COLLABORATIVE PUBLIC VALUE

A study into the practice of neighborhood mediation

Research Master Thesis

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Introduction

In the Netherlands, the public domain is vastly changing. From being a country that was once characterized by an elaborate welfare system – a system in which the state takes responsibility for its citizens' wellbeing – major reform is turning the relationship between government and citizens on its head (Verhoeven & Tonkens, 2013). In recent years, government has introduced a new system, called the 'Do-Democracy' (Rijksoverheid, 2013)[1], in which the role of government is limited, while citizens – as formulated by the Dutch Cabinet – "are asked to take responsibility in [their] own life and environment" (Website Rijksoverheid).

In the Do-Democracy, citizens are seen by government as important actors of the public domain, who no longer just contribute by voting or deliberating, but now also by doing (Van De Wijdeven, 2012). For itself, government sees the task of 'participation', meaning that instead of instigating public action, it now seeks to 'connect' with societal initiatives and provide them with the necessary support and delineation (Van Der Steen et al., 2014).

Unfortunately, there is a problem with this idea of 'government participation'; in the same way that there is also problem with the opposite idea of 'citizen participation', wherein citizens participate in the activities of government (Arnstein, 1969). This problem is that both forms of 'participation' ignore the fact that government and citizens act according to different logics, with government typically following a 'top-down' logic and citizens a 'bottom-up' logic. Because these two logics are fundamentally opposed, one cannot simply be infused into the other.

The next two paragraphs will argue why this is so, by briefly exploring the practices of both citizen and government participation. Then, based on an explanation of both problems, an alternative idea will be proposed; forming the starting point of this study.

Problem 1: citizen participation

Citizen participation is a practice that came to exist around the 1960s (Arnstein, 1969). It emerged as a response to the problems of modern representative government: a system in which public action traditionally occurs from the 'top down', with policies being decided upon by politicians and then implemented through bureaucracy (Osborne, 1993). An early, but point-on, critique on this system was given by American philosopher John Dewey, in his book the *Public and its Problems* (1927). According to Dewey, politicians and bureaucrats in representative government together constituted a "class of experts" (idem: 208), who - due to the top-down structure of the system - are "shut off from knowledge of the needs which they are supposed to

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[1] Before 'Do-Democracy', Dutch government coined the term 'Participation Society' to prescribe the same changing relationship between government and citizens. As this was soon followed by Do-Democracy, the latter term will be used for this thesis.

serve" (1927: 206), thereby causing government action to be unresponsive to the public (idem: 208). Dewey believed that this problem could be solved if citizens gained channels to inform experts of their specific needs in specific situations, and therefore advocated the institution of local deliberative practices (ibid.).

These practices came to exist with the emergence of 'citizen participation', which refers to a variety of practices wherein citizens deliberate with their government about public issues (Fung, 2006). Although intended as a democratic innovation, the practice of citizen participation proved to be unruly. Influential was the criticism of Sherry Arnstein (1969), who claimed that often, citizen participation does not lead to a more responsive government. Instead, Arnstein argued, the involvement of citizens is frequently used by governments to further legitimize policy decisions that are already made (idem: 217). Arnstein therefore stated that "participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless" (idem: 216); an argument that would be reaffirmed many times by scholars investigating practices of citizen participation (e.g. Innes & Booher, 2004; Chilvers & Burgess, 2008). For Arnstein, this problem could be solved by giving citizens substantial power or even full control over the issue at hand (idem: 217). In other words: Arnstein proposed to replace a government logic by a citizen logic. This brings us to second problem.

Problem 2: government participation

In the Dutch Do-Democracy, Dutch government appears to emphasize the citizen logic, by framing citizens as important actors of the public domain, who contribute to society 'from the bottom up'. Government is still needed, but in a participatory way: to encourage the initiatives of citizens and provide them with support and delineation (Van Der Steen et al., 2014). This emphasis on the role of citizens can be seen as a response to the decline of the welfare state ideal (Van Dam et al., 2015); because government believes that the welfare state has made citizens too dependent on welfare arrangements, it now seeks to reverse the relationship, and make citizens responsible for themselves (Verhoeven & Tonkens, 2013).

However, also the practice of government participation does not fulfill its potential, as government appears to be fundamentally unable to 'participate' without exercising power. This effect is demonstrated by several studies (e.g. Van Dam et al., 2015; Tonkens & De Wilde 2013) that found that even well-intended government efforts to support citizens' activities lead to government pushing citizens in the direction of pre-assigned policy goals, thereby discouraging or even excluding citizens who do not adapt. At the same time, government can also not do nothing, as this might lead to citizens not taking up their new public role. This is for instance suggested by studies (e.g. De Wilde et al., 2014; Kampen et al., 2013) that found that 'vulnerable' citizens are much less capable of 'taking responsibility' than other citizens, because they lack the

necessary resources. Without a participating government, therefore, active citizenship falls short where it is needed most: with the people who previously relied on welfare arrangements.

In sum, what these studies various demonstrate, is that in the Do-Democracy, government involvement is as much needed to support bottom-up public action as it is problematic. Therefore, government participation appears to suffer from the same problem as citizen participation: it is necessary, but also inherently flawed. How can both problems be explained?

The problem of participation explained

When overseeing the problems of the two forms of participation, this argues that one overarching dynamic appears that can be explained by five central points:

o *First*, government and citizens have inherently different logics, with government typically acting 'top-down' to meet its policy goals and citizens typically acting 'bottom-up' to address their individual needs.

o *Secondly*, the need for participation arises, because both government and citizens are incapable of taking on public action alone: government because it lacks knowledge of the needs of citizens; citizens because they lack resources to pursue their activities.

o *Third*, in the public domain, government has a power position, making it able to overrule citizens when their input and/or activities do not align with pre-assigned policy goals.

o *Fourth*, citizen involvement in the public domain is voluntary, causing citizens to be frustrated and discouraged when their needs are not addressed as a result of their involvement.

o *Fifth* and *most importantly*, the goals of government and needs of citizens may conflict with each other, causing government to exercise its power and, subsequently, citizens to become discouraged, leading to failed practices of participation.

Although this dynamic does not imply that practices of citizen and government participation per definition fail, it does show why the *idea* of participation is flawed: by departing from one logic - whether it is the top-down government logic or the bottom-up citizen logic - and then trying to infuse it with the other, it fails to acknowledge the complexities of bringing these two together. More specifically, it fails to provide an answer to how it can be prevented that the 'top-down' government logic overrules its counterpart of the 'bottom-up' citizen logic. Therefore, this thesis argues that a different starting point is necessary. This starting point is the explicit acknowledgement that the two logics of government and citizens are inherently different but equally valid. Therefore, interactions between government and citizens must be sought that fully adhere to both logics. This can be signified as the move from participation, to *collaboration*.

Learning from collaboration that works

With the need for government-citizen collaboration established, the next question is how such collaboration can lead to successful public action; or, as Mark Moore would say, how it can create 'public value' (1995). Currently, this question can be seen as a 'black box': a process of which the input and output are known, but not its internal complexities (Latour, 1987). To create public value, we know what has to go in - government-citizen collaboration - and what has to come out – public value that adheres to both logics. But what needs to happen in between to connect the two, is still unknown. This thesis aims to bring an understanding to what happens in the 'black box' of public value creation through government-citizen collaboration. It does so by following the pragmatic stance of "truth is what works" (James, 1987: 44). That means that this study will take a case of government-citizen collaboration that appears to 'work' - in the sense that its outcome adheres to both logics – to unravel the mechanisms that make it work. In short: it aims to learn from a success story. This story is found in the Dutch practice of neighborhood mediation.

The practice of neighborhood mediation

Neighborhood mediation is the practice of organized volunteers who mediate in disputes between neighbors (Peper et al, 1999). It started in 1995 with two local experiments, and has spread throughout the Netherlands ever since: currently, almost half of all Dutch municipalities feature a project of neighborhood mediation. The practice of neighborhood mediation constitutes a case of government-citizen collaboration, for two major reasons: first, the intervention of neighborhood mediation is undertaken by active citizens who volunteer as neighborhood mediators. Secondly, neighborhood mediation projects are either organized or supported by public institutions (Jansen et al., 2010). Furthermore, it also appears to adhere to both logics, as the practice is both widely appreciated by institutional stakeholders, and is regarded as a successful example of active citizenship (Peper et al, 1999; Meijs & Delleman, 2006; Jansen et al., 2010; Fiers & Jansen, 2004). This thesis will investigate the mechanisms of neighborhood mediation's success, to learn more about the concept of public value creation through government-citizen collaboration. The thesis will pose the following research question: *in the practice of neighborhood mediation, how does the collaboration between citizens and public institutions create public value?* The following paragraph lays out how the thesis will answer that question.

Structure of the thesis

In the next chapter, chapter 1, the Dutch case of neighborhood mediation is explored to establish the relevant levels of the empirical analysis. Chapter 2 will lay out the theoretical framework to guide the empirical part of the study. Chapter 3 will elaborate on the method used for the

empirical study. Chapter 4 and 5 will present the empirical analysis, each chapter concerned with one level of analysis. In the conclusion, the study's findings will be used to answer the main research question and position this answer in the broader theoretical debate.

Chapter 1. The Practice of Neighborhood Mediation

In the introduction, the practice of neighborhood mediation was established as an example of government-citizen collaboration that succeeds in creating public value. This chapter will take a closer look at the practice of neighborhood mediation, to shed light on what constitutes this practice, and to investigate how that can help us understand the dynamic of government-citizen collaboration and its public value creation. This will be done by, first, turning the problem that neighborhood mediation addresses: the problem of neighborhood disputes. Then, the practice of neighborhood mediation itself will be explored. In a last step, two relevant levels will be distinguished for further investigation, resulting in the formulation of two sub research questions.

The problem of neighborhood disputes

Disputes between neighbors form a problem that is difficult to define, as these 'neighborhood disputes' - as they are called from now on - can vary wildly in content, context, severity and complexity (Van Zanten et al., 2014); they can be about a birthday party that went on too long, but also about a family that is violently terrorizing the neighborhood. Regardless of its wide variety, neighborhood disputes occur often. In the city of Amsterdam, for instance, police annually receives more complaints of nuisance caused by neighbors than all other forms of nuisance combined (Website Parool).[2]

Traditionally, there are various public institutions involved in dealing with the problem of neighborhood disputes, such as the housing corporations, police and municipality (Peper et al. 1999: 27-33). These institutions often lack the means to effectively deal with the problem. Peper et al. argue that this is largely due to the relational nature of these disputes (ibid.). According to them, relations between neighbors are characterized by a *mutual dependency*: because neighbors live close to each other, they are inherently affected by each other and each other's lifestyles (1999: 81). Differences between neighbors in interests, needs and identities therefore all cause conflict (idem: 86). In this context, enforcement by institutions tends to fall short: having a dispute does not mean that neighbors are doing something wrong; and even if they are, the fact remains that neighbors live next to each other, having to make do regardless of 'who's right' (idem: 81).

When seen from a governance perspective, neighborhood disputes thus constitute a so-called 'wicked problem': a societal problem that cannot easily be solved through policy, because of its inherent complexity (Rittel & Webber, 1973). It is in this void, in which institutions cannot

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[2] With a total of almost 13.000 complaints in 2012.

effectively deal with the problem at hand, that the practice of neighborhood mediation came to exist (Peper et al. 1999: 326).

The solution of neighborhood mediation

Neighborhood mediation has existed in the Netherlands since 1995. In that year, two experiments started in the cities of Rotterdam and Zwolle, soon followed by a third experiment in the city of Gouda (Peper et al., 1999). All three experiments were concerned with the intervention of mediation, as inspired by the 'San Francisco Community Boards' (idem: 19). In this American practice, volunteer mediators from the community form 'boards' that facilitate conversations between various disputed parties, for instance between family members, co-workers or neighbors (Website Community Boards). The three Dutch experiments used the Community Board as an example to set up projects specifically focusing on mediation between neighbors, again by the use of trained volunteers (idem: 5).

Four years into the practice, in 1999, a major study was published by researchers of the Erasmus University that evaluated the first three experiments (Peper et al., 1999). The researchers unequivocally came to the conclusion that neighborhood mediation worked: both as an intervention that helped neighbors in a majority of cases to (partly) resolve their dispute (idem: 332); and as a practice, with the institutional environment being predominantly positive about neighborhood mediation (idem: 326). In the years following the publication, the practice of neighborhood mediation quickly spread throughout the Netherlands; also due to the support of the Ministry of Justice, who temporarily provided start-up subsidies and raised a neighborhood mediation expertize center[3]. The result is a widespread practice: in 2009 there were 97 projects of neighborhood mediation in the Netherlands, present in almost half of all Dutch municipalities (Jansen et al., 2010: 8).

Between the first evaluation and now, various practical studies have investigated the further development of neighborhood mediation in the Netherlands (e.g. Jansen et al., 2010; Fiers & Jansen, 2004). Similar to the Erasmus evaluation, these studies emphasize the dual success of neighborhood mediation, arguing that it works for citizens – e.g. neighbors and neighborhood mediators - and for the various institutional partners. One study for instance claimed that "90% of local stakeholders are satisfied to very satisfied with neighborhood mediation, [including] institutional partners, neighbors, neighborhood mediators and coordinators" (Fiers & Jansen, 2004: 57). Translated to the interest of this study, these conclusions suggest that neighborhood mediation succeeds in creating public value, because it works on two levels: first, on the *operational level*, where volunteer neighborhood mediators help

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[3] Interview coordinator CCV, 32

neighbors to resolve their disputes; thereby situated in the domain of citizens. Secondly, on the *institutional level*, where this intervention is embedded in its broader institutional context; thereby situated in the domain of institutions. For that reason, the operational and institutional level form the two relevant levels of analysis for investigating public value creation in the collaborative practice of neighborhood mediation. In the following paragraphs, both levels will be explored further, resulting in the formulation of two sub research questions.

The operational level of neighborhood mediation

First, regarding the operational level of neighborhood mediation, the main question is why and how the intervention of neighborhood mediation works. Peper et al. argue that the effectiveness of neighborhood mediation has much to do with the social psychological principles of the method. According to them, "the method of mediation facilitates a process (…) in which each neighbor is impartially respected in its story, emotions and underlying interests and needs. (…) When there is recognition and respect, agreements follow." (translated from Dutch; 1999:332)

When considering the role of the neighborhood mediator in this process, Peper et al. argue that it is essential that the volunteers are trained, so that they master the principles of mediation (idem: 241) and possess the right communication skills (idem: 243). Organization is also of the essence, Fiers & Jansen add (2004), as only through organized training and coordination, the quality of neighborhood mediators can be ensured. Volunteer neighborhood mediators are more than just 'cheap' professionals, however. On the contrary, Peper et al. argue that the volunteer-aspect is also important in itself: by being volunteers and 'co-neighbors' who live in the neighborhood, neighborhood mediators reinforce their impartiality (1999: 337). As such, neighborhood mediation is able to resolve disputes "on the horizontal level, between neighbors, therein supported by other neighbors." (translated from Dutch; ibid.)

When taking these various features into account, a duplicity arises in the intervention of neighborhood mediation: on the one hand neighborhood mediation constitutes a 'professional' intervention, entailing principles rooted in social psychology, and communication skills acquired through training. On the other hand, it is done by volunteers and co-neighbors, who by their 'civic' background reinforce the principle of impartiality and horizontal problem-solving. Adding to the latter, neighborhood mediation also appears to be 'civic' in the sense that it successfully activates citizens. Jansen et al. (2010), for instance, note that neighborhood mediation is such a popular volunteer job, that none of the neighborhood projects experience problems with attracting volunteers, and that some of these projects even have waiting lists.

What in summary can be taken from the various studies, is that in the intervention of neighborhood mediation, both professional and civic elements play a considerable role. Other than stating that 'volunteers reinforce impartiality', however, the various studies shed little light

on how these two elements interact. Instead, the studies tend to separate the two, establishing neighborhood mediation as a successful intervention *and* as a successful case of active citizenship. (Peper et al. 1999: 332). This leaves various questions unanswered. For instance, why are volunteers more impartial than professionals? Why do citizens want to do volunteer work that is distinctively professional? How exactly are neighborhood mediators organized? Therefore, to address these issues, the following sub research question is posed for the operational level: *how do elements of a civic and professional repertoire interact as to produce successful neighborhood mediation, and what is the role of organization in this?* With the research question for the operational level formulated, the next paragraph will turn to the institutional level of neighborhood mediation.

