How to Involve Citizens in Sustainable Development

An Exploratory Study of the Transition Towns Network in the Netherlands and Freiburg, Germany

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Preface

The main motivation for starting this study was to understand how citizens can be involved in the transition to a sustainable society. Much research has been done on the technical aspects of sustainable development, but it is also of crucial importance to understand how people can be involved in this transition from a more social perspective. Just having the technology and understanding is not enough; everyone should be involved in order to reach this transition. Citizens see the problem of sustainable development in many cases too complex and they often do not know how, when and why to start. An attempt is made to come to terms with this complexity where people are dealing with. One of the main aims of this study is to understand how citizens can become more involved in sustainability issues.

1.   Introduction

The term "sustainable development" was used for the first time in 1987 in the outcome of the Brundtland Report. Twenty-five years ago the concept of sustainable development was completely new. Nowadays everyone has an idea or opinion about sustainable development (Hauff, 2007). Twenty-five years after the release of the Brundtland Report many things have changed in the area of sustainable development, but a transition to a sustainable society has not yet been reached. The Brundtlandreport was called "Our Common Future" and contained a call for change. Meanwhile, the ecological footprint is still growing and exceeds the biocapacity of the earth by about fifty percent (IPCC, 2011). The human effect on the earth's climate has become an even more important issue, and environmental regulations often did not have their intended effect (Hauff, 2007). This sounds (and is) alarming, but fortunately the number of sustainable initiatives keeps on growing. A major breakthrough to a sustainable world has, however, not yet been reached.

Findings of Christiaan Hogenhuis from "Stichting Oikos" show that one explanation of the slow progression in sustainable development is that the number of organizations that deal with sustainable initiatives is large, that their activities are highly fragmented and that all kinds of ideological differences occur. According to Hogenhuis (2012) and others, we are currently in a systemic crisis. Systemic thinking refers to the fact that we are currently addressing environmental problems as a separate part of behavior instead as part of the wider system in which economical, institutional and social factors play a role. There is a lack of systemic thinking which stresses the interconnectedness of the multiple problems of unsustainability on different scales and the many institutions and their interventions that have an impact on sustainability. This leads to a lack of systemic collaboration between different parties and an overly narrow view on problems. Another factor is that images about the future of a sustainable society are often too abstract or too specialized and technical (Hogenhuis, 2012). Citizens do not think of ecological sustainable development in technical terms but live in a broader (social) world in which they have to choose their actions on the basis of social, cultural, economic and –hopefully- ecological considerations (Hogenhuis, 2012).

One of the problems of sustainable development lies in its complexity. The broad field of systemic thinking tries to come to terms with this complexity. In the environmental reform agenda there has been a shift in focus from polluting companies to the individual role of citizen-consumers. In the current debate the government often frames citizens as a problematic factor in sustainable development. However, research shows that many citizens actually want to move to a more sustainable society but, for instance, need some (governmental) support in order to accomplish their goals (De Bakker et al, 2008).

The effect of this group of small-polluters can be severe and citizen-consumers can have an important influence and put pressure on environmental policies. Citizens simply have the power to refuse using certain products when they think they are devastating for the environment (Spaargaren & Mol, 2008). The emphasis on national politics in social sciences should make a shift towards local policies and consumer-citizens (Spaargaren & Mol, 2008). Theory suggests that the influence of citizens and their support develops in gradually widening circles, where specific people play a key role as multipliers, and eventually a tipping point may be reached where the change accelerates (Gladwell, 2001). The behavior of citizens

is restricted by larger structures and the availability of products, services and institutions. These need to change along with the desired change in citizen behavior. Put differently behavior takes place in specific social practices (Spaargaren, 2006).

An example of an organization that tries to make this complexity more manageable on a practical level is an organization called Transition Towns (Hopkins, 2010). Transition Towns changes the perception that citizens are a problematic part in the transition to a sustainable society towards the positive assumption that citizens actually want and can make a difference and that this should be done in their local environment where initiatives are directly visible (Hopkins, 2010).

1.1   Aim and Questions

The aim of this study is to come to a better understanding of both the successes and failures of the Transition Towns (in short: TT) movement through a comparison with the theoretical understandings of systemic thinking. This will offer clues as how to involve citizens as key agents of change in a systemic transition towards a sustainable society and economy.
The combination of the exploratory study of Transition Towns with the theories presented lead to the following research question:
"To what extent do theories about social practices, transition management and tipping points offer an explanation to understand the successes or failures of Transition Towns in the reinforcement and acceleration of sustainable development?"

Theoretical question: "To what extent do these theoretical approaches offer insight into the systematic character of sustainable development and practical clues to addressing system transitions as proposed by the Transition Town movement?"

Empirical questions: "To what extent does the Transition Towns movement offer a good answer to the systemic character of sustainable development?"

This empirical question has two sub questions:

"How successful are the initiatives of Transition Towns and what are the explanations for this?" "To what extent do these theoretical approaches relate to the experiences of citizens in the Transition Town movement?"

1.2   Social Relevance

This research is socially relevant, because it aims to provide information about how to involve citizens to work towards sustainable development in their local environment. Sustainable development is important, because it addresses a set of interconnected social, economic and ecological problems which threaten people, their society and even nature. In this research, the focus will lay on ecological sustainability.

Issues concerning sustainable development are often addressed from a technical or economic perspective but information about how to accomplish technical and economic solutions in the direct social environment is still limited. In order to allow citizens to become involved in a transition to a more sustainable society, they should be addressed in their own local environment. There is an urgent call for a more sustainable society but information on

how to give citizens a meaningful role in this transition is still lacking. In his book 'De ceder en de saxofoon' Christaan Hogenhuis from 'Stichting Oikos' raised the question of whether theories from social science can be implemented in practice. The findings of this study can provide useful information for the Transition Towns movement and organizations like Oikos. Local governments can use the findings of this study for policy making. For instance, they can learn about communication with organizations like Transition Towns. In this way this study can inform policy recommendations

1.3   Scientific Relevance
Research has shown that citizens can be an important driver in a transition towards a sustainable society (De Bakker et al, 2008; Gladwell, 2001; Spaargaren 2002).

The chosen theoretical approaches can be useful in explaining this role, but it is not yet clear to what extent they apply to practice. In other words: this research does not lead to the development of new theories but it test existing theories. This research has therefore no fundamental scientific relevance

1.4   Relevance from the Perspective of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences
This study is relevant from the perspective of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences because it approaches the complexity of the sustainable development 'problem' from different disciplines. Sociological theories about Social Practices, Transition Management, improvisation/incrementalism, ecocentrism/anthropocentrism and psychological theories about environmentally significant behavior and tipping points are used and combined with information from the environmental sciences. The research is problem based and will provide practical information that can be used in policy recommendations.

1.5   Definitions
Before going on with the concept of environmental sustainability is it important to give a definition of the concept. In this study the Brundtland definition of sustainable development will be used. This definition is frequently quoted in literature and therefore also used in the introduction of this study. The Brundtland definition connects to the systemic thinking theory which is used in the theoretical framework of this study.

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

- The concept of **needs**, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
- The idea of **limitations** imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs." (WCED, 1987, p. 43)

The important point of this definition is that it sees sustainable development in the context of a broader system. This systemic thinking approach thinks in terms of space, all environmental decisions in the world are spatially related. And also in terms of time, decisions that we currently take have consequences for future generations (WCED, 1987).

In this study the successfulness of an initiative is defined as: "an initiative that continues for a long period of time without being stopped or changed". Another indicator for success is the diversity of people (religion, ethnicity, age, level of education etc.) that attend a particular initiative. A failing initiative is defined as: "an initiative that does not continuously attracts visitors and that does not meet the requirements of a successful initiative."

1.6   Structure

The structure of this study is as follow. Firstly, a description of Transition Towns will be given. This description follows from the handbook of Rob Hopkins (2008) and aims to come to a better understanding of the Transition Towns movement. Chapter 3 offers relevant theoretical approaches including: systemic thinking, transition management, the social practices approach, the ABC theory, ecocentrism/anthropocentrism, improvising/incrementalism and the tipping point approach. This chapter comes with an answer to the theoretical research question. The fourth section of this thesis is the method section, which explains which method is used for data analysis and for what reason it is decided to choose for this method. The result section is split in two parts (chapter 5 and 6): chapter 5 comes with a description of Transition Towns which followed from the interviews and chapter 6 comes with an interpretation from the results of the interviews in combination with the results from the theoretical framework. The sixth chapter will give an answer to the empirical research questions. The study ends with a conclusion in which the research question is answered and a summary is provided of the main results. The conclusion ends with a reflection on the research and a commentary on the theory and practice.

2.   The social phenomena of Transition Towns

2.1   Introduction to the Transition Towns Movement
In this part the Transition Town movement will be discussed in detail. Questions that will be answered are: What are the origins of the Transition Towns movement?, What are the main aims and philosophy of Transition Towns?, What kind of method do they use?, What is the practical aspect of Transition Towns? , and What is the psychology behind Transition Towns?

Origins of Transition Towns
Transition Towns is a bottom-up movement of active citizens who are trying to find practical solutions on a local level to big (worldwide) problems like climate change and peak oil. The first Transition Towns movement started in Totnes, England and was founded by Rob Hopkins. Totnes is a medium sized town in the Southern part of England.
Transition Towns Totnes started in 2006 and since then 39 projects have emerged. After the successful initiation in Totnes, the initiative got global attention and currently already 1009 initiatives are officially registered as a Transition Town initiative. The number of Transition Towns is still rising (Transition network, 2012).

Aims and Philosophy
The philosophy of Transition Towns is based on the concept of local resilience: local communities should be self-supplying instead of producing on a global scale. According to Rob Hopkins, the founder of Transition Towns, we are now living in the end of the era of cheap oil. In today's society we are completely dependent on oil. Oil is used in the production of almost anything, but we are reaching a peak when more than half of the oil supply has been consumed and this will lead to scarcity and rising prices. This problem is defined by Hopkins as 'peak oil'. Change is therefore needed to end this addiction before we run out of oil.

The second cornerstone of Transition Towns is climate change. The rising level of CO_2 in the atmosphere has led to a global rise in temperature. Rising temperatures potentially have dramatic consequences for life on earth. Climate change and peak oil are both symptoms of a society that is dependent on fossil fuels (Hopkins, 2008).
The Transition Town model is based on the assumption that localization of life and work is necessary to discourage the use of cheap oil for food production, transport and energy which nowadays is part of a globalized economic system. Peak oil is an interesting concept because people will directly feel the consequences of the depletion of oil in their current lifestyle while the consequences of climate change are in many cases not directly tangible for human beings. Hopkins assumes that our current communities are not resilient enough yet to deal with less energy. For this reason it is important to get the resilience of local communities back and to act collectively and directly to the peak oil problem. He assumes that with the help of collective intelligence it will be possible to use less energy.

Method of Transition Towns
Hopkins provides practical solutions to the problem of peak oil and climate change. Initiatives are practically set up and the idea is to involve people in the local neighborhood. All activities are organized by citizens themselves. This should stimulate social bonding in the local

environment. Transition Town initiatives in the Netherlands vary from permaculture courses, local food programs, attention to the local economy, movie nights/lectures, energy related initiatives and even the initiation of a local energy cooperation. In the result section, table 2 gives an overview of the different initiatives that take place in different cities in the Netherlands and Germany (Freiburg).

According to Hopkins, it is important to make use of the skills that people already have and people should be allowed/able to do what they are passionate about. Examples of skills that can be useful are handymen skills, being able to bring people together, public speaking and organizing effective meetings. Hopkins made a plan of twelve steps which can be followed by participants in Transition Towns in order to set up a successful Transition Town. The twelve ingredients of the Transition Model are:

1.Set up a steering group and design its dissolution from the outset. 2. Raise Awareness.
3. Lay the foundations. 4. Organize a big unleashing of the Transition Town. 5. Form working groups. 6. Use Open Space. 7. Develop visible practical manifestations of the project.
8. Facilitate the great re-skilling. 9. Build a Bridge to Local Government.
10. Honor the elder. 11. Let it go where it wants to go…
12. Create an energy descent plan. (Transition Towns USA, 2012).

The first ingredient refers to the structure of a particular Transition Town and says that a coordination group should be raised in order to lay the foundations and to coordinate different activities which each other. The second ingredient refers to publicity that should be made in order to get known by other people. The third ingredient refers to the structure of a particular Transition Town and aims to get a clear structured organization. The fourth ingredient refers to the organization of an event which can raise awareness in the neighborhood for the Transition Town. The fifth ingredient explains that working groups should be formed, which can focus on a particular topic like gardening. The sixth ingredient refers to a method that is important in the Transition Towns movement which is called open space. People will sit in a circle and come up with new ideas and discuss these ideas with each other. The seventh ingredient indicates that activities should be organized which are visible in the local neighborhood. The eighth ingredient says that people should be skilled again in living with less energy. The ninth ingredient indicates that people should collaborate with the local government in order to become more successful. The tenth ingredient is to honor the elders, since elderly people can teach us how it was to live in a society with less energy. The eleventh ingredient indicates that you should not follow a too strict path, you are dependent of the people who are involved and sometimes it is better to try something new instead of following the same path. The twelfth ingredient says that you should create an energy descent plan, which has to build a future in which less energy is needed (Hopkins, 2008).

A Transition Town can become internationally recognized if a Transition Town meets the goals of the handbook. It is important to get this status because it means that an initiative becomes an officially registered Transition Town. In order to obtain this status, fundamental documents must be send to Totnes in England (and in English). The assembly in Totnes provides the recognition. A summary about what should be done to obtain international recognition is added to paragraph 9.4 in the appendix.

Psychology behind Transition Towns

According to Hopkins, the spectre of a ruined planet that is used by many environmental activists (think of the lonely polar bear surrounded by water) does not work to make a transition to a sustainable society possible. Hopkins claims that we should not create fear but come up with practical solutions to the peak oil problem. Hopkins (2008) compares our penchant for oil with an addiction. Insights from the field of addiction therapy show that we give specific attention to the different changing processes that people are going through and pay attention to factors like motivation, resistance and ambivalence. The changing process in this case is the process from being dependent on oil to becoming independent of oil. People should be given the space to express their own views instead of convincing them of one's own right (Hopkins, 2008). Insights from the field of psychology show that the main barriers created by people in order to avoid taking action are feelings of powerlessness and isolation. These feelings prohibit people to spring into action. The transition model makes use of these insights and aims towards creating a positive vision in a way that people can be part of a collective that is bigger than themselves. This can be done by keeping transition initiatives small so that everyone knows each other. According to Hopkins we should create stimulating images of the future in order to initiate the transition process. Hopkins argues that we should find a positive solution which comes from inside society (on a local level) and not from experts.

"Transition is based on hope and optimism and sees the men on the street as a solution" (Hopkins, 2008, p. 157).

2.2   Discussion Transition Towns

The Transition Towns movement is an upcoming (and still growing) movement with potential. For this reason it is interesting to get to know more about the movement. The Transition Towns movement, which originally comes from Totnes in England, has as main objectives to solve the peak oil and climate change problem. The Transition Towns approach connects to the idea of think globally, act locally which is a common heard slogan in policy plans. This slogan shares the assumption that big global problems should be addressed on a local level. The Transition Town movement is based on the assumption that we should find a positive solution which comes from inside society (on a local level) and not from experts.

   The Transition Towns movement is investigated in this research because of its local and practical approach which connects to the social practices approach of Spaargaren (2003) that will be discussed more thoroughly in the theoretical framework. Spaargaren says that citizens are an important actor in the process of transition, as end user of products and services. They play an important role in society and can be highly influential in a transition towards sustainability. The government can make policy plans but if citizens are not willing to follow these plans big changes in society will not be reached. The willing to change should come from the society itself instead of from policy makers. It is decided to investigate Transition Towns since it is an upcoming grassroots movement which got global attention. The movement got attention in many countries and places and it is for this reason interesting to see what is so attractive of the movement for citizens. The successes or failures of the Transition Town movement can be used to investigate how citizens can be activated in the transition towards a more sustainable society.

3.   Theoretical framework

3.1   Introduction and Context

The main topic of this study is how to stimulate and involve citizens in the transition to a sustainable society. The Dutch government wants to be a frontrunner in this transition. This can be achieved only if everyone participates in this process and deliberately opts for sustainable consumption and production (Bakker et al., 2008). In the past, citizens were often not directly engaged in policy development but there is an ongoing shift towards including citizens in policy development. Research has shown that governments no longer see citizens merely as small polluters but increasingly engage them directly (Spaargaren & Mol, 2008). According to Bakker et al. (2008) citizens can be an important factor in the transition to a sustainable society. However, the government and commercial companies should connect to the everyday life of citizens in a suitable way (Bakker et al., 2008).

   Environmental pollution is often an unwanted side effect of human activity. It is difficult to win citizens loyalty for 'anonymous' regimes as the environment in which the result of activity is not often directly visible in the environment where it occurs. This is especially the case, when citizens have to sacrifice parts of their current lifestyle. Denial of the actual problem and attempts to avoid financial burdens complicates the creation of environmental policy (Spaargaren et al., 2002). People often do not see themselves as directly responsible for climate related issues and are avoiding the problem. This chapter investigates what can be done to involve citizens in sustainable development. An answer will be given to the theoretical research question:

"To what extent do the theoretical approaches offer insight into the systematic character of sustainable development and practical clues to addressing system transitions as proposed by the Transition Town movement?"

