reports often going for walks with his wife and his daughters – which gives rise to the idea that visiting natural places is a merely private activity and feeling the need to remain close to such areas is interwoven with the urge for privacy in general.



## 6.5 Urbanity and the city

A large part of the respondents described the village and city as counterparts in a sensory and embodied sense; as two different worlds in which the village is seen as standard. Most respondents who work or enjoy retirement in the village described the surplus city life offers compared to village life in two distinctive ways. One way was that the city beholds specific aspects that are hardly or not present in the village such as shops, public transport and cultural institutions, and on the other hand at usability problems, such as parking problems. Antoon (65, works part-time at home in Wolfheze) and Virginie (78, pensioner in Wolfheze) were the two respondents who almost exclusively spook of the city in terms of constraints: Antoon even calls Arnhem a “terrible town”. Virginie stated that above all, it restricted her from walking and cycling as she always had been a sporty person, so also therefore the city has predominantly negative associations. She still assesses a city merely on its constraints for her, only now it focuses on her health issues: she states to only visit the inner city of Apeldoorn once in a while because that city has the best parking options for her.

Chantal (49, works part-time in her office in Wolfheze) and Linda (44, works fulltime at her office in Wolfheze) were more focussed on the other way; thinking of the urban in a sensory lifestyle sense. Chantal focuses predominantly on the intensity of the city as invigorating and dynamic environment as clear opposite to the peacefulness of Wolfheze. She always really enjoyed the crowdedness and intensity of a city as she has a number of good associations with being in a city, such as freedom in her youth, leisure time with girlfriends and short holydays with her husband:

*Author: How do you experience visiting the city?*

*Chantal: Oh, wonderful! No, I find it, I mean, every year my husband and I go on a short holyday without my child, and I just find it wonderful and I always choose the largest possible city and I have always given Amsterdam the highest priority. I just find it super, mighty, delightful! And then it's lovely to be back here again.*

**- Chantal (49, works part-time in her office in Wolfheze)**

For her visiting a city can certainly be regarded as an act to stabilize the balance between feeling relaxed from residing in the tranquil environment of Wolfheze and energized from the vibrancy the city offers her. However, she emphasizes to prioritize an environment of stillness as she would “rather come home in stillness and go look for the liveliness than the other way around... that you have to search for your peace of mind”.

The respondents from Beegden who work there or enjoy retirement were also strongly focused on the way being in a city constrains them. For instance, Hilde (52, works part-time at home in Beegden) mentioned to often experience difficulties with finding a parking space close enough to the inner city to be able to enjoy herself without being bothered by her medical condition. For Theo (63, pensioner in Beegden) the city is a realm that is not part of his life, except if his wife or family decides to go there for shopping or celebrations. He focusses more on the embodied and lifestyle dimensions of being in the city, using terms such as “life in a hurdle”, “hectic” and “not pleasant at all”, from which it becomes clear that he does not feel comfortable being in a city. In the previous chapter it already became apparent that Theo is not comfortable with the unfamiliar people swarming around him, but it appears to be that he also cannot feel well being in unfamiliar surroundings, as some urban environments in some conditions provoke feelings of unsafety:

*Author: Do you feel safe in the city?*

*Theo: yes and No. During daytime I don't have issues with it, but I think wouldn't walk through the streets of Roermond where nobody's there or streets that are unfamiliar to me and streets that aren't safe, the ones that always have had a bad name. No, I really wouldn't walk through these streets. Look, in Roermond nowadays there aren't that many people in the streets that do not belong... who don't have their own homes, they take care of that, that isn't so bad, but when I'm in other cities and I have to pass groups of other people who... no, I don't like it at all...*

**- Theo (63, pensioner in Beegden)**

From the quote it appears that Theo does not feel well in an unfamiliar environment in which he has difficulties predicting what will happen because of factors such as unknown people with unfamiliar lifestyles and unfamiliar buildings that close off his view to the sky. Adding to that, he does argue feeling less uncomfortable while not being on the move constantly – sitting down somewhere watching people – as opposed to when walking. This enables him to familiarize with the temporal environment. This idea is strengthened by the following quote:

*The other way it was very rainy, but despite the rain it was very cosy [laughs]. Then inside it becomes all the more cosy, you know. If you walk in small bars where people are just reading the newspaper, is apparently possible there, so the city is not always as bothersome as I just described. There are thus some places where it happens, where together with your children you can drink hot chocolate. That outside it isn't so pleasurable, but in the afternoon, that you can visit a restaurant where the children are welcome too and where they can walk around, and that is just nice.*

**- Theo (63, pensioner in Beegden)**

When during daytime the rain forces Theo and his family to go inside a café, being surrounded by his own family inside a room to which he can familiarize, allows him to relax more and enjoy himself because he does not have to pay too much attention to all kind of unfamiliar stimuli. Hence, when he has a kind of private bubble surrounding him, feels enabled to extend himself somewhat more onto the surroundings. Although in many perspectives Theo is quite similar to Jacques (62, pensioner in Beegden), urbanity and the city are subjects where they depart from one another. Unlike Theo, Jacques really enjoys visiting different cities not only for shopping, but also just to be in another environment as he searches for the unknown in the form of visiting a new city: "it has just a slightly different atmosphere". This may not only be the result of knowing the city of Roermond inside out, but also be a result of knowing Beegden inside out. Because of his intense rootedness and enormous knowledge of all facets of the village, searching for new challenges in urban environments and especially unknown urban environments may be a way to not only appreciate Beegden more but also become more energized again.

Another villager from Beegden, Willemien (49, from Beegden works part-time in Roermond) reckons a village to be a better place for children to grow up in. She watched her children grow up in Beegden and became increasingly happy with her choice to move to Beegden. She compares the circumstances of her children with a child of a family member who lives in Roermond:

*To grow up there, a child can't run outside, can't play in the garden, I mean, there is a small play house, but they also have pond... it's barely possible and then she has to run between two parts of the pond [makes hand gestures] and then I think: "here she can run", here my children could dig in the dirt. I find that important.*

**- Willemien (49, from Beegden works part-time in Roermond)**

Clearly, she finds a village environment a place that is better suitable to grow up in as a child than in most parts of the city. This may also be a result of her own childhood memories in which an urban neighbourhood was the scenery; the emphasis she put on the act of digging can well be something that she has missed in her younger years as she and her parents lived on a small paved square.