The institutional level of neighborhood mediation

Regarding the institutional level of neighborhood mediation, it was established that the various institutional partners – most importantly the housing corporations, police and municipality - are all satisfied with the practice of neighborhood mediation. According the various studies, these institutional partners often actively collaborate with projects of neighborhood mediation, for instance by providing funds (Jansen et al., 2010: 21; Fiers & Jansen, 2004: 51). This collaboration is deemed essential, as one study for instance argues that "without collaboration with the essential institutional partners, a project of neighborhood mediation is doomed to fail." (Translated from Dutch; Fiers & Jansen, 2004: 39) The institutional partners also appear to benefit from the collaboration themselves: according to Fiers & Jansen, neighborhood mediation significantly unburdens these partners in dealing with light cases of neighborhood nuisance, saving up to 4 hours of work per case for the housing corporations, and 1,5 for the police (Idem: 43-44).

To summarize, the various studies imply that the practice of neighborhood mediation exists by the grace of an institutional collaboration from which all parties can benefit. Nonetheless, these studies give little attention to the deeper dynamics of such relations, and to how that might affect the intervention of neighborhood mediation. Although not coming to empirical findings themselves, Meijs and Belleman (2006) demonstrate the importance of understanding these dynamics. According to them, the dependency of neighborhood mediation on institutional collaboration entails several risks. For instance, the risk that neighborhood mediation becomes the "drain" of its institutional partners: the place that all cases go to that institutions find too difficult to deal with themselves (Idem: 39); or the risk that integration in the institutional 'chain' harms the autonomy of the intervention (Idem: 33).

What thus becomes clear, is that collaboration in the case of neighborhood mediation may both help and harm the intervention, although these dynamics are still unclear. Therefore, the following sub research question can be formulated for the institutional level: *how do*

institutional partners relate to each other in the practice of neighborhood mediation, and how does that relationship affect the intervention? With this question formulated, the next paragraph will conclude this chapter with an overview of the research questions.

Overview research questions

In this chapter, the practice of neighborhood mediation was investigated from the perspective of public value creation through government-citizen collaboration. It was argued that neighborhood mediation constitutes a successful intervention, both in the eyes of citizens - i.e. the neighbors and neighborhood mediators - and in the eyes of public institutions. This 'public value' is created through a collaboration that takes place on two relevant levels: the operational level, in which neighborhood mediators help neighbors with resolving their disputes, and the institutional level, in which neighborhood mediation interacts with its institutional environment. To investigate the dynamics of this collaboration, two research questions were formulated that respectively address the operational and institutional level of neighborhood mediation. See below for an overview.

- o Main research question:
  In the practice of neighborhood mediation, how does the collaboration between citizens and public institutions create public value?

- o Research question for the **operational level** of neighborhood mediation:
  How do elements of a civic and professional repertoire interact as to produce successful neighborhood mediation, and what is the role of organization in this?

- o Research question for the **institutional level** of neighborhood mediation:
  How do institutional partners relate to each other in the practice of neighborhood mediation, and how does that relationship affect the intervention?

Chapter 2. Public value creation in the 'differentiated polity'

In the preceding chapter, the practice of neighborhood mediation was studied to distinguish the relevant analytical levels through which government-citizen collaboration and its public value creation can be investigated in this particular practice. This resulted in the formulation of two levels - neighborhood mediation on the operational and institutional level - and corresponding sub research questions. This theoretical chapter will continue the preparation of the empirical study, by taking a closer look at theory relating to, first, the concept of public value and, secondly, the phenomenon of government-citizen collaboration. Based on this theory, sensitizing concepts will be formulated and operationalized research questions proposed to guide the empirical investigation of this study.
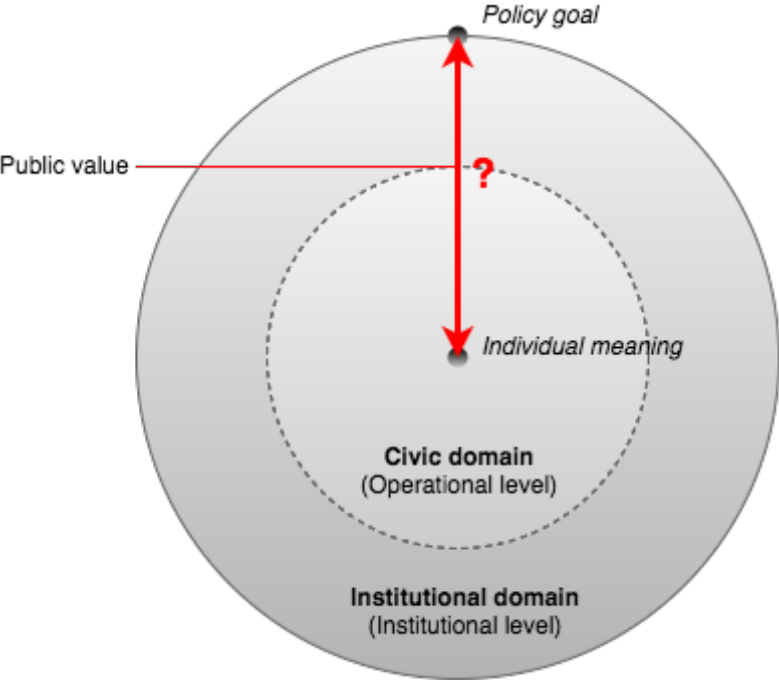
The creation of public value

In 1995, Mark Moore famously coined the term 'public value' to denote how public institutions could contribute to society. In short, Moore theorized that institutions could succeed in creating public value, when they aligned a substantial societal value with both political legitimacy and organizational capability (1995). This narrow 'top-down' view on public value creation, was later broadened by Meynhardt, who argued that "any impact on shared experience about the quality of the relationship between the individual and society can be described as public value creation." (2009: 212)

When using Meynhardt's 'relational' definition of public value creation, it becomes possible to conceptualize public value as something that can be created in a variety of ways: from the top down, from the bottom-up, and through collaboration. Uniting these various ways, this thesis proposes that the general 'relationship' in which public value arises, is the relationship between the 'top' and the 'bottom' itself. This relationship can be conceptualized as a line, running from 'policy goals' (that aim to reflect broad societal aims) on the one end, to 'individual meaning' (that reflect a subjective evaluation of individual needs) on the other; for a visualization, see figure 1.

In the 'line' of public value creation, top-down public action starts from a policy goal – and the political-organizational environment Moore describes - but only reaches public value when it impacts individual lives in meaningful ways. Bottom-up public action starts from individual meaning - as citizens become involved in the public domain when they find it meaningful themselves - but only becomes 'publicly valuable' when it meets broader societal aims, as reflected by policy goals. As was argued in the introduction of this thesis, both of these strategies have a tendency to fail. First, top-down public action often fails to reach individual meaning, because government lacks knowledge of the needs of citizens. Secondly, bottom-up

public action often fails in reaching policy goals, because citizens lack the resources to pursue public activities. Moreover, participation does not provide a solution to either problem, as this often invokes a problematic interaction between government and citizens in which government overrules, and citizens become discouraged as a result. Therefore, the line does not represent an answer, but instead a question: how can individual meaning and policy goals be connected, thereby creating public value?

This thesis argues that an answer may be found in government-citizen collaboration, and seeks to investigate why and how collaboration may be able to connect 'top' and 'bottom'. Translating this to theory, the line represents a challenge of 'governance' of which the proposed government citizen-collaboration constitutes one possible form. Therefore, to understand this collaboration from a theoretical perspective, the next paragraph will turn to the concept of governance.

Figure 1. The question of public value creation
In this figure, the operational and institutional levels are included. For this study, 'individual meaning' can be found in the operational level of analysis; 'policy goals' can be found in the institutional level of analysis.

Governance in the 'differentiated polity'

Governance refers to what Rhodes describes as a "new process of governing" (2007: 1246). With his concept of the 'differentiated polity', Rhodes describes how in contemporary society, there has been "a shift from government by a unitary state to governance through and by networks."

(Idem: 1249). Rhodes argues that due a process of fragmentation – caused for instance by marketization and international interdependence – the state has become "hollowed out" (Idem: 1248): it has lost its ability to effectively govern alone. Instead, governance has become taken up by a multitude of differentiated policy networks that contain both state and non-state actors, brought together by shared interests (Idem: 1246). Governance therefore has become 'plural' - containing many actors – and also 'pluralist' - entailing many processes. As government itself has lost its "privileged, sovereign position" (idem: 1246), it is left to "indirectly and imperfectly steer networks" (ibid.). However, although network coordination has become a central instrument of governance, Rhodes argues that it is not the only instrument: in the networks of the differentiated polity, 'old' instruments of market and hierarchical coordination continue to exist, where they "co-mingle, compete and conflict with the new instruments of governance" (idem: 1253).

In sum, Rhodes argues with his concepts of the 'differentiated polity' that in contemporary society, governance takes place in a variety of ways; 'network' coordination has gained a central position, but also 'hierarchy' and 'market' coordination continue to exist. When investigating a practice of governance - such as the government-citizen collaboration in the practice of neighborhood mediation - it is therefore important to understand the various instruments of governance, both 'old' and 'new'. In the following paragraphs, these instruments will be explored by looking at three 'ideal-typical' modes of governance – as described by Osborne (2006) – that each emphasize one of the three coordination mechanisms of hierarchy, market and networks. Together these modes of governance form the theoretical background through which practices governance can be recognized and interpreted; thereby enabling this study to understand *how* public value is created in the government-citizen collaboration of neighborhood mediation.

Three ideal-typical modes of governance, and their roles for professionals and citizens

In his article *The New Public Governance?* (2006), Osborne oversees the historical developments of modern government, to come to three modes of governance: Public Administration, New Public Management and New Public Governance. Similar to Rhodes' argument, Osborne states that these governance modes have succeeded each other, but at the same all three continue to exist. Therefore, to bring an understanding to these various modes and demonstrate their differences, Osborne presents them ideal-types, or "simplifications" of forms of governance that in reality overlap with each other and/or co-exist (idem: 378). In the following paragraphs, Osborne's typology will be explored to distinguish the various mechanisms of governance. Also, for each mode of governance, the specific roles for professionals and citizens will be discussed, to gain a theoretical background for the research question on the operational level. See table 1 for an

overview of the three modes of governance, and their respective roles for professionals and citizens.

1. Public Administration

Public Administration (PA) constitutes the traditional mode of governance, which was dominant from the late nineteenth century - when modern government came to exist - up until the late 1970s (Osborne, 2006: 377). PA emphasizes the coordination mechanism of *hierarchy*: it focuses on the administration of rules, which are decided upon by politicians and subsequently implemented top-down through bureaucratic organizations (idem: 378). The public service delivery system, however, is dominated by professionals who are relatively detached from bureaucratic control (ibid.). Associated with PA is the welfare state, a system in which the state takes responsibility for the social and economic needs of its citizens (ibid.).

In the mode of Public Administration, the role of professionals can best be seen as 'autonomous'. As they are relatively detached from bureaucratic control, professionals largely succeed in what Freidson describes as the "occupational control of work" (2001: 2). This means that in PA, professional work is strongly defined by professional elements, such as professional knowledge and skills, qualifications that are obtained through professional education, and professional values about what constitutes 'good' work (ibid.).

The role of citizens on the other hand can be described as 'subjected'. In PA, citizenship is mostly associated with rights. Marshall (1950), for instance, argues how the consolidation of modern democracy included an evolution of such rights. This process started with civil rights in the 18th century, continued with political rights in the 19th century, and was finalized with social rights in the 20th century (ibid.). During the dominant period of PA, social rights came to a great height with the emergence of the welfare state (Osborne, 2006). Nonetheless, PA gives citizens little voice, as policies are autonomously formulated and implemented by government (ibid.).

2. New Public Management

In the late 1970s, the second mode of governance came to rise: New Public Management (NPM). As an influential mode of governance up until the start of the 21st century, NPM emphasizes the performance of government (ibid.). This is sought through the coordination mechanism of the *market*: for instance, by increasing the role of 'management' in public organizations, and by opening public service up to market competition (ibid.).

In the mode of NPM, professional work becomes result-driven (Van Der Veen, 2013). As managers and market mechanisms are brought into public professional organizations (Tonkens et al., 2013), the work of professionals becomes increasingly monitored, for instance through 'performance indicators' (Vrielink & Van Bockel, 2013). Through such measures, professional

autonomy is decreased with the purpose of making professional work more 'client-centered' (Clarke & Newman, 1997). Altogether, in NPM, the role of professionals can be characterized as 'performing'.

Regarding citizens, NPM aims to provide "service, accountability, choice and voice to citizens, mainly in their role as consumers" (Tonkens et al, 2013). This role of consumer mostly refers to citizens as recipients of public service. Nonetheless, this thesis argues that the proliferation of participation practices since the 1990s (Fung, 2015) can also be related to this idea of the citizen as a consumer. Most of these practices are concerned with involving citizens in issues in which they hold a direct stake, such as planning projects for residents (Healy, 2003), or school boards for parents with school-going kids (Fung, 2004). In such participation practices, the centrality of government remains: although citizens participate in the public domain, their role is directed towards improving the performance of government. In NPM, the role of the citizen can therefore be described as 'demanding'.

3. New Public Governance

In the third and still evolving mode of governance (Osborne, 2006), New Public Governance (NPG), the coordination mechanism of *networks* is emphasized. In NPG, the field of governance is no longer solely the domain of public organizations, but is instead inhibited by 'multiple inter-dependent actors' (idem: 384). These actors contribute to the delivery of public services, either with or without the involvement of government (idem: 381). Lastly, actors strive for service effectiveness and outcomes through the "governance of processes" and "inter-organizational relationships" (idem: 384).

Professionals can no longer operate in isolation in NPG, but rather need to engage with their environment in order to succeed (Noordegraaf, 2015; Dzur 2004; Tonkens & Newman, 2011). As to how this engagement should take form in this 'new' governance mode, scholars put forward different perspectives. Dzur (2008), for instance, pleads for a close collaboration, in which professionals should 'share' tasks and authority with citizens. Noordegraaf (2015) takes a more moderate approach, and argues that professionals can still act as experts, but should now 'link' their expertise and authority to various stakeholders, including clients and citizens (2015). Uniting these various views, the role of professionals in NPG can be summarized as 'connective'.

NPG perceives citizens as one of the actors that have entered the public domain. This new role for citizens is aptly described by Bang & Sorensen's concept of the 'everyday maker' (1999). According to Bang & Sorensen, 'everyday makers' are citizens who direct their political engagement towards concrete problems in daily life, rather than focusing on the performance of government (idem: 326). They engage in practical problem-solving activities on "the lowest level possible", either by themselves (self-governance), or in collaboration with government and/or

other actors (co-governance). From a NPG perspective, such everyday makers should be acknowledged for their contribution and made part of the process of governance. In NPG, therefore, the role of citizens is considered 'active'.

Mode of governance	Public Administration	New Public Management	New Public Governance
Focus	*Administration of rules through bureaucracy*	*Performance through market-inspired measures*	*Processes and inter-organizational relationships*
Coordination mechanism	*Hierarchy*	*Market*	*Networks*
Role of the professional	**Autonomous professional** *Relatively detached from bureaucratic control*	**Performing professional** *Output monitored for better performance*	**Connective professional** *Needs to connect with clients and environment*
Role of the citizen	**Subjected citizen** *Beneficiary of public service with little voice*	**Demanding citizen** *Enhances government performance*	**Active citizen** *Engaged in practical problem solving*

Table 1. Overview of three modes of governance and their roles for professionals and citizens.

The problems of each mode of governance

With the three modes of governance considered, a last step is to discuss their ability to deal with contemporary challenges. As was argued with Rhodes' concept of the differentiated polity, elements of each mode are present in contemporary governance. At the same time, Osborne argues that New Public Governance has come to rise exactly because Public Administration and New Public Management cannot adequately deal with an "increasingly plural and pluralist world" (idem: 380). Osborne blames this on the fundamentally "statist" nature of PA (idem: 377), and the "intra-governmental focus" and "outdated private sector techniques" of NPM (idem: 380). In sum, Osborne's criticism on the other two modes implies that NPG forms the best mode of governance to address contemporary challenges. However, because he does not provide a normative evaluation of NPG itself (ibid.), his argument remains incomplete: is New Public Governance able to adequately deal with a plural and pluralist world?