Different theories will be presented that try to come to terms with the complexity of sustainable development. The theories are categorized on the basis of three pillars. The first pillar is: "What should the focus be and on which level?" Theories about systemic thinking, transition management, social practices, environmentally significant behavior and anthropocentrism/ ecocentrism are all grouped under this subtheme. The second pillar is: "How to organize and who to engage". Insights of Boutellier (2011) and Hajer (2011) are part of this subtheme. This pillar refers to the question of how to organize sustainable development. The final pillar is "How to reach?" The tipping point approach comes with a practical approach of how to get more citizens involved in the transition to a sustainable society.

3.2   What should the Focus be and on which Level?

3.2.1   Systemic Thinking

The systemic thinking approach rests on the assumption that the global sustainability crisis cannot be solved with a focus on single issues and symptoms. The so-called wicked problems ask for a much deeper thinking about the way the economy, the political system and the

society works (Narberhaus et al., 2011). The following citation explains why we should think in terms of a system:

"Environmentalism will never be able to muster the strength it needs to deal with the global warming problem as long as it is seen as a special interest. And it will continue to be seen as a special interest as long as it narrowly identifies the problem as environmental and the solutions as technical " (Shellenberger & Nordhuis 2004 as cited in Narberhaus et al., 2011, p. 10).

The systematic nature of wicked problems, like climate change, can only be systematically addressed as they are seen in the wider system. The environmental crisis is often broken down into small pieces like deforestation, consumer behavior etc., but all these parts influence each other, and for this reason the problem should be addressed as a whole or as a set of interconnected elements (Narberhaus et al., 2011). The same lack of systematic thinking applies to the focus on individual behavioral change. Behavioral change should be addressed on a collective level because behavior and motivation are complex and deeply entrenched in emotions, norms and habits. Choices are not made individually, but on a more collective level (Narberhaus et al., 2011). In this study some theoretical concepts and approaches are used that can be connected to systematic thinking (Narberhaus et al., 2011). The first theoretical concept that will be discussed in more detail is Transition Management. Transition management and systemic thinking are closely related since transitions take place in complex systems, in which multiple factors and interests play a role.

3.2.2   Transition Management

Transition management is a governing model that is used to understand, how large changes/transitions in the society can take place. Transitions are important changes in functional systems and they are the outcome of many developments which take place during a period of at least 25 years. Transitions are the result of developments in areas as economy, ecology, technology, culture and governmental policy making. A transition to sustainable development is one of the issues that we are currently dealing with (Grin et al., 2010).
In order to get insight into how a process of transition can look like figure 1 is provided. The model shows how the multi level perspective can be achieved through interaction at different levels in Transition.
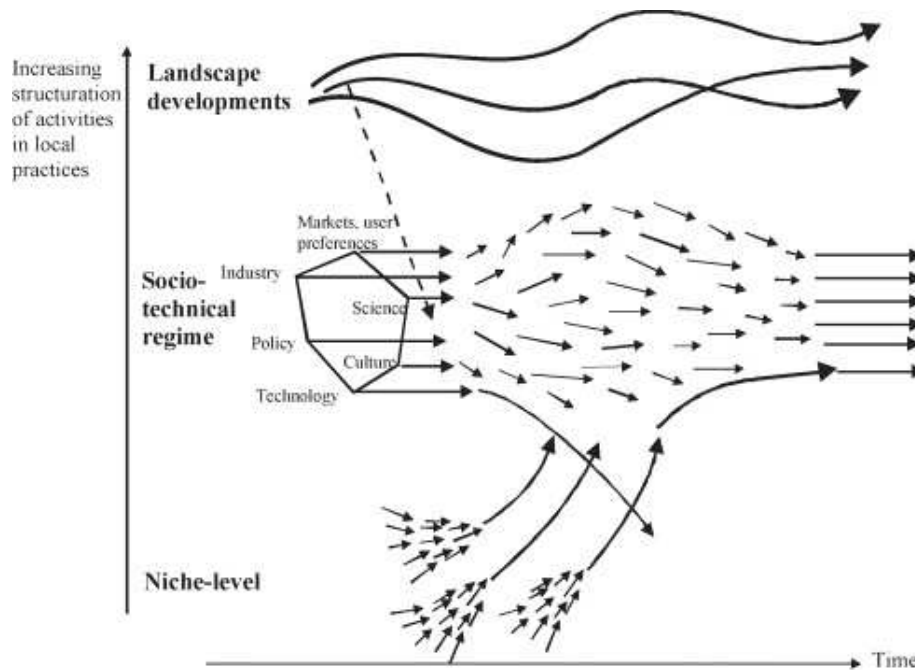
Figure 1. Integration of different levels in the multi level perspective of the Transition Management model. From Grin et al. 2010, p. 64

The multi-level perspective explains that transition comes about through interaction between processes at different levels. The three levels differ in terms of stability and size. Transition starts at a niche (micro) level. On this level, social networks are small and unpredictable, but there is room for radical innovation and experimentation. Niche innovators are the so-called forerunners of transition processes. Environmental activists and citizen initiatives are examples of potential niche innovators. These niche innovations can break through but have little chance as long as the regime is still stable (Grin et al., 2010). The regime (meso) level is the level in which the dominant practices are represented. Rules and technologies provide stability and reinforcement of the prevailing socio-technical regimes. Examples of actors that act on a regime level are industries, governments, companies, universities and (cultural) organizations. The regime is the established situation of a given system. This level has major influence and can be decisive on the next, more abstract, level: the landscape level. When problems occur on a regime level (think for instance of rising oil prices) windows of opportunity will be created for niche innovators (like bottom-up initiatives) (Grin et al., 2010). The landscape (macro level) forms a stable platform and is beyond the direct influence of regime and niche actors. Changes can occur on a landscape level and these changes are slower than on other levels, but have more influence. An example of a change on a landscape level is a shift in thinking such as environmental awareness which has as an influence on the regime level in transport energy and agriculture (Grin et al., 2010).

    The example of the transition from the pre-industrial to industrial society is chosen to further clarify the above explanation of transition processes. The horse-based transport regime faced problems in the beginning of the 20th century. The electric tram already existed in a *niche* but later became the basis of the urban transport regime because there were already problems with the horse based transport regime (Grin et al., 2010). In the early twentieth

century, the electric tram rapidly developed from a niche into the dominant urban transport regime. The landscape level involved more than just transport but a whole shift in thinking concerning technology and a new systemic adaption in society.

The Transition Town movement can be seen as one of the niche innovators which may lead to a change on a regime level (for instance changing legislature and policy plans around transport), which in turn may lead to a landscape change (sustainable development) (Grin et al., 2010). The current complex environmental problems should be directed through transition management that is directed to a systemic change (Hajer, 2011). In current transition policy, too much emphasis is put on technical-systemic change, and not enough attention is given to societal embedding and complexity (Hajer, 2011). In the next section specific attention will be given to societal embedding and the role of citizens in this process.

3.2.3   Social Practices Theory

Within transition, human beings play a fundamental role as change agents. The idea that human beings are rational decision makers is incomplete. Decisions are often made unconsciously and driven by routines and emotional factors, and the social, material and economic context and cultural values play an important role (Narberhaus et al., 2011). The idea that actions have a routine, pragmatic, recursive, ordinary and everyday-life character is emphasized by the theory about social practices (Spaargaren, 2006). Examples of social practices are: eating, playing, traveling, living and exercising (Spaargaren et al., 2002). Social practices theory believes that strategies for environmental change should address issues concerning environmental development not at the level of products or isolated individuals but at the level of practices themselves. Different social practices should be addressed independently from each other. This suits well to the idea of transition management in which different levels and phases should be directed in a different way (Spaargaren, 2006). Human agents carry out social practices and these practices are influenced by social structures. Social structures refer to the social, material and institutional environment in which actors have to move. Social structures emphasize the system character in the social practices theory. Actors have to move in a (pre-existing) system in which limited space is available for new decisions which go beyond routines (Spaargaren, 2006).

Citizens can have a major influence on politics, policy makers and organizations. Therefore, citizens should be taken into account when aiming to a more sustainable society. Bakker et al. (2008) emphasizes that policymakers and environmental scientists often view citizens as a problematic part in the transition to a sustainable society because they would not be willing to sacrifice their current lifestyle. However, Bakker et al. (2008) claim that citizen-consumers, as end users of products and services, can play an important role in this transition. According to Bakker et al. (2008), an active participation of citizen-consumers is crucial if we want to reach this transition. They claim that the government, in contrast to the current situation, should connect to the daily life and experiences of citizens. Environmental policy should create favorable social conditions to make a transition to sustainable development possible. If, for instance, organic food in supermarkets is missing, it is not reasonable to expect from citizen-consumers that they will buy organic food (Bakker et al., 2008).

Policy makers often make the mistake of viewing environmental behavior as a separate component of behavior. However, environmental behavior is not a separate category in the

daily life of citizens. Almost all human behavior is to some extent related to the environment (Spaargaren et al., 2002). The social practices approach rests on the assumption that everyone has to deal more or less with the environment. A small group is especially active in acting in an ecological responsible way, but the biggest group is just following habits and routines concerning environmental behavior. This insight shows that it is not reasonable to expect big changes in environmentally significant behavior of citizens, as long as the right circumstances are not yet there (like availability of organic food in supermarket) (Spaargaren et al., 2002).

Structure / Agency:
The sociological structuring theory plays an important role in the social practices approach of Bakker et al. (2008) which deals with consumer behavior. Human behavior is embedded in a routinized social structure. His theory explains the interrelationship between individual behavior and social structures. The underlying quote of Giddens clarifies why people have to choose between individual choices and institutionalized social structures which have a major influence on the behavior of people:

"Rules refer to cognitive, interpretive frames and to cultural norms. Resources refer to economic/allocative resources (control over things/money) and authoritive resources (control over people). Rules do not exist out there, but only through instantiation and reproduction in practice" (Giddens 1984 cited in Grin et al, 2010).

The social practices approach rests on the assumption that consumption is more than individual gratification but that it makes part of a context related social practice (Beckers et al., 2000). The social practices approach does not view the individual as the central unit of analysis but views social practices collectively. In the social practices approach the role of social structures in human functioning gets a central place. According to this approach structure is not only restricting for human functioning but also facilitating. Without structure human functioning is not possible (Spaargaren et al., 2002).

Many things we undertake are routinized. In this way we can undertake activities in daily life without asking ourselves continuously why we are doing things the way we are doing them. These shared behavioral routines have a social character. The possibilities for de-materialization and de-commodification of consumption are limited because the social and routinized character of consumption is often not taken into account. The role of environmental movements is often limited and takes a small part in decision making (Spaargaren et al., 2002).

In policy intervention, the promotion of sustainable consumption should be addressed through social practice. People should be addressed for instance on the environmental impact of their holiday or their food consumption. The analysis of Spaargaren showed that in the traditional environmental policy social practices are presented in technical and environmental terms, while environmental considerations should be given a place in the daily routinized life world of citizen consumers. The environmentally conscious citizen does not exist; people make environmentally motivated and non-environmentally motivated choices (Spaargaren et al., 2002).

In order to connect better to the real world and daily routines of citizens, environmental

heuristics should be addressed per practice and be connected to technical arguments. Examples of environmental heuristics are waste prevention and separation and the use of eco labels for consumers (Spaargaren, 2003). Abstract environmental goals should be framed in the language of daily life in order to attract more citizens (Spaargaren et al., 2002).

The next paragraph connects to the social practices theory and emphasizes the routine and habits character of human behavior. It comes with a useful augmentation to the social practices theory.

3.2.4 *Environmentally Significant Behavior*

Environmentally significant behavior (ESB), as defined by Stern (2000), connects to Spaargaren's social practices approach and investigates the psychology of environmental significant behavior (Stern, 2000). ESB can be defined by its impact on the environment and by its intention to change the environment in a positive way. Intent oriented behavior is influenced by different motivations and is undertaken with the intention to change and to benefit the environment in a positive way. Intent oriented behavior is not the same as impact oriented behavior because the intention to do well for the environment does not necessarily lead to benefits to the environment. Throughout history had the human desire to reach a higher living standard an impact on the environment and only recently has environmental protection become a consideration in human decision making (Stern, 2000).

Stern claims that intent oriented behavior is only one of the factors affecting environmentally significant behavior and is often not one of the most important. Environmentally related behavior is often a matter of personal habit or household routine and many of those habits are rarely considered. Environmentally beneficial actions may also follow from non environmental concerns, such as saving money (Stern, 2000). Other behavior is often highly constrained by the institutional environmental such as possible infrastructures.

The complexities of environmentally significant behavior can be formulated in the ABC theory. According to this theory is *behavior* (B) an interactive product of personal sphere *attitudinal variables* (A) and *contextual factors* (C) (Guagnano et al., 1995 as cited in Stern, 2000). Attitudinal factors include norms, beliefs and values. The attitude of an individual is the strongest when contextual factors are neutral (Stern, 2000). However, the stronger contextual factors are (like the more difficult or time consuming and expensive ESB is) the less dependent people's decisions are on attitudinal factors. In other words, attitudinal variables decline when more effort needs to be taken. When promoting environmentally significant behavior it is important to take away barriers or limiting conditions to behavior change. If you want to reach many people it is important that beneficial side factors are easily visible. This can be done by making information easily available, the amount of time that need to be invested limited and that financial barriers are taken away. This was demonstrated in programs concerning home insulation. The programs which had a clear set up and had financial incentives turned out to be more successful than programs that did not have these incentives.

3.2.5 *Ecocentrism and Anthropocentrism*

Intent oriented behavior is influenced by different motivations and is undertaken with the intention to change. It can be differentiated as anthropocentrism and ecocentrism.

Anthropocentrism and ecocentrism are two ways of understanding how ethics relates to nature. The anthropocentric ethic has the assumption that humans are the center of the universe (Kortenkamp & Moore, 2001). This approach views nature from the viewpoint of usefulness to human beings. A statement, which was used by Kortenkamp and Moore that belongs to anthropocentrism is: "What happens to the larger ecosystem, beyond what happens to humans does not make much difference to me." (Kortenkamp and Moore, 2011, p. 272)

The ecocentric approach has the assumption that all life has intrinsic value and places nature in a more central position. An example of a statement which was used by Kortenkamp and Moore as ecocentric statement is: "It is personally important to me to try to protect the larger ecosystem beyond what happens to humans." (Kortenkamp and Moore, 2011, p. 272

3.3 How to Organize and Who to Engage?
In this section will be analyzed how different networks should collaborate and coordinate their actions with each other and what types of organizations are important in this process.

3.3.1 *Improvising and Incrementalism*
A useful approach that focuses on the connection and cooperation between agents is presented by Boutellier. In his book Boutellier (2011) provides an explanation about how to handle and give direction to complex problems in current complex society in which multiple actors and organizations play a role. According to Boutellier (2011), it is not the central government that should deal with complex problems, but rather different organizations should improvise and coordinate their actions to each other. Currently initiatives tend to be loose and not well coordinated with each other.

We are currently living in a networked society in which multiple interests play a role. The networked society is the result of globalization, individualization and computerization. We are living in a time of insecurity with a politics lacking in substantive ideas. Through its connections the world has become physically and digitally stronger, but it has also led to feelings of insecurity (Boutellier, 2001, p. 117). The networked society has led to the need to organize around collective identities, such as, environmental movements (Boutellier, 2011). Our society can be characterized by complexity without guidance. Government often appears to be acting in a haphazard or improvising manner with many of its institutions having problems defining their function in an appropriate way. The government often sees citizens as a problem in political issues rather than as a solution. An example of such a complex problem is the issue concerning climate change (Boutellier, 2011).

We should improvise in order to give direction in current complex society. Part of improvisation is collaboration, which consists of coordinating action. There should be a common goal, and this goal can be reached by different means in which everyone fills in a part of the whole (Boutellier, 2011). In a networked society trust cannot be guaranteed by closed communities or feelings of kinship, but if control is not an option, people should rely on personal contact and social capital, which are part of network competencies. Control and trust are the moral parameters of a networked society (Boutellier, 2011). The spontaneity of improvisation should make a shift to alignment in order to make it work.

Currently, we are in a situation of horizontal organization. Every member of the society has in principal influence in decision making. This assumes competencies concerning

transparency, selection, transaction and readiness to take part in a complex body of processes in which certain coherence should be realized. An example of this is that citizens actually want to have more influence on decisions on a governmental level which leads to a more complex system than it used to be (Boutellier, 2011).

A government is needed that with help of knowledge, rules and facilities can create preconditions for citizens, organizations and entrepreneurs to work on sustainable development. This means that we need a more incremental model, in which many steps by different parties needs to be taken instead of a model in which the government keeps on playing a decisive role (Hajer, 2011).

In order to mobilize the strength of society, the government should restore the relation between abstract environmental problems and daily living conditions. This does also come forward in the social practices approach of Spaargaren (2006). The everyday environment can have a crucial role in finding a solution to the environmental problem (Hajer, 2011). According to Hajer (2011), in times of an energetic society the model of incrementalism works better than the classical control model of analysis and instruction by the government. The incrementalist model emphasizes the use of dynamic control systems and the dynamics of all levels of a system, from local to global. In this system of incrementalism which consists of collaboration and concurrence, the old hierarchical structure has made place for a more horizontal and open way of control. The government should take the local situation as a starting point and involve the wishes, ideas and capacities of the local communities in the policy process (Hajer, 2011). After discussing what the focus should be in current society and on which level, the next section explains on a practical level how to address people when talking about environmental goals.