Although the respondents had the same ideas about residing in an urban atmosphere, for some this idea meant a total loss of control and overview, while for others it meant a regular world of liveliness breaking the mundane in their daily routines of working and being at home. Interviewee David (52, works fulltime outside Beegden) who very often visits cities for work and leisure purposes describes life in the city as “stress in the broadest sense of the word, not unpleasant by definition, but that there is no rest in the city”. He said to love being in the city, but for some reason “reaches his limit” and becomes “fed up with after a few days”, as he “needs to have that rest, otherwise I go crazy... that’s not good for me! [laughs]”. In close resemblance to Rebecca (27, works fulltime in a city) Jeanne (42, from Beegden, works fulltime in a city) states to very often be in the city because she needs the hassle of the city surrounding her. She argues that the urban environment provides her with a good balance of being in complete stillness at home and in the business of her job in the city. Because she often spends leisure time in the city, it has become more or less a familiar realm, while always retaining a sense of unfamiliarity in the people and the sensory details.

## 6.6 Declining village populations

In Beegden the daily activities of the respondents are likely to be affected by a decrease in inhabitant numbers but for most by the decline and complete vanishing of amenities and facilities. For all respondents, one way or the other, it would change their perceptions of the liveability of the village in the sense that if the village would not have any amenity anymore it would feel as a loss of independence of the village. Willemien (49, from Beegden works part-time in Roermond) denotes after mentioning that the only ATM in the village had been removed: “now we really don’t count anymore”. Surprisingly, also the villagers who report to almost never make use of amenities and facilities in Beegden seem to feel negative about this possible scenario, presumably because shops are part of their discourse of a village in general and without them it would have no centre.

Especially villagers with large social networks seem to show concern about amenities having to close down as in these places they meet other villagers and hence, where population decline is most visible already. Theo (63, pensioner in Beegden) makes a direct connection between the developments in inhabitant numbers and his daily activities as he mentions to already ‘feel’ the commencing of the declining population and the threat it causes to the experiential pleasure of living in this village, chiefly when visiting elderly people in the village as he notices that there are less of them in Beegden as many have to move out earlier in order to obtain the medical help they need. In addition he knows that a part of the school has been demolished a few years ago and he notices that still three classrooms are always empty. He and other respondents with a large social network in Beegden seem to regard the diminishing amenities as something that prevents new people from moving to Beegden, and push out current inhabitants as they fear that others do not want to make that extra trip to grocery stores outside Beegden. However, in this research not one respondent views this as a motivation to move out as everyone already seems used to it and enjoy living in Beegden for other reasons, it just requires better planning.

The scenario image <sup>1</sup> as visualisation of a shrinking village population also presents the strongest differences between villagers with a large social network in Beegden and villagers with a small social network in Beegden. As for the respondents with a small social network in the village the image was chiefly assessed for the consequences in the streetscape, as Jeanne (42, from Beegden, works fulltime in a city) expects less people and therefore less houses which “doesn’t look very nice”, and an “even stiller” environment by Hilde (52, works part-time at home in Beegden) who only experiences the village from her home and the routes to other villages. Unlike villagers with a large social network, they do not know who is moving out and are only confronted with this phenomenon when they accidentally walk by houses with for-sale signs. Hence, they remain largely unaware of this future development as their daily activities do not take place in Beegden. On the contrary, the respondents with a large local social network will be confronted with this phenomenon on a daily basis as all of them often visit places in Beegden. For instance Simon (46, from Beegden works fulltime in a city) and Theo (63, pensioner in Beegden) who both often walk through the village with leaflets, reported very negative feelings when they were confronted with the scenario picture, as because of their activities they are very aware of these signs in Beegden. For them the sheer amount of for-sale signs in the scenario image immediately causes negative feelings, which seem to be stemming from the idea that the houses are or may soon become empty. It gives them an “unheimlich gefühl”:

*Recently I visited a village that looked like that and I thought: Jesus! As long as they sell them and family move in in return, it's fine by me, but I would be devastated if they would all become vacant, because now somebody still lives there and when it is sold too, but if they would all become empty houses, it would hurt me: hurting in the sense of 'where are we heading towards?' (...) [pointing at scenario image] If you look at this street... that's a mighty cheerful street... blossoming trees... [dreadfully shakes his head]*

- **Simon (46, from Beegden works fulltime in a city)**

## 6.7 Chapter conclusions

The respondents who work in cities on a daily basis proved to be more focused on their homes, including the views and the gardens, and this is especially the case for those with a small social network in the villages. Their home in all of its aspects is the place onto which they can extend their selves completely as they retain it as purely private space to shield off influences of all aspects of the village. This group expresses most strongly heir individualist lifestyle and their homes seem to be the place where they need to recuperate from the daily new impressions and actively search for stillness in their surroundings such as natural areas to reside in, distinctive of the demanding urban one. At the same time, this draws away their interest for the village, as these places are associated with unfamiliar others in Wolfheze and the communal discourse in Beegden. As a result the people and the collective discourse remain rather meaningless. Other elements of the village that do fall within the boundaries mainly comprehend sensory entities such as sounds, smells and sights, especially for those working in urban environments with small social networks. These people appear to be detached in the sense that they cannot and seem not very much willing to extend their selves onto the affective places of the village in general, but are strongly attached to their home and to the sensory aspects of the village they experience in their home. The meaning the village is attributed by this group therefore chiefly seems to differ from the others in that affect in the village appears to be absent: aspects that are very important enable emotional engagements with the self and members of the household.

Those who work in a city on a daily basis and do have large social networks mainly seem to appreciate the village from the perspective of their personal discourse of life in a village that has rather strong collectivist

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2 See Appendix 4 for the image presented



notions. They act out their daily activities according to these ideas which come down to doing as much of them in the village, such as principally buying local products. They pursue a continual enlargement of the amount of entities of the village onto which they can extend their selves, such as other people and the community discourse: presumably therefore they showed less focus on their home and more on affect and affective places in the village. Natural areas were seen as an extension of the private realm as they did not put up strong boundaries between the self and the village. Hence, their home appeared not fully enable them to focus on oneself and family members. The city posed a challenge as in a way they enjoyed being in it, but still they put emphasis on the constraints it imposed on them, as they felt they could not extend their selves onto the unfamiliarity of the urban environment, which was especially the case in Beegden. Presumably in these environments it is especially the affective atmosphere that they struggle to deal with as they feel emotionally far from the unfamiliar people present.