When considering the example of the 'Do-Democracy' that was introduced in this thesis, the answer may be that also NPG is not. In the Do-Democracy, Dutch government applies a NPG-approach, by recognizing citizens as relevant public actors and subsequently trying to

provide them with support and delineation. However, as was argued in the introduction, this type of government involvement has the unintended side-effect of discouraging citizens. The example of the Do-Democracy therefore implies that engaging in 'relationships' is a more complex process than Osborne's NPG acknowledges.

This lack of acknowledgment can be explained by the fact that NPG frames relationships as both a 'functional need' and a 'structural solution'. Osborne sees relationships as NPG's functional need, when he argues that the plural and pluralist state requires "inter-organizational relationships and the governance of processes" (2006: 384). Simultaneously, he sees relationships as NPG's structural solution, when he states that "trust, relational capital and relational contracts act as the core governance mechanisms" (ibid.). The problems is that equating these two is paradoxical: if relationships between actors are what is required to deal with contemporary challenges, then this 'functional need' cannot be solved by relationships themselves, nor by relational qualities such as trust[4].

This is visible in the Do-Democracy, in which the need for involvement of citizens in the public domain is rightfully acknowledged, but the 'relational' measure to achieve this relationship is flawed. Indeed, it even drives citizens away. This example makes it clear that rather than the relation itself, the 'structural solution' of NPG lies in whatever makes such relationships possible. Or more specifically: what creates "trust, relational capital and relational contracts" (Osborne, 2006: 384). Although this important issue is not addressed by Orborne's New Public Governance, finding such a 'structural solution' is the purpose of this study: by investigating how public value is created in the government-citizen collaboration of neighborhood mediation, it seeks to understand how relationships between government and citizens can work in the 'differentiated polity'.

To summarize, although the three modes of governance aptly portray the various ways in which 'governance' takes place, none of them appear to fully solve the challenge of governance in the differentiated polity. Relating this back to the concept of public value, this means that none of the modes are unequivocally able to 'connect' policy goals with individual meaning, even though all three attempt to do so in their own way; see figure 2, 3 and 4 for visualizations. Nonetheless, the various modes of governance do provide the theoretical background with which governance in the practice of neighborhood mediation can be recognized and interpreted. In the next paragraph, this theoretical background will be operationalized, by constructing sensitizing concepts that guide the empirical investigation of this study.

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[4] This argument is inspired by Bannink's argument of the 'double management challenge' (2014) and rooted in conversations held with Bannink about the paradox of equating functional needs with structural solutions.
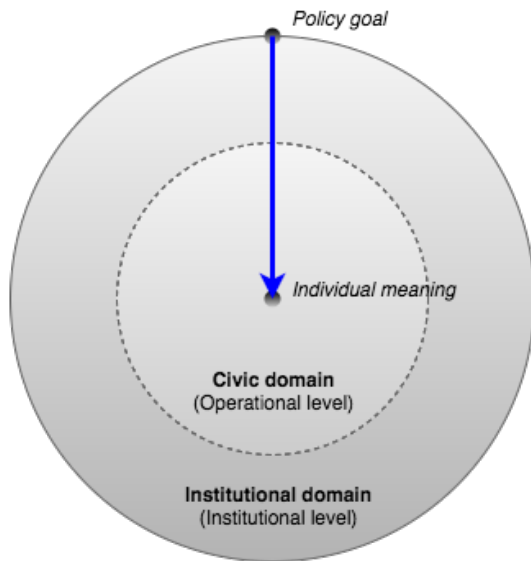
Figure 2. Public Administration

In Public Administration, public value is thought to be created 'top-down' through the administration of rules, or through the public service delivery by autonomous professionals; both signified by the blue arrow.
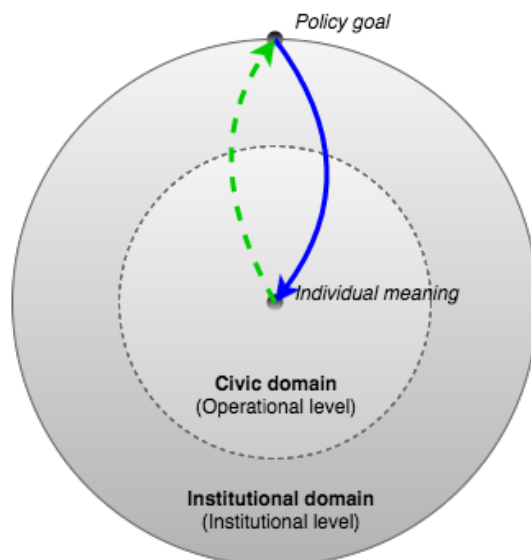
Figure 3 New Public Management

In New Public Management, public value is thought to be created by emphasizing performance. Therefore, the output of government action (arrow down) – such as professional work - is monitored. This is done through output measures, but also through citizen participation (arrow up).
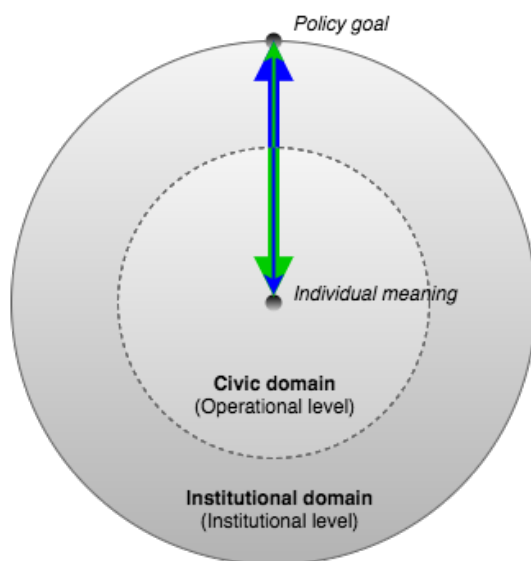
Figure 4 New Public Governance

In New Public Governance, public value is thought to be created by multiple interdependent actors who engage in relationships. Examples are professionals who 'connects' with their clients to reach 'individual meaning' (arrow down) and citizens who engage in co-governance to reach policy goals (arrow up).

Sensitizing concepts for understanding government-citizen collaboration

In the previous paragraphs, various modes of governance were discussed, to understand the phenomenon of government-citizen collaboration from a theoretical perspective. This theoretical background will now be turned into a series of 'sensitizing concepts'. These are conceptual tools that "give the researcher a sense of how observed instances of a phenomenon might fit within conceptual categories." (Bowen, 2006: 7)

The sensitizing concepts will be formed along the two analytical levels of this study: the operational level and the institutional level of neighborhood mediation. On the institutional level, theory on governance will be operationalized, by introducing the sensitizing concept of 'arrangement'. On the operational level, the roles of professionals and citizens will be operationalized, by introducing the sensitizing concept of 'repertoire'. See table 2 for an overview of both sensitizing concepts. Based on these sensitizing concepts, operationalized sub research question will be formulated.

Arrangement - Institutional level

Regarding the institutional level, the following sub research question was formulated: *how do institutional partners relate in the practice of neighborhood mediation, and how does that relation affect the intervention?* From a theoretical perspective, this question addresses the issue of governance, which - as was established in this chapter - entails a variety of practices, drawing from various modes of governance. To operationalize 'governance', therefore, a concept is needed that distinguishes the overarching dimensions of this variety. This can be achieved by utilizing the concept of 'policy arrangements', which can be defined as "the temporary stabilization of the content and organization of a policy domain." (Arts et al., 2006: 99). Policy arrangements can be characterized by four dimensions (Arts et al., 2006; Leroy & Arts, 2006):

1. *Actors* - The actors involved in the arrangement, and their coalitions and oppositions.
2. *Resources* - The division of resources within the arrangement, leading to differences in power. Related to this is the question of who determines policy outcomes and how, leading to differences in influence.
3. *Rules of the game* - Formal procedures within the arrangement, as well as informal rules and 'routines' of interaction.
4. *Discourses* - The views and narratives of the actors involved – in term of norms and values, definitions of problems and approaches to the solution of all the actors involved. Related to this is the concept of 'program', which refers to the specific content of policy documents and measures.

As Arts et al. state, these four dimensions are closely related: change on one dimension induces change on other dimensions, thereby also altering the policy arrangement as a whole (2006: 99). By looking at these dimensions and their relationship to each other, therefore, the arrangement's "relative stability and change" (2006:13) can be investigated as well as the "mechanisms behind these dynamics" (ibid.).

In the empirical part of the study, the institutional level of neighborhood mediation will be explored using the concept of arrangement, thereby informed by the broader theoretical background of governance. Based on this concept, also the research question for the institutional level can be further operationalized, by splitting it in two questions. The first question aims to 'characterize' the arrangement, and the second question aims to investigate its 'mechanisms of stability and change':

1.   *How and why do institutional partners collaborate in the practice of neighborhood mediation?*
2.   *What tensions arise from this collaboration, and how do the institutional partners deal with them?*

Repertoire - Operational level

Regarding the operational level, the research question was formulated as follows: *how do elements of a civic and professional repertoire interact as to produce successful neighborhood mediation, and what is the role of organization in this?* From a theoretical perspective, this question addresses the roles of professionals and citizens, as given to them within the various modes of governance. This thesis argues that this variety can be captured by the concept of 'repertoire'. A repertoire refers to the whole of what professionals or citizens can and should do based on their role. Repertoires flow from arrangements: based on an arrangement's respective a) discourse, b) resources and c) rules of the game, a repertoire decides the appropriate a) motives, b) capital, and c) authority for each of its actors. As repertoires of professionals and citizens differ from each other in general terms, the next paragraph will elaborate these differences.

First, *motive* addresses the issue of what drives people to do what they do. For professionals, motive is explicitly connected to professional values. Professionals are ideally driven by a societal 'calling' (Tonkens et al, 2013), and pursuing personal interests in professional work is perceived as an abuse of power (Illich, 1976). For citizens, it is the opposite: they are expected to become involved in the public domain because of a personal motive, whether that is self-development, to do something for the own group, or something entirely else (Tonkens & Verhoeven, 2011).

Second, *capital* refers to the instruments that professionals and citizens possess by which they can undertake their activities. For professionals, the most important capital are constituted by knowledge and skills (Freidson, 2001). These are professional, because they stem from a common source - professional education - and moreover are professionally controlled (ibid.). Citizens, however, do not have such a common source of capital. On the contrary, citizens use whatever personal capital they have – for instance experience, money or network - when they act in the public domain. For that reason, several studies have shown that highly educated people are also more likely to become active on their own, while lower educated people require governmental support of government (Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2013; Denters et al, 2013).

Third, *authority* refers to the right to exercise power. Professionals enjoy a professional form of authority that provides them with the autonomy to help clients to the best of their professional ability (Hupe & van de Krocht, 2013: 58). As became clear from the three modes of governance, the source of professional authority is not always the same: it may be rooted in professional expertise – such as in PA – but for instance also in the connections made with stakeholders – such as in NPG (Noordegraaf, 2015: 10). Citizens, on the other hand, only have authority over themselves, meaning that they for instance have the authority to demand that their needs are served (Tonkens et al, 2013: 174), but not the authority to decide what others need Their authority can therefore be seen as personal and limited.

In sum, on the operational level, the role of professionals is characterized by a professional motive, professional capital, and professional authority, while the role of citizens is characterized by personal motives and capital, and a personal (lack of) authority. In the empirical part of this study, the operational level will be investigated using the concept of these professional and civic repertoires, as well as the broader theory that informs them. Based on the concept of repertoire, the research questions can also be further operationalized, this time by splitting the question in three. Specifically, the first question addresses motive, the third question addresses capital and authority. Additionally, the second question addresses the role of the organization in creating this repertoire. The questions are:

1. *Why do citizens become volunteer neighborhood mediators?*
2. *How are neighborhood mediators organized?*
3. *What do neighborhood mediators do, and how does that contribute to effectively solving neighborhood disputes?*

See the next page for an overview of all research questions.

Arrangement	→	Repertoire	
Actors	→	Professionals	Citizens
Coalitions and oppositions			
Resources	→	Capital	
Power and influence		*Instruments to act*	
Rules of the game	→	Authority	
Formal and informal rules		*Right to exercise power*	
Discourse	→	Motive	
Problems, solutions, values, norms		*Reasons to act*	

Table 2 Sensitizing concepts

Overview of research questions

Main research question:

In the practice of neighborhood mediation, how does the collaboration between citizens and public institutions create public value?

- o Research question for operational level:

  How do elements of a civic and professional repertoire interact as to produce successful neighborhood mediation, and what is the role of organization in this?

  - ▪ Operationalized research questions:
    1. *Why do citizens become volunteer neighborhood mediators?*
    2. *How are neighborhood mediators organized?*
    3. *What do neighborhood mediators do, and how does that contribute to effectively solving neighborhood disputes?*

- o Research question for institutional level:

  How do institutional partners relate to each other in the practice of neighborhood mediation, and how does that relationship affect the intervention?

  - ▪ Operationalized research questions:
    1. *How and why do institutional partners collaborate in the practice of neighborhood mediation?*
    2. *What tensions arise from this collaboration, and how do the institutional partners deal with them?*

Chapter 3. Method

In the previous chapter, the concept of public value and the phenomenon of government-citizen collaboration were investigated from a theoretical perspective, resulting in a theoretical framework designed to interpret the multi-faceted 'governance' taking place in the practice of neighborhood mediation. Furthermore, to finalize the theoretical preparation of this study, operationalized research questions were formulated for both the operational and institutional level of neighborhood mediation. Now, in this methodological chapter, the last step will be taken in preparation of the empirical analysis, by elaborating on the method which the empirical investigation was conducted. This will be done in the following manner: first, the research approach is explained. Then, the case is considered, which is the subject of the empirical investigation. Finally, the practical steps in data collection and analysis are reviewed.

Research approach

In the previous chapters of this thesis it was argued that in this study, the practice of neighborhood mediation is investigated to better understand a subject of which little is known: public value creation through government-citizen collaboration. From a methodological point of view, this means that the study concerns an 'exploratory' research, aiming to explore situations in which the intervention under evaluation has no clear, single set of outcomes (Yin, 2003). Also, as the sum of research questions makes clear (on the previous page), this exploration is concerned with understanding the deeper mechanisms that underlie this government-citizen collaboration, thereby seeking to create 'in-depth knowledge'.

To serve the aim of 'in-depth exploration', this study adopts a qualitative interpretive approach, inspired by Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Interpretive research can be understood as research that seeks to understand social phenomena by focusing on the "meanings, experiences, and perspectives" of those involved (Boeije 2014:22). Rather than seeking to objectively explain a reality that is 'out there', interpretive research approaches reality as being socially constructed, and is therefore interested in interpreting subjective understandings of reality (Yanow, 1999: ix). Not only from a methodological but also from a substantial point of view, the interpretive perspective fits well with the object of this study: neighborhood mediation constitutes an intervention that is based on the idea that neighbors can reconstruct their subjective understandings of one another (Peper et al. 1999).

Grounded Theory counts as one of the approaches within the interpretative perspective, which can be characterized by its ambition to build theory 'from the ground up', starting with the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In Grounded Theory, the researcher investigates its object of study in an open exploratory manner, therein guided by a 'theoretical sensitivity', which refers to "the

attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn't." (Strauss & Corbin, 2007: 42). Building theory occurs through a process of 'constant comparison', by which data is systematically compared, with the goal to first construct categories and eventually relate those categories to each other in theory (ibid.).

In this study's application of the Grounded Theory approach, Boeije's perspective is stressed that "data do not speak for themselves" (2014:105). What is required instead, is an active researcher who combines data with existing literature and knowledge in a process that can be described as 'abduction': a constant iteration between data and literature (Boeije, 2014; Maso & Smaling 1998). As part of this abduction, this study has started its research process with studying literature to come to 'sensitizing concepts' (Bowen, 2006), as detailed in the previous chapter. Following Bowen (ibid.), these sensitizing concepts formed the starting point for an iterative research process, in which some concepts proved to be irrelevant, while others became deepened by the findings of the empirical study, and still other concepts were introduced along the way; the end result of this process are the sensitizing concepts as presented in the previous chapter.

To summarize the research approach, this study is informed by an interpretive perspective and specifically follows the method of Grounded Theory, in a way that centers the iterative process of 'abduction'. The following paragraph will turn to the next methodological choice that was made in this study: the selection of the case.