3.4   How to Reach People?

3.4.1   Tipping Point

According to Gladwell (2001, p. 12) a tipping point is "the moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point ". His approach can offer useful insights for understanding how change in sustainable development can be made possible. He argues that you can only initiate an epidemic when you concentrate on some key aspects. According to the law of the few, *connecters*, *mavens* and *salesmen* are responsible for the genesis of worldwide epidemics. They play a decisive role in this process (Gladwell, 2001). Connecters are people with a special talent to bring people together. They are the kind of people that everyone knows. The connecters are informed by mavens. Mavens are the people who connect us with new information. Mavens are the people who have the most information. A maven has authority and he educates and helps people. In a social epidemic mavens are seen as databanks: they formulate the message. Connecters spread the message. The last group is the salesmen. They are able to convince us if we are hesitating about what we hear and see. The three groups together are decisive in social epidemics. Through connecting with the few special people who have the power, we can shape the process of social epidemics (Gladwell, 2001).

The law of context says that we can only initiate epidemics when we pay attention to little things. It is not necessary to find solutions for big problems through big answers; tipping points can be small but still effective. The paradox of an epidemic is that you need to make

small steps to create a big movement. The law of the few suggests that we are unnoticeably influenced by the signals from others. These signals can be small but may have a big influence. Gladwell (2001) argues that we do not have a unified personality. We show some behavior in one situation and other behavior in other situations. He shows that character is not as stable as it seems. Context and circumstances have a big influence on the situation. The influence of the group is large and plays a crucial role in the beginning of an epidemic. If we want to keep being successful, it is important not to exceed the maximum of 150 people. Otherwise groups become too big and will become unmanageable. In Gladwell's Tipping Point stories share a humble design; small things can make the difference. Social change is often instable and inexplicable because we are ourselves are instable and inexplicable. By taking care to present information in the correct way we can make sure that it sinks in. Gladwell's Tipping Points approach can provide useful information about what kind of people are important in organizations and which competencies are needed in order to be successful (Gladwell, 2011).

3.5   Discussion of the Theoretical Framework
The theoretical framework aimed to give an answer to the theoretical research question:

"To what extent do the theoretical approaches offer insight into the systemic character of sustainable development and practical clues to addressing system transitions as proposed by the Transition Town movement?"

The insights gained from the theoretical framework will now be discussed in more detail in order to answer the theoretical research question above. The theoretical framework is subdivided into three pillars.

The first pillar comes with an understanding of: what the focus should be and on which level. The theories that belong to this subtheme come with an understanding on which level issues concerning environmental sustainability can be addressed in the most suitable way. Bakker et al. (2008) mentioned that citizens can play a crucial role in transition process, as end users of products and services. For this reason it is important to take the role of citizens into consideration when making policy decisions concerning environmental sustainability. The systemic thinking approach makes clear that environmentally related problems should be addressed in a wider system, since all parts of a system influence each other. People live in a broader world in which multiple interests play a role. People make decisions not only based upon environmental considerations, but other motivations (e.g., financial, time, social) play an important role in decision-making. This was also found in the social practices theory and Stern's theory about environmentally significant behavior. We learn from Stern that attitudinal factors decrease as contextual factors become stronger. In other words: when people need to spend a lot of time and effort on environmentally beneficial behavior, the chance that they will actually come to environmentally beneficial behavior is low. The role of attitudinal factors on impact-oriented behavior is often limited. For this reason the theory about eco/anthropocentrism will probably not be very useful in practice, since people do not make their decision intentionally but more dependent on the context and environment they are living in. The theory about Transition Management explains how shifts in behavior on a

societal level can take place. The Transition Management model sees Transition on a large scale with Transition Towns being just one of the many actors. When evaluating sustainable initiatives it is interesting to see if the theories are applicable or not. If the theories are correct, the most successful initiatives are the ones that combine environmental considerations together with other considerations.

In the second pillar, "how to organize and who to engage", the theory about improvising and incrementalism is discussed in more detail. Boutellier and Hajer come with a practical understanding of how the relationship between government and citizens place out in the current society in which multiple actors and organizations play a role. They show that different organizations should coordinate their actions in an appropriate way. The government could best take a facilitating role and communicate on a more horizontal level with citizens. It will be investigated how policy makers of different municipalities view their work in relation to others. Collaboration between different organizations and governments is seen as a crucial component for success. For this reason network competencies are crucial, and it is investigated how the collaboration between Transition Towns and other parties works and if the appropriate competencies are available.

The third and last pillar is "how to reach people." Gladwell's approach comes with a practical understanding of what kinds of competencies are useful to have in order to attract many people to an initiative. Connectors, mavens and salesmen should be recognizable in an organization in order to gain successes. It would be interesting to see to what extent the success of TT can be predicted by the competencies of the people involved.

With these three pillars, three important parts of the transition towards a more sustainable society are covered. These different topics give insight in the systematic character of the transition towards a more sustainable society and can be applied to the Transition Towns movement.

4. Method

4.1   Introduction

The research question of this study is:

"To what extent do theories about social practices, transition management and tipping points offer an explanation to understand the successes or failures of Transition Towns in the reinforcement and acceleration of sustainable development?"

In the first section of this study an answer has been given to the theoretical research question. This question is as follows:

Theoretical question: "To what extent do these theoretical approaches offer insight into the systematic character of sustainable development and practical clues to addressing system transitions as proposed by the Transition Town movement?"

 In the theoretical framework different theories were presented that offered useful clues for understanding how to give citizens a meaningful role in a systemic transition towards a more sustainable society.The second part of this study will deal with the empirical question:

Empirical question: "To what extent does the Transition Towns movement offer a good answer to the systemic character of sustainable development?"

This empirical question has two sub questions:
"How successful are the initiatives of Transition Towns and what are the explanations for this?"And "To what extent do the chosen theoretical approaches connect to the (daily) experiences of (citizens) in the Transition Town movement?"

The aim in this research is to come to a better understanding of both the successes and failures of the Transition Towns movement through a comparison with the theoretical understandings of systemic thinking. This will offer clues as how to involve citizens as key agents of change in a systemic transition towards a sustainable society and economy.
   The focus of this study lies on initiatives that are organized by the Transition Towns movement, which promotes local sustainable projects in cities. The successes and failures of Transition Towns will be analyzed and explained with help of theoretical approaches from the theoretical framework.
    After the interviews with Transition Towns, alder men and policy makers from municipalities and one policy maker from a province were interviewed. The main objectives of these interviews were to get insight in how policy makers relate their work to ecological sustainable issues and what their conception of local sustainability is, both generally and applied to Transition Towns. In addition was of interest how the collaboration between the government and Transition Towns is.

4.2 Comparison

A comparison between thirteen different stakeholders from Transition Towns in different cities in the Netherlands and one in Freiburg, Germany is made. This has been done by interviewing key people in the Transition Towns network. In order to find out how partners of Transition Towns see their movement, also 7 policy makers from local governmental bodies were interviewed. In total were 22 respondents interviewed, out of this 22 were 15 respondents from Transition Towns and 7 respondents were policy-makers from local governmental bodies in the area of climate, energy and sustainability.

In the result section an analysis has been made of why some initiatives turn out to be more successful than others. For the selection of Transition Towns, different factors were included that might have an influence on the successes or failures of the Transition Town movement. A definition of success is given in paragraph 1.5 in the introduction. Bigger-sized cities and smaller-sized cities were included in order to find out if the size of a city has influence on the success of a particular Transition Town. Internationally recognized and non internationally recognized Transition Towns were included as well in order to find out if international recognition has an influence on the success of a Transition Town. Finally, bigger and smaller Transition Towns' initiatives were included in order to find out if there was any relationship between the size of a Transition Towns and its success

4.3 Selection and Categorization

In order to determine the most relevant respondents, a national meeting day of Transition Towns was visited first. The selection of relevant respondents took place on the basis of the network method. The network method has the assumption that potential respondents should be selected in the first interviews with help of the respondents (Boeije, 2008). The first interview was with one of the initiators of Transition Towns in the Netherlands. This person had a good overview of the organization and was able to give some advice about the size of the different initiatives. He was also able to give an indication of successful and failing initiatives. However, this was just an indication and the judgment of successful and failing initiatives was done after analyzing the initiatives. Hereafter, the different respondents from Transition Towns were selected for the interviews. Most selected respondents were either contact person or a member of a coordinating group because these persons have the best overview of the movement. For the selection of municipalities only municipalities were included in which a Transition Towns initiative was located that was interviewed in this study. All potential respondents were firstly contacted by email and asked if they were willing to be interviewed. Non responding respondents were reminded with an email and phone call. It was quite easy to find respondents. Most people were enthusiastic and it was easy to find a date. From the selected Transition Towns only one respondent did not react, the other respondents participated immediately. The respondents of the municipalities were a bit more difficult to reach; half of the respondents were willing to participate for an interview.

The selected Transition Towns were: TT Rotterdam, TT Eindhoven, TT Utrecht, TT Groningen, TT Deventer, TT Tilburg, TT Apeldoorn, TT Freiburg (DE), TT Wageningen, TT Zutphen, TT Den Dolder and TT Houten. Two members of the initiative group of the national network were interviewed; both were also involved in their local Transition Town (Den

Dolder and Deventer). The founder of the Repair Café foundation was also interviewed. The Repair Café foundation is not a part of Transition Towns, but many Repair Cafés have been set up by members of Transition Towns. This initiative was investigated because it has grown very fast in the past few years. It also got a lot of publicity and was mentioned in national and international media. The national meeting day which was open for everyone who was interested in Transition Towns was also attended. This was the first physical acquaintance of the author with Transition Towns. On this day, first potential respondents were acquired. An assembly of the national initiative group was also attained.

Table 1 is provided in order to give an overview of the interviewed Transition Towns in the Netherlands. The information in the table is acquired from the interviews, the websites of Transition Towns and the bureau for statistics Netherlands (CBS, 2011). The different categories of the columns will be further discussed here. The "Position of respondent" column refers to the position of the interviewed person in the particular Transition Town. The column "Year founded" refers to the year in which a Transition Town initiative was founded. "Size of the city" refers to the actual size of a city in which a particular Transition Town initiative is located. In this study a large city is indicated as having 300.000 or more inhabitants, a medium- sized city has 100.000 to 300.000 inhabitants and a small city (or village) has 100.000 or fewer inhabitants. "Size of TT" refers to the number of activities that are roughly organized by the local Transition Town. A small Transition Towns is categorized as having three or less different initiatives, a medium Transition Town is categorized as having four to six different initiatives and a large one as having six or more initiatives. "Internationally recognized" refers to the groups that are internationally recognized according to the Transition Town handbook. The subheading "Initiative group available" refers to the question whether the group has an initiative group who coordinates the different working groups. Groups with initiative groups tend to be of a larger size than groups that do not.

Table 1: Overview of the twelve Transition Towns.

Transition Towns	Position of respondent	Year founded	Size of city	Size of TT	Inter-nationally recognized	Initiative group available
Apeldoorn	Initiator TT Apeldoorn	± 2009	Medium	Small	No	No
Den Dolder	Founder TT National and member initiative group locally	2010	Small	Small	No	Yes
Deventer	1: Member initiative group in Deventer /founder national TT and regional. 2. Member working group/ involved in local level.	2008	Small / Medium	Large	Yes	Yes
Eindhoven	Contact person	2009	Medium	Small	No	No

Freiburg (Dui)	Member initiative group	2011	Medium	Large	Yes	Yes
Groningen	Member initiative group	2008	Medium	Medium	Yes	Yes
Houten	Former member initiative group/currently alderman Houten	2010	Small	Medium	No	Yes
Rotterdam	Contact person	2009	Large	Small	No	No
Tilburg	Night major/ hostess dinner activity, initiator not shopping day	2011	Medium	Medium / Large	No	No
Utrecht	Contact person	2009	Large	Small	No	No
Wageningen	Founder working group energy	2009	Small	Medium	No	Yes
Zutphen	Member initiative group	2009	Small	Medium	Yes	Yes

The selected municipalities were: Wageningen, Utrechtse Heuvelrug, Apeldoorn, Houten, Tilburg and Groningen. A policy maker of the province Noord- Brabant was also interviewed. These local governmental bodies were selected because they could be connected to Transition Towns which were located in the same city. Further information about these interviews is provided in table 3 in the result section.

4.4   Research Design

For this study a qualitative research design with in depth interviews was chosen. The focus for this type of research design lies on understanding how actors give meaning to their social environment. In this case a qualitative research design is more relevant than a quantitative one because it will provide more in-depth information about how people actually think and act. First reason is that more needs to be known about the organization before a quantitative research will pay off. The second reason is that the focus of this study was on understanding what was going on in the research population, and directly talking with people would lead to more in-depth information than sending questionnaires to respondents. The qualitative research method leads to more insight in processes that are going on in the research population and this connects quite well to Transition Towns because they are also in a process of trying out new things and figuring out what works and what does not work. When making use of a standardized questionnaire respondents are not given much freedom to motivate their answer and this can lead to the fact that important information will get lost. In the interviews it became clear that after continuing to ask and giving people more time to think about their answers and motivating them it became possible to discover what was going on in the

research population. A standardized questionnaire would fit better in a follow up study when more information is already available (Boeije, 2008).

Before starting with the interviews, a topic list was made which gave a handheld during the interviewing process. This was done because part of qualitative research is to work exploring and to give gave space for topics that are not directly included in the questionnaire. The topic list was designed in an unstructured way in order not to determine the direction of the interview (Boeije, 2008). The questions were not formulated beforehand, but a topic list was used. There was room for asking further on topics that need to be questioned more. The order of the topics was not strict and could differ per interview. The respondents were free to come up with new topics when relevant. Since answer categories set up before, respondents were free to answer the questions in an open way.

Duration and Location
The interviews of Transition Towns took place in the city were the initiative was located, mostly at the home of the respondent or in a café. The duration of the interviews differed from half an hour to 2 hours. The interviews with policy makers of municipalities were done by phone and mostly took around 15 to 20 minutes. The interviews took place in April, March and June in 2012.

4.5   Validity and Reliability
The qualitative research design with in depth interviews has influenced the internal validity (absence of systematic measurement errors) of this study in a positive way (Boeije, 2008). By doing in depth interviews, the underlying opinions of the respondents became clear and thus more details were obtained than using another method. The qualitative research design allowed for new topics to be incorporated in the topic list. Additionally, respondents gave the impression that they were not giving socially desirable answers but were trying to describe the reality as naturally as possible, which is positive for the internal validity of this research. The limited research population will have an effect on the possibility of generalizing the results, which has an effect on the external validity of this study. However, during the interviews it was the author's impression that at a certain moment, saturation took place (Boeije, 2008). The Transition Town network in the Netherlands is not very large and many people know each other. Respondents who had the overview over Transition Towns in their city or village were interviewed and for this reason it has been discovered quite well what is going on inside the research population. This is positive for the population validity since the selection of the research populations seems to be a good representation of the Transition Towns network (Boeije, 2008). In the last interviews there was not much new information acquired. The results of this study can be seen as a design for follow up studies.

   An influential factor in connection with an interview is the interviewer. When the aim is to analyze the respondent's attitudes, motives and characteristics, the reliability of the surveys will be influenced significantly by the interviewer's behavior. This may have a negative or positive effect on the atmosphere and the relationship of trust when the interview takes place. As mentioned above, the qualitative survey is structured by a topic list which increases the possibility of making a comparison of the interviews. When interviewing people it is a

possibility that there may be misinterpretations in the dialogue between respondent and the interviewer. To avoid such problems, the interviewer made a little summary of what the respondent said per theme. The qualitative research design gives the possibility of assessing whether a question has been understood and to discuss, conclude, interpret and verify the results. This has a positive effect on the reliability of this study. It was positive for the reliability of this study that before starting with the study, the Transition Towns movement was not familiar to the researcher yet. For this reason there was no preliminary (subjective) opinion yet about the movement, which was positive for the objectivity of the results (Boeije, 2008). In order to guarantee the validity it was decided to make use of software (NVivo) in order to analyze the data systematically. It was decided to let data collection and data analysis interact with each other, in this way, it became possible to test interim interpretations. Something that was negative for the reliability of this study is that some interviews were conducted in cafés with some background noise. This made it in some cases difficult not to get distracted for both the respondent and the interviewer. During the transcribing it was in some cases difficult to hear what the respondent said due to back ground noise. In addition, were in two cases (Repair Café and TT Deventer (respondent member working group)) not all topics discussed since there was not enough time available, this was negative for the internal validity of this study.

4.6   Explanation Topic List

Before starting with the interviews, first the theoretical framework was finished in order to gain insight on which theoretical topics were interesting to compare with the daily practice of Transition Towns and how they could be applied in practice. In order to understand what Transition Towns means, the handbook of Rob Hopkins was analyzed in detail. The national and local websites of Transition Towns were analyzed in order to get an idea of the different activities that are organized by Transition Towns. After analyzing Transition Towns in theory it was decided to visit the national meeting day (Landelijke Genoegdoeningsdag) of Transition Towns in order to understand better how the movement works and to come in contact with people to interview. After this day a topic list was made which gave a handheld during the interviewing process. The topic list was structured via an interview guide with 7 themes, each comprising a number of specific questions. The themes were chosen and formulated on the basis of theory presented in the theoretical framework and information in the Transition Town handbook. The topic list will now be defined further.