The respondents who stayed in the village on a daily basis and had large social network there expressed the strongest collectivist notions about life in a village. Residing in one place the whole day provokes the urge to leave the house that acts as a realm for business when working there instead of only as a retreat. Natural places then take over that role of private, relaxing realm to which the self can be extended onto without associating it with pressing issues, and in which affect is not as strongly present as in the village and there is a smaller chance of coming across someone. Their home seemed also the least shielded from the village. In urban environments most of them had difficulties to extend themselves onto the entities present and therefore felt limited, unsafe and cramped. Moreover, this stood in sharp contrast with their ability to extending their selves onto many entities of the village. For them, the village in general appears to be an extension of the home as they felt strongly rooted in the village, mainly in Beegden.

Those who stayed in the village on a daily basis and had small social networks there felt emotionally distant to the community, which was especially the case in Wolfheze. Presumably therefore they were strongly focused on their homes in the broadest sense, also incorporating the view, the gardens and the natural areas with which they had strong associations and onto which they could easily extend themselves. Furthermore, they also had put up strong boundaries to keep influences from the village out. This group displayed individualist notions, but needed some kind of collective on another level that they found in their social relations outside the village, but also in the affect that they sensed. Hence, unlike the villagers with small local social networks who work in a city, they appreciated the sensation of affect from their home.

Commuters seem to be more aware of the sensory experiences when moving in the village than the people who work in the village or reside in it on a daily basis, especially when combined with the size of the social network in the villages. Then it becomes apparent that the commuters with small social networks are very aware of their bodily appearance in the village. Some have even adopted strategies to maintain the personal boundaries by manipulating the circumstances in which they move through these spaces in the village to regulate interactions with others. Those residing in the village on a daily basis with large social networks seemed to focus more strongly on their own experiences in specific places in the village enhancing the already emotionally charged places in the village and strengthening the attachment to it.

It thus appears that the respondents who are more individualised do not associate many negative feelings with the potential decline in population numbers as it does not pose a direct threat to elements in the village they care about, such as the streetscape and the stillness. This mainly alludes to the respondents with small social networks in Beegden, but also to those who work in a city on a daily basis as the signs remain largely unnoticed for them. Strongly showing opposing opinions are those who enjoy the collectiveness of Beegden, such as the respondents with large social networks and in particular those who remain in the village for their daily activities.





7



# Chapter 7: Conclusions and Discussion

This chapter in which the conclusions will be presented is based on the latter chapters describing the results from the empirical findings and evaluating them from the perspective of the theoretical framework proposed in Chapter 3. First, an overview of the thesis objective and approach is given, refreshing the reader's memory of the general motivations, the research questions and the theoretical framework. Second, the main conclusions will be drawn in an attempt to answer the research questions. Third, the policy implications are given and last, the recommendations for further research are proposed.

## 7.1 Thesis objective and approach

The circumstances in contemporary villages have changed in a profound sense compared to a few decades ago, and continue so to this day. Three societal processes were identified to be the most important causes. Firstly, because of increasing personal mobility means that on a daily basis people are confronted with many different environments. Secondly, society-wide individualisation processes have profound effects as people's priorities change and belongingness is not strictly confined to the community anymore (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Thirdly, social networks are increasingly delocalised (Neal & Walters, 2008) and less territorially driven (Bruhn, 2011). Therefore villagers increasingly differentiate from each other in their perceptions and experiences of the village as spatial unit as they are influenced by different places and lifestyles (McIntyre et al., 2006). Therefore in accordance with their altered needs, also their expectations of village life have changed. These new conditions are expected to influence the meaning villagers attribute to life in a village. The study attempted to come to grips about the importance of daily activity patterns and social networks for this meaning.

The study posits itself between studies taking a place-based approach and studies taking a person-based approach as Netto (2008) proposed to regard meaning as referential. He argues that meaning should be regarded as the experience of associations which is an inherently partly subconscious embodied and emotional account of meaning. As villages are often regarded as representations of communities the influence of affect is investigated. Emotions here are regarded in accordance with theorizations of Thift (2004) as bodily subconscious drives born from memories in place that form associational relations with environments that are resided in on a daily basis. Affect is regarded as a force of potential interaction; an intensity that stems from outside bodies which do have an effect on them, expressed in emotions. It is an atmosphere that is collectively shaped but experienced on an individual basis, and constituted by the presence, performance and representation of others in a place. Actor network theory was chosen for regarding the most important entities that make up the village from the perspective of the villager. As the emphasis was put on experiences in earlier life and embodied experiences in daily life, a post-phenomenological approach was used that supports the relational approach of experiencing both the tangible and intangible aspects of the village.

1. *What is the importance of social networks of village inhabitants in the embodied meaning of their village in an emotional and affective sense and how does place attachment play a role?*
2. *What is the importance of daily activities of village inhabitants in the embodied meaning of their village in an emotional and affective sense and how does place attachment play a role?*

The methodology of this research project was based on in-depth interviews. The interviews were held in two Dutch villages: Wolfheze, characterized as 'elitist countryside' and 'empty' after the typologies of the SCP (2008) and Savage et al. (2005) in which the inhabitants are not very interested in the essence of the village and are more focussed on how their life became enhanced with living in a village, and Beegden, characterized as a 'closed countryside' and 'full' in which the villagers form a strong community. Eight respondents from each village were chosen based on two characteristics: the size of the social network in the village and the job location. In Wolfheze, four respondents were interviewed who had large social networks in the village and four with a small social network in the village, and within these groups, four respondents worked fulltime in an urban environment and four stayed and organised their daily activities in the village. In Beegden the same groupings were formed, only one interviewee with a small local social network who would reside in the village on a daily basis could not be included due to restraints in the time budget. The interviews were transcribed in Word and analysed in MAXQDA <sup>1</sup>.

## 7.2 Main conclusions

Dividing the respondents from both villages into four groups according to the size of their social network in the village and their job location proved to be very interesting in attempting to come to an understanding of how the village plays a role in the lives of its inhabitants and how the villagers deal with the impressions of the village they are confronted with on a daily basis. This study proves that a villagers' personal discourse on motivations to live in a village as nested set of expectations shaped by earlier experiences and their evolving desires. Two major conclusions can be drawn.

The first major conclusion concerns the way people negotiate being in the village with all elements in and of the village environment. From the results of this study it appears that all villagers with their different orientations of their social relations network and in their daily activities show different fashions of extensions of the self, the home and the village. Subsequently, the villagers belonging to the four groups showed different strategies to deal with these extensions in order to feel most comfortable (Bamberg, 2011) when dwelling in the village which has profound effects on the meaning that becomes attributed to the village. The extension of the self is a way of feeling familiar with the surroundings by consciously and subconsciously allowing relations to grow onto entities as they enter and leave the environment where performances are enacted. The intensity and the quantity of the extensions of the self in the surrounding then influences the experience of that place as they are associations of emotional states and memories of events. The extension of the home can be regarded as a secondary extension of self as it entails the materiality of the dwelling and entities that are associated with the homely and the private, in which influences of others are consciously kept to a bare minimum. The extension of the village all influences of the village is a broad sense, which in this thesis incorporates the material appearance, other villagers, smells and sounds and communal discourses.