Case selection

As the purpose of this study is to create in-depth knowledge, the empirical research will be limited in scope, and conduct a single case study. This case is 'instrumental', which means that "the case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else." (Stake, 1995: 247) For this study, that means that the practice of neighborhood mediation is investigated to understand more about the broader phenomenon of government-citizen collaboration and its public value creation. Although the choice for a single case study allows this research to adequately investigate the complexities of this case, it also means that the findings will be firmly rooted in their context. The purpose of this explorative study is, therefore, not to produce 'generalizable' explanations of government-citizen collaboration, but to instead 'tease out' relevant mechanisms that can form starting points for further study. Nonetheless, Patton (2001) argues that qualitative research can still enhance the 'generalizability' of such findings, by investing in the quality of its case selection and subsequent study.

Regarding the quality of the case selection, this study selected a particular practice of neighborhood mediation that arguably entails the most rigorous form of government-citizen

collaboration, because of its organizational set-up and its size. This is the Amsterdam practice of neighborhood mediation.

First, when it comes to organizational set-up, neighborhood mediation in Amsterdam is organized by an independent foundation called BetterNeighbors (translated from the Dutch 'BeterBuren'). Within the Netherlands, this situation is unique: BetterNeighbors is the only independent foundation organizing neighborhood mediation, while most other projects are organized by social welfare organizations (Jansen et al., 2010). This 'independent' character of BetterNeighbors is further reinforced by the fact that it started as a citizens' initiative: the foundation was set up by three citizens with a background in (neighborhood) mediation, therein supported by municipal funding[5]. Taking these two organizational features together - BetterNeighbors as an independent foundation and a former citizen's initiative - make this practice highly relevant for the purpose of this study, as it can reveal the extent to which a collaboration can take place outside of the 'traditional' institutional domain, while still creating public value.

Secondly, with regards to size, BetterNeigbors constitutes the largest project of neighborhood mediation in the Netherlands (BeterBuren, 2016b). Although starting as a small project in parts of Amsterdam[6], BetterNeighbors has become a large volunteer organization that offers neighborhood mediation in the whole of Amsterdam, as well as in multiple municipalities adjacent to the city (idem: 5). It has a total of 241 volunteers, of which 177 are active within Amsterdam (ibid.). Furthermore, the collaboration surrounding neighborhood mediation is considerably institutionalized: in Amsterdam, BetterNeighbor's collaboration with its partner institutions is formalized through a covenant that is renewed every three years (BeterBuren, 2013b). For those reasons, the Amsterdam practice of neighborhood mediation can provide insight into the dynamics of government and citizens working together on a large scale.

In sum, the Amsterdam practice of neighborhood mediation provides this study with a rigorous case of government-citizen collaboration, which can provide insight into the dynamics of a 'large' collaboration that is not 'ruled' by traditional institutions. Although the Amsterdam practices may not be fully representative for all practices of neighborhood mediation in the Netherlands, the choice for Amsterdam is made regardless, because the purpose of this study is not to understand the practice of neighborhood mediation in itself, but to understand it as an example of government-citizen collaboration. It should be noted that this study only investigates the practice of BetterNeighbors within Amsterdam. The reason for this is that on an institutional level, collaboration in this practice is arranged per municipality, making the city of Amsterdam the most relevant locus. A second note, is that I – the researcher – became a volunteer for this

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[5] Interview initiator BetterNeighbors
[6] Interview initiator BetterNeighbors

organization during the process of my thesis, because of my interest in neighborhood mediation. Although this experience contributes to my overall knowledge of the practice, this knowledge is not used directly in this thesis.

With the case selection made, a last issue to consider are the practical methodological steps that were taken in this study's empirical research. This will be explained in the following paragraphs, starting with the explanation of the data collection and then following with the data analysis.

Data collection

Regarding the investigation to the Amsterdam practice of neighborhood mediation, data was retrieved in two ways. First, through a small document study, including publications of BetterNeighbors and its partner institutions. Secondly, and most importantly, through a series of interviews. As these interviews delivered the bulk of the data, the following paragraph will specifically consider the interviews.

Interviews

The interviews constitute the heart of this research. In total, 18 interviews were held with 19 respondents (one double interview), who provided various perspectives on this practice. For instance, neighborhood mediators, employees of BetterNeighbors, institutional partners and neighbors. The purpose of including these various perspectives - as well as considering various documents - is to engage in 'triangulation'. Stake emphasizes the dual purpose of triangulation by saying that "triangulation has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation. But, acknowledging that no observation or interpretation are perfectly repeatable, triangulation serves also to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen" (1994: 241). Either way, triangulation importantly enhances the 'credibility' of the data (Baxter & Jack 2008: 556). See table 3 for an overview of the respondents and the analytical purpose of each interviewed role.

The conducted interviews were 'semi-structured' in-depth interviews. In a semi-structured interview, categories of questions are decided beforehand through a topic list, but these questions are not strictly applied during the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In this way, the researcher is able to give considerable space to the respondent's story as well as to adhere to the study's sensitizing concepts (Idem). Interviews were furthermore held face-to-face, and were turned into anonymized transcripts to ensure transparency of the analysis. For the final analysis, exempts of the interviews were translated to English.

In order for abduction to take place, the interviews were held in two rounds, both entailing about half of the total amount of interviews, also within the roles. After the first round of interviews, a preliminary analysis was made, that informed both a second look at the sensitizing concepts and at the topic lists of the interviews. In a more modest manner, the sensitizing concepts and topic lists were also reconsidered after each interview. The next paragraph, will consider the analysis further.

Role of respondent	Number of respondents	Analytical purpose
Neighborhood mediators	7 in total (Coming from three teams in total.)	To investigate the intervention of neighborhood mediation as experienced in practice.
Employees BetterNeighbors	4 in total (Of which the specific functions were: director, project leader, trainer & volunteer coordinator.)	To investigate the organizational set-up and institutional collaboration of neighborhood mediation in Amsterdam.
Institutional partners	4 in total (Of which one interview with two civil servants of the municipality, one interview with an employee of the housing corporation and one interview with a police officer.)	To investigate the institutional collaboration of neighborhood mediation in Amsterdam.
Neighbors	2 in total (Of which both neighbors were part of different cases with different neighborhood mediators)	To investigate the intervention of neighborhood mediation as experienced in practice.
National neighborhood mediation coordinator, CCV	1 in total	To investigate the wider context of the practice of neighborhood mediation
Initiator of BetterNeighbors	1 in total	To investigate the history of BetterNeighbors.

Table 3. List of respondents

Data analysis

For this study, data analysis was done by use of the software program MaxQDA. The analysis was carried out in an iterative fashion through the Grounded Theory method of 'open, axial and selective coding' (Strauss & Corbin, 2007).

In this particular method of analysis, research starts with *open coding*, which entails a process of "breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data" (Idem: 61). The result is a 'codetree' of many codes that are not yet related to each other (Boeije 2014). This was largely done after the first round of interviewing. Secondly, *axial coding* refers to a "set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories" (Strauss & Corbin, 2007: 96). The goal of axial coding is thus to investigate how categories of codes relate to each other, or differ from one another. This was largely done during the second round of interviews. Lastly, *selective coding* constitutes "selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development" (Idem: 116). In this phase, relations between various categories are established, providing the basis for the final analysis. This was largely done after all interviews were held.

To summarize the chapter, this study entails a qualitative research that is informed by an interpretive perspective. It follows the method of Grounded Theory, therein specifically centering the iterative process of 'abduction'. The research is done through a single-case study: it investigates the Amsterdam practice of neighborhood mediation, which constitutes a rigorous case of government-citizen collaboration. In practical terms, the study is done through a small document study and, more importantly, the conduction of interviews (n=18). The data was analyzed with the use of the Grounded Theory method of open, axial and selective coding. With the method fully established, the next chapter moves on to the analysis.

Chapter 4. Neighborhood mediation on the operational level: how organization creates self-reliance.

In the practice of neighborhood mediation, a collaboration between government and citizens creates public value. To gain an understanding into how this works, this chapter is concerned with investigating the first 'half' of the collaboration: neighborhood mediation on the operational level. The operational level is where the intervention of neighborhood take place, and constitutes the 'domain of citizens'. Here, neighbors get into disputes, and volunteer neighborhood mediators act to help their 'fellow neighbors' overcome those disputes. In chapter 2, it was argued that to understand the mechanisms of this intervention, the interaction must be studied between civic and professional elements of neighborhood mediation, thereby also considering the role of organization. This chapter therefore addresses the following sub research question: *how do elements of a civic and professional repertoire interact as to produce successful neighborhood mediation, and what is the role of organization in this?*

The chapter will answer that question by addressing the various operationalized sub questions. First, it will address the question of why citizens become volunteer neighborhood mediators. Then, it will turn to the question of how neighborhood mediators are organized. Finally, it will investigate what neighborhood mediators do and how that contributes to effectively solving neighborhood disputes. Altogether, they will result in a conclusion that answers the research question for the operational level.

Why citizens become neighborhood mediators

The role of the neighborhood mediator is a voluntary one. Citizens who takes up this role can be seen as 'active citizens': citizens who actively contribute to society (Van Dam et al, 2015), in this case by spending time as a volunteer. What motivates these volunteers to become active? The seven interviewed neighborhood mediators gave a wide variety of answers, which can be grouped into three categories: 'skill-centered motives', 'societal engagement', and the so-called 'hygiene factors' (Herzberg, 2001).

The motivation to learn and use mediation skills

Neighborhood mediation constitutes a method that requires skill. This skill of neighborhood mediation is concerned with communication: neighborhood mediators have the ability to listen and ask the right questions, thereby helping the neighbors to come together in conversation (Peper et al. 1999). All interviewed neighborhood mediators claimed that their motivation to

become mediator was related to this particular skill-set[7], though in a variety of ways. The following three exempts demonstrate the diverse reasons:

- "Something from which I can learn, I find that important. I want to continue developing myself"[8].
- "I was also thinking about myself a little bit: this is a good way to practice, and it looks good on my resume"[9]
- "Well, what really spoke to me (..) was the fact that you use a skill that you already have; or that you enjoy using, because you know you're good at it."[10]

Where the first quote signifies the motive of self-development, the second is concerned with the motive of gaining work experience, and the third with the motive of using existing skills. These particular motives can be related to the interviewees' personal backgrounds. For instance, for volunteers who are also professional mediators work experience is important: through neighborhood mediation they can increase their "hours of flying"[11]. Other interviewees have a 'social' type of work background (e.g. in education, social care, or psychology) and see mediation as a skill that can benefit them in those daily professions[12]. Lastly, some of the interviewees are retired, who want to use the experience they have build during their career[13]. In sum, although these motives are not exactly the same, they are all concerned with learning or using mediation skills, together constituting the 'skill-centered' motives.

The societal engagement of neighborhood mediators

A second category of motives that the interviewed neighborhood mediators displayed was that of societal engagement: the motive to do something for the neighborhood, or for society as a whole. One interviewee for instance said: "I was already thinking about it for a while, that I wanted to do something for society, as a volunteer."[14] On a similar note, some interviewees portrayed a positive attitude toward volunteer work in general and/or had previous volunteer experiences. Nonetheless, motives of societal engagement were not mentioned by all interviewees, and one interviewee in particular - a professional mediator - explicitly mentioned it had no interest in

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[7] Code 4111 – skill-based motivations
[8] Interview neighborhood mediator 2, code 41112 – personal development
[9] Interview neighborhood mediator 7, code 411131 – resume
[10] Interview neighborhood mediator 1, code 41111 – using skills
[11] Interview trainer BetterNeighbors, code 411133 – hours of flying
[12] Code 41211 - social
[13] Code 41221 - pensioners
[14] Interview neighborhood mediator 4, code 41121 – do something for society

volunteer work prior to neighborhood mediation: "I had no aspirations to become a volunteer (…) Even though my wife runs her own volunteer organization, it wasn't my thing."[15]

Moreover, the motive of societal engagement appears to be conditional, as one interviewee claimed, "I will always do something, but in a way that I benefit from it myself as well."[16] Similarly, the work must fit with the volunteer's profile, as another interviewee noted: "For my work, I used to go to food banks, thinking: would I want to do this? No. That bit of skill that I have, that's what I like, and I love conflicts."[17] Thus, although the volunteers are often driven by societal engagement, their engagement is conditional: they want to do neighborhood mediation because it allows them to do something good, while also gaining something from it themselves, whether that is self-development, fun, or something else.

Hygiene factors

Lastly, there are the 'hygiene factors'. These denote the type of motives that impact work satisfaction only when they are not sufficiently catered for; they maintain satisfaction, but do not create it (Herzberg, 2001). Under this category, a wide variety of mentioned motives can be placed, an important one being the factor of fun. Almost all interviewees explicitly claimed that they thought this volunteer work was fun[18], for a variety or reasons, ranging from a good atmosphere within the group to successfully closing cases. About the latter, one interviewee said: "Especially when you have success in many cases, it becomes fun. Because if you have two in a row wherein people do not react (…) and it is a cold winter night, then you think: 'What have I gotten myself into?"[19] Thus, as depicted by the concept of hygiene factors, this interviewee notes that lack of success has a discouraging effect. A similar effect was also apparent for other apparent hygiene factors, such as spare time, convenient location, and - as in the following quote - flexibility: "I have friend who work at the 'Children's Telephone'. They have to search endlessly for replacement if they cannot make it for a night. We are not bothered with such things."[20]

The motivation of neighborhood mediators

When looking at the sum of motives that the interviewed neighborhood mediators mention, it becomes clear that these volunteers primarily join BetterNeighbors because of what neighborhood mediation has to offer them: a skill-centered environment, where they can learn and use mediation skills. Although many of the volunteers are also driven by the motive to do

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[15] Interview neighborhood mediator 6, code 41332 – no previous interest in volunteer work
[16] Interview neighborhood mediator 7, code 4132 – balance between giving and receiving
[17] Interview neighborhood mediator 4, code 4131 – work must fit with profile
[18] Code 41131 – fun
[19] Interview neighborhood mediator 6, code 411313 – success makes it fun
[20] Interview neighborhood mediator 5, code 41132 – flexible

something for society, this societal engagement is conditional: they want to do something for society, but not anything. Neighborhood mediation offers volunteers a type of volunteer work where they can give something, while also addressing their personal needs and interests, in an activity that is sufficiently fun, convenient and flexible.

With the question of why citizens become neighborhood mediators answered, the next question is what happens with them when they enter the organization of BetterNeighbors. In other words: how are neighborhood mediators organized?

How neighborhood mediators are organized

By becoming neighborhood mediators, volunteers also become part of the organization BetterNeighbors. This segment will investigate how the organization of BetterNeighbors organizes its volunteer neighborhood mediators. From the interviews, it becomes clear that this organization entails two important elements, namely: 'volunteer' elements and 'professional' elements. Both will be considered separately in the next two paragraphs.

BetterNeighbors as a volunteer organization

BetterNeighbors is an organization that is distinctively concerned with volunteers. The interviews indicate that the 'voluntary' character of neighborhood mediation has two important organizational consequences: first, it means that there are limits to what the organization can ask. Secondly, it makes it important for the organization to create an attractive work environment.

First, regarding limits, neighborhood mediation is a volunteer job that entails various obligations: mediators are for instance obliged to follow training and to do a minimum amount of cases per year[21]. Nonetheless, it was frequently noted in the interviews that the organization cannot ask too much of its volunteers, as there are various limits. One of those limits is *time*, about which BetterNeighbors director states: "If I would decide that you would all have to do ten cases a month, then I'm sure some of you will walk away. It has to be doable next to daily activities."[22] Another limit is *expertise*, which means that BetterNeighbors must make sure its cases are not too complex for volunteers. As an interviewed coordinator states: "We are just neighbors that have undergone a short training. You cannot expect someone to act as a psychologist."[23] Finally, there is also the limit of *safety*, which means that BetterNeighbors must guarantee its volunteers' safety, as the director states: "One time we had a case in which the parties almost started a brawl with the mediators right in the middle (…). Those are not the cases

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[21] Code 42111 - "Voluntary but not without obligations"
[22] Interview director BetterNeighbors, code 42112 – time
[23] Interview coordinator BetterNeighbors 2, code 42113 – expertise

you want to be involved in (…) as volunteers."[24] If the limits of time, expertise and safety are exceeded, neighborhood mediation becomes too demanding or even too dangerous to be done by volunteers. BetterNeighbors deals with these limits by making sure it has enough volunteers, and by placing the volunteers in teams that are led by coordinators. These coordinators make sure that the work is not too demanding for volunteers, for instance by assessing the incoming cases for too complex or dangerous situations[25].