The first subheading (practical information TT) in the topic list refers to the Transition Town on a local level and comes with practical questions about the Transition Town. The first topic concerned the role of the respondent in the local Transition Town. In this way it became possible to understand if the respondent was in a position to know what was going on in the TT. Hereafter, some questions were asked about the origins of the TT. It was asked how the Transition Town was organized and what type of initiatives were organized. It was also asked to what extent the Transition Town followed the 12 steps of the handbook. This topic came forward from the handbook of TT, in which 12 ingredients of a Transition Town are listed. Interviewees were also asked about the kind of city in which the TT was located. In this way it became possible to understand whether a neighborhood was very individualistic or if there

were strong social ties in the neighborhood. In the handbook it was described that a city could get an international recognition if they followed the steps. The topic "Type of initiatives" refers to the type of initiatives that are organized by a particular Transition Town. In the first interview it was asked how you could get international recognition. In the next interviews it was asked whether or not Transition Towns were internationally recognized and for what reason.

The second subheading comes with more general questions about Transition Towns in order to understand its philosophy and background. Interviewees were asked how the movement was founded on a national level and how the national coordination group works. After that it was asked what the importance is of localization in Transition Towns and for what reason. According to Vermeij's theory (2008) this clashes with reality since social bonding in the local neighborhood is becoming less and less important, while bonding with friends and family remains important. It was asked what the respondents thought about this issue and if the local approach might have influence on the success. It was also asked what is so special about TT if you compare it with other environmental organizations like Greenpeace and World Wildlife Fund. Since the movement has become established in many countries it was asked how the international collaboration is with Transition Towns in other countries and to the headquarters in Totnes. Only members of the national initiative group were asked this question. This question was relevant because it can be connected to the Boutellier's theory about improvising.

The third subheading "the involvement of people" was about how much effort people from Transition Towns made to incorporate new people. It was asked how Transition Towns convinced new participants to join them. It was also questioned why some people are according to them not willing to be involved.

The fourth subheading concerned the success of initiatives. Different topics were made that might have influence on the success of a particular Transition Town. It was asked how many people are involved, how new initiatives originate, what kind of publicity is done to raise awareness for the TT and how the initiatives are organized and structured. It was asked which problems occur when setting up initiatives. Interviewees were asked which initiatives were more successful than others and for what reason. It was asked how successful the TT was and why. It was also asked how they define success.

The fifth subheading is "Social practices/ESB". The topics under this subheading are related to social practices theory and Stern's theory about environmentally significant behavior. It was asked how the social ties are in the movement and if people from Transition Towns also do social activities with each other. This was asked because in Spaargaren's theory about social practices it becomes clear that the direct social environment has major influence on the people's behavior. In other words, the closer social ties are between people, the more they will be influenced by each other. It was also asked how the social environment (e.g., friends, family) see their work for Transition Towns. The topic how important the role of citizens is in issues concerning environmentally sustainability was asked because Spaargaren (2003) claims

that citizens have a major role in sustainability issues since they can have put pressure on environmental policies. The question was whether citizens are directed individually by Transition Towns or as a group. This topic was included because Spaargaren's (2003) theory says that if people are addressed in a group there is more chance that they will continue with the behavior than when they are addressed as an individual, since the influence of collectivities is high and individuals are often directly influenced by group behavior. The question whether more 'green supply/biological products' in supermarkets lead to more consuming was asked to contact people. The respondents were asked whether people should give up many things in their current lifestyle to live sustainably.

The respondents were told that theory from social science has the insight that behavior is often made on the basis of habits and routines that are often not considered by individuals. It was asked whether they had thought about this before and how they react on this. Spaargaren's theory also says that it is good to direct citizens through social practice (eating, going on holiday, etc.), and it was asked whether or not this was the case for Transition Towns. The respondents were questioned about what the motivation is for people to get involved and what major objections are for people not to join the movement. Another thing that was asked was what type of people is involved. People are the most influenced by like-minded people.

The sixth subheading is called "Network''. The topics of this part refer to Boutellier's and Hajer's theory about improvising and incrementalism and ask about the nature of collaboration with the network. It was asked how the collaboration with municipalities, companies, other organizations and other Transition Towns place out. It is also asked what the role of the government should be in sustainable development. This question connects to Boutellier's and Hajer's approach because they claim that it is important to coordinate actions with each other and to work on a horizontal level with governments.

The last subheading is called "Tipping Points" and refers to Gladwell's approach. According to Gladwell's approach some people with special competencies can make success/transition happen. It was asked whether people in the group have these specific competencies, such as skills in public speaking, organizing, networking, etc. It was also asked what the influence is of the size on an initiative on its success. This was done because Gladwell claimed that initiatives can become too big (more than 100 people attending) and this might have influence on their success.

Explanation questionnaire for municipalities
The questionnaire for the municipalities was made after having interviewed all those involved in Transition Towns. The questions are self-explanatory and relate to the objectives which were described in the first part of the method, page

4.7   Explanation of the Code Tree
The interviews were recorded with an audio recorder and analyzed with help of NVivo. This software program makes it possible to compare, analyze and code interview data (QSR, 2012). The interviews were first transcribed and then loaded into the NVivo software

program. After that, portions of the text were coded. Codes were given to particular components of the interviews, such as "Collaboration with third parties", so that they could easily be compared. During this process some codes were adapted or deleted if they turned out to be irrelevant for the analysis. The codes were ordered according to the topics that came forward from the theory. From the analysis in NVivo in relation with the topics from the theory, a code tree was produced which was used for the analysis of the interviews. The different topics of the interviews were coded per theoretical subject. The code tree made it possible to analyze and compare the relevant information. However, the structure of the code tree is not exactly the same as in the results. Using this structured analysis makes it possible to explain the successes or failures of the Transition Towns movement by connecting theory to practice.

The first subheading of the first part of the code tree is called "General information". Codes were given to text fragments that belonged to this subheading. The code "Role in TT" is used to tag information about the role of the respondents in the movement. "Philosophy of TT" is a label for all parts of the text that are related to the philosophy of TT in general. "Localization of TT" refers to parts of the text that explain why localization is so important for TT. For the code "12 steps of handbook" all quotes were selected that refer to the question whether the 12 steps that are described in the handbook were followed or not. The code "Head, heart, hands" was added to the analysis, since many respondents mentioned this topic even though it did not made part of the topic list. "Internationally recognized" is used to tag all text fragments that explained about international recognition. The code "TT on a national level" refers to text fragments that have something to do with the organization of TT on a national level. The last code under the first subheading is called "Definition of sustainability", which refers to the respondent's definition of this term.

   The second subheading is called "Factors for success". Different factors that might have an influence on the success of TT's are categorized under this subheading. The first code is "Successful and unsuccessful initiatives", this code is used to tag text fragments that explain why some initiatives are more successful than others. The second code is "Number of people involved" and comes with a categorization of how many people are involved. The third code is "Acquaintance TT in town" and refers to the text fragments which give an indication of how many people know TT in a particular town. The fourth code "Structure of TT" gives an overview of the structure and organization of the different Transition Towns. The fifth code "Size of city" is self-explanatory. The sixth code "Fixed location for organizing initiatives" gives information about whether a TT has a fixed location or not.

   The third subheading was problems with setting up initiatives. The codes "Lack of time", "Lack of financial means" and "Lack of enthusiastic people" are added to this subheading. The code "In general" is added in order to add text fragments that do belong to this subheading but could not be categorized under the other codes.

The second part of the code tree is: "What should the focus be and on which level?" and has the almost same structure as is used for the analysis of the results. Theory and practice are brought together in this part. The subheading "System thinking/ Transition/ Social Practices/ESB" refers to the theories that are used in the theoretical framework. In this part

theory is connected to the daily practice of Transition Towns. The first code is called "Neighborhood and individualism" and refers to text fragments in which the respondents gave answer to the question whether there is a clash between individualism in society and the local approach of TT. The code "Are social practices directed independently and practically" connects to social practices theory. These code fragments say something about the practicality of initiatives and if they are directed per topic or more one social practice (think of travelling, eating, shopping etc.). The code "Recruiting of new people" is used to label fragments that explain how new people are recruited. The code "Influence of green supply" refers to answers to the question whether the supply of organic products leads to more people buying it. This question tests the Social practices theory. The code "Should people give up many things for a more sustainable lifestyle" is self explanatory. The code "Social ties" codes fragments of text which say something about the social bonding inside the movement. This connects to Spaargaren's structure and agency theory. The code "Are people addressed as a group or as individual" was a topic from the topic list and refers to the social practices theory as well. Since people react in a different way in collectivities than in individual circumstances this question was important to incorporate. "Attitude towards others" was not part of the topic list, but was important to incorporate because respondents often mentioned this topic. Special attention is given to young people because many respondents had ideas why young people are not part of the movement. The code "Type of people that are involved" is used to label the type of people that are involved. People are, according to Spaargaren (2003) and Stern (2000), often directly influenced by like minded people who are in their close social environment. The answers were categorized in different categories. Descriptions of people that could not be placed under one of these categories were placed under the code "Rest". The different initiatives that are organized by Transition Towns are categorized as "Important initiatives" and "Less important initiatives". Important initiatives are the ones that are used in most Transition Towns. Initiatives that are not organized by many Transition Towns are less interesting to analyze because they are not possible to compare.

The third part of the code tree is called "How to organize and who to engage?".This part is structured according to the theories about improvising and incrementalism. The first two codes are "Collaboration of TT with municipality" and "Collaboration of TT with third parties" and refer to the collaboration of the TT with different organizations. The interviewees were asked what the role of the local government should be and the answers on this question were coded as "Role of local government". The code "Subsidies" was given to text fragments about the subsidies that a Transition Town might or might not get. This relates to the code "Costs", because costs of initiatives was an often mentioned subject. The code "Publicity" was given to all text fragments that explained something about the publicity of a Transition Town.

The fourth part of the code tree is called "How to reach people?" and is similar to the result section. This part connects to Gladwell's approach about Tipping Points. "Tipping points" is also the subheading under this theme. The first code of this section is "Competencies". The different competencies that people have or are potentially relevant are categorized under this code. It was also coded which people are especially influential in TT because this related to

the tipping points theory. Finally, the "Influence of the size of an initiative on its success" was coded.

The results of the interviews with policy makers were also coded in the code tree. The text fragments are coded per subject. The codes were: "Conception of sustainability", "Importance of local initiative", "Opinion about TT", "Collaboration with TT" and "Bottlenecks". The code "Conception of sustainability" refers to the concept of sustainability that the interviewed policy maker has. Text fragments that given indication of the importance of local initiatives for the municipality are tagged under the code "Importance of local initiative". The opinion of the policy maker about the Transition Town movement is labeled with the code "Opinion about TT". Text fragments refer to the collaboration of the municipality are tagged with code "Collaboration with TT". The code "Bottlenecks" refers to problems that the municipality encounters with local citizens initiatives

5. Results

The result section is mainly structured according to the structure in the code tree. The section is split up in two parts. The first part provides a description of the outcomes of the interviews. The second section provides an interpretation of the results from the interviews in relation with the theory. In chapter 2, a description has been made of the Transition Towns movement. In this section the results of the interviews will be presented.

5.1 Overview of Initiatives Organized by Transition Towns

Table 2 gives an overview of the different initiatives that are provided by Transition Towns. The categorization is made with help of the answers from respondents during the interviews and the websites (see References) of Transition Towns.

Table 2. Overview of the different Transition Town initiatives per city.

TT / Initiatives	Local economy	Heart & Soul	Vegetarian Meal	Energy	Movie night/ lecture	TT Café	Bees belt	Repair Café	Local food	Permaculture Course	Local Energy Cooperation	Exchange of consumer goods	Community resources agriculture	Ecovillage	Consume less
Rotterdam			■					▓	■	▓			■		
Eindhoven				▓	■				■			▓			
Groningen	■			▓	■	▓		▓	■	▓	■	▓	■		
Deventer	■	▓		▓	■	▓	■	▓		▓	■	▓			
Tilburg		▓	■		▓				■		■	▓	■		■
Houten	■			▓	■				■	▓				▓	
Den Dolder		▓			■			▓		▓					
Wageningen				▓					■	▓	■	▓			
Zutphen	■			▓	■	▓	▓		■						
Apeldoorn			■		■			▓	■						
Freiburg		▓	■	▓	■	▓			■	▓	■		■	▓	

Explanation of table 2

"Local economy" refers to projects which have as goal to stimulate the local economy of a particular city. Examples of initiatives are a local monetary unit which can only be used in the city itself and the creation of a local sustainability guide which give consumers an overview where to buy sustainable products or for instance organic food. "Heart and soul" refer to

initiatives that are related to the hearth out of the "head, heart hand approach" (see result section page 36 for more information). An example of a heart and soul project is earth meditation. Earth meditation is a form of meditation in which participants try to get closer to the nature by listening to the 'rhythm' of the earth during meditation. This type of meditation focuses on the heart, and teaches participants to order their world based upon emotion rather than ratio. "Organic meal" refers to initiatives in which an organic meal is provided by and for the participants in order to create awareness about organic food. Initiatives related to the subheading energy consist of different parts. Examples are: solar panel initiatives, ventilation boxes and an energy team which visits houses and judge them on their energy efficient aspects. Also the energy descent plan, which is part of the 12 steps, is linked to this initiative. Movie nights and lectures are mainly informational and give information about peak oil and climate change. TT café is a social activity in which participants socialize and discuss Transition Town matters. The bees belt- initiative tries to attract more bees in the city by spreading seeds of flowers that bees and butterflies like. The Repair Café initiative is the most famous of all initiatives and is discussed in more detail in the results section. The Repair Café is a meeting place where people from the local neighborhood can go to with their broken or malfunctioning consumer goods that otherwise would be discarded. On these meeting are repairers available to help with repairing products. Local food refers to all initiatives which have as an aim to stimulate the consummation of food from the local area. Examples of initiatives are initiating of vegetable gardens, planting of eatable plants in the neighborhood and buying food from local farmers. Permaculture course is a course in which the main principles of permaculture are explained. Permaculture is a philosophy that seeks to reduce the human influence on the earth by living in a way that is permanently sustainable. A local energy cooperation is an energy provider in which the members are the decision makers themselves. There are no shareholders and it is a nonprofit organization. The profit will be invested in local sustainable energy, this stimulates employment in the local environment. The aim is to keep the energy prices lower than from other energy providers. Different initiatives of Transition Towns are related to exchange of consumer goods. Examples of this are exchange of clothes, books, cars and even seeds for plants. Two Transition Towns are working together with other citizens on eco villages. The district meets ecological, social, economical and cultural requirements. An example of an ecovillage is the city district Vauban in Freiburg, Germany. Consume less (Consuminderen) is an initiative in Tilburg and aims on consuming less non renewable products. An example of an initiative that is organized in Tilburg under this theme is the Buy Nothing day. People go to the city on the Buy Nothing day on the Saturday before the celebration of Sinterklaas (Dutch festivity). Activities on this day are diverse and can differ from street reviews among shoppers, street theatre, music, establishing of a present exchange stall, or the giving away of boxes happiness. This activity is very symbolic and has the aim to make people aware of the overconsumption of consumer goods in the current Western society.

Discussion Table 2
Table 2 shows that initiatives related to local food play a crucial role in Transition Towns. Transition Town Den Dolder was the only Transition Town that did not report an initiative related to local food, but this was because Transition Town Den Dolder is still in an early

stage. Other initiatives that are applied by many Transition Towns are movie nights / lectures and energy related initiatives. Also, the Repair Café initiative is carried out by many Transition Towns. Table 2 shows that six Transition Towns have a Repair Café. However, in reality there are four more Transition Towns with Repair Cafés, but these Transition Towns were not analyzed in this study. Some Transition Towns which are mentioned in the table (Eindhoven, Wageningen and Houten) did not organize a Repair Café since there is already a Repair Café in their city organized by other organizations. Because local food related initiatives, movie nights / lectures, energy related initiatives and Repair Cafés were mentioned by many Transition Towns, it was decided to analyze and discuss these initiatives more thoroughly in the result section and in the interpretation of the results. This does not mean that other initiatives are less important, but rather this decision is made because it is easier to compare initiatives that are applied by most groups than the ones that are only applied by a few Transition Towns.

   Table 2 also shows which Transition Towns have the largest variety of initiatives. Groningen, Deventer, Tilburg and Freiburg have all ten or more different initiatives. It is interesting to see that Groningen, Deventer and Freiburg are internationally recognized as well and that there could be a relation between being internationally recognized and the number of activities that are organized. This will be discussed more in more depth on page 36 and 37 in the result section.

5.2   Transition Towns in the Netherlands

Philosophy of Transition Towns according to key persons in TT network
The fourteen respondents were asked what they thought that Transition Towns means. The answers were quite similar to the description in the handbook by Rob Hopkins (2008). To describe it in short: Transition Towns means local resilience and to become independent of peak oil. The different key people say that Transition Towns is something else than other environmental movements because it aims to connect people with each other. It is also locally organized and it stimulates citizens to become active, instead of waiting for someone else to solve the peak oil problem.

   "Milieudefensie is fighting against things and the difference with us is that we come with practical solutions" (TT Groningen).

   "You hear people saying, I don't even know my own neighbors and I want that back" (TT Rotterdam).

The quotes show that important aspects of Transition Towns are to become (socially) involved in the neighborhood and to come up with practical solutions to large environmental problems.