Walking through the village expresses the difference in this ability, as for those with small local social networks the village remains largely an unfamiliar place in which they can only extend their self onto the material and sensual entities, such as flowery trees, a memorial place, the facades of historical buildings or the smell of burning firewood. Hence, for them the village as scenery does only comprehend the material fabric where the view ends. For inhabitants with large local social networks the houses that are passed represent their familiar residents and bring back memories of social events. Walking through the village must rather be seen as a performance that goes beyond the mere representations of the facades of the dwellings but continues to unfold behind the walls and curtains and hence can be regarded as an interaction with the village itself as

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3 For the terms on which the analysis is based, see Appendix 5



a way to bond with it because pleasant emotional associations are experienced again. For villagers who have small social networks and/or work in a city, walking in the village can also cause stress as discomfort can grow because of overexposure, as they do not know who is potentially watching them, limiting extension of the self beyond the body, clothes, a dog and personal belongings. For some this is uncomfortable to such an extent that they adopt certain strategies to shield themselves pulling up boundaries by only minimally using the available facilities and manipulating the circumstances, such being mobile only by driving a car or by walking late at night in the dark or in bad weather to limit the chances of being noticed.

The realm of the home accommodates closing off from the village and allows for more focus on the self and the elements that belong to the homely, private realm of self, such as household members and personal artefacts. For those who stay in the village the home also becomes extended by the view and the garden(s) which is especially true for villagers with small local social networks because they experience the village and in particular the affect in the village as oppressive. And because they already feel emotionally close to others outside the village, they do not need to feel emotionally near to other village inhabitants. Therefore they actively put up boundaries to protect the homely, or the realms of self from unfamiliar affective elements of the village, including other villagers with other discourses of life in a village such as those with more need for communal affect. They only need to feel near to others in a spatial sense from their homes. For those working in a city on a daily basis this also means that they cannot fully extend the self onto the urban environment, and as they have important others living elsewhere, the village becomes a realm of stillness, away from everything familiar apart from the homely. Because of the absence of many stimuli, for these people the village then seems to acquire an extra dimension of privacy, as an extension of the home that is affective on a village scale but not on a detailed level, thereby eliminating associations of other villagers and their discourses.

The village also penetrates the private realm of the home as the residents are connected to events in the streets and objects, such as people carrying club leaflets and which become material representations of the village entering the home. From the home especially villagers from Beegden are therefore often in direct contact with the village which subconsciously brings about associations of events, parts of the social networks and which extends their life world in the village around it. Very often these entities crossing the boundaries between the home and the village are representations of the strong communal discourse that for those with small local social networks brings about negative emotions of personal failure, guilt or feelings of exclusion. Therefore, Beegden plays a thorough role in the everyday lives of its inhabitants, whether this is desired or not. In this the main difference between Wolfheze and Beegden becomes revealed. Whereas in Beegden the communal discourse is directly related to Beegden and its history, in Wolfheze this discourse is weaker and less place-bound as it is more aimed at rural life in general. Hence, place attachment for those in Beegden seems intimately related to specific traditional elements that make up the essence of Beegden, while place attachment in Wolfheze seems 'footloose' as it is more related to the possibility and enactment of a lifestyle in a village that is called Wolfheze. Therefore this study supports both the claim of Scannell and Gifford (2010) that individual experiences form the basis of place attachment as this seems to be the case in Wolfheze, and the claim of Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) as they emphasize the distinctiveness of places that triggers place attachment in Beegden.

Villagers who on a daily basis are confronted with the demanding urban environments are more aware of the nontangible and nonmaterial sensory experiences in the village, which is enhanced when a personal discourse of life on the countryside is present. The sensory challenging environment of a city combined with the challenging jobs many inhabitants have, the sounds, smells and visions (e.g. the streetscape) of the village act as representations of relaxation and stillness. Thereby it supports the research of Soneryd (2004) who

stresses the importance of hearing the surroundings in meaningful dwelling. It helps to stabilize emotional states as the familiar unchanging appearance of the village seems to be a welcome sense of visual stillness as a realm onto which the self has been extended numerous times, as opposed to the limitations urban environments are inherent in. Hence, on the contrary to Cuba & Hummon (1993) who underscored localised interactions and participation in the community to be crucial in identifying with the village and growing a bond with it, this study emphasizes the importance of embodied – other than social – performativity in dwelling in a rural place.

By actively sensing these the aspects of the village that make it unique, intimate knowledge is gathered as a way of growing emotional associations with specific entities of the village, while at the same time remaining insensitive to affect and not feeling the need to re-establish boundaries. Being so strongly aware of these characteristics of the village, familiarizing with them and appreciating them fully is an act of extending the self onto and growing attached to the village. In addition, it is a way of escaping unwanted affects and entities that are associated with the communal discourse in order to direct attention to the self, while at the same time fulfilling dialectic desires to be away from the home for a moment. Also confirmed by the study of Manzo (2005) who proposed the multidimensionality of place meaning as the village is a place in which a balance between excitement/the unknown and familiarity/the known is created. This can be seen as a different way in which performance is aimed at growing attachment to the village-place. When this state of mind has become apparent meaning becomes attributed to the village.

These pleasantly emotional associations with entities of the village are not confined to the build-up part of the village, also the natural areas surrounding it are often visited by almost all villagers, performing walks in these landscapes seems to give peace and quietness to people mainly because of the absence of – many – others and its consistence of elements people easily bond with and extend their selves onto. However, to some extent affect is present but here it seems to add to the feeling of relaxation; not having to interact with other people, while being assured of their presence. Both this insurance and the fact that the landscape does not require much attention from the walker enable him to concentrate on his thoughts. Hence, because of its impersonal but comfortable nature the natural areas surrounding the village seem to be a kind of private realm, incorporated in the boundaries.