Secondly, the interviews also signify that working with volunteers, makes it important for BetterNeighbors to create an attractive work environment for its volunteers. The most notable example of this that came forward in the interviews, is that BetterNeighbors allows its volunteers to focus on what they came to do: neighborhood mediation. The volunteers are barely involved in the administrative hassle that is also part of the work, as the office employees take care of most of it[26]. This lack of administrative burden is appreciated by the neighborhood mediators. As one interviewee noted: "You only have to do what you're supposed to be good at: facilitating conversations. All the organizational stuff surrounding it, I don't particularly like that. It would be a barrier for me."[27]

In sum, through both the measures of setting limits on the work and creating an attractive work environment, BetterNeighbors makes neighborhood mediation suitable and attractive work for volunteers. Nonetheless, this is not all that BetterNeighbors does to organize its neighborhood mediators, as it also organizes them in distinctively professional ways. This will be discussed in the next paragraph.

BetterNeighbors as a professional organization

BetterNeigbors acts as a professional organization in a variety of ways. Most importantly, by organizing professional training: after being recruited, all neighborhood mediators follow a basic training, in which they learn about the intervention as well as develop mediation skills, such as the ability to listen and ask the right questions[28]. Next to the basic training, also a variety of follow-up training programs are offered, which neighborhood mediators can take once or twice every year[29]According to the interviewed trainer, this training is an essential part of successful neighborhood mediation, as mediation skills need to be learned: "[People] are too much focused on the solution, do not listen enough and only ask closed questions. These are all things that you

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[24] Interview director BetterNeighbors, code 42114 – safety
[25] Code 42115 – assessing cases
[26] Code 42121 – no organizational hassle
[27] Interview neighborhood mediator 3, code 42121 – no organizational hassle
[28] Code 42221 – learn the method
[29] Interview neighborhood mediator 2, code 4222 – training

have to run into sometime before you know it doesn't work. So, in a few aspects, people are just not capable, and also not aware that they are not capable."[30]

From the interviews it becomes clear that mediators appreciate the training, especially when training programs connect to issues that mediators encounter in practice. For instance, one interviewee said the following about an intercultural training he followed: "I once had a big Moroccan family. Well, then you know the background of (…) Moroccan culture. So you're handed an instrument, so that you can recognize something better. Or act more practical, with a greater chance of success." [31] Another interviewee noted that the training programs are of professional quality: "I'm always very satisfied. I can compare, because I get similar training at my job. (…) In those cases I think, 'whatever'. I've never had that in the five years [here]. (…) I find them professional (…) You really learn something."[32]

Apart from training, BetterNeighbors also organizes other professional practices. It for instance organizes regular team *intervisions*, so that neighborhood mediators learn from each other's complex cases[33]. Furthermore, mediators are connected to a coach whom they can consult about their work[34]. When needed, these coaches - as well as the coordinators - step in when they find that a neighborhood mediator is not functioning properly, for instance because the mediator lacks skills or deviates too much from the method. One coordinator explains how this works: "It leads to a conversation. And then the advice can be to do a special training offered by BetterNeighbors. Or somebody says, take me out for a couple of months. A time-out, as we call it. So that someone can think about his position at BetterNeighbors. And then he's called after six months to see if he wants to continue. Often, people quit by themselves, by that time."[35]

When summarizing these professional elements, BetterNeighbors organizes its mediators in a variety of ways: by providing basic and follow-up training, by organizing regular intervisions, and by connecting the neighborhood mediators to a coach that can give them advice. Furthermore, BetterNeighbors also monitors the professional quality of its mediators, to make sure they do good work.

Returning to the question of how neighborhood mediators are organized, it can be concluded that BetterNeighbors constitutes both a volunteer and a professional organization. Through its mix of voluntary and professional elements, BetterNeighbors seeks to make sure that volunteers can and want to do the work of neighborhood mediation. The next paragraph will investigate the work of neighborhood mediators itself, and how this contributes to solving neighborhood disputes.

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[30] Interview trainer BetterNeighbors, code 42221 – learn the method
[31] Interview neighborhood mediator 6, code 42222 – training must connect to need
[32] Interview neighborhood mediator 2, code 42223 – neighborhood mediators appreciate training
[33] Code 4223 – intervision
[34] Code 4225 – coaching
[35] Interview coordinator BetterNeighbors 2, code 42243 – managing performance neighborhood mediators

What neighborhood mediators do and how they contribute

After finishing basic training, neighborhood mediators are sent off into their respective neighborhoods to mediate in cases of neighborhood disputes. Based on the interviews, this work can be characterized by two important tasks: the facilitation of conversations, and the process of making neighbors responsible for the solution of their problem. The following two paragraphs will elaborate on both of these tasks. Then, the result of the work will be considered. In the last paragraph, it will be argued – based on the interviews – why 'traditional' professionals cannot achieve the same thing.

Facilitating a conversation

Neighborhood mediators do their work by following the method of neighborhood mediation: in pairs of two, they first talk with the inflicted parties separately in order to hear both sides of the story. Then, if both parties agree to it, the mediators organize a mediation session, in which the neighbors talk about the problems they experience and together look for solutions, therein facilitated by the mediators (BeterBuren, 2013). When overseeing this process, the first task of neighborhood mediators appears: to facilitate a conversation. This facilitation entails various elements.

First, it entails that neighborhood mediators give considerable attention and time to the inflicted parties. Because mediators take their time and show interest in the personal story of both neighbors, neighbors feel taken seriously and become more open to engage in a process of mediation. One interviewed mediator even told an anecdote about a case, in which the mediation itself was easy, because the problem for the complaining party - a woman with a mental infliction - was already resolved by the first individual conversation. The woman's parents had said to the mediator: "God, thank you. Because you know what, you've taken her seriously. She loved that."[36]

Secondly, facilitation entails the application of skills, therein mostly focusing on communication techniques and process management[37]. In short, mediation skills are concerned with listening and asking the right questions, making the neighbors feel heard and helping them to see things from a different perspective. Neighborhood mediators pick up these skills during training, but also draw from their personal background: for instance, from their background as professional mediator, or from another work experience[38]. Moreover, neighborhood mediators

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[36] Interview neighborhood mediator 5, code 4311113 – taking neighbors seriously
[37] Code 4311121 – communication techniques; code 4311122 – process management
[38] Code 43111231 – in line with neighborhood mediation

also use experience they gain within the organization: first doing everything "by the book"[39], and later "following their gut feeling"[40].

To summarize, a first major task of the neighborhood mediators' work is that they facilitate conversations; first by giving time and attention, secondly by applying mediation skills. However, the work of neighborhood mediators is not only characterized by what they do, but also - to an important extent - by what they refrain from doing. The latter will be considered in the next paragraph.

Making neighbors responsible for the solution

The second task of neighborhood mediators' work is closely linked to the fundamental idea that underlies neighborhood mediation: the idea that neighbors themselves are responsible for solving their dispute, and not anybody else. The neighborhood mediator plays a big role in achieving that aim, by adhering to two important principles: impartiality and confidentiality.

First, neighborhood mediators act strictly impartial, meaning that they under no circumstance choose sides or offer solutions. In the words of one neighborhood mediator: "You have to let them work. (…) You're there to manage the process, not to solve things."[41] For neighborhood mediators, being impartial entails that they deal with their own assumptions. As one interviewee says: "It always turns out that you both have assumptions. Something as 'that is probably a horrible man, that neighbor', or 'do you think he deals drugs?'. Then you have to tell each other 'forget it all (…) erase it.'"[42] At the same time, impartiality is not only reinforced by what they (do not) do, but also by what they are: volunteers. Often, the mediators present themselves as co-neighbors, who are 'just there to help'. This causes surprised reactions with the neighbors, and appreciation for the fact that mediators give their free time. One of the interviewed mediators re-enacted such a reaction from a neighbor, by saying: "You are volunteers? Oh, and you do that next to your job? And you come here for free?"[43]

Besides impartiality, the principle of confidentiality is also important. It entails that neighborhood mediators keep all given information to themselves. The only exception is the 'civic duty' - as some call it - to report dangerous situations; although the director of BetterNeighbors stresses that this duty only plays when danger is directly observed: "If somebody establishes child abuse or domestic violence, then you have your civic duty. But you have to consult with us in that case, because we also had cases where party 1 said of party 2 'there's a child molested there', but they did not establish it themselves. Then you can't report; because

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[39] Interview neighborhood mediator 2, code 43111241 - inexperience
[40] Interview neighborhood mediator 5, code 4311125 – personal style
[41] Interview neighborhood mediator 2, code 4312112 – do not offer solutions
[42] Interview neighborhood mediator 5, code 4312113 – dealing with own assumptions
[43] Interview neighborhood mediator 2, code 43121111 – surprised about nm's being volunteers

you're being used."[44] Although the interviewed mediators underpin this principle, one mediator also notes that it can be stressful, for instance when one neighbor makes threats towards the other neighbor: "What do I say? On the one hand I want to be honest. So if he says, 'but did he also make threats towards us?' Well those are difficult questions, because if I say yes, then he says: 'What now?'."[45]

To summarize, in their work, neighborhood mediators uphold the principles of impartiality and confidentiality. As an effect, neighbors are made responsible for the solution: because the mediator is not solving it for them, and because they do not have to worry about interference from outside institutions, making it easier for them to engage. In the words of the BetterNeighbors director: "Mediators come without an interest. That's the beauty of it. That we offer something, and if you don't want it, then we'll just leave. It's up to you if you want to solve your dispute – it makes it easier for people to talk."[46]

Thus, from the interviews emerged two major tasks in the work of neighborhood mediators: facilitating the conversation on the one hand, making neighbors responsible for the solution on the other. The next question is, what do neighborhood mediators achieve with their work?

The result of neighborhood mediation

Before moving on to investigating the results of neighborhood mediation, it is first important to address why neighbors often cannot deal with disputes themselves, as that can help understand what neighborhood mediation does to resolve these problems. In the interviews, two reasons were given: a lack of constructive contact, and conflicting perspectives.

The first reason that was mentioned in the interviews, is that people find it difficult to have constructive contact with their neighbors. This can be demonstrated by the story of an interviewed neighbor, who explained that she felt forced to call the police, because she could not get into contact with her neighbors: "We wanted to have a conversation with them, but well, they didn't open the door. Then we had to go up and call the police. (…) Finally, it became quiet, although they had to come twice. So we slept at 4 in the morning. The problem just was that they didn't say that they were having a party."[47]

A second problem that emerged from the interviews, is that neighbors can have very different perspectives on the problem and its causes. One mediator, for instance, told a story of how extreme such conflicting perspectives can be: "I once had a case in which the two parties had had a physical fight – one had hit the other, and then the other had done something back.

[44] Interview director BetterNeighbors, code 4312121 – civic duty
[45] Interview neighborhood mediator 4, code 431212 – confidentiality
[46] Interview director BetterNeighbors, code 431211 – impartiality
[47] Interview neighbor 1, code 43211 – difficult to get into contact

Both of them said the other had started. In those cases, I find it so interesting to come to a mediation. To come to a situation where they can shake hands and bring their stories together, because the truth lies in the middle."[48]

In sum, when neighbors cannot deal with disputes themselves, it is often because they do not have (good) contact with each other and/or because their perspectives are conflicting. It is with these two problems that the neighborhood mediator actively works. From the interviews it became clear, namely, that when neighborhood mediation succeeds, it usually entails three successive elements:

1. The neighbors get to know each other's story
2. The neighbors discover common ground
3. The neighbors together find solutions.

First, through neighborhood mediation, neighbors are brought into contact with each other, in an environment where they can constructively listen and talk to each other. Here, under the guidance of the neighborhood mediators, the neighbors get to hear each other's story. As one neighbors describes it: "everybody can say their side of the story, without being interrupted. I really like that. You tell your story and the other keeps silent. And then you work with that."[49] Then, by getting everything laid out on the table, a basis is provided for discovering common ground. Finally, once that common ground is found, neighbors become open to finding solutions. How this works, can be signified by an anecdote told by one of the interviewed mediators. In this story, the mediation became a success when one neighbor found out that the other neighbor was Egyptian, while she herself was "terribly interested in Egyptian food."[50] With this small connection the ball started rolling: "The man then said, 'Well, my wife can teach you that.' To which she reacted, 'Then I can teach your wife Dutch in the meantime.' Then the man asked, 'Do you perhaps also know of a day-care?' 'Well, then I will go with you to the day-care.' In the end, the wife of neighbor 2 said via her husband, 'If you let me know in the morning - when it is nice weather - then I'll push your wheelchair outside to the bench and I'll come sit with you. Then my children can play outside.' Everything fell right into its place."[51]

A big condition for going through these three stages, however, is that the neighbors are willing and able. Many interviewees noted that this is not always the case. One mediator for instance said about a particular instance: "You know what, we did everything to make it work.

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[48] Interview neighborhood mediator 4, code 43212 – subjective problem experience
[49] Interview neighbor 2, code 43221 – knowing each other's story
[50] Interview neighborhood mediator 5, code 43222 – finding common ground
[51] Interview neighborhood mediator 5, code 43222 – finding common ground

But if there's no will, it's like pulling a dead horse."[52] Even when neighbors are open to the process of mediation, it happens that they can still not come to concrete solutions. One interviewed neighbor noted: "I noticed that it got stuck at 'what are we going to do?' Yes, we can visit each other and listen to the noise we hear. But that is not really concrete."[53] In such cases, it appears that the dispute is about more than a lack of contact and understanding: there appears to be a conflict between the neighbors' respective needs, which cannot be resolved by talking alone.

To summarize, neighborhood mediation constitutes an intervention that helps neighbors to get to know each other, so that they can discover common ground and eventually find solutions for their problems – if they are willing to do so. What makes this work of neighborhood mediators valuable - besides that they can bring neighbors together - is that 'traditional' professionals cannot achieve the same thing. This will be discussed in the next paragraph.

Why traditional professionals cannot do the same thing

In the interviews, not only the role of neighborhood mediators was discussed, but also the role of 'traditional' professionals, such as police officers or case managers of the housing corporations. Intriguingly, many of the interviewees noted that these professionals would not be able to engage in mediation as neighborhood mediators do, for two reasons. First, because professionals lack the time and skills to facilitate conversations[54]. Although this first reason can potentially be solved, the second reason appears more irresolvable: professionals also have a role that fundamentally conflicts with the principles of mediation.

The role of professionals conflicts with mediation, for two major reasons: because professionals cannot be impartial, and because they can exercise authority. First, regarding impartiality, professionals always have a responsibility that is coupled to their role. Therefore, they cannot be completely impartial. For instance, the interviewed police officer noted her responsibility of dealing with criminal activities: "They look at my uniform. For that reason, they also find it hard to tell me things off-the-record, because they have the idea - and sometimes that's correct - that I have to do something with it. Because when I know of a criminal act, I have to pursue it."[55] Moreover, coupled to this responsibility, is the fact that professionals also have the authority to act. In the words of the interviewee of the housing corporation: "I think the big difference is: if you have a dispute with your neighbor, and the corporation comes to enforce…

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[52] Interview neighborhood mediator 3, code 43224 – condition: neighbors must be willing
[53] Interview neighbor 1, code 43223 – finding solutions
[54] Code 431121 - lack skills; code 431122 – lack time
[55] Interview police, code 431231 – professionals have authority

Look, I have a position of power. I have a rental agreement with you. I can break that agreement, under dire circumstances. So I come as an enforcer."[56]

Professionals thus have the responsibility and the authority to act in ways that can strongly impact individual lives. One the one hand, this makes professionals prone to be used by citizens as an instrument. One interviewed mediator experienced this, when she encountered neighbors who thought she was a civil servant coming to solve things: "'So you're from the municipality?' 'No, we're not.' 'But they said that over the phone.' (…) The whole neighborhood was there. We didn't know that beforehand. And they said, 'We don't want to talk, we want action. You are here to solve it.' Well, we left after a cup of coffee."[57] On the other hand, what is an instrument for one neighbor, becomes a threat to the other, thereby causing the problem to further escalate. This is described by an interviewed neighbor, who noted how calling the police had further complicated her relationship with her neighbors: "That with the police, it kept coming back. This was the first time they were in trouble with the police. How could we do that to them? We could not get past that."[58]

In sum, because professionals can strongly impact people's lives with their actions, their involvement often drives neighbors further away from finding a solution with each other. This stands in sharp contrast with the involvement of neighborhood mediators. Through their background and training, mediators reinforce the fundamental mediation principle of impartiality and confidentiality: first, they are co-neighbors who volunteer to help. Secondly, they cannot enforce solutions, and also cannot share information with authorities who can enforce such things. This makes it easier for neighbors to talk mediators and to each other, as is demonstrated by this story of a mediator: "I notice that with neighbor 2 there is often the idea that you are an authority and that you're there to tell him what to do. So you're spending much more time and attention in explaining why you're there. Then if they fully understand, and know that we are not here to enforce, but to listen and help... well, then it becomes a bit more settled."[59] The difference between traditional professionals and neighborhood mediators is therefore, that the former has a *vertical* role, while the latter has a *horizontal* role that aligns with the horizontal nature of the intervention.