The handbook's twelve steps
In chapter 2, a description has been made of the Transition Towns movement. The different respondents were asked what they thought about the twelve steps and if they followed them. Eleven respondents mentioned that they followed the steps to a certain extent. Most of the groups did not organize a big unleashing/ party (step 4) to celebrate the successes. Transition

Town Freiburg was one of the exceptions in this respect since they did organize a big party to present the Transition Town to the city. Four respondents actually mentioned that they had created an energy descent plan, which is explained in chapter 2 (step 12). Most respondents were enthusiastic about the open space method in which people have the chance to express their feelings and concerns in a circle of people (step 6). Interesting to see was that step 10, honoring the elder was not mentioned by the respondents. It was the author's impression that the different groups were not explicitly seeking out elderly people to learn from their expertise. They argued that some things do not work in a certain context and sometimes you have to try it in a different way. This is also shown in the movie *In Transition 2.0* newly released by Transition Towns, in which different initiatives are shown all over the world. One of the messages in this video is that some initiatives only work in a certain context and situation. From the interviews can be learned that the handbook's twelve steps are useful to read but not always (useful) to apply in practice.

The Head, Heart, Hands approach
Something that was not incorporated in the description of Transition Towns (chapter 2) but that received even more attention from the respondents than the twelve steps was the Head, Heart, Hands approach. Hopkins (2008) divided his book into these three sections. The head refers to the things you have to think about. However, we are currently doing too much with our head and we should, according to Hopkins, do more with our hands (practical things like gardening) and our heart, which refers to bonding with people and dreaming about a more localized future. This triad of methods was something that is appealing to the respondents. The combination of activities that refer to the Head (for instance movie nights, information evenings), Heart (for instance earth meditation) and Hands (for instance gardening) was by almost all respondents mentioned as one of the reasons for joining Transition Towns.

Internationally recognized Transition Towns
In the section on method is described that internationally recognized Transition Towns are compared with non-internationally recognized Transition Towns. The question was if the status of international recognition has influence on the success of a particular Transition Town. In this section Transition Town Freiburg will be leaved out of the analysis since the international recognition works in another way in Germany than in the Netherlands.

   In the first interview, a member of the national initiative group was asked what should be done to obtain international recognition and why only three groups in the Netherlands (Groningen, Zutphen and Deventer) have this international recognition. Two founders of the national Transition Town network explained to me that this had something to do with the history of the movement in the Netherlands. The three groups that are internationally recognized were also the first groups to start a local Transition Town in their city. To become internationally recognized you have to submit a direct application to Totnes (town in England) in English. The national Dutch network was not ready yet to take this role since the national initiative group is too small. Only three groups are internationally recognized because many Transition Towns were not interested in becoming internationally recognized, partially because that would interfere with the local way of living in Transition Towns. Many key people claimed that they did not see the advantage of becoming internationally recognized.

Respondents argued that it would consume much time and it will be not of particular advantage on a local level. Most key people claimed that they preferred to invest this time in other goals of Transition Towns. The three groups that gained this status claimed that they did so because some key people actually wanted to become internationally recognized. Main motivation for the three groups to get international status was because they thought it would help them to become more successful. There is probably a relationship between being successful and being internationally recognized since the Transition Towns with the most variety in initiatives (Groningen, Deventer, Tilburg and Freiburg) in table 2 were internationally recognized. Tilburg is an exception in this case because it is not internationally recognized. Transition Town Zutphen is an exception since it is internationally recognized but has not a very large variety in initiatives.

Common problems with setting up initiatives according to respondents
Almost all groups were struggling with the same kind of problems. Especially a lack of time was a common complaint. Many people organize activities for Transition Towns voluntarily and beside their other activities (like work and family life). For this reason, it is difficult to find and keep involving active members. The group of active people in most Transition Towns is limited and this leads in some situations to feelings of stress and time pressure. Another problem that occurs is a lack of financial means. Seven out of twelve TT groups are not subsidized and have to organize their activities low budget. This can be difficult and in some situations this has led to a personal financial setback. This also limits the different groups in their choices. This problem was also discussed in a national meeting with all those involved in the national coordination group. Five respondents argued that it is difficult to set up initiatives because they have no fixed locations for their activities. In four groups organizational problems occurred in Transition Towns. Sometimes the bonding between core group and working groups is not very strong and people start to lose the overview of the movement. These issues will be discussed later in the analysis more thoroughly.

Conception of Sustainability
During the interview process the respondents were asked what their view is of sustainability. They came up with different answers but all the respondents had in common, that they believe that we currently have a standard of living which is too high. All claimed that we are living in a waste- producing system and that the way that we are living now is not maintainable. Around eight respondents argued that we should start to live more locally. This relates to the ideas that Rob Hopkins (2008) wrote down in the handbook of Transition Towns. The respondents had the following idea about sustainability.

   "We think that a cultural change is necessary. We are currently busy with consuming, consuming, and more consuming. We want to go away from that, in the future we should start living more locally" (TT Deventer Locally).

   "I would like to live in a society that is directed to recycling and no wasting of goods and energy, also human energy. It would be good as everything is still there for future generations" (TT Tilburg).

   "Nothing will happen if everyone keeps on looking to others. Factories will react if people will buy more sustainable consumer goods" (TT Eindhoven).

"I miss that I am not living in a cycle, but instead in a waste producing system .If you will live in a closed system you will live in harmony "(TT Rotterdam).

"The necessary transition goes deeper and is on a cultural level. This was one of the good sayings of Hopkins, he said that when they started in Totnes he had the feeling that he started on a environmental project but he found out that it is more a cultural project" (TT Deventer/national)

People from Transition Towns do not see themselves as situated above nature (anthropocentric worldview) but take the human effect on climate change and peak oil serious. However, they clearly see the relation of human beings with nature and they also refer to future generations when explaining why we should start living more sustainable.

5.3   What should the Focus be and on which Level?

Are social practices directed independently and practically?
Transition Towns is organized at a local level according to the respondents. According to the respondents all activities of Transition Towns are organized by citizens themselves and on a local and practical level. All the initiatives are focused on a particular city or neighborhood. The different social practices (like eating, using energy) are directed independently from each other. All of the activities of Transition Towns are directed per subject.

Habits and Routines
According to Stern (2000) and Spaargaren (2003) have habits and routines a strong influence on the behavior of people (see paragraph 3.2.3 and 3.2.4 for more information about habits and routines). It was asked to the interviewees if they were aware of this kind of behavior. Eight respondents were aware and want to create awareness by letting people consciously think about their habits and routines. Five respondents compared this with the addiction model of Hopkins (2008). He argues that we are addicted to oil and that we suffer from withdrawal symptoms. The consumption of oil can be seen as one of these routines. In order to consume less oil we should try to stop this routine.

Recruiting New People
According to all contact people, potential new Transition Town participants are especially targeted through advertising (publicity). Transition Town is promoted on the Transition Towns' websites, in flyers and in activities. Activities are easily accessible and they try to avoid using jargon. Publicity is made largely in local newspapers. Since not everybody reads these newspapers some groups are not addressed. Two respondents argued that especially young people often do not read local news (TT Deventer local, TT Wageningen). During the interviews it became clear that respondents often had an indifferent attitude towards people who are not involved in the movement. Around half of the respondents argued that they do not know why other people are not involved or interested and for what reason they do not want to become involved in the movement.

"We do not want a conflict, they consider us strange and elitist anyhow: open sandal and wooly sock types" (TT Deventer local).

"We don't argue with them. I don't see them and I don't talk to them" (TT Rotterdam).

About young people:
   "Many young people are alienated. They are either locked in their own virtual world or they do not know what to do" (TT Deventer local).

   "Students are mostly interested in each other and their study. They do not have a very strong commitment to the city. Probably, students do not read local news" (TT Wageningen).

Influence of the availability of Sustainable Products
The respondents were asked if an increased availability of green/biological products would lead to more people consuming organic products. All respondents agreed. They claimed that stores could make the green transition easier by selling more biological and local products.

Should people give up many things for a (more) sustainable lifestyle?
There were actually two different opinions that came out of the interviews. Around half of the respondents said yes, we should give up some things and stop living in the current way, which is dependent on cheap oil, because it cannot be maintained. The other half said no, we do not have to give up things but we should just consciously consider what we do instead of relying on our reflexes. The contact person of TT Den Dolder, and one of the founders of the national Transition Town network, reacted in another way. He claimed that we do not have a choice between unsustainable and sustainable because at a certain point we will be forced to be sustainable.

   "We should not think that we have the choice between acting sustainable and unsustainable, because unsustainable means that it is not tenable for the future. At a certain moment we should act in another way" (TT Den Dolder).

Are people addressed as a group or as individual
The social practices theory has the assumption that people should be addressed in their social environment and that their friends and families should be taken into account when trying to change environmentally significant behavior in a positive way. In the interviews it was asked, in relation to the Spaargaren's theory, if people are addressed in their social environment (as a group) or as individual. It came to light that most respondents had not thought consciously about this question. People are mostly addressed as individual in the communication; this means that the social environment of people is not specifically taken into account. However, one of the aims of Transition T owns is to create solidarity in the local neighborhood. Two members of the national group agreed that is helpful to work collectively.
One of the respondents gave as an example that people in you neighborhood should show environmentally beneficial behavior in order to motivate people.

"You should see it around you. If your neighbors fly every year by plane to the other side of the world it is not motivating if you try to behave in a more sustainable way" (TT Den Dolder).

Energy
Eight Transition Towns have had an initiative related to energy (solar panels, ventilation boxes or an energy team which visits housed to judge their energy efficient aspects.), and they all turned out to be very successful. There are often many people interested when Transition Towns organizes information meetings about for instance solar panels. It was interesting to learn that people attend who are normally not involved in Transition Towns. The energy related initiatives are often financially attractive and there is good collaboration with other parties. Examples of co-partners are municipalities that are willing to provide lecture rooms and companies who can provide cheap solar panels.

Movie Night / Lecture
Eight out of twelve Transition Town groups have tried to organize movie nights or lectures with environmental sustainability or peak oil as subject. As indicated by the respondents these kinds of movie nights are often unsuccessful. Nine respondents indicated that organization of such movie nights consumes considerable time and energy and it often does not lead to the desired attendance. People who choose to not attend say that the media is available everywhere and people do not feel directly attracted to go to an educational movie night. Additionally, the uncertainty of the attendance is a financial risk for the organization. The people who do attend this activity are mostly the public that visits Transition Town initiatives regularly (higher level of education, native Dutch, middle class, middle aged).

Repair Café
One of the initiatives that is organized by members of ten Transition Towns is the Repair Café. The founder of the Repair Café was interviewed in order to get an idea of the initiative. The findings of this interview will be presented here. The Repair Café initiative, which is an initiative of the Repair Café foundation, turns out to be successful in many places. The Repair Café is a meeting place where people from the neighborhood can go with broken products that otherwise would be discarded. People with repair skills and materials are available to repair products that are broken. The aim of the Repair Café is to reduce the amount of consumer goods that will be discarded. There has been a lot of publicity for the Repair Café from the start. The founder of the Repair Café had experience as a journalist, which has probably led to the successful publicity for the Repair Café from the beginning. The founder explains:

"Repairing should become easy again. That is not the case right now. There was a broad nationwide interest from the start and it has found a wide audience" (Founder Repair Café).

The Repair Café was able to make a good start because of subsidies provided by organizations and the district. According to the founder of the Repair Café the initiative is successful for several reasons. The first reason is the financial stimulus: many people would like to have their products repaired but think it is too expensive to send it back to the factory. It is often cheaper to buy a new product than to let it be repaired by a professional. A second reason for going is that results are directly visible and people are happy to see their products repaired. The Repair Café has also a social aspect. It becomes possible to meet your neighbors again and to have a cup of coffee with them. A final reason to go is the educational aspect: so that

you try to learn to repair it by yourself the next time. Interesting to see is that the Repair Café attracts other people than the mainstream public of Transition Towns. Also immigrants and lower skilled people come to this initiative.

Local Food
Local food is according to all interviewed respondents the main spearhead of Transition Towns. Table 2 shows that ten out of eleven Transition Towns have initiatives related to local food. Producing your own food is seen as essential by Transition Towns since less transportation is necessary. Large scale industrialized food production is seen as a major problem of the current society. Examples of initiatives related to local food are initiating vegetable gardens, planting of eatable plants in the neighborhood and buying food from local farmers. The initiatives have according to all respondents, besides the reduction of oil use, as advantage that it is very practical, it connects you to nature and it can be fun. The vegetable garden initiative also has an educational aspect because you learn how to produce your own food. This is related to the philosophy of permaculture, which is one of the foundations of Transition Towns. Permaculture (see page 34 for further information) tries to deal with problems such as pollution and diseases related to monoculture that have occurred together with the industrial revolution (Hopkins, 2008). The participants who attend this initiative are, like in the movie night/lecture initiatives, mostly higher educated, native Dutch, middle class and middle aged.

5.4   How to Organize and Who to Engage?

Collaboration with Municipality
Seeking good collaboration with the government is one of the twelve steps included in the handbook. Two thirds of the respondents report good collaboration with their local government. These respondents explained that the local government helps in some cases by providing a location to organize activities, plots for gardening and the providing of subsidies for activities organized by Transition Towns. Transition Towns that do not work together with municipalities have more problems with financing their activities and getting PR for their activities than those who have good connections. In three cases a lack of financial means was a bottleneck for Transition Towns and this led to problematic financial situations, like paying for activities by respondents themselves. An overview of the collaboration with the municipality per Transition Town is given in the paragraph 9.5 in the appendix.

Collaboration with Third Parties
All Transition Towns that were interviewed, work together with third parties. This can be local organizations, alternative cinemas, local farmers, local networks, environmental movements and sometimes even with the radio (mainstream and local). In many cases there is collaboration with solar panel companies and other local companies, like local farmers, local vegetable stores and local cheese farm.

Role of Government in Sustainable Development
Most of the respondents said that the local and national government should have a role in facilitating but that they are currently not doing enough. Common complaints of respondents were that policy makers are too slow and that procedures are endless. Two contact people complained that subsidies for solar panels have stopped recently and that the government can

play a bigger role in pricing of energy. Five contact people emphasized on the other hand, that Transition Towns is an a- political movement and that citizens themselves can do a lot by consuming more consciously.

Structure of Transition Towns
The organization of Transition Towns in general is as follows: There is an initiative group who has the overview over the local Transition Town and contacts with the national Transition Towns network, and there are working groups who organize different activities, members of the different working groups are involved in the initiative group (TT Den Dolder).
The respondents were asked how many people were included and how the groups are organized. This was often not clear as the following comments illustrate.

"It is hard to define how many people are included. I see myself as Transition Towns Rotterdam, but are the people who work in the vegetable garden also Transition Towns? " (TT Rotterdam).

"We have a collecting point with local food; around 30 families go to this collecting point. But you do not know what people think. They do not always know that it is the initiative (Voordorp op eigen kracht) and perhaps they also do not know that it is related to Transition Towns" (TT Utrecht).

On the question of who does belong to the initiative group was answered:

"That is debatable. The people who are active for diverse working groups also show interest for the initiative group but a clear structure is lacking" (TT Zutphen).

The confusion whether an initiative belongs to Transition Towns or not happened as well with a solar panels information evening. Citizens go to the information meeting which is for instance called 'Solar blitz', but they have no idea that Solar blitz is related to Transition Towns (TT Zutphen). This was also found in a meeting of the national assembly in which TT members argued they should make themselves more visible so as not to be drowned out by other names and organizations.

The Number of People Involved
The different respondents were asked how many people are involved in their local Transition Town. The answers were diverse and it appeared to be though to estimate the exact number of people active inside a Transition Town, partly because it is often not known to the Transition Town. Respondents explained that Transition Towns has no members, only people who are involved or interested. There are active people that are involved in the initiative group or a working group but in these groups it was not always clear to the members who is involved and who is not. On average you can say that around 3-5 people are involved in each initiative group of active Transition Towns (for instance Deventer, Zutphen, Freiburg, Wageningen). In four cases there is only one contact person for the group without an initiative group at all (Eindhoven, Utrecht, Apeldoorn, Rotterdam). Seven Transition Towns have different working groups (gardening, bee belt, energy team, food, Repair Café) and the number of people that are involved per working group varies widely.
Besides the organizational aspects there are also people who attend per activity. This is also diverse, the numbers are in many cases relatively low (around ten to twenty people) who attend. But there are also exceptions, solar panels information evenings are quite popular with a fifty to a hundred people attending. The movie nights are not very popular in general according to most respondents; however, the attendance can vary widely from three to fifty people. The first organized movie night is often best visited and later on the number of

visitors decline.

    All Transition Towns use mailing lists to spread information. The number of people that receive the mailing list varies; this can differ from fifty people to two hundred people. These people have shown interest in Transition Towns and receive the information of Transition Towns about the different activities. Since all Transition Towns were very recently founded there seems not to be a relationship between the year founded and the size/structure and success of a particular Transition Town

5.5   How to Reach People?

Tipping Point
Gladwell (2001) often referred to the concept of the tipping point (see paragraph 3.4.1 for more information). During the interviews it has been discovered that eight contact people were inspired by his book. According to two respondents of the national initiative group should 15 to 20 per cent of the population be reached in order to reach the tipping point where Gladwell was referring to.

   "We are inspired by an interesting research of Malcolm Gladwell, which is called: the Tipping Point. It says that you do not have to reach the full hundred percent but that you have to reach 15 to 20 percent of the population, if you get these group active, the rest will follow" (TT Deventer national).

This means for Deventer that 15 percent of the almost 100.000 inhabitants of Deventer should be reached in order to involve the whole population of Deventer (CBS, 2011).