The possible threat of declining village populations can also be regarded from the extensions of the self. Affect appears to be a very important factor in how the phenomenon is experienced: those who sense affect in the village and experience this as a soothing element, bringing about pleasant emotional associations also feel most limited in the extension of their self. This is mostly aimed at the communal discourse that becomes threatened which expresses in a decline in like-minded people. Hence, in this, negative emotions would distress the strong affective atmospheres in the village, which in turn would influence the strong communal discourse. From this study it does not become entirely clear how this would influence the discourse as the research was not comprehensive enough to make behavioural statements. There seem two possibilities: one, those with large local social networks would sense a decline of affect in the village because of negative emotions prevailing in the community, and two, the communal discourse becomes even stronger which would be confirmed by Manzo (2005). Then affect grows amidst vacant lots with a complete lack of affect.

Herein the importance of performances and local social networks shows, as those who are oriented on the village in their daily activities and social relations expressed the most intense emotional associations because they felt limited in their extension of the self over the village as they would constantly be memorized of the population shrinkage. The increasing amount of dwellings may even be experienced as a personal insult. Hence, the meaning of the village during on-going population decline would either weaken as both the

communal discourse weakens and the self faces problems in its extensions when being reminded of or encountering vacant lots. Or the communal discourse would significantly strengthen which would drown negative emotional associations and may even turn them into places of personal pride when the self can be extended onto these places and population decline is not regarded as an insult but more as a challenge.

The second main conclusion is concerned with the fragmentation and concentration the village is made out of from the perspective of the inhabitants. This study shows that both the location of the social network and the activity pattern of a villager are indeed of importance for the shaping of the meaning of the village. On the one hand, knowing not so many people in the village and performing little activities there seems to result in a fragmented image of the village. Interactions often occur under specific circumstances such as times or parts of the year or when pursuing specific goals. In addition, the specific routes to places in the village are often also associated with specific villagers or groups of other – unfamiliar – villagers as these routes (re-)produce a series of emotional experiences, such as a dangerous crossroad. Places are then often associated with distinct performances and are infused with distinct symbolic communities if they inherit other people at all. Hence, specific affects are sensed in these places and they are infused with specific sets of emotions because of distinct sets of associations. This image of the village held by inhabitants who feel the desire to fulfil almost all of their needs outside the village then appears poor in the sense that these places in the village are separated from other aspects in life. This has two consequences: one, these places as collection result in a set of rather shallow emotional associations which results in a weak meaning that becomes attributed to the village. Two: in fact the absence of other elements of life is often indiscriminately experienced as pleasant as the surroundings of these places eliminates worries and sorrows in others aspects of life. Here the relational associational networks exceed the village and are mainly stretched out over a larger area. Hence, being oriented with the daily performances outside the village accommodates for the extension of self over regional characteristics such as the landscape.

On the other hand, for villagers with a large social network in the village, it appears as a concentration of emotional associations as many elements of the village overlap in the associational networks. This can be illustrated by knowing other villagers from multiple institutions or clubs, such as the elementary school and interest clubs. For inhabitants with large social networks in the village it thus contains many places infused with affects and memories containing many different – groups – of familiar villagers. Hence, these places are then also largely regarded from the perspective in which daily performances are aimed at social activities. It makes the village more of a concentrated affective whole in which the collection of places merges together. Subsequently, especially for villagers who reside in the village on a daily basis and have a large local social network the emotional and affective distinctiveness of places becomes less apparent. Hence, these people are less selective in attributing meaning to particular places in the village because basically the whole village feels comfortable as they can extend their self onto almost all elements that make up the village.

That in Beegden the discourse of being involved in the community via community associations or the school, church or other institution is a strong one becomes apparent in the way for many people certain places in the village are representations of it. Especially as for the ones with large social networks these places provoke strong pleasant emotional associations as this is associated with actively bonding with the village by enjoying themselves with other like-minded villagers and being a ‘good or real’ villager because there they act out the communal discourse. The affective atmosphere in this particular place is strengthened by the specific shared emotions: affect is even so strongly present that for those with small social networks that never visit it, it is an obvious representation of the community and especially of the community discourse. Belongingness is thus centred on this collective discourse of Beegden which is most profoundly articulated in the most affective place; the community centre. Hence, the communal discourse and the essence of

Beegden are inherent in affect. The meaning for many with a large social network becomes then mainly constituted through emotional relations with the village and less with the self.

For inhabitants with a large social network in Wolfheze the community building does not provoke these kinds of supplementation, as villagers use it only in a limited sense or not at all. Hence, in this place affect can only be sensed rather faintly. Rather it is not centralized as other places that better suit the more specific social networks, such as the elementary school, the hospital bar, the tennis court and the children's playground. As in these places the potential for interaction is higher, there is most affect in these more specified places in which visitors enact more specific activities that serve a goal other than just bonding with the village such as in Beegden. In addition, in Wolfheze there is not such a strong communal discourse and only villagers with discourses of village life with added communal aspects have large local social networks as they feel the need for a form of collectiveness in the place where they dwell. However, this does mean that their ideas are largely independent of Wolfheze itself, but aimed at general life on the countryside. Those with small social networks do not have communal tendencies and are focussed primarily on aspects of their own life, especially those who work outside the village. Attachment and belongingness of villagers in Wolfheze are therefore aimed on personal ideas of village life, and are spatially more fragmented, both due to the lack of an obvious affective centre and performances in the village have more relations to the emotional self than to the village.

Hence, instead of regarding place meaning as internalized process as Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) do, this study confirms the embodied referentiality of place meaning (Netto, 2008) that is neither confined to aspects of places, nor to identities and personal characteristics. Rather, this study shows that for a place to become meaningful a complex process of balancing the elements of daily surroundings in relation to spatiotemporal needs and desires by putting up boundaries between the self, the homely and the village. Hence, this process hinges between the material surroundings and the body as it develops in accordance to affects and the myriad – or the lack – of emotional associations allowing place meaning to grow.

### 7.3 Implications policy

This research project can be interesting for policy makers, as it sheds light on specific village elements that are valued highly by a certain type of villagers. Local policy makers can make use of that to adapt their village to better suit the wishes or requirements posed by its inhabitants. Additionally, they can emphasize the presence of these elements to attract new inhabitants of a specific type as a marketing strategy, or to counter population shrinkage. For policy makers the difference between villages having a more 'footloose' or a more traditional communal discourse or is important as well, as it may shed more light on what exactly is valued in a village. 'Lifestyle villages' such as Wolfheze need for instance different measures to keep the quality of life high, while 'essence-of-place villages', such as Beegden, need a stronger policy focus on the community discourse and meeting places. This may attract more villagers who value the village because of its particularity and relieve the village from the threat of decreasing inhabitant numbers. Furthermore, this study provides new arguments on how life on the countryside can be equally or more attractive than life in an urban environment for contemporary western citizens as in many ways villages have features that provide for the on-going individualisation processes. Hence, this study can possibly assist in the discussion of on-going urbanisation in the Western world and how to better guide it using the villages in the surrounding areas of cities.