Thus, to answer the original question of what neighborhood mediators do, and how that contributes to effectively solving neighborhood disputes, the following can be said. The work of neighborhood mediators can be characterized by two tasks, the one being 'facilitation of the

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[56] Interview housing corporations, code 431232 – professionals have an interest
[57] Interview neighborhood mediator 2, code 4312333 – citizens expect professionals to solve their problem
[58] Interview neighbor 1, code 4312332 – professionals have escalating effect
[59] Interview neighborhood mediator 5, code 431231- professionals have authority

conversation', and the other 'making neighbors responsible for the solution'. Through this, mediators are able to help neighbors to resolve their disputes; that is, if the neighbors are willing and able. Furthermore, although the methods applied by neighborhood mediators can be considered professional, this method would not work when done by 'traditional' professionals, because these professionals cannot be impartial and are able to exercise authority. Neighborhood mediation therefore constitutes a professional intervention that works, precisely because it is done by volunteers. With this third question answered, this chapter can now return to the research question of the operational level it sought to answer; which will be done in the following segment.

Conclusion: civic self-reliance through civic-professional organization

This chapter investigated neighborhood mediation on the operational level, with the purpose of answering the following question: *how do elements of a civic and professional repertoire interact as to produce successful neighborhood mediation, and what is the role of organization in this?* In this conclusion, this question will be answered, by summarizing this chapter's findings and relating them to the earlier constructed sensitizing concepts of a professional and civic repertoire, that include motive, capital and authority.

First regarding the concept of motive, this study found that neighborhood mediators are most prominently driven by 'skill-centered' motives: they become volunteer mediators, because they want to learn or use mediation skills. Because neighborhood mediation offers these volunteers a 'skill-centered environment', they are willing to become active and subsequently contribute to society as neighborhood mediators. This motive can be seen as typically *civic*: it starts from a position of individual meaning and causes citizens to be willing to contribute to broader societal goals.

Secondly, regarding the concept of capital - the instruments by which neighborhood employ their activities - this study found that neighborhood mediators heavily draw on *professional* capital. Because the method of mediation needs to be learned, all neighborhood mediators of BetterNeighbors receive training when they enter the organization. Their professionalism is further enhanced by follow-up training, intervision and coaching. Neighborhood mediators are allowed to use their personal experience and skills, but only to the extent that it aligns with the professional method of mediation; when mediators deviate too much from this method, the organization intervenes. This sharply contrasts the idea of civic capital, wherein citizens act as free bottom-up actors with whatever personal capital they have.

Thirdly, regarding the concept of authority, neighborhood mediators demonstrate a *civic* form of authority. In their mediation of disputed neighbors, their responsibility is to make neighbors responsible for solving their own problem. Therefore, they are to act strictly impartial

and keep everything they hear confidential. Consequently, the mediators have no means to exercise authority over neighbors: if neighbors do not want to solve their dispute, then there is nothing the mediator can do about it. The only exception is the 'civic duty' to report dangerous situations, but here the term says it already: the mediator does this in its role as a citizen, not because he or she is professionally responsible.

So as expected, the role of the neighborhood mediators contains elements of both a professional and civic repertoire. The question is, however, how these elements interact as to produce successful mediation. Based on the analysis of this chapter, this interaction can be characterized by a dynamic that entails two central movements. First, *citizens become neighborhood mediators because of what the professional intervention offers them*: the ability to learn and use mediation skills. Secondly, *the professional intervention works because it is done citizens*. The intervention is professional, because volunteers need to be professionally trained in order for them to successfully mediate in cases of neighborhood disputes. At the same time, the intervention also works because it is done by citizens, rather than 'traditional' professionals: neighborhood mediation is a horizontal intervention, that cannot work when it is taken up by 'vertical' professional roles, due to their responsibility and authority. In sum, the intervention of neighborhood mediation works because it has both civic and professional elements, and can therefore best be described as a form of 'civic-professionalism'.

In creating this civic-professionalism, the organization of BetterNeighbors plays a vital role: by explicitly addressing the voluntary and professional elements of neighborhood mediation in its organization, it makes sure that volunteers *can* and *want* to do this work. First, through its 'voluntary' organization, it guarantees that cases are not too demanding or even dangerous for the volunteers. Second, through its 'professional' organization, it makes sure that the volunteers gain the necessary mediation skills, while at the same time attracting them to become a volunteer in the first place. When taking these two together, BetterNeighbors can be seen as a civic-professional organization itself, that creates the civic-professional intervention of neighborhood mediation.

Translating this conclusion to the broader question of how public value can be created through government-citizen collaboration, this analysis provides a first 'half' of the answer, by showing how neighborhood mediation works on the operational level. For a visualization, see figure 5.

In this figure, the green arrow up signifies the citizens that are attracted by a civic-professional organization (BetterNeighbors) to become civic-professionals (neighborhood mediators). After receiving the necessary professional skills (the skills of mediation) at the level of the organization, these citizens return into the civic domain as civic-professionals to help other citizens with their problems (the problem of neighborhood disputes).

Taken together, the two arrows represent the public value that is created through neighborhood mediation. This is the public value of *civic self reliance*: the ability of citizens to take care of their own disputes, therein assisted by other citizens. This form of public value is created through a collaboration of the organization and its volunteers, of which the essential element is that the organization allows the volunteers stay within their own civic domain. The civic-professional organization of BetterNeighbors has the volunteers only briefly 'touch' the institutional domain, when it equips them with the necessary professional skills, but furthermore not bothers them with institutional demands. What is not visible in this figure, but certainly present in this dynamic, is that self-reliance as a public value has an important limit: it entails that citizens only solve their dispute when they are willing and able, which may not be so. A last element of the figure is the question mark: what allows the civic-professional organization of BetterNeighbors to exist from an institutional perspective? This is the subject of the next chapter.
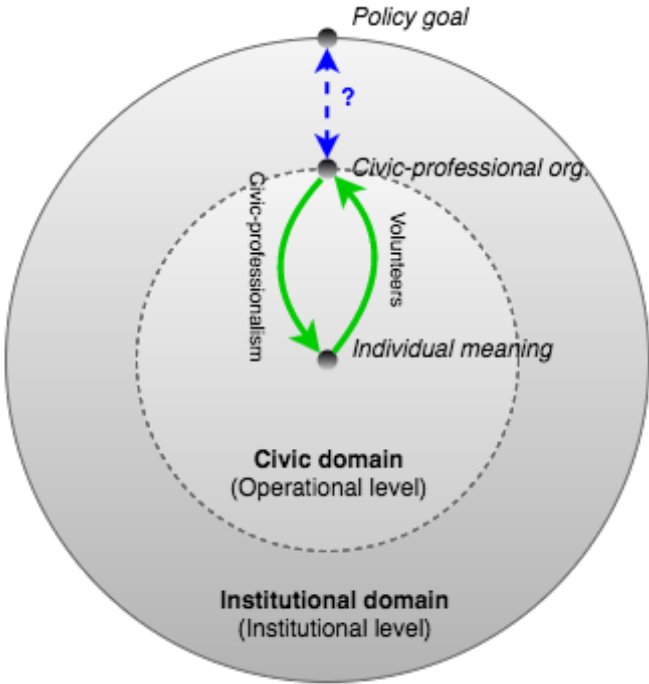

Figure 5 Neighborhood mediation on the operational level

Chapter 5. Neighborhood mediation on the institutional level: how collaboration enables and constraints

In the previous chapter, it was concluded that in the practice of neighborhood mediation, the public value of civic self-reliance is created through civic-professional organization. To fully understand the process of how public value is created through government-citizen collaboration, another step is necessary: a closer look must be taken at the 'policy arrangement' that allows this civic-professional organization to exist. This chapter will do exactly that, by investigating the practice of neighborhood mediation on the institutional level.

It is on the institutional level that the collaboration between BetterNeighbors and its institutional partners takes place; thereby constituting the 'domain of institutions'. The following research question has been proposed to research this domain: *how do institutional partners relate in the practice of neighborhood mediation, and how does that relation affect the intervention?* This question will be answered by, first, investigating how and why actors collaborate in the policy arrangement of neighborhood mediation. Then, in a second step, it will be investigated what tensions arise from this arrangement and how the institutional partners deal with them. Finally, this chapter will come to a conclusion and answer the research question.

Features of institutional collaboration

To realize neighborhood mediation, BetterNeighbors actively collaborates with its institutional environment. The most central elements of this collaboration are formalized through a covenant that is signed by BetterNeighbors and its most important partners (BeterBuren, 2013b). In the covenant, neighborhood mediation is established as an early intervention for dealing with neighborhood disputes, offered in the whole of Amsterdam. Also, the covenant draws up how the institutional partners support BetterNeighbors as well as the results that are expected from BetterNeighbors. The following paragraphs will take a closer look at this collaboration, by investigating it as a policy arrangement, using both official documents and the interviews with BetterNeighbors and the various institutional partners. This will be done by first investigating the organizational features of the arrangement, and then by considering its substance, or rather: what the various partners aim to achieve through it.

Organization of the arrangement

In the collaboration surrounding neighborhood mediation, BetterNeighbors primarily works together with three institutional partners: the municipality of Amsterdam, the Amsterdam

federation of housing corporations, and the Amsterdam police force[60]. The four taken together can be seen as the coalition of *actors* involved in the policy arrangement of neighborhood mediation. How this coalition organizes neighborhood mediation on an institutional level, can be understood by looking at two other dimensions of the arrangement: *resources* and *rules of the game*.

Resources

With regards to resources, the interviews make clear how the arrangement of neighborhood mediation includes two types of resources: funds and case referrals.[61]

Regarding funds, it should be noted that BetterNeighbors is dependent on the financial support of two of its institutional partners: the municipality and the housing corporations. Both of these partners provide half of BetterNeighbors' annual budget of approximately 400.000 euros (BeterBuren, 2013b). With this budget, BetterNeighbors can keep its organization running: it can pay for the salaries of its employees, organize the training for its volunteers and arrange an office (BeterBuren, 2016). The director of BetterNeighbors emphasizes how the organization is able to achieve much with relatively little: "We are a small organization with a huge tail."[62]

Regarding cases, the interviews made clear that many neighbors are not familiar with the service of neighborhood mediation[63]. For that reason, BetterNeighbors depends on its partner institutions to refer cases to them (BeterBuren, 2016b: 10). Institutions such as the housing corporations and police are frequently approached by neighbors; often with the request to do something about nuisance. These institutions can then refer the neighbors to the service of neighborhood mediation[64], in some cases also directly applying the neighbors for neighborhood mediation[65]. Such referrals are done most frequently by the housing corporations, then followed by the police (ibid.). How the process of referrals exactly takes place, will be discussed in the next paragraph, which considers the 'rules of the game'.

Rules of the game

A second feature of the arrangement are the rules of the game. Based on the covenant and the interviews, two 'rules' appear to be specifically important in this arrangement: the stage of the intervention, and the exchange of information.

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[60] In the 2013-2015 covenant, the 'Tenants' Association Amsterdam' (Huurdersvereniging Amsterdam) is also part of the partnership. As this is a very minor partner, however, it will not be included in the analysis.
[61] Code 51121 – financial support; code 51122 – referrals to BetterNeighbors
[62] Interview director BetterNeighbors, code 51121 – financial support
[63] Code 511221 – neighbors unfamiliar with neighborhood mediation
[64] Code 5112221 – self-registration
[65] Code 5112222 – 'warm' referral

First, with regards to the stage of the intervention, the covenant defines neighborhood mediation as suitable for neighborhood disputes that are still in an "early stage"[66]. Ruled out from neighborhood mediation are cases that are too complex, because they entail "severe psychiatric problems, criminal acts or drug and alcohol addictions". [67] Also through the covenant, institutional partners commit themselves to "timely"[68] referral of suitable cases of neighborhood disputes to BetterNeighbors. About this, the interviewee from a housing corporation says: "We train our superintendents for this. Can you have a normal conversation with someone? Or is someone so wasted that it has no use? Then we contact the hotline [for Care and Nuisance]. Because then someone needs care." [69] Finally, if despite these efforts, BetterNeighbors still receives a too complex case, it refers it back or sends it forward to the appropriate institution[70]. In sum, the arrangement establishes neighborhood mediation as an intervention for the 'early stage' neighborhood disputes, while disputes in more developed stages are left to other institutions. From the perspective of neighborhood mediation, this makes sense: as was established in the previous chapter, complex cases require more than what neighborhood mediation can offer, and are too demanding for volunteer neighborhood mediators.

Secondly, with regards to the exchange of information, the covenant also establishes that BetterNeighbors does not share information about the content of conversations held within the process of mediation[71]. As was argued in the previous chapter, this principle of confidentiality allows neighbors to deal with their own problems without an institutional intervention lurking in the background. This advantage becomes a disadvantage from the perspective of the other institutions: for them it can be a limitation, as this information could help them do their work. This is for instance described by the interviewed police officer, who states: "The moment that you say, 'well, I have suspicions of domestic violence or child abuse', then I would like to know. Because then I can get into contact with these people. Then I can make a visit and say 'hey, I heard that BetterNeighbors was here, how did that conversation go? Was everything ok? And then I can make a subtle reference about the kids (…) It gives you material to work with."[72] What can therefore be concluded, is that through the arrangement, BetterNeighbors is able to establish the principle of confidentiality to protect the process of mediation, thereby limiting other institutions.

This is emphasized further by the fact that BetterNeighbors does approach the institutions to receive information about cases from them, even though it does not share information itself.

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[66] Convenant 2013-2015, p.3
[67] Convenant 2013-2015, p.5-6
[68] Convenant 2013-2015, p.5
[69] Interview housing corporations, code 511322 – assessing cases for referral
[70] Convenant 2013-2015
[71] Convenant 2013-2015
[72] Interview police, code 5113311 – police would like to know more

For instance, BetterNeighbors' coordinators sometimes approach partner institutions for information about specific neighbors, when they suspect more serious problems are at play. One interviewed coordinator for instance said: "Sometimes [the housing corporations] ask us 'well, we're not sure, this one's in the grey zone.' Then I say, 'send it to us, so I can take a look if it's suitable, and if it's not, I'll let you know. I then contact the municipality and they may say, 'don't do it, because it could result in a dangerous situation for you'. That they know, does not always mean the housing corporation knows."[73] What this quote makes clear, is that the exchange of information is not limited due to for instance a lack of good cooperation, but is purely intended to protect the process of mediation.

When summarizing the various organizational features of the policy arrangement of neighborhood mediation, the following can be concluded. First, the institutional collaboration includes four primary actors: BetterNeighbors, the municipality, the housing corporations and the police. As a coalition, they make neighborhood mediation possible, by providing the organization of BetterNeighbors with funds and cases, although not in an equal manner: only the municipality and housing corporations provide funds, and the housing corporations also play an essential role in referring cases. Moreover, the coalition also establishes how this intervention should be institutionally embedded: as an early intervention for neighborhood disputes, about which BetterNeighbors does not share information with the other partners. Both of these 'rules' protect the process of mediation, thereby helping it to be effective on the operational level.

With the organization of this arrangement established, the next question to answer is what motivates the partners of this coalition to engage in the collaboration. This will be discussed in the next segment.

Substance of collaboration

From a policy arrangement perspective, substance relates to the dimension of *discourse*: what are the views of each partner with regards to the problems that this arrangement should solve, and how do they think solutions can be reached? What do partners think is the value of this arrangement? This segment will investigate those various perspectives, based on interviews that were held with the director of BetterNeighbors and interviewees of the various institutional partners.