Competencies
The respondents were asked what is needed to set up a successful initiative. Just three respondents explained that no specific competence is needed and that everybody can do it. The majority of the respondents had a different opinion. According to them important competencies are: networking skills, being resolute, being able to bring structure into the organization, organizing a well-structured and effective assembly, skills in public speaking, public relations and communication skills, and not being too afraid to start. This is illustrated by the following quotes.

   "When we started with this Transition Town we took a look at whom we like to have in the initiative group. But they did not have to apply for the position. For this reason everything goes well on a organizational level" (Former member initiative group Houten and Alderman Houten).

 "Some TT groups are started by the wrong people. The success is dependent of the people who set up the initiative and of what is locally possible" (TT Den Dolder).

Influence of the size of an initiative and city
All respondents argued that the more people that attend the more successful the initiative or activity will be. The size of Transition Town initiatives is currently too small to become impersonal because the initiatives are in many cases relatively small (normally 20/30 in average and maximum 100 with solar panels nights). In general is the rule the more people that attend the better. Gladwell (2001) explained that a maximum number of one hundred people can be part of an organization or other collectivity before it becomes impersonal and

the social bonding will become looser. The initiatives of Transition Towns are often small and rarely exceed one hundred participants. Therefore, there is no risk of Transition Towns initiatives to become impersonal and can the general rule of 'the more participants the better' be applied. On the other hand, has the size of a city a crucial influence on the success of a particular Transition Town. Middle sized cities tend to be the most successful. If a city is too big it will become difficult to bring people together in one place. This happened for instance in Utrecht were the initiative for the whole city failed but people went on in their own district (Voordorp) where the initiative started to become successful.

Publicity

Almost all Transition Towns do something with publicity. All groups have a website in the format of Transition Towns where they publish their activities. However, not every group is equally active in maintaining the website. In some cases the information is not 'up-to-date' but this mainly happens in Transition Towns that were already less active in organizing activities. All groups also have a mailing list for people who are interested in the activities. Around eight groups make us of publicity in local newspapers. Some groups also direct their publicity to a specific neighborhood in district newspapers. Five groups explained that they make use of the mailing list of community centers, in which their activity was published to the neighborhood. In Deventer the PR was quite well established and they even have a local Radio Program (Transition Town Radio). There is also a radio program on the national website, where programs are made about Transition Towns. Respondents from the national initiative told me that Transition Towns has also been in the more national news.
The Repair Café has been quite active in publicizing their activities. The Repair Café foundation had spread flyers and posters, have been on national radio and television, made a press release and published their activities in social media such as Facebook and Twitter. There has also been PR for the Repair Café in the national media. Something interesting is that almost no other groups have mentioned social media like Facebook and Twitter.

Social Ties

The respondents were asked about the nature of social ties in the movement and if friendships arise. The answers were quite similar, in some cases friendships arise but it often remains limited to acquaintances. The Transition Town café is seen as way to socialize together but the conversations often remain limited to Transition Town related subjects.
Only two respondents mentioned that they also meet people from Transition Towns in social activities that are not related to Transition Towns. The initiator of Transition Town Tilburg indicated that she did not become friends with other involved people in Transition Towns.

   "We are not friends but involved people with the same goal" (TT Tilburg).

Description of the type of people involved

The people that are involved in Transition Towns are relatively easy to describe.
With some exceptions, can the majority of the people of Transition Towns be described as: native Dutch, middle class and middle aged (35-60). There are hardly any immigrants involved in the Transition Towns. Transitions Towns Utrecht is an exception where the

contact person of the group is originally French.

"They think it is something for the Dutch" (TT Deventer local).

"It is difficult to get rid of the white middle class image" (TT Den Dolder).

It is also interesting that quite a high percentage of the members have a high level of education and they are alternative oriented. In three groups there is a link with the Occupy movement and the anthroposophist worldview. And in most groups there are people who were already a member of an environmental (or activist) movement before. Men and women are quite equally divided in Transition Towns as a whole. Women are more involved in the gardening while men are better represented in energy related subjects than women. In four groups there was a bit more women than men involved in Transition Towns.

Categorization of the different Transition Towns
In the appendix, paragraph 9.5 different tables are provided that give an overview of the results per Transition Town. The data comes from the interviews, with key people from Transition Towns. A short description is given per Transition Town about the organization and structure of the Transition Town. It is also summarized to want extent there is collaboration with the municipality and with third parties (which can be all co-partners besides the municipality). A short description is given of the available competencies in a particular Transition Town. It is important to note here that the categorization of the available competencies comes forward from what the respondents said and the interpretation of the researcher. It is possible that some competencies are lacking because they did not come forward in the interviews or that the respondents were not aware of these competencies. The "Type of people" row gives a description of the type of people that are involved in a particular Transition Town. The row "Spearheads" comes with a description of the most important activities that are organized by a particular Transition Town. The subheading "Publicity" gives a listing of the different kinds of publicity means which were done according to the contact person in a particular Transition Town. The subheading strong points comes with the strong points per TT and the subheading weak points expresses the weak points per Transition Town.

Short summary of the main results
When comparing the different Transition Towns it becomes clear that the groups with the most structured organization have the most varied numbers of initiatives which are in addition most continuously organized and visited. Transition Town Wageningen, Houten, Zutphen, Groningen, Deventer, Freiburg and also the Repair Café Foundation have this sort of clear and strong structured organization. It might therefore be hypothesized that the structure of the organization could be an important factor for success of a Transition Town.

In addition, Transition Towns that get subsidies appear to be more successful in organizing activities than groups that have not. Especially TT Deventer and the Repair Café foundation were able to become successful because they have people involved who actually get paid for their work and thus can invest enough time in initiatives to make them successful. In other

groups a lack of time and money are an often mentioned bottleneck.

The type of people that are involved in the different Transition Towns is not very diverse. Especially young people, elderly people, immigrants and people with lower levels of education are often not represented. The Repair Café foundation is an exception in this case. Elderly people, immigrants, people lower levels of education and people with lower incomes also attend the activity.

Collaboration with third parties and the municipality turn out to be important indicators for predicting the success of the different Transition Towns. TT's with a strong collaboration with third parties or the local municipality are: Wageningen, Houten, Zutphen, Deventer, Utrecht, and Freiburg.

The involvement of key people with certain competencies helps the success of a particular Transition Town. Important competencies for Transition Towns are: networking, publicity skills, public speaking, liaising and leadership. It can be observed that Transition Towns with multiple competent people or persons with multiple competencies are the most successful. Transition Towns with key people with one strongly developed competence are Houten, Tilburg, Zutphen and Den Dolder. The Repair Café foundation and TT Deventer are examples of groups with multiple developed competencies.

5.6   Interviews with municipalities

In order to understand how the collaboration of Transition Towns with the local government works there has been decided to interview policy makers in the area of energy, climate and environment. In table 3, a short overview is provided to give an overview of the function of the policy maker, whether they know Transition Towns or not, if they are positive about activities organized by TT and which Transition Town corresponds to the local governmental body.

Table 3. Overview respondents local governmental bodies.

Governmental body	Function	Knows TT	Positive about activities of TT	Corresponding local TT
Municipality Wageningen	Policy maker climate and sustainability.	Yes	Yes	TT Wageningen
Municipality Utrechtse Heuvelrug	Policy maker milieu, climate and sustainability	Yes	Yes	TT Den Dolder. TT Doorn
Municipality Apeldoorn	Policy maker energy neutral	Yes	Yes	TT Apeldoorn
Municipality Houten	Alderman, Portfolio: sustainability, finance, land and property, housing and permits and former member of initiative group TT Houten	Yes	Yes	TT Houten

Municipality Tilburg	Alderman Portfolio: Soil, housing, administrative innovation, staff and organization, international collaboration, media policy, downtown district counselor	Yes	Yes	TT Tilburg
Province Noord - Brabant	Policy maker agriculture	No, indirect	Neutral	TT Eindhoven, TT Tilburg
Municipality Groningen	Policy maker sustainability	Yes	Yes	TT Groningen

Table 3 shows that most policy makers know the Transition Towns movement and are positive about the organized activities of Transition Towns. The policy maker of the province of Noord-Brabant was an exception in this case. He had heard about it but he did not know the details.

Conception of Sustainability of Policy Makers
The different policy makers were asked what their conception is of sustainability. All respondents agreed that sustainability issues should be wide ranging deployed. Five out of seven respondents referred to the People, Planet, and Profit approach. This approach has as key points that we should combine the three P's in a harmonious way. Another slogan that was mentioned by three respondents was 'think globally, act locally'. In their conception all policy makers mentioned climate change, but did not mention peak oil. This differs with the conception of Transition Towns in which peak oil gets a central place.

Importance of Local Initiatives
All respondents agreed that local sustainable initiatives are of crucial importance. Sustainability issues should be supported at a local level and bottom up.

   "We look for connections because it should happen bottom – up" (Alderman Tilburg).

Opinions of Policy Makers about Transition Towns
All respondents were positive about the initiatives that are organized by Transition Towns. Two respondents were convinced of the initiatives that are organized by Transition Towns and did not question the movement. However, not everyone was completely convinced of the effect of Transition Towns. Three respondents (Groningen, Wageningen, and Tilburg) mentioned that the movement is still quite small and that they would prefer to work together with a larger group. Something else that was mentioned by three respondents was that they do not appeal a large/mainstream public. The people who are involved are people were in many cases already involved in environmental activism. Two respondents referred to the movement as 'open sandal wooly sock types', to alternative and, environmental interested people. Two respondents argued that Transition Towns does not attract a very mainstream public. One respondent argued that only attract people who are already involved in the movement will be committed to Transition Towns; other people are more influenced by their peers. He explained that people should be addressed in their own local environment. Transition Towns

only addresses people who are already interested in sustainability.

Collaboration with Transition Towns
In five cases there was collaboration between Transition Towns and municipalities but limited. Two policy makers mentioned that they have organized an information evening about solar panels in collaboration with TT. Five respondents were negative about providing subsidies to citizens because there is not enough budget available and initiatives should be self-supporting.

Bottlenecks
Three respondents mentioned that often too few people are involved in a particular initiative and that in some cases initiatives blow over during the collaboration due to a lack of involved people. Another problem that was mentioned by three respondents was that citizens and policy makers do not speak the same language. Citizens expect fast progress but if you want something to happen inside the municipality many steps need to be taken.

5.7   Discussion
The result section came with a description of the results from the interviews. Interpretations from the results will be discussed in chapter 6. The interviews showed that the most important spearheads of Transition Towns are to solve the problems of peak oil and climate change by coming up with practical solutions on a local level. The 12 steps of Transition are described in the handbook are followed to a certain extent, they are often considered as useful to read but not always useful to apply in practice. Initiatives from TT are relatively diverse and vary from initiatives related to the head (like movie nights and lecture), initiatives related to the hands (like local food and repair café) and initiatives related to the heart (like earth meditation). Most applied initiatives by TT are the Repair Café, local food initiatives, energy related initiatives and movie nights or lectures. The Repair Café has practical, financial and educational aspects, the local food initiative has practical, educational and healthy aspects, the energy related initiatives are mostly practical and financial and movie night are mostly related to the head and have the aim to learn more about environmental change and peak oil. There seems to be a relation between Transition Towns that are internationally recognized and the success of these Transition Towns. Most variety of initiatives is visible in TT Deventer, Groningen and Freiburg.

   Problems that mostly occur in TT's are a lack of time, a lack of financial means and a lack of enthusiastic people. Collaboration with third parties is crucial because it provides useful advantages. For instance companies can give discount on solar panels. The municipality can provide in subsidies and facilitate in publicity, rooms to use and plots for gardening. Other organizations are also useful because they can work together in initiatives and give advice in difficult situations.

   The result section showed that successful Transition Towns often have a clear structure, people with the right competences, and a wide variety of people involved. The interviews with municipalities showed that most policy makers are positive about what the Transition Towns movement does but that they think that the movement is still too small to attract a larger public. Half of the respondents mentioned that they do not appeal a mainstream public

and that involved people are in many cases already involved in environmental activism.

6. Interpretation of the results

In this chapter an answer will be given to the empirical research question:

 "To what extent does the Transition Towns movement offer a good answer to the systemic character of sustainable development?"

This question has two sub questions:
"How successful are the initiatives of Transition Towns and what are the explanations for this?" And "To what extent do these theoretical approaches relate to the experiences of citizens in the Transition Town movement?"

6.1   Systemic Thinking
In the theoretical framework a description is given of the systemic thinking approach (see paragraph 3.2.1). The systemic thinking approach rests on the assumption that the global sustainability crisis cannot be solved with a focus on single issues and symptoms, but that the environment should be seen as incorporated in a wider system in which political, economical and societal interests play a role. Moreover, solutions should not only be addressed as technical but also social aspects should be taken in mind (Narberhaus et al., 2011).

   During the analysis of the results it became clear that some initiatives of Transition Towns turned out to be more successful than others. Four initiatives of the movement are analyzed more thoroughly since they were often mentioned in the interviews. The Repair Café, local food initiatives, energy related initiatives and movie nights / lectures are compared with each other. When analyzing the Repair Café initiative it becomes clear that the environment is often not the first (or only) reason to go, many other motivations are incorporated in this initiative. People do not only take the environment into consideration but also financial, social, practical and educational aspects are taken in mind. This is probably one of the reasons why the Repair Café has become such a success. This is similar to Narberhaus' theory (2011) where he argues that environmental issues should not be seen as a special interest but as part of the wider system.

   The idea behind local food initiatives is to produce your own food on a local level and to become more connected to food production chain again. A problematic part of this initiative is that it mostly works for people who actually have time to work in a vegetable garden or similar initiative. It probably does not attract many people because it is time consuming and supermarkets or vegetables stores are a very easy alternative. It is the authors impression that people who have a vegetable garden mostly do it because it is fun, healthy and educational and not only because of environmental considerations because it takes a lot of effort to maintain. This also becomes clear when analyzing the type of people that actually do attend local food initiatives. They mostly belong to the traditional public of Transition Towns, since they are mostly native Dutch, middle class and middle aged.

   Other initiatives that are organized by many Transition Towns are energy related initiatives. Transition Towns organizes in some cases that people from the neighborhood can buy solar panels together with discount. Interesting to see is that many people show interest in this kind

of initiatives, even people who are normally not involved in activities organized by Transition Towns. Many people are interested because there is a financial stimulus and because the invested time is temporary. A fourth type of initiative that has been described are movie nights or lectures with peak oil or climate change as subject. These movie nights are often unsuccessful, mainly because it takes time to go and information is already available on many places (i.e. internet).

The analysis shows that initiatives where the environment does not take a central place have more success than initiatives that are mainly environmentally based. This connects to the systemic approach of Narberhaus (2011).

One of the tentative conclusions on Transition Towns in general is that the movement will keep being relatively small as long as the focus is for a large part based on environmental goals. The movement focuses on peak oil and the human impact on the earth and focuses too much on one separate part of behavior, in this case environmental behavior. It would perhaps be advisable to work together/ incorporate environmental goals in networks in which people are already involved. Think for instance of sport clubs, volunteer organizations, churches and work. It is advisable to seek for a good relationship with other organizations that already exist, so their network can be used to reach more people. Transition Towns is too much a separate movement while sustainability should be a part of your life instead of a separate occupation. It does not lead to systemic thinking because it is mainly an interest of a small group of people who are (already) quite involved in the subject. However, Transition Towns is an organization who exerts influence in the field of sustainability and a number of initiatives have been very successful.

6.2   Social Practices

According to Spaargaren (2003) should strategies for environmental change take place at the level of practices themselves and independently from each other. According to the respondents this connects very well to Transition Towns because they approach different social practices (food, energy) independently from each other. They also give practical solutions to abstract (environmental) problems. This works quite well in the area of energy and food

Habits and Routines
The social practices theory of Spaargaren et al.(2002) and the ABC theory of Stern (2000) rest on the assumption that everyone has to deal more or less with the environment. A small group is especially active in environmentally beneficial behavior, but the largest group is just following habits and routines concerning environmentally beneficial behavior (see paragraph 3.2.3 and 3.2.4). Transition Towns is a movement that is especially active in environmentally beneficial behavior. Eight respondents were aware of the habits and routines and consciously tried to change the habits and routines of people. This can be hypothesized to be the main psychological spearhead of TT. The main psychological reasoning of TT is as follows: people should change their habits and routines when it comes to the consumption of oil. This provides the main difficulty in the transition towards a more sustainable society since we are "addicted" to oil. To overcome this addiction people have to dramatically change their habits

and routines and this will result in withdrawal symptoms (Hopkins, 2008). When analyzing the addiction model which is used by Hopkins you see that on one hand Transition Towns appears to be incorporating the assumption that a large group of people is just following habits and routines. However, two fundamental points are not incorporated in the addiction model of Transition Towns. Habits and routines are easiest changed when the barrier to change behavior is made as low as possible and when these changes are incorporated into the daily practice of people. Transition Towns does not focus enough on the context in which people have to move but mostly on radical changing the attitude of peoples. There can be learnt from Stern (2000) that attitudinal factors decrease when contextual factors become stronger. For this reason you can conclude that TT focuses too much on attitudinal factors when trying to change habits and routines of people and not enough on contextual factors. The direct environment of people plays an important role in this issue and the section about structure and agency will go on with this issue.

Structure / Agency
In the social practices approach; the role of social structures in human functioning receives a central place (Spaargaren et al., 2002). One of the characteristics of systemic thinking is the incorporation of social, institutional, organizational, political, and material environment where in people have to move. The organizational environment is included, in most cases there is collaboration with third organizations. The material environment of citizens is partly involved and there also is collaboration with companies who have a local basis. The collaboration with more commercial companies is missing because they do not connect to the ideas of Transition Towns.