Furthermore, it adds to the current debates on population decline that awaits many villages in the near future. Different from other studies this study was aimed at coming to a better understanding of how villagers in these villages actually perceive the threat and the initial phases of the phenomenon by focussing on everyday experiences of the village environment. It appears that they perceive it first and foremost in the



community associations of which they think they will lose members fast. As the possibility that the clubs may vanish fills those villagers with discomfort in combination with disappearing amenities and facilities may become an unfortunate combination. Not only does that make villagers more dependent of other towns in their daily activities, it also weakens their sense of independence. Additionally, for those who currently have their social life in the village may the loss of meeting points in the village also be unfortunate because it would not resemble a village anymore. These predicted developments may form an incentive for more to leave the village which would even speed up the population decline.

## 7.4 Research recommendations

Incorporating affect in coming to understand the meaning that is attributed to the village seems to have been fruitful. It can further supplement research on community attachment because it accommodates for theorizing the interplay between materialities, bodies and discourses while not considering it as owned by either places or persons. Taking an affective stance in community attachment research may therefore shed more light on how emotions of individual people influence collective discourses, and in turn how residing amidst a group, whether it is territorially defined or otherwise influence emotional associations with the group and the place. Hence, it allows for investigation of attachments on a subconscious level on a group level.

Furthermore, in this study performance other than bodily action could not be defined in more detail as it appears to be functionally limited by being mobile in the village and sharing social events. Future research could therefore focus more on more manners of performativity in relation to the village. For instance, this study did not comprehend virtual mobility and performativity. In the digital society of today large parts of social networks are developed and maintained in virtual space. Hence, to contact social relations outside the village, one does not necessarily have to leave the village. It would also be interesting to incorporate more-than-human geographies for owning a dog and performing the activities that are associated with one. It can be imagined that walking a dog would heighten the sense of affect surrounding the owner, which would make it easier for influences from the village to penetrate the boundaries around the self, for instance. In addition, leaving and returning to the home may also intensify with emotions.

For future research recommendations can be made to also execute the methodology in this theoretical framework for inhabitants of urban environments. How do they experience the possibilities of extending their self onto the dynamic urban environments and what are these possibilities, and how do they cope with limitations. The pursuit for stillness in life seems to be quite easy on the countryside as nature is easily available and environments do not change much as opposed to environments in the city. Furthermore, the structures of the social networks and the daily life paths of inhabitants of cities are very different than those of villagers: hence it can be interesting to study what the influences are on meaning attribution to the city. Another recommendation for further research can focus on the importance of life changing events for the meaning of the dwelling environment

Lastly, future research is recommended to engage with the socio-demographics and backgrounds of villagers in order to understand which aspects in life are important for developing a desire to engage with community associations and identify with communal discourses. For instance, in village the school may be regarded as an institute that is used by active association members to recruit young families to take on tasks for these clubs. How does having school-going children influence collective desires, sensed affect and the (de-)construction of boundaries between the self and the village?

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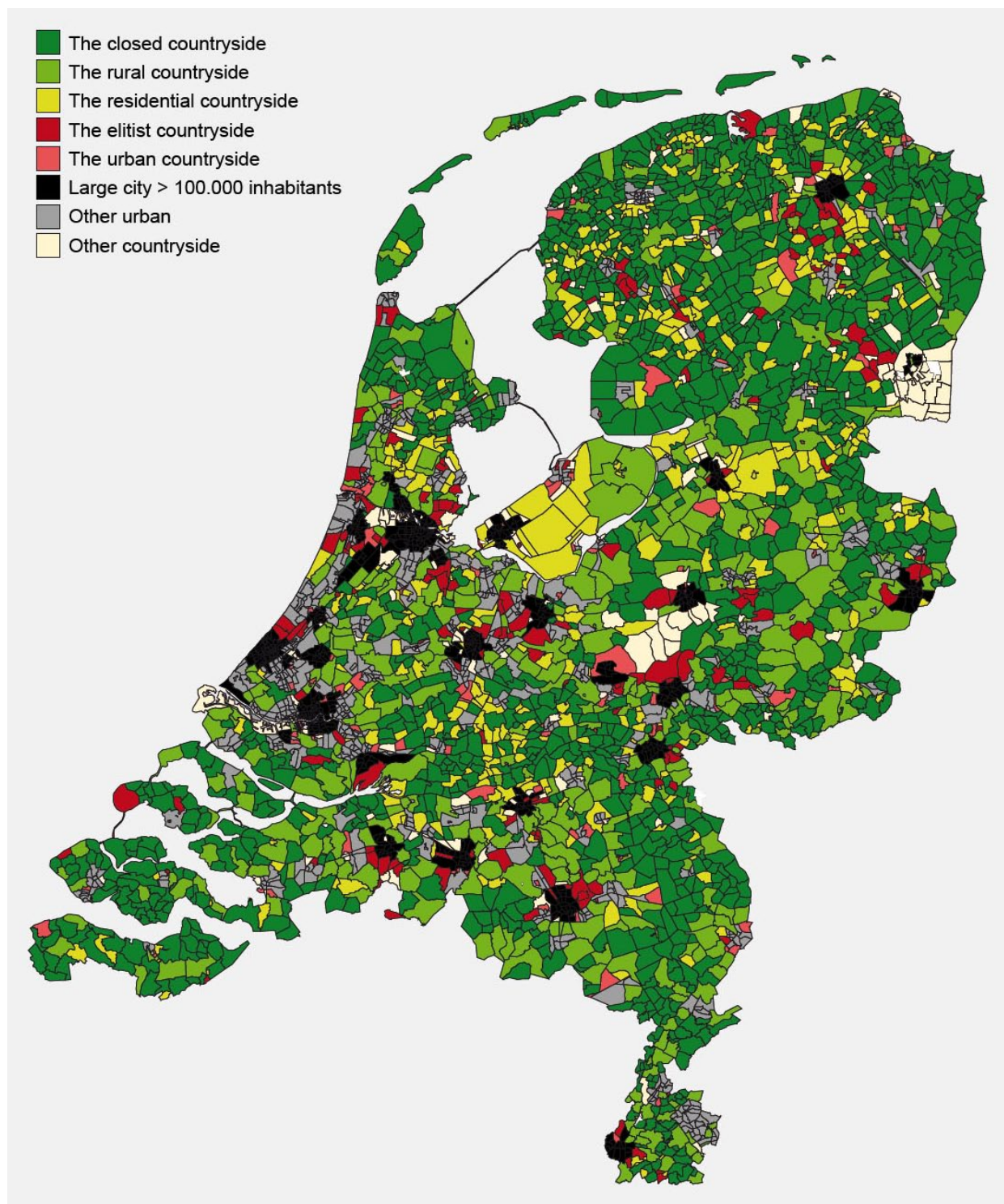
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Picture front page: The Wallpapers.org, 2011 website visited on 13-11-2011