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[73] Interview coordinator BetterNeighbors 1, code 511332 – get information from partners

BetterNeighbors

From the perspective of BetterNeighbors, the problem of neighborhood disputes is caused by a lack of self-reliance in contemporary society. According to the director of BetterNeighbors, this is first of all caused by a strongly individualized society: "These days it is 'our four walls and about the rest I could care less' (…) People don't know each other (…) and that makes it very difficult to have a good conversation with each other. Because if you're angry at someone (…) and you don't know that person, then it is even more difficult to talk."[74] Additionally, the director argues, people are also not used to solving their own problems, because until recently, government did that for them: "It's expected of us to be good citizens. But that doesn't just happen, because we're not used to it anymore. (…) Many things were taken out of our hands. (…) So when people say 'hey, corporation, there are black stains…'. 'Yeah, so what? It's your hallway? You pay rent for it?' People have forgotten that, because we have made it so easy for them."[75]

As an intervention, neighborhood mediation is able to address both of these problems: through their civic-professional repertoire, volunteer mediators can get neighbors into contact with each other, without acting as a professional that is there to solve their problems. In the words of the director: "It's accessible: (…) simply about having a good conversation with each other. And having two people there, who are trained for it and have no interest."[76] However, the directors stresses that this intervention can only work when it is professionally organized: "Does this have to be professionally organized? I think so. (…) I think you have to ensure a certain quality (…). Sure, if there is an old neighbor man or lady in the neighborhood who is the person to go to when people have a fight, please continue. Then you don't have to go to us. But if there's no such thing, then it's really convenient that you know that [neighborhood mediation] exists and that it is well organized."[77] This last quote makes it clear why BetterNeighbors is engaged in the policy arrangement: to be able to professionally *organize* neighborhood mediation, it needs resources from its partners.

In sum, BetterNeighbors sees the problem of neighborhood disputes as a lack of civic self-reliance, rooted in a societal context of individualization and of citizens relying on government. As was concluded in the previous chapter, the practice of neighborhood mediation can create the necessary civic self-reliance, but only when it is professionally organized. In order words, BetterNeighbors is engaged in this arrangement because they believe neighborhood mediation has a *civic-professional* value.

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[74] Interview director BetterNeighbors, code 512111 – individualized society
[75] Interview director BetterNeighbors, code 512112 – citizen relied on government
[76] Interview director BetterNeighbors, code 51212 – neighborhood mediation solution
[77] Interview director BetterNeighbors, code 51213 – organization necessary

Municipality

The problem definition of the municipality is closely related to the problem definition of BetterNeighbors, as the two interviewees of the municipality argue that citizens need to become more self-reliant, but that this self-reliance can sometimes be difficult. One of them states: "You expect citizens to try to solve their problems first; and if you're bothered by someone, to point that out yourself. Sometimes that it is not possible, because it went too far, or somebody is not good at it. Then mediation is a nice instrument to do something, instead of involving government, or the police."[78] In other words, the municipality sees neighborhood mediation as an instrument to create civic self-reliance: instead of depending on government, citizens are supported by other citizens to resolve their disputes.

For itself, the municipality sees a role in facilitating this self-reliance. As one of the interviewees notes: "[The role of government] is not smaller, it is different. Where government used to have a responsibility to care, it is now becoming self-reliance for citizens, citizen participation. So not less municipal government, but different."[79] As to what this difference may be, the other interviewee adds: "As a government you have to organize yourself differently; much more facilitating. And that's a different role. Quite complicated."[80]

In sum, to solve the problem of a lack of civic self-reliance, the municipality sees a role for itself in facilitating projects such as neighborhood mediation; a 'civic' project of volunteers that nonetheless still needs government support to exist. The municipality's perspective on the value of neighborhood mediation can therefore be seen as *facilitative*: the municipality supports BetterNeighbors because it fits well with their agenda to be a 'facilitating' government that activates citizens to rely on themselves.

Housing corporations

From the perspective of the housing corporations, the problem appears to have a different starting point: it starts not with the citizens who should do more, but with the housing corporations who were forced to do less. According to the interviewee of the housing corporations, up until some years ago, the corporations had large departments of case-managers, who acted almost like social workers in their effort to deal with neighborhood nuisance. The interviewee said: "(…) nuisance is a responsibility of the corporation. But that used to go very far. I've had a case manager come back and say 'well, I also cleaned the bed. Because there was no home care, and I couldn't let him lay there in his own dirt.'"[81] The interviewee also notes that this practice continued after

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[78] Interview municipality, code 51221 – self-reliance difficult
[79] Interview municipality, code 51222 – facilitating government
[80] Interview municipality, code 51222 – facilitating government
[81] Interview housing corporation, code 512312 – care used to be elaborate

BetterNeighbors came to exist: "Talking to the neighbors yourself, that happened in the time when there was still money and a whole department. This was not the idea, but still we did it. We paid for BetterNeighbors and then did some part ourselves."[82] It was not until a period of austerity started, that corporations began to use neighborhood mediation intensively. In the words of BetterNeighbors' director: "When I just got here, 10 years ago, there were departments that never referred to us. Up until the point that their supervisors started saying, we really have to make savings in our budget. And if you have a stack of files on your desk everyday, and you can't get through them, then your supervisor says to you that 'you should have long referred that case'. So it's a new way of thinking. And that's prompted by the budget cuts that all corporations are suffering from."[83]

In order words, for the housing corporations, civic self-reliance is a solution to the corporations' problem of needing to take care of nuisance without having the means to do so. Neighborhood mediation thus has a *substitutive* value for the housing corporations: they support neighborhood mediation because it has an unburdening effect on their work.

Police

For the police, the problem definition appears to be somewhat similar to that of the housing corporations, although to a smaller extent. Like the housing corporations, the police operate in a context where they have limited time to deal with neighborhood disputes, making neighborhood mediation an intervention that saves them time. About this, the interviewed police officer said: "Yes, it saves me a lot of time. And I have the feeling that if I refer to you, the case is in good hands. So that gives me space, (…) because I would be busy with such a case for five hours. And if I have a first conversation, and think 'this is going to cost me too much time, I'm too busy for that now', then it stays a short conversation, after which it goes to [BetterNeighbors]."[84] Also for the police, therefore, the self-reliance of neighborhood mediation forms a solution for problems they are confronted with, while sometimes not having the resources to address them.

However, the severity of this need is much smaller: unless there is a suspicion of illegal activity[85], the police is not obliged to follow-up on disputes. Nonetheless, the interviewee - who is a warden officer - notes that she often visits conflicted neighbors, to see if she could get them talking to each other. According to the officer, this fits with the 'approachable' character of her function, and furthermore, visiting neighbors also helps her gather information about the neighborhood. In the officer's own words: "I think it's part of my job. As a warden officer, I think I should be approachable. (…) People see me, know me, I know them. Know their environment.

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[82] Interview housing corporation, code 512312 – care used to be elaborate
[83] Interview director BetterNeighbors, code 51231 – lack budget to deal with nuisance
[84] Interview police, code 51241 – saves time
[85] Code 511132 – illegal activities

I also gain information, (…) not only about the dispute, but also about others in the street. (…) That bit of extra information, that is of great importance to me."[86]

In sum, for the police, the civic self-reliance of neighborhood mediation helps them to deal with some of the neighborhood disputes that come their way. Neighborhood mediation thus also unburdens the police, although to a smaller extent than it unburdens the housing corporations. For the police, neighborhood mediation has an *additive* value: neighborhood mediation adds to their own work, but does not cross it out.

To conclude, the various partners have different perspectives on the problems surrounding neighborhood mediation and the solutions offered by it. When overseeing all four perspectives, neighborhood mediation appears to be valuable to each partner in its own way: the intervention has a civic-professional value for BetterNeighbors, a facilitative value for the municipality, a substitutive value for the corporations, and an additive value for the police. Also, two overarching narratives appear. First, BetterNeighbors and the municipality see the problem as a lack of civic self-reliance that can be solved through activation; they express a narrative of *activation*. The housing corporations and police share a different sort of narrative, a narrative of *disburdenment*. For them, (a lack of) self-reliance is not the problem, but rather the solution: neighborhood mediation serves as an effective instrument to deal with the problem of neighborhood nuisance that they are confronted with in their daily work.

Although these two narratives differ, they are also in line with each other: by making neighbors more self-reliant in resolving their disputes through neighborhood mediation, neighborhood nuisance as a whole is also reduced. This allows the official program of neighborhood mediation to explicitly include both the reduction of nuisance and the enhancement of self-reliance as goals of neighborhood mediation. As cited from the covenant: "The goal of neighborhood mediation is to reduce neighborhood nuisance and to prevent and resolve disputes in the neighborhood. This is reached by identifying and efficiently dealing with neighborhood disputes in an early stage. Intended results are a better living environment, a stronger sense of community and a greater self-reliance of citizens."[87] See table 4 for an overview of the various narrative and discourses.

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[86] Interview police, code 5124212 – mediation is a way to know the neighborhood
[87] Covenant 2013-2015, p.3.

Narrative of activation	
BetterNeighbors	Civic-professional value
Municipality	Facilitative value
Narrative of disburdenment	
Housing corporations	Substitutive value
Police	Additive value

Table 4 Discourses and narratives of actors within the arrangement of neighborhood mediation.

The policy arrangement of neighborhood mediation

To summarize the various features of the policy arrangement of neighborhood mediation, the analysis makes clear that the various partners engage in this arrangement of neighborhood mediation, because in some way it benefits them all. The arrangement benefits BetterNeighbors, because it provides the organization with necessary resources; the municipality, because it allows the municipality to act as a facilitating government that activates citizens; the housing corporations, because it allows them to pass on their cases of light nuisance; and lastly, the police, because it allows them to pass on their cases when they see fit. When translating these findings to the general subject of this thesis - public value creation through government-citizen collaboration - the following conclusion can be made: *in the practice of neighborhood mediation, the civic-professional organization of BetterNeighbors is able to create its public value of civic self-reliance, because this civic self-reliance also benefits the institutions on which BetterNeighbors depends for resources.*

Although it has been established that the policy arrangement constitutes a balance that works for all actors involved, the arrangement also shows that the involvement of each actor is not equal: BetterNeighbors, for instance, strongly depends on funds provided by the municipality and housing corporations, while the police do not provide funds at all. Also, BetterNeighbors depends on case referrals that mostly come from the housing corporations, and to a smaller extent from the police. At the same time, the three partners - the municipality, housing corporations and police - on their turn depend on BetterNeighbors to organize the outcome of the arrangement: effective neighborhood mediation. Seen from the concept of 'policy arrangements', this means that power and influence are unequally divided within the arrangement (Arts et al., 2006); with the municipality and housing corporations as main financiers and/or referrers holding considerable power, while BetterNeighbors holds considerable influence as neighborhood mediation's implementer. In the next segment, it will be investigated how these inequalities affect the arrangement, by considering two major tensions that arise from it.

Tensions of institutional collaboration

In the previous segment, it was concluded that the policy arrangement of neighborhood mediation benefits all actors involved. At the same time, power and influence within the arrangement are unequally divided. This segment will investigate how those inequalities affect the arrangement. Based on the interviews, this thesis found two related tensions: the tension of fund dependency, and the tension of case dependency. These tensions will each be investigated in the next two paragraphs, thereby considering how they affect the practice of neighborhood mediation and how BetterNeighbors deals with this. For the first tension, the thesis will specifically focus on the role of the municipality, for the second tension on the role of the housing corporations. This is *not* because this thesis concludes that the former solely causes a tension with regards to funds, and the latter solely causes a tension with regards to referrals, while the police causes no tension at all. Instead, the aim of these two paragraphs is to use the study's findings to demonstrate how tensions within the arrangement may affect the intervention.

The tension of fund dependency

In the arrangement of neighborhood mediation, BetterNeighbors depends on funds to be able to organize its intervention; without these funds, neighborhood mediation could not exist. This means that the stability of neighborhood mediation is largely in the hands of whoever provides the resources, which are currently the municipality and the housing corporations. How stable is their funding? In this paragraph, that question will be answered for the municipality specifically, to give insight into the dynamics of fund dependency.

The municipality supports BetterNeighbors because, in general terms, neighborhood mediation has a facilitative value; it fits well with their agenda of being a facilitating government that activates citizens. A closer look at their agenda reveals that the municipality also provides this support because the mayor of the city finds it important. In the words of one of the interviewees of the municipality: "The mayor is an advocate of BetterNeighbors. (…) He finds it very important. He has been a lawyer himself for a long time, and I think he also did mediation cases. Based on that involvement, and because he thinks it is good for the city, he finds it an important subject. And he has appropriated money for it on the budget. Which has to be approved by the City Council; but that is a little more indirect."[88] Because BetterNeighbors is funded out of the mayor's budget, the question arises: what happens when there's a new mayor, or when the City Council becomes more involved? The interviewees argue that, especially when considering the current context of austerity, such an event could mean the end of the support: "If you look at all the subsidies that have been discontinued or decreased. Whether it may be for

[88] Interview municipality, code 5211 – mayor advocate of neighborhood mediation

societal organizations or cultural institutions. At a certain point, when budget cuts are needed, it has to come from somewhere. And then it's the question if not only the mayor thinks it's a priority, but also the city council."[89]

For BetterNeighbors, this threat is not new. As the director notes: "In 2008, we received a letter of the municipality (…) that said 'we don't know whether we can pay for 2009'."[90] For that reason, BetterNeighbors has built up a buffer to deal with financial setbacks[91]. For a long-term solution, however, the director of BetterNeighbors argues that something else is needed: neighborhood mediation should be institutionalized further and become a basic provision in the social domain. She says, "In the Netherlands we decided we have debt counseling everywhere, everywhere we have social work, and this belongs in the same category. (…) If that's taken care of, then you also have less discussion about the money. Of course, the municipality must have the money, in the sense of 'am I giving a social welfare foundation a million or eight ton?' But then you do decide as a country that you want it."[92] Nonetheless, it is uncertain whether and when this will be achieved: also on the national level efforts are made by the national coordinator of neighborhood mediation of the CCV[93] to establish the intervention as a basic provision, but up until this point without success. In the meantime, it has occurred that local neighborhood mediation projects lost their subsidy, as the interviewed national coordinator stated: "Yes, that has been my concern for years. I sometimes see that a municipality backs away [from a project], as well as corporations."[94]

Everything taken together, it becomes clear that financial dependency for BetterNeighbors means it has to deal with financial uncertainty; in this case because municipality may withdraw its support due to political reasons, but as the CCV quote makes clear, other financiers such as the housing corporations could also withdraw support. For that reason, BetterNeighbors - as well the Dutch practice of neighborhood mediation as a whole - strives to further institutionalize neighborhood mediation and make it a basic provision in the social domain. However, this has not yet been achieved, meaning that the arrangement of neighborhood mediation is not fully stable, and the future of the intervention not guaranteed. In conclusion, *BetterNeighbors' dependency on funds negatively affects the stability of neighborhood mediation*. With the consequences of fund dependency explored, now the thesis turns to understanding the dynamics of case dependency.

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[89] Interview municipality, code 5211 – mayor advocate of neighborhood mediation
[90] Interview director BetterNeighbors, code 5212 – risk of dependency on funds
[91] Code 52131 – financial buffer
[92] Interview director BetterNeighbors, code 52132 – further institutionalize intervention
[93] Centrum voor Criminaliteitspriventie en Veiligheid; public instance that acts as the national coordinator of neighborhood mediation.
[94] Interview CCV, code 52132 – further institutionalize intervention

The tension of case dependency

In the arrangement of neighborhood mediation, BetterNeighbors not only depends on funds, but also on the cases that are referred by partner institutions. As was argued earlier, partner institutions such as the housing corporations and the police are happy to provide referrals, because neighborhood mediation unburdens them in dealing with cases of neighborhood nuisance themselves. But do the cases that institutions want to give also match the cases that BetterNeighbors wants to have? In this paragraph, that question will be answered by taking a closer look at the 'referring' practice of the most important referrer: the housing corporations.

For the housing corporations, it was argued that their engagement in the arrangement of neighborhood mediation is driven by its substitutive value: they support BetterNeighbors with funds and cases, because it allows them to convey cases of neighborhood nuisance, for which they currently lack the means to handle them themselves. However, the interviews gave various indications that this substitutive value does not only provide BetterNeighbors with fitting cases, but also with cases that are less suitable for neighborhood mediation. In the interviews, two types of 'unsuitable' cases came forward: first, cases of nuisance that are too complex for neighborhood mediation; second, cases of nuisance that appear to have a physical rather than a social cause. Both of them will be elaborated on below.

Cases that are too complex

A societal development that was mentioned frequently in the interviews, is the development of 'extramuralization'. It refers to changes in Dutch social care policy that cause more people who require care - psychiatric patients for instance - to live independently in regular neighborhoods, rather than in specialized institutions[95]. The director of BetterNeighbors noted that, as a result of this development, BetterNeighbors is increasingly confronted with too complex cases[96]. This is confirmed by some of the interviewed neighborhood mediators, although other mediators noted that they have not yet experienced this[97].