According to Spaargaren's theory (2002) the direct social environment of people is of crucial importance for understanding how people react in environmentally related goals. It was interesting to see that social ties stay limited to acquaintances and the point of friendships is often not reached in the movement. This was interesting because this does not connect to the structure and agency's theory. There can be concluded that the social bonding is not very strong inside the movement and for this reason there is a chance that people inside the movement do not exert much influence on each other. Since the people in the direct social environment exert much influence on the behavior of people there has been analyzed what type of people are involved in order to understand which people will probably feel the most attracted by Transition Towns. The type of people involved in Transition Towns is not very diverse. Especially people are involved who were already interested in environmentally related subjects, higher educated people and people in the age from 30 to 60. Young people, elderly people, lower educated and immigrants are often not represented. It will therefore be hard to attract young, elderly or immigrant people. During the interviews it became clear that respondents often had an indifferent attitude towards people who are not involved in the movement. It is the authors' personal opinion that Transition Towns tries to set a good example for other people, but that those "other people" are (unintentionally) left aside. For instance many arguments were put forward for why young people are not involved, while at the same time there is in most cases no contact with young people. According to Spaargaren et al. (2002) is the direct social environment of high influence on the decisions that people make. When Transition Towns does not make use of the direct social environment of people it

will probably not exert much influence on them. To connect to the systemic approach it would be advisable to incorporate environmental initiatives in organizations where people are already involved.

Individual / Group
In Transition Towns are people especially addressed in the local neighborhood, which is also one of the goals of Transition Towns. This connects to the structure/agency approach of Spaargaren et al. (2002). However, it can be questioned if the local neighborhood is the best way to reach people about sustainability issues. Research has shown that friendships have become more and more important, while the value of neighborly/ family relations has declined. People are less and less involved in the neighborhood and the influence of the neighborhood is for this reason often limited (Vermeij, 2008).

6.3   Transition Management
When analyzing the Transition Management model of Grin (2010), (see paragraph 3.2.2.), it becomes clear that Transition Towns can be seen as one of the actors in the Transition Management model which create awareness on environmental sustainability. The movement can be classified under the niche phase. They will stay in a niche, as long as the Transition Towns movement keeps being relatively small and oriented on a small target group. However, different initiatives related to sustainability next to each other who are oriented on different target groups, can finally lead to a transition on a regime and landscape level. Niche innovators often come with new and radical ideas. These niche innovators are necessary in order to create awareness about new issues. If problems occur on a regime level (like for instance an oil crisis or environmental disasters) there will be windows of opportunities for niche innovators like Transition Towns. From this insight follows that it is not expected from the movement that they will become extremely large. Probably they will keep being a small player in the large system. Different actors on different levels together can make a transition possible.

6.4   Improvising and Incrementalism
According to Hajer (2011) the government should work as a facilitator. Transition Town connects to a more horizontal way of decision making. During the interviewing process it became clear that Transition Towns that cooperate with their local government often have more success than those who do not. Insights of Boutellier (2011) show that we should work together in a networked society and coordinate different interests to each other in an appropriate way. The local government can help by facilitating a location to organize activities, facilitate in plots for gardening or they might provide subsidies for activities organized by Transition Towns. This is positive for the well being and functioning of a particular Transition Town. During the interviews it became clear that Transition Towns who have a good connection with their local government (for instance, TT Deventer, TT Freiburg, Repair Café, TT Den Dolder, TT Wageningen and TT Houten) gain often more easy successes than other groups who do not have a good connection with their local government.

   Local municipalities were positive in the interviews towards local initiatives. Municipalities actually need the help of citizens because they cannot organize everything by themselves.

Transition Towns that do not work together with municipalities have more problems with financing their activities and getting attention and publicity for their activities from citizens than those who have a good connection. A lack of financial means can become a bottleneck for a Transition Town. In the analysis it becomes clear that almost all Transitions Towns mainly work together with the more alternative and locally oriented organizations and companies. The Repair Café was an exception in this case. Another advantage of working together with a local governmental body is that they can give PR for free (on their website) and in this way the number of people that can be reached is enlarged. A bottleneck that mentioned by policy makers, was that the movement is relatively small and for this reason difficult to cooperate with.

Network Competencies
Good network competencies appear to be crucial for the success of the Transition Town. Examples of good network competencies are: being able to bring people together and creating a large network. The analysis made clear that Transition Towns that have people with good network competencies have more success (reach more people) than Transition Towns who are lacking people with network skills.

Structure of Transition Towns
It is the authors impression that one of the 'problems' of Transition Towns is that many groups are loosely coordinated and that it is not always clear who is part of the movement and who is just interested. This became also clear in the interviews with municipalities. Most of the time they do not understand how many people are involved and how the movement is organized. Many Transition Towns lack a clear structure (partly because it is all organized by part- time volunteers) and this makes it hard to define its success. It is difficult to attract new people if the structure of the movement is not clear. However, some Transition Towns are able to make clear how they are organized and they have a good collaboration with third parties, TT Deventer is the best example of this.

Municipalities Interviews
Most interviewed policy makers were positive about the initiatives but had not a very strong connection with the particular Transition Town. Some respondents argued that Transition Towns does not attract a very mainstream public and that the movement is quite small and loosely organized which makes it hard to collaborate with the movement. The Transition Town movement can learn from these findings that they should address a more diverse and larger public in order to get a better collaboration with municipalities

6.5   Tipping Point
Three respondents from Transition Towns mentioned that they had read the Tipping Point of Gladwell and that they actually think that 'The Tipping Point' where Gladwell is referring to will be reached as more than 15 per cent of the population will be involved. In addition Gladwell has also described in his book that this group should consist of mavens, connectors and salesmen (see paragraph 3.4.1). In Transition Towns is the reached group still limited and narrowly scoped. In practice you should connect to the right fifteen percent who actually have

influence. Also diversity in the group is needed in order to gain success. Mavens, connectors and salesmen are recognizable in some Transition Towns but lacking in others. Connecters, bring people together. Connectors were recognized in Deventer, the Repair Café Foundation and Tilburg. Transition Town Zutphen had a connector but he left his central position. Mavens are people who connect us with new information; these people were recognizable in members of the national initiative group. The third group is the salesmen you see them back in different cities as well. Sometimes the three characteristics are united in one person, like in Deventer. This is a strong point but also a weak point when this person will leave. In other cities these kind of people appear to be missing with the result that it will be more difficult to raising awareness for initiatives and to bring people together (Gladwell,2001).

Influence of the Size of Initiative and City
Gladwell (2001) mentioned in his book that the size of an initiative might have an effect on the success of the initiative. If an initiative becomes too big it might become impersonal. This was also shown in the analysis of Transition Towns. A general rule of thumb is that the more people that attend the more successful an initiative will be.

When analyzing the effect of the size of a city it became clear that initiatives that were located in a big city were less successful than initiatives that were located in a smaller city/village. Initiatives that were located in a big city had more success when they focused on a particular neighborhood than on the whole city. This can also be seen in the neighborhood Vauban in Freiburg and the neighborhood Voordorp in Utrecht.

Internationally Recognized Transition Towns
In this paragraph an attempt will be made to answer the question whether there is a relationship between being internationally recognized and becoming a successful Transition Town. Important indicators for becoming a successful Transition Town according to the discussed theories in this study are: having a clear and strong structure, to collaborate with third parties, having people with the right competencies involved and involve a wide variety of people. Transition Towns that want to become internationally recognized should meet the requirements which are discussed in paragraph 9.4 in the appendix. The indicator "having a clear and strong structure" is also recognizable in the requirements for international recognition. Step two claims that you should have an initiative group of at least four or five people. This will probably be beneficial for the structure of the Transition Town. Some requirements of becoming internationally recognized connect to approaches of Boutellier and Hajer (2011) (see paragraph 6.4 for more information). In step four, ten and twelve it is propagated to create a potentially strong connection with the local government, to network with other communities in Transition and to work together with the national transition network when applying for subsidies. The analysis has shown that groups that work together and coordinate different interests with each other in an appropriate way have more success than groups who do not.

Having people with the right competencies connects to the tipping point's approach of Gladwell (2001) and is also recognizable in the requirements of international recognition. Step seven refers to the promise to update your Transition Town website regularly and requires communicational skills. Step nine requires skills in public speaking, step ten requires

networking skills and step fifteen refers to skills in permaculture. The indicator involving a wide range of people is not involved in the requirements for international recognition.

Internationally recognized Transition Towns that functions well are Freiburg and Deventer. They have a clear and strong structure, people with the right competencies in their group (people with influence) and they also have a good collaboration with the local network. The other internationally recognized groups (Groningen, Zutphen) have been successful before but had some organizational issues (like for instance a too small number of people involved and a lack of people with influence). Perhaps more groups could be internationally recognized, but according to the respondents, are most Transition Towns not interested in obtaining this status, since they are too busy with organizing initiatives on a local level. Interesting to see was that there seems to be a relationship between the variety of initiatives and being internationally recognized. Groups with more than ten different initiatives which are internationally recognized as well are Groningen, Deventer and Freiburg.

International recognition seems to be an indicator for success but not necessarily an explanation for success. International recognized Transition Towns have been able to spend time on obtaining the international recognition. It therefore seems that the limiting factor on becoming an internationally recognized Transition Town is time and interest in obtaining this status.

6.6   Discussion
In this paragraph answers will be given to the empirical questions. The empirical questions of this study are as follows:

"To what extent does the Transition Towns movement offer a good answer to the systemic character of sustainable development?"

With the sub questions:
"How successful are the initiatives of Transition Towns and what are the explanations for this?" And "To what extent do these theoretical approaches relate to the experiences of citizens in the Transition Town movement?"

As mentioned in paragraph 6.1 does the systemic thinking approach rests on the assumption that the global sustainability crisis cannot be solved with a focus on single issues and symptoms but that the environment should be seen as incorporated in a wider system in which political, economical and societal interests play a role (Shellenberger and Nordhuis 2004 as cited in Narberhaus et al., 2011). The Transition Towns movement focuses on peak oil and the human impact on the earth and is too much focused on a separate part of behavior (e.g. environmentally related behavior) while environmental goals should be part of your life instead of a separate occupation. The movement does not lead to systemic thinking because it is mainly an interest of a small group of people who are already involved in the subject, while other less involved people are left aside. However, Transition Towns is an organization who exerts much influence in the field of sustainable development and different organizations next to each other can lead to a transition in sustainable development as proclaimed by the

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Transition Management model of Rotmans et al. (2005).

During the analysis of the initiatives it became clear that successful initiatives are the initiatives that do not only incorporate environmental goals but also other considerations. People do not only have the environment as motivation when acting in an environmentally beneficial way, but also other contextual factors, like financial, social, educational and practical aspects are taken in mind. Most successful initiatives that attract a large variety of people are initiatives related to energy and the Repair Café. These initiatives have both a practical set up, have financial stimulation and are beneficial for the environment.

The theoretical approaches proof to be applicable to the Transition Town movement and will be discussed in more detail the conclusion.

7. Conclusion

7.1 General Conclusions

The human effect on the earth's climate has become an important issue, but environmental regulations often do not have their intended effect (Hauff, 2007). Citizens are seen as an important target group by policy makers since they can put pressure on environmental policies, simply by changing their consuming behavior. For this reason this study made an attempt to understand how best to address citizens and how they can be more involved in sustainability issues. Now we return to the research question as given in the introduction:

"To what extent do theories about social practices, transition management and tipping points offer an explanation to understand the successes or failures of Transition Towns in the reinforcement and acceleration of sustainable development?"

The analysis of Transition Towns in relation to systemic thinking shows that the focus of Transition Towns is too heavily based on environmental goals like peak oil and climate change. It would be advisable to incorporate other parts of behavior (than just environmental goals) in initiatives. Initiatives that already work well are initiatives where different parts of behavior (material/institutional/social) are already incorporated in the initiative. Examples of this are the Repair Café and energy related initiatives, which are set up practically. These initiatives are successful due to the fact that, besides environmental goals also financial, institutional and practical issues are incorporated in the initiative. The systemic thinking approach provides useful insights that can be used in practice.

   A strong point of Transition Towns, which connects to the social practices theory of Spaargaren, is that all initiatives approach different social practices (eating, using energy, etc.) independently from each other and on a practical level. Something else that resulted from Sterns' (2000) and Spaargaren's theory (2003) is that social structures (people's direct social/institutional/material environment) exert much influence on their behavior. The types of people that are involved in Transition Towns are quite alternative- oriented, were in many cases already involved in environmentally beneficial behavior and are aged 30 to 60. This lead to the fact that a more (mainstream) public will probably not feel attracted and many people will be left aside. Transition Towns addresses people mainly individually or otherwise in their local environment. However, this clashes with the reality in which the influence of the local neighborhood is becoming less important and the role of friendships more important (Vermeij, 2008). The social practices' theory is useful to get an understanding of the successes and failures of the Transition Towns movement. Something that resulted from the Transition management model of Rotmans et al. (2005) is that Transition Towns can be classified as acting in a niche phase. Different initiatives like Transition Towns, which are directed to a broader target group can together lead to a transition on a landscape level. From this insight follows that it is not expected from the movement that they will become extremely large. Probably they will keep being a small player in the large system. Different actors on different levels together can make a transition possible.

The approaches of Boutellier (2011) and Hajer (2011) have shown that it is important for different parties to collaborate and to coordinate different interests with each other in an appropriate way. The analysis shows that Transition Town groups that have a good collaboration with their local government have more success than those that do not. Close collaboration with municipalities is advantageous because municipalities can facilitate in initiatives, connect Transition Towns with other parties and provide publicity to an initiative. Collaboration with third parties is also important because they can help each other and providing publicity for each other. Collaboration with other Transition Town groups is recommendable, since different groups can share information, and help each other with difficulties.

A weak point of some of the Transition Towns is that they are too loosely organized, and the structure is not very clear to people inside the movement, co-acting parties and outsiders. This affects the credibility of the movement.

Most interviewed policy makers were positive about the initiatives but did not have a very strong connection with the particular Transition Town. Some policy makers argued that Transition Towns does not attract a very mainstream public and that the movement is quite small and loosely organized which makes it hard to collaborate with the movement.

Gladwell (2001) has argued that mavens, connectors and salesmen are important in order to let success happen. This connects to Transition Towns because groups where these kinds of people are recognizable (Deventer, the Repair Café Foundation) have more success than others. These Transition Towns have people with the right competencies like communication skills, organizational skills, network competencies, communicational skills and experience with PR. However, the types of people involved are too narrowly scoped, which leads to difficulty in reaching a more mainstream public. Diversity in the people involved is recommendable in order to reach more people. A part of Gladwell's approach claims that initiatives should not become too big because they might become too impersonal. This became evident in Transition Towns, as well. Initiatives that try to incorporate a whole big city are more difficult to manage than initiatives that focus on a smaller part of the city or are located in a smaller city. At the same time, for any particular initiative, the more people that show up, the better. Gladwell's approach is very practical to apply in practical and explain why some Transition Towns are more successful than others.

To conclude, important indicators for becoming a successful Transition Town are: having a clear and strong structured organization, to collaborate with third parties, having people with the right competencies and involve a wide variety of people

7.2   Reflection Research

The use of a qualitative research design was positive for the internal validity of this study. By making use of in depth interviews the underlying opinions of respondents became clear. The qualitative research design allowed for a systematic continuation of questions that thereby greatly increased the reliability of the research. The validity of the research was increased by the usage of the NVivo software program. This program made it possible to systematically analyze the data per theme in the code tree. Data collection and data analysis took place during the same time in order to test interim interpretations.

During the interviews it was the authors' impression that at a certain moment, saturation took place. At the end of the interviewing process often the same information was told and not much new information was acquired. One of the reasons for this is that the Transition Town network in the Netherlands is not very large and many people know each other. This has positively influenced the external validity of the results. Sometimes not sufficient time was available to discuss the complete topic list. This has influenced the validity of this study in a negative way.

    When conducting research, there may be misinterpretations between respondent and interviewer. To prevent misinterpretation, a little summary was made by the researcher in order to test interim interpretations of the researcher and to give the respondent the chance to further clarify their answers. The interviewee might be influenced by the behavior of the interviewer. This might have an influence on the relationship of trust between interviewer and interviewee. It was the author's impression that respondent did not withhold information. In some cases very personal information was told by respondents. For this reason it can be argued that the respondents probably trusted the researcher. This was positive for the reliability of the research. Something that was negative for the reliability of this study is that some interviews were conducted in cafés with some background noise. During the transcribing it was in some cases difficult to hear what the respondent said due to back ground noise.

7.3   Recommendations

Further Research

One of the conclusions from this report is that environmental- related initiatives should be more systematically embedded in the broader life world of citizens. It would be interesting to analyze the successes and failures of environmentally related initiatives of social networks where citizens are already part of, like sport clubs, voluntary organizations, churches, schools and companies. In this way you can see if different niche innovators can finally lead to a transition on a landscape level as proclaimed by the Transition Management model of Rotmans et al. (2005).Such a research could verify the Transition Management model or might lead to new theory building.

Practice

Initiatives should be systematically embedded in the broader life world of citizens and be part of their social, material and institutional environment. The influence of the social structures is high, and sustainable behavior has the greatest chance to break through if the environment is positive about it. Close collaboration with local governments is crucial because the government can facilitate in many ways. The collaboration with other parties and companies is also important because they can help and facilitate in sustainable initiative. It is of crucial importance to have people involved with the right competencies like organizational, network, presenting, communicational and social competencies.