Chapter pictures: Dion Koens

## Appendix 1: Spatial spread of five classifications of countryside



Source: SCP (2008) Overgebleven Dorpsleven. Sociaal kapitaal op het hedendaagse platteland. SCP-publication 2008/19. Translated from Dutch



## Appendix 2: Questionnaire Wolfheze (in Dutch)

# VRAGENLIJST

Deze vragenlijst bestaat uit vier korte delen die bestaan uit meerkeuzevragen, ja/nee-vragen, stellingen en open vragen. Bij de stellingen en de meerkeuzevragen is het de bedoeling dat u het open blokje zwart of blauw maakt. Bij de ja/nee-vragen kunt u de goede antwoorden omcirkelen of de foute antwoorden doorstrepen. De open vragen graag zo kort en bondig mogelijk beantwoorden. Hartelijk dank voor uw medewerking en veel plezier met het invullen van de vragen!

Naam: .....

Straatnaam: ..... No: .....

Leeftijd: ..... jaar Geslacht: M / V

### Deel 1. WONEN IN WOLFHEZE

*De volgende stellingen en vragen gaan over uw ervaring en mening over het wonen in Wolfheze.*

STELLING	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Neutraal	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
<i>Ik voel me verbonden met dit dorp</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Ik voel me thuis in dit dorp</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Ik voel me verbonden met de mensen die hier wonen</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Ik vind mezelf een echt Wolfhezenaar</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Ik ben er trots op om in Wolfheze te wonen</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Dit dorp is speciaal</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Als ik Wolfheze binnen kom rijden, voel ik me prettig</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Ik vind het prettig om af en toe uit Wolfheze te zijn</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Ik ken Wolfheze op mijn duimpje</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Ik vind het leuk om te wandelen of fietsen door het dorp</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Ik vind het dorp mooi</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Ik vind de omgeving van het dorp mooi</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Ik heb goede herinneringen aan Wolfheze</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Ik heb hier belangrijke momenten in mijn leven beleefd</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. Hoelang woont u in Wolfheze? .....jaar

2. Om welke reden(en) bent u in Wolfheze komen wonen?

.....  
 .....

3. Bent u van plan te verhuizen?

- Nee, ik wil hier nog lang blijven wonen*
- Ja, ik ben van plan te verhuizen naar een andere woning **binnen** Wolfheze*
- Ja, ik ben van plan te verhuizen naar een woning **buiten** Wolfheze*



4. Waar bent u opgegroeid? (plaatsnaam + provincie) ..... + .....

5. Heeft u ooit in een stad gewoond? **Ja / Nee**

Zo **Ja**, Welke?.....

Zo **Nee**, waarom niet? (meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)

- Wonen in een stad trok me niet
- Wonen in een stad is duurder dan in een dorp
- Ik kon geen geschikte woning vinden in een stad
- Ik wilde mijn kinderen niet in een stad laten opgroeien
- Ik vond een geschikte woning in een/dit dorp
- Ik hoefde niet voor mijn werk of mijn partners werk te verhuizen
- Anders, namelijk: .....

## Deel 2. FACILITEITEN

*Nu volgen een aantal vragen over faciliteiten. Onder faciliteiten vallen bijvoorbeeld: winkels zoals supermarkten, kledingzaken, garages en electronicazaken, gezondheidinstellingen zoals dokters en tandartsen, culturele instellingen zoals theaters, bioscopen, bibliotheken en musea, uitgaansgelegenheden zoals bars, restaurants en disco's, sportclubs zoals voetbalclubs en bridgeclubs, hobbyverenigingen zoals koren, boekenclubs en knutselclubs en dorpsverenigingen zoals lokale belangenverenigingen, redacties van lokale kranten en kerkelijke verenigingen.*

1. Maakt u gebruik van de faciliteiten **binnen** het dorp? **Ja / Nee**

Zo **Ja**, Welke?

1. .... Hoe vaak?..... x per week/maand/jaar
2. .... Hoe vaak?..... x per week/maand/jaar
3. .... Hoe vaak?..... x per week/maand/jaar
4. .... Hoe vaak?..... x per week/maand/jaar

2. Maakt u gebruik van de faciliteiten **buiten** het dorp? **Ja / Nee**

Zo **Ja**, Welke?

1. .... Hoe vaak?..... x per week/maand/jaar
2. .... Hoe vaak?..... x per week/maand/jaar
3. .... Hoe vaak?..... x per week/maand/jaar
4. .... Hoe vaak?..... x per week/maand/jaar

3. Spendeert u vrije tijd **in** het dorp? **Ja / Nee**

Zo **Ja**, wat doet u dan, en hoeveel tijd spendeert u daaraan?

1. Activiteit: ..... Hoe vaak?..... x per week/maand/jaar
2. Activiteit: ..... Hoe vaak?..... x per week/maand/jaar
3. Activiteit: ..... Hoe vaak?..... x per week/maand/jaar
4. Activiteit: ..... Hoe vaak?..... x per week/maand/jaar

Zo **Nee**, Waarom niet? (meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)

- Er zijn hier geen leuke winkels / uitgaansgelegenheden / geen interessante activiteiten
- Ik zijn hier geen goede bekenden om activiteiten mee te ondernemen of gelegenheden mee te bezoeken
- Ik kan me niet identificeren met de mensen die daar aanwezig zijn
- Anders, namelijk: .....



## Deel 3. SOCIALE NETWERKEN

*Uw sociale netwerk bestaat uit iedereen die u kent, zoals familieleden, vrienden, kennissen, collega's en andere personen met wie u bekend bent. Het maakt niet uit of ze nu nog dagelijks aanwezig zijn in uw leven.*

1. Waar wonen de 8 voor u belangrijkste mensen?

	Plaats	Provincie
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

2. Maakt u, naar uw mening, deel uit van het sociale netwerk in het dorp? **Ja / Nee / Enigszins**

3. In welke sociale netwerken binnen Wolfheze neemt u deel? *(meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)*

- Sportvereniging      Aantal: .....
- Hobbyvereniging      Aantal: .....
- Kerkelijke vereniging      Aantal: .....
- Dorpsvereniging      Aantal: .....
- Politieke partij      Aantal: .....
- Anders, namelijk: ..... Aantal: .....
- Geen

4. Bent u op de hoogte van wat er gebeurt in het dorp? **Ja / Nee / Enigszins**

Zo **ja**, op welke manier? *(meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)*

- Van de burens / straatgenoten
- Van kennissen in het dorp
- Lokaal krantje
- Affiches in winkels / bibliotheek
- Anders, namelijk: .....