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9. Appendix

9.1　Topic List

Practical information TT
- Role of respondent in the Transition Towns movement
- How and when did this TT initiative come up?
-Structure of Transition Town
- Description city or village
- 12 steps followed
-Type of Initiatives
- Internationally recognized Transition Towns

General information
- Philosophy of Transition Towns
- Importance of localizing
- Neighborhood approach and individualism
- Success TT in general
- Success of Transition Towns in comparison with other environmental movements
- International collaboration of TT
-Transition Towns on a national level

The involvement of people
- Recruiting of people
- Convincing people

Success initiatives
- Number of people involved
- Publicity of TT
- Organization
- Problems with setting up initiatives
- Successful and unsuccessful initiatives
- How do initiatives arise
- Success TT in particular city
- Definition of success

Social practices /ESB
- Social ties
- Opinion of social environment of respondent concerning sustainability issues
- Role of citizens
- Are citizens directed individually or as a group?
- What is the influence of green supply?
- Should people give up many things to be sustainable?

- Routinized behavior
- Advising citizens through social practice
- What is the motivation of people to be involved
- What are mentioned objections of citizens not to go
- Type of people that are active in Transition Towns
	- Alternative circuit
	- Foreigners
	- Pensioners
	- Gender
	- Interests
	- Church
	- Age
	- Left wing
	- Level of education
	- Singles
	- Jobless

Network
- Collaboration third parties
- Municipalities
- Companies
- Other organizations
- Other Transition Towns
- What should the role of the government be?

Tipping points
- Competencies
- Size of initiative

9.2   Municipalities Questionnaire

What is your function?
What kind of work do you undertake in the area of sustainability?
What is your conception of sustainability?
Is this your personal conception or the conception of the municipality?
How do you feel towards local sustainable initiatives?
Does the municipality provide subsidies for these kinds of initiatives?
What is the policy of the municipality concerning sustainability?
How many initiatives do you see on a local level? Are there enough of them?

Do you know Transition Towns?
What do you think of the initiatives of Transition Towns?

Is it important for the municipality to work together with active citizens in the area of sustainability?
What are important bottlenecks in the collaboration with local (citizen) initiatives?
To what extent are churches working on sustainable initiatives?

9.3   Code Tree

General information
-Role in TT
-Philosophy Transition Towns
-Localization of TT
-12 steps of handbook
-Head, heart, hands
-Internationally recognized
-TT on a national level
-Definition sustainability

Factors for success
-Successful and unsuccessful initiatives
-Number of people involved
-Acquaintance TT in town
-Structure of TT
-Size of city
-Fixed location for organizing initiatives

Problems with setting up initiatives
-In general
-Lack of time
-Lack of financial means
-Lack of enthusiastic people

What should the focus be and on which level?

System Thinking/ Transition/ Social Practices/ ESB
- Neighborhood and individualism
- Are social practices directed independently and practically
- Recruiting new people
- Influence of green supply
- Should people give up many things for a more sustainable lifestyle
- Social ties
- Are people addressed as a group or as individual
- Attitude towards others
  - Young people
- Type of people that are involved

-Pensioners
  -Gender
 - Housewives
 - Unemployed
 - Interests
 - Religion
 - Age
 - Political preference
 - Level of education
 - Marital status
 - Rest

Important initiatives:
   - Energy
   - Movie night/lecture
   - Repair Café
   - Local food

Less important initiatives for analysis:
   - Local economy
   - Heart & Soul
   - Vegetarian Meal
   - TT Café
   - Bees belt
   - Permaculture course
   - Local energy cooperation
   - Exchange of consumer goods
   - Community resources agriculture
   - Eco village
   - Consume less

How to organize and who to engage?
Improvising and incrementalism
- Collaboration of TT with municipality
- Collaboration of TT with third parties
- Role local government
- Subsidies
- Location
- Costs
- Publicity

How to reach people?
Tipping Point
- Competencies

-Leadership
- Public speaking
- organizing an effecting meeting
- Network competences
- Communicational skills
- PR skills
- Organizational skills
- Rest

-Influential people in Transition Towns
-Influence of the size of an initiative on its success

Interviews with municipalities
- Conception of sustainability
- Importance of local initiative
- Opinion about TT
- Collaboration with TT
- Bottlenecks

9.4   International Recognition

To become internationally recognized you should:

(1) understand the concepts of peak oil and climate change and describe them in the main documents of your Transition Town. (2) You should have at least an initiative group of 4 or 5 people; (3) Find at least two people in the coordination group who want to do the training of Transition Towns; (4) a potentially strong connection with the local government; (5) understand the twelve steps that should be taken to found a Transition Town; (6) the promise that if you need help you ask for it; (7) The promise to update your Transition Towns website; (8) write a blog for Transition Towns internationally; (9) To do a speech to at least two nearby other starting Transition Towns initiatives and talk about your own experiences; (10) to network with other communities in Transition; (11) take care that there is a minimum of clashing interests in the initiative group; (12) to work together with the transition network when applying for subsidies, (13) an engagement to strive for inclusiveness; (14) the central place to start is your local community and not the whole region; (15) At least one person in the coordination group should have followed a permaculture course. If you are able to show that you meet these requirements the assembly in Totnes will provide your group international recognition (Hopkins, 2009).

9.5   Results per Transition Town

TT Apeldoorn

Structure	Small group, organized around Repair Café and vegetable garden. No coordination group but one contact person who send the newsletters and organizes most activities.
Collaboration with municipality	There are contacts but not very strong. Contact person is not very positive about the role of the municipality. Municipality gave TT plots for gardening after some difficulties. No subsidies.
Collaboration with third parties	Contact with Natuurhuizen (Nature Houses) Apeldoorn.
Available competencies	Skills in organization.
Diversity of people	Men and women equally divided. Age 35 to 60. Group is too small to give a detailed description.
Spearheads	Repair Café and vegetable garden.
Publicity	Website and news letter.
Strong points	Two successful projects: Repair Café and vegetable garden.
Weak points	Group is still quite small and has a shortage of enthusiastic people who want to start something new. Shortage of time and financial means.

TT Den Dolder

Structure	Initiative group is small (3 people), the group is not big enough yet to start with working groups and to specialize on particular topics.
Collaboration with municipality	Not very strong yet, but the group is still in process of establishment
Collaboration with third parties	Collaboration of TT Utrechtse Heuvelrug, which consist of TT Den Dolder, De Bilt, Doorn and Zeist with the Rabobank who provide subsidies for local sustainable initiatives.
Available competencies	Skills in organizing an effective assembly, skills in public speech, network competencies, organizational skills.
Diversity of people	Age is diverse from 6 to 60. Mainly higher educated. Native Dutch and middle class.
Spearheads	Movie night and gardening course.
Publicity	News letter and website.
Strong points	Motivated people with the right skills.

Weak points	Group is still small.

TT Deventer

Structure	Coordination group which consists of 7 people. Working groups have several different projects. 30 to 50 people are active in the working groups. 500 people receive the news letter.
Collaboration with municipality	Strong, the initiative gets subsidy from the municipality. There is collaboration with TT Overijssel (provincial level). TT Overijssel and TT Deventer have together a budget of 50.000 euro. There are two paid part-time employees who work on 20 different projects. There is also collaboration with the municipality in the establishment of a bees belt.
Collaboration with third parties	Collaboration with companies, municipalities and residents corporations to start with a large energy project for green energy, they hope to get 10 000 members this year.
Available competencies	Skills in PR, network competencies, people who can connect people (leaders), skills in organizing an effective assembly.
Diversity of people	People with interests in nature, mainly higher educated, left wing political orientations, native Dutch and middle class, age 40+.
Spearheads	Solar panels, movie nights, TT café, vegetable gardens, earth meditation and earth children.
Publicity	Website, internet campaigns and via third parties.
Strong points	They reach many people, there are many successful initiatives and the initiatives share certain continuity.
Weak points	Still mostly oriented on a group that is not very diverse.

TT Eindhoven

Structure	Loosely organized, no coordinating group but there is a contact person. There are no assemblies anymore. Number of activities is limited. There is no continuity in the initiatives.
Collaboration with municipality	Lacking.
Collaboration with third parties	Information evening with Nudge about solar panels (successful). Stand with Olie No (oil no).
Available competencies	Network competencies.
Diversity of people	Alternative oriented. Different ages. Hard to say with only a few people.

Spearheads	Making publicity for other sustainable initiatives. News letter, permaculture, energy.
Publicity	Mailing list. Monthly newsletter per email.
Strong points	Looking for collaboration with third parties, successful solar panel meeting. Very motivated.
Weak points	The number of involved people is limited. They mainly work together with other initiatives but do not have their own activities. It is not clear which initiatives belong to Transition Towns. No fixed location. Lack of people with organizational skills.

TT Freiburg (Germany)

Structure	Well structured organization. The coordination group consists of 8 people. There are 8 different working groups who focus on different topics. The coordination group has the coordination over the different working groups. Every working group sends one member to the coordination group.
Collaboration with municipality	Good collaboration with municipality and they also get subsidies from the government.
Collaboration with third parties	Collaboration with large number of local organization. Especially with a neighborhood in Freiburg called Vauban (ecovillage).
Available competencies	Organizational skills, skills in public speaking, organizing an effective assembly.
Diversity of people	Alternative oriented, people from church, all ages are incorporated.
Spearheads	Permaculture, energy, information gathering, heart and soul, incorporating children.
Publicity	Website TT, local newspapers.
Strong points	Many goals are reached in Freiburg, strong 'green' network.
Weak points	Especially oriented on one neighborhood: Vauban, which already had many green projects.

TT Groningen

Structure	Ordered with one coordination group, with different working groups.
Collaboration with municipality	No frequent contact.
Collaboration with third	Collaboration with Occupy for movie nights, invited at Noorderzon (Festival)

parties	for organizing a Repair Café. Foundation Grunniger Power (local energy cooperation) in collaboration with TT. Movie nights at forum image (cinema). There is contact with environmental federation of Groningen. Student organization SIFE for solar panels on student's houses.
Available competencies	Network competencies, organizational competencies.
Diversity of people	Mostly 40+, but also a few students showed interest. All kind of professional occupations are incorporated.
Spearheads	Repair Café, Grunniger Power (local energy cooperation), local food, solar panels.
Publicity	Local news paper, TT Website.
Strong points	They organize many successful initiatives.
Weak points	Lack of time. Difficulties with getting a broader / mainstream public involved.

TT Houten

Structure	In the first year, there was a coordination group. After one year there was an evaluation and the core group was abrogated. Now they have different working groups on energy and food.
Collaboration with municipality	Strong collaboration with municipality, former member initiative group is now alderman of the municipality of Houten. The municipality facilitates in locations for gatherings and plots for gardening.
Collaboration with third parties	There are contacts with other Transition Towns, like Utrecht and Deventer. And contact with companies for solar panels.
Available competencies	Network competencies, the members of the initiative group are partly selected on the network that they bring and the knowledge and skills that they have. They are strong in communication.
Diversity of people	Age 30 to 50, especially families with children. Native Dutch, middleclass. Some people are church members. Men are women are equally divided.
Spearheads	Solar panels, Ecovillage.
Publicity	In newspapers, inviting alderman for opening of an activity.
Strong points	Good collaboration with municipality, people involved with the right skills to let success happen.
Weak points	Shortage of time.

TT Rotterdam

Structure	Loosely organized, it is a movement not an organization with members. The interested people do not exactly know who is involved and who is not involved. There is a coordination group, but it does not work to coordinate for the whole city.
Collaboration with municipality	Yes, plots for gardening
Collaboration with third parties	NIVON Natuurvrienden ('Friends of Nature') for room and with the local playground for getting space for a vegetable garden.
Available competencies	Gardening expert.
Diversity of people	Age: 20 to 60. Slightly more women than men. Highly educated, native Dutch.
Spearheads	Vegetable gardens and workplace (kind of Repair Café but broader oriented than a Repair Café and existed before Repair Café started nationally) and community sources agriculture (bakery).
Publicity	Website/flyers.
Strong points	Very practical, movement is still growing in Rotterdam
Weak points	Lack of time. No active PR. Type of initiatives is somewhat limited.

TT Tilburg

Structure	Loosely organized, there are different working groups without a coordination group.
Collaboration with municipality	Limited, there is contact between TT and policy makers but they do not get any subsidy or facilities.
Collaboration with third parties	Foundation Stadsbomen (' City Trees'), freelancers for making publicity for free, Brabantse milieufederatie, magazine Genoeg ('Enough'). Sometimes collaboration is obstructed by slightly different interests.
Available competencies	Contact person has good network competencies and competencies in public speech.
Diversity of people	Single people, higher educated, people with interest in nature, age: 30 +.
Spearheads	Vegetarian meal, local food production (community resource agriculture) and Repair Café.
Publicity	Newspapers, the website, via Twitter, Facebook, mailing list and radio advertisements.
Strong points	Many activities are organized around food. Goeie Eten (community recourses agriculture) is a successful initiative and also the vegetarian meal attracts many people.

Weak points	Shortage of time and financial means. No subsidies, no annual report, no bank account. Small group of active people.

TT Utrecht

Structure	TT Utrecht started on a city level and aimed to incorporate the whole city, this did not work out well. After that, the contact person decided to raise a group on a smaller level, a neighborhood called Voordorp in Utrecht.TT Utrecht has no coordination group, but there are different working groups. The different but they do not gather with each other.
Collaboration with municipality	Yes, they get subsidy from municipality for a local vegetable garden.
Collaboration with third parties	Collaboration with the sustainable residential complex het 'Groene Dak'. This organization facilitates a free location for activities.
Available competencies	Organizational skills.
Diversity of people	Varies from alternative oriented people, to families with children. Age: between 40 and 60.
Spearheads	Energy and vegetable garden.
Publicity	Local newspaper and via newsletter of the neighborhood.
Strong points	Successful in the neighborhood Voordorp, but not in Utrecht.
Weak points	Quite small and only oriented on Voordorp. Lack of time.

TT Wageningen

Structure	There is a coordinating group with different working groups. Especially the energy working group attracts many people.
Collaboration with municipality	Energy related initiative. Help with the map 'Wageningen Neutral'. TT Wageningen gets a subsidy from the municipality.
Collaboration with third parties	Solar panel company, Duurzaam Wageningen (sustainable) Wageningen, Foundation zone energie (local solar energy foundation) Wageningen. LETS (local exchange group).
Available competencies	Network competencies, practical skills, organizing skills.
Diversity of people	Middle class higher educated native Dutch, Idealistic and people that attend a church. Age: 30/40+
Spearheads	Energy and a vegetable garden.
Publicity	Local newspaper, poster, website TT.

Strong points	Energy related initiatives, are success full and many people show up. Strong collaboration local government.
Weak points	Shortage of time. Lack of volunteers.

TT Zutphen

Structure	TT Zutphen was very organized from the start. In the first year there was an initiative group, and from this initiative group several working groups followed. After exactly one year the founder decided to (according to handbook) discontinue the coordination group. Members did not like this, which resulted in internal difficulties. Hereafter, the different working groups went on without a strong coordination and this led to a lack of collaboration between the working groups and internal cohesion.
Collaboration with municipality	There is contact with the municipality but no strong collaboration.
Collaboration with third parties	Zutphense energy transition is a more commercially oriented organization on solar panels. Movie nights with Milieudefensie in alternative cinemas. Contacts with: Boomstichting (Foundation Trees), Natuur en Milieu Educatie (Nature and Environment Education) (IVM), Vogelwerkgroep (Bird Working Group). Cycling along sustainable companies: an old-fashioned windmill, energy corporation with solar panels, nature food stores and ecological clothing stores.
Available competencies	The founder of the group had leadership competencies. Finally he quitted and there is no successor for him. The group members have network competencies.
Diversity of people	Mostly women, age 30-40 (with families), native Dutch, alternative oriented.
Spearheads	Energy, bees belt and local food.
Publicity	Newsletters per e-mail, TT Website, local newspapers.
Strong points	Successful energy related and local food initiatives.
Weak points	Internal struggles in group. The movement was at the start too much built around one person. This has resulted in a vacuum when he left. The movement was demoralized because of the internal struggles. There is no meeting place. Shortage of time, since many have young children.

Foundation Repair Café

Structure	Foundation Repair Café has one fulltime paid worker and 2 part timers. There are right now 30 different Repair Cafés in different cities in the Netherlands. Every group is responsible for his own organization and subsidies. On average there are 3 people who organize the Repair Café per location and around 7 repairmen, which lead to around 300 people in total who are actively involved. Foundation Repair Café made an information package for people who want to

	start a Repair Café.
Collaboration with municipality	Foundation Repair Café is a foundation that gets subsidies from the ministry of infrastructure and environment.
Collaboration with third parties	With Transition Towns who have established many Repair Cafés. Subsidies from Foundation Doen and Agentschap NL.
Available competencies	Organizational skills, leadership skills. Ability to make people enthusiastic
Diversity of people	Broad public. Immigrants and natives are both represented. People with high and low incomes are both represented. People with high incomes are often a bit alternative oriented. Age mostly 40+.
Spearheads	Reparation of broken products.
Publicity	Mainstream radio, flyers, press release, posters, different national newspapers, information packages (which are even translated in several languages because there is also international interest).
Strong points	The practical approach and the financial advantages of Repair Café attract many people.
Weak points	Not many young people visit the Repair Café or are involved in organizing activities.