Zo **Nee**, waarom niet? *(meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)*

- Het interesseert me niet wat er in het dorp gebeurt
- Ik ken niet zoveel mensen in het dorp
- Ik weet niet waar ik die informatie kan vinden
- Anders, namelijk: .....

5. Hoe schat u de grootte van uw sociale netwerk **binnen** het dorp in?

- Klein
- Ondergemiddeld
- Gemiddeld
- Bovengemiddeld
- Groot



6. Hoe schat u de grootte van uw sociale netwerk in **buiten** het dorp, in vergelijking met uw netwerk binnen het dorp?

- Veel kleiner*
- Een beetje kleiner*
- Gelijk*
- Groter*
- Veel groter*

## Deel 4. ALGEMEEN

---

*Tenslotte volgen nog een paar vragen over uw huishouden en werkzaamheden.*

1. Wat is de samenstelling van uw huishouden?

- Alleenstaand zonder kinderen*
- Alleenstaand zonder kinderen (zijn al het huis uit)*
- Alleenstaand met kinderen*      *Aantal:.....*
- Samenwonend zonder kinderen*
- Samenwonend zonder kinderen (zijn al het huis uit)*
- Samenwonend met kinderen*      *Aantal:.....*
- Getrouwd zonder kinderen*
- Getrouwd zonder kinderen (zijn al het huis uit)*
- Getrouwd met kinderen*      *Aantal:.....*

2. Wat is de door u hoogst afgeronde opleiding?

- Basisschool & middelbare school*
- Lager beroepsonderwijs,*
- Middelbaar beroepsonderwijs*
- Hoger beroepsonderwijs*
- Universitair*

3. Werkt u momenteel? **Ja / Nee**

Zo **ja**, hoeveel uur werkt u per week?

- 0 – 15*
- 15 – 32*
- 32 of meer*

Zo **ja**, Wat is uw beroep? .....

Zo **ja**, waar oefent u dit uit? .....

Zo **ja**, Hoe gaat u naar uw werk? *(meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)*

- Met het Openbaar Vervoer*
- Met de auto*
- Ik carpool*
- Met de fiets*
- Lopend*

4. Zou ik u mogen contacteren voor een interview? **Ja / Nee / Misschien**

~~~

*Einde van de vragenlijst. Hartelijk dank voor uw medewerking!*





## Appendix 3: Instructions personal information sheets

### Instructions emotional value map Wolfheze (in Dutch)

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**BLAD 3**

#### EMOTIONELE WAARDENKAART EN ROUTES DOOR HET DORP

Hartelijk dank voor uw bijdrage aan het onderzoek over de betekenisgeving van inwoners aan hedendaagse dorpen!

De bedoeling van Blad 3 is het in kaart brengen van uw persoonlijk associaties met het dorp. Welke herinneringen komen boven borrelen als u door het dorp loopt, fietst of rijdt? Welke plekken hebben voor u een bijzondere betekenis? Het gaat hier dus om uw persoonlijke ervaringen binnen het dorp.

Op de kaart op de achterkant kunt u deze plekken aangeven. U kunt daarvoor de potloodjes gebruiken die bij het pakket zijn gevoegd. Met rood geeft u, mits mogelijk, de locatie van drie negatieve associaties aan. Met blauw geeft u, mits mogelijk, de locatie van 3 positieve associaties aan. Als u meer dan zes associaties kunt bedenken, kunt u ze natuurlijk ook intekenen.

Daarnaast is het fijn als u de routes intekent die u door het dorp neemt als u naar de locaties gaat die u in de enquête aangegeven heeft. Daarvoor kunt u een gewoon potlood of een zwarte pen gebruiken.

| De faciliteiten in Wolfheze | De faciliteiten buiten Wolfheze | De verenigingen waar u lid van bent |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|                             |                                 |                                     |
|                             |                                 |                                     |
|                             |                                 |                                     |

Teken de route vanaf uw huis en zet het nummer bij het eindpunt van de lijn (waar de locatie van het eindpunt is, of waar de kaart verlaat) en de plaats waarin het zich bevindt.

*Note: In the instruction the respondents were also asked to draw routes from the home to facilities in and outside the village and to village association meeting points. The table was filled out with the locations they had written down to visit in the initial questionnaire by the author. In a later stage of the research is decided to leave out the analysis of routes through the village from the drawings: in the interviews it became apparent which areas in the village they regularly move through or visit.*



## Appendix 4: Scenario image of Beegden

In the interviews with the Beegden inhabitants this image, printed at A4 paper size, was presented as a means to have people consider how they would experience heavy shrinkage of inhabitant numbers, by overemphasizing the presence of 'for sale' signs. It is a Google Streetview screenshot that was edited in Adobe Photoshop. The location of the image is the current Nieuwstraat facing in the south-east direction towards Heel.



## Appendix 5: Analysis in MAXQDA

MAXQDA version 10 was used for the analysis of the transcripts of the interviews. These are the codes used:  
Code System [3201]

- Shrinking population [8]
- Final two questions (*questions about the meaning of living in the village and the meaning of the village itself*)[15]
- Amenities and facilities [66]
- MEANING [0]
  - Situational meaning [254]
    - Existential meaning [147]
  - Time geography [184]
- ANT [189]
  - Postphenomenology [120]
  - Experiences in the past [157]
  - Events [55]
  - Description urban environment and lifestyle [78]
  - Description village environment and lifestyle [141]
- AFFECT AND EMOTION [0]
  - Affect [222]
  - Emotion [196]
- EMBODIMENT [134]
  - Stillness, tranquillity, quietness, pleasantness [110]
- PLACE ATTACHMENT [1]
  - Attachment with the village [88]
  - Duration of stay [10]
  - Identity and self [297]
  - Meaning home [53]
  - Feeling at home, homeliness [39]
- SOCIAL NETWORKS [36]
  - Reason of contact in life [27]
  - Opinion significant others [91]
  - About villagers [101]
  - Contact with villagers [161]
- DAILY ACTIVITIES [48]
  - Dialectives/distinctiveness [76]
  - Routines [97]