Regardless of the extent to which this actually happens, the perceived development of extramuralization reveals how institutions may put pressure on BetterNeighbors to handle cases that exceed the boundaries of neighborhood mediation, as established in the covenant. In the words of the interviewee of the housing corporation: "Sure, sometimes it is very difficult. See, if we for instance notice that out of a hundred people (…) we get eighty back for some reason, then that's something to work on with BetterNeighbors. Like, is it really a good idea to not do conversations with people because they are addicted or on something else? Or is it possible to

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[95] Code 52211 – 'extramuralisering'
[96] Interview director BetterNeighbors, code 52211 – 'extramuralisering'
[97] Code 522111 – neighborhood mediators experience complex cases

have a conversation with someone who for instance has a disability, but also has professional support, if that support is present? You can also say, they are volunteers. You cannot expose them to that."[98]

BetterNeighbors appears to deal with this pressure in a dual way. Firstly, the organization seeks to equip its mediators for dealing with more complex cases, for instance by organizing special training or by making special arrangements. These arrangements vary from using more experienced mediators for complex cases to letting a social worker be present at the mediation[99]. Through these various measures, BetterNeighbors thus increases its ability to handle complex cases so that it can extend the boundaries of neighborhood mediation. In the words of the director: "[The boundary] has been stretched. When I came here, [questions for assessing cases were]: 'Psychiatric issues? Language issues? Violence?' (…) but you see that in society, people have to live independently longer and longer. So in the field of neighborhood mediation, more and more attention is given to that subject in training."[100] Notwithstanding, she adds: "But you have to protect your boundaries, that is most important."[101]

This protection of boundaries forms the second manner in which BetterNeighbors appears to handle the pressure of complex cases. To protect this boundary, the director discusses the limits of mediation with its partners: "I'm busy with that, with the external partners. There is major austerity, so all doors are closing and everything comes to us. But if you know that something is wrong with this man or woman, then tell us or don't refer them to us."[102] According to the director, the ultimate boundary is that neighborhood mediation remains suitable for volunteers: "Mediation is possible if someone can have a conversation – possibly with the help of a social worker – and still remembers the next day what was agreed upon. That's the bottom line for me. If I say to you 'hey, you need to find out the pathology', then I'm not a volunteer organization anymore."[103]

In sum, the development of extramuralization demonstrates how BetterNeighbors is subject to pressure to handle cases that are too complex. BetterNeighbors deals with this pressure by better equipping its mediators for these cases, but at the same time also by striving to protect its boundaries, with the main argument that neighborhood mediation should remain suitable work for volunteers. In other words, BetterNeighbors adapts to societal developments and thereby seeks to meet the needs of its partner institutions, but only to the extent that this does not harm the intervention of neighborhood mediation in its most basic features.

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[98] Interview housing corporations, code 52212 – pressure on limits
[99] Code 5131 – professional present at mediation
[100] Interview director BetterNeighbors, code 52212 – pressure on limits
[101] Interview director BetterNeighbors, code 52212 – pressure on limits
[102] Interview director BetterNeighbors, code 522122 – protect boundaries
[103] Interview director BetterNeighbors, code 522122 – protect boundaries

Cases that have a physical cause

Secondly, the interviews also indicate that housing corporations are eager to let BetterNeighbors handle cases of nuisance that appear to have a physical cause rather than a social cause. According to various interviewees, neighbors often end up using neighborhood mediation, *after* they approach their housing corporation with the request to do something about the noisiness of their apartment[104]. An example is provided by one interviewed neighbor: "Well, I live here for a year now with my boyfriend. I must say, the apartments are very noisy. We found out within a month and a half that you could really hear everything. The neighbors upstairs. Of course, these are living sounds."[105]When this neighbor approached her housing corporation to discuss this problem, the corporation's answer was to try neighborhood mediation[106].

However, the effect of mediation for neighbors who find their houses 'too' noisy more than they are experiencing problems with their neighbors, appears to be limited. One interviewed neighbor for example said that for her, mediation helped to salvage the relation, but not the underlying problem. Therefore, nuisance continues to occur: "I do want to go for solutions", she says. "But after a few times [of mediation], I found out that it is not really a solution. It's a matter of isolating the house or finding another place." Various interviewed mediators note that they encounter these situations frequently[107]. One of them for instance says: "Well sometimes, after you had the third in a row about noise nuisance, you think 'why can't the housing corporation...' (…) In that sense I can get annoyed by the fact that the housing corporations do not fix such crappy houses. (...) Because what are we doing? We can't solve it."[108] Although the interviews thus signify the need for isolation in some cases of nuisance, they also indicate that housing corporations are not willing to make such investments[109]. One neighbor for instance states: "They are not eager to do the isolation; they only do that after you leave. And then they sell it, or make it an expensive rental. So that's the way it is."[110]

These various examples indicate that neighborhood mediation deals with cases of nuisance that cannot be solved by mediation only, because they have a psychical cause: low housing quality. As housing corporations still refer these cases to neighborhood mediation, and refrain from making physical adjustments themselves, the question arises whether housing corporations perhaps also use neighborhood mediation to deflect their own responsibility in dealing with the physical cause of nuisance. In the words of one of the interviewees of the municipality: "[The housing corporation] have a limited capacity, so often it's easy, 'Oh there's

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[104] Code 522214 – approach housing corporations for noisiness
[105] Interview neighbor 1, code 52221 – houses very noisy
[106] Interview neighbor 1, code 522214 - approach housing corporations for noisiness
[107] Code 522221 – neighborhood mediation cannot solve cause
[108] Interview neighborhood mediator 2, code 522221 – neighborhood mediation cannot solve cause
[109] Code 522222 - housing corporations not eager to invest
[110] Interview neighbor 2, code 522222 – housing corporations not eager to invest

BetterNeighbors, just go there.' Even though they could also do something themselves." To which the other interviewee adds: "That they could maybe do something about the isolation in the apartment, so that nuisance decreases."[111]

In sum, it appears that the housing corporations want BetterNeighbors to deal with their cases of nuisance, even if some of these cases require a physical solution coming from the housing corporations themselves. Although the interviews indicate that this is problematic for neighbors, and sometimes also frustrating for neighborhood mediators, the problem was not explicitly mentioned by interviewees of BetterNeighbors, such as the director. Perhaps, this is because getting these cases is not a real problem for BetterNeighbors, as it does not necessarily hurt the intervention. The interviewed neighbors for instance both noted that they appreciated the service of neighborhood mediation, even though it did not fully solve their problems[112]; the frustration they do have, is directed towards the housing corporations[113]. Therefore, for BetterNeighbors, there appears to be no harm in trying.

The pressure to handle unsuitable cases

When taking both problematic types of cases together – those that are too complex and those that have a psychical cause -, this thesis concludes that the housing corporations are eager to send BetterNeighbors as many of its cases as possible, thereby sometimes exceeding the limit of what neighborhood mediation can actually fix. This finding reaffirms the risk noted in chapter 1 of this study: that neighborhood mediation becomes the 'drain' of its institutional partners. Meijs and Delleman explain how this is often caused by the 'business-like behavior' of partner institutions, meaning that partners such as the housing corporations are so concerned with efficiency and profit, that they are eager to pass on complex and/or costly problems such as nuisance (2006: 39). Although it cannot be said with certainty whether this is the cause, the discourse of the housing corporations does reaffirm the importance of financial considerations: because the housing corporations are no longer able to handle cases of nuisance due to budget cuts, they see neighborhood mediation as a solution that *substitutes* their work.

Regardless of its cause, BetterNeighbors has to deal with these 'unsuitable' cases: with too complex cases, BetterNeighbors does so by better equipping its mediators as well as by trying to protect its boundaries; with cases of a psychical cause, BetterNeighbors appears to accept these cases, because there is no harm in trying. However, one could argue that due to both types of cases, the quality of the arrangement is or may be affected. For example, if BetterNeighbors does not succeed in using its influence to convince housing corporations that certain boundaries must

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[111] Interview municipality, code 522222 – housing corporations not eager to invest
[112] Code 52232 - neighbors satisfied with neighborhood mediation itself despite lack of solutions
[113] Interview neighbor 1 and 2, code 522222 – housing corporations not eager to invest

be protected, the result may be that neighborhood mediation becomes less attractive for volunteers, thereby harming the arrangement's goal of civic self-reliance. Also, by having BetterNeighbors handle cases with a psychical cause rather than the housing corporations, the arrangement reduces its overall ability to achieve one of its goal: to reduce nuisance.

In conclusion, where fund dependency negatively affects the stability of the arrangement, *BetterNeighbors' case dependency negatively affects the quality of neighborhood mediation*. With these tensions elaborated, the next segment will bring this chapter's analysis on the policy arrangement of neighborhood mediation and its tensions together, to answer the research question concerned with the institutional level of neighborhood mediation.

Conclusion: civic-professional organization through institutional collaboration

This chapter investigated neighborhood mediation on the institutional level, with the purpose of answering the following question: *how do institutional partners relate in the practice of neighborhood mediation, and how does that relation affect the intervention?* In this conclusion, the research question will be answered by summarizing the policy arrangement of neighborhood mediation, and the tensions that arise from it.

In the policy arrangement of neighborhood mediation, four actors work together to realize the intervention of neighborhood mediation: BetterNeighbors, the municipality, the housing corporations and the police. All four actors are engaged in this collaboration for their own reasons. First, BetterNeighbors, because it depends on its partners' resources of funds and case referrals to be able to organize its civic-professional intervention of neighborhood mediation. These three partners of BetterNeighbors, on their turn, are willing to provide these resources, because they also benefit from the collaboration themselves: it allows the municipality to be a facilitating government, and it unburdens the housing corporations and police in their work. Therefore, it can be concluded that *in the practice of neighborhood mediation, the civic-professional organization of BetterNeighbors is able to create its public value of civic self-reliance, because this civic self-reliance also benefits the institutions on which BetterNeighbors depends for resources.*

Nonetheless, apart from enabling BetterNeighbors, the arrangement also constrains it. This is largely due to BetterNeighbors' dependent position in the arrangement. Its dependency on funds means that the future of neighborhood mediation is unsure: the municipality and housing corporations are free to withdraw their funding, although BetterNeighbors needs these funds to exist. Secondly, BetterNeighbor's dependency on case referrals means that it needs to deal with cases that are referred to them, even if they are not all 'suitable'. Because this thesis found that the housing corporations appear to be eager to refer as many cases as possible to BetterNeighbors, the quality of neighborhood mediation is at risk. In conclusion, *the dependency of BetterNeighbors on*

the resources of its institutional partners negatively affects both the stability and the quality of the civic-professional intervention of neighborhood mediation.

In a reaction to these tensions, BetterNeighbors uses its influence to secure and protect the intervention of neighborhood mediation, for instance by discussing with its partners that boundaries are needed to make sure that neighborhood mediation remains suitable work for volunteers. Moreover, in an effort to overcome the position of dependency, BetterNeighbors also strives to further institutionalize neighborhood mediation making it into a basic provision of the social domain. This further institutionalization would change the power relations of the arrangement, and would cause BetterNeighbors to gain control over the relation of its intervention of neighborhood mediation. Nonetheless, this has not yet been achieved, thereby forcing BetterNeighbors to continue to deal with the challenges that flow from its dependency.
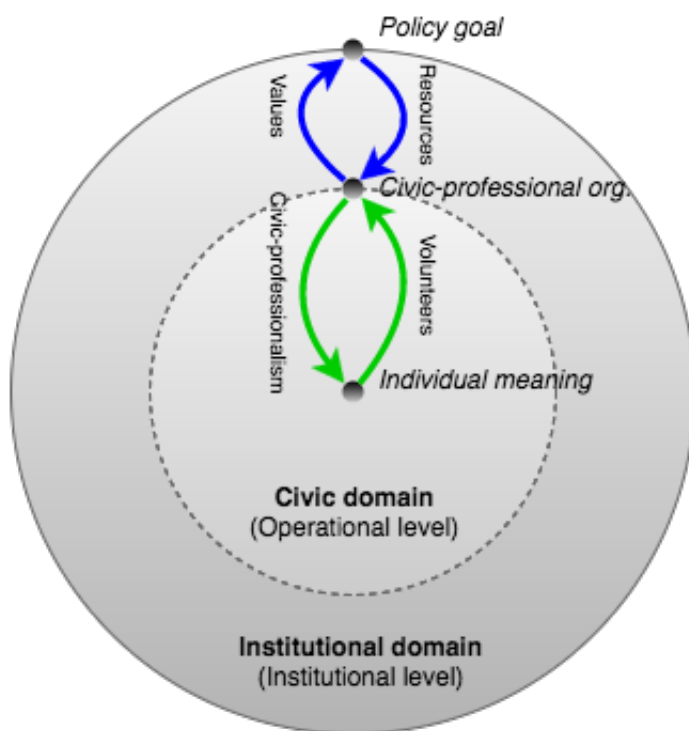
Figure 6 Neighborhood mediation on the operational and the institutional level

Translating this conclusion to the broader question of how public value is created through government-citizen collaboration, the analysis can now provide the second 'half' of the answer, via the visualization in figure 6. In this figure, the downward arrow running from policy goal – where the institutional partners 'reside' - to the civic-professional organization represents the flow of resources in the arrangement upon which BetterNeighbors depends. Meanwhile, the upward arrow running from the civic-professional organization to the policy goal, represent the respective values of neighborhood mediation for BetterNeighbors' partners, as viewed by the partners

through their own discourses. The two arrows combined, portray what makes the policy arrangement able to exist: a mutual benefit. Lastly, also the two tensions can be placed within this figure: the fund dependency that affects the stability of the intervention may be placed at the top with the partners and their policy; if that point falls away, the arrangement may be dissolved. The case dependency that affects the quality of the intervention can be placed at the point of BetterNeighbors, as it puts pressure on the organization and its practice of neighborhood mediation in the operational domain. With this, the 'picture' of public value creation through government-citizen collaboration is complete. The explanation of this picture, however, will be done in the conclusion of this thesis that follows.

Conclusion

This thesis made the case for government-citizen collaboration. In the introduction, it was argued that government and citizens *need* to collaborate with each other in the public domain, in order to create public value. Nonetheless, practice shows that this collaboration is often difficult. Government and citizens act according to different logics, with government typically acting 'top-down' to meet its policy goals, and citizens typically acting 'bottom-up' to address their individual needs. As the example of the Do-Democracy shows, these logics easily conflict: when government tries to support citizens in the public domain, it often ends up driving them away. This thesis, therefore, aimed to open up the 'black box' of successful government-citizen collaboration. By taking a case of collaboration that succeeds in creating public value – the practice of neighborhood mediation – it sought to unravel the mechanisms that make this collaboration work. This was done by the means of an interpretative empirical study, focusing on interviews and undertaken within the Amsterdam practice of neighborhood mediation.

In this conclusion, the findings of this empirical study will be summarized, first by considering the two levels of neighborhood mediation. Then, the two analyses will be brought together, to answer the main research question of this study. This question is: *in the practice of neighborhood mediation, how does the collaboration between citizens and public institutions create public value?*

The two levels of neighborhood mediation

To investigate government-citizen collaboration in the case of neighborhood mediation, this study distinguished two levels of analysis. First, the operational level, which was concerned with the intervention of neighborhood mediation itself and situated in the 'domain of citizens'. Second, the institutional level, which was concerned with the collaboration between BetterNeighbors and its institutional partners and is situated in the 'domain of institutions'. The next two paragraphs will summarize the sub questions that were posed for each level, and the respective answers that were given.

For the operational level of neighborhood mediation, this thesis asked the following sub question: *how do elements of a civic and professional repertoire interact as to produce successful neighborhood mediation, and what is the role of organization in this?*

As an answer, the study found that neighborhood mediation constitutes a horizontal intervention that creates civic self-reliance in the area of neighborhood disputes, by helping neighbors to resolve their own disputes with the help of other neighbors. The intervention is effective because of its specific interaction between professional and civic elements, which is

characterized by two connected movements: first, citizens choose to become neighborhood mediators because of what the professional intervention has to offer them - the ability to learn and use skills. Secondly, the professional intervention works because it is done by citizens – although it requires professional skills, it cannot be done by 'traditional' professionals because of their inherent vertical role. In sum, neighborhood mediation constitutes a civic-professional intervention. A crucial factor in realizing this intervention is the civic-professional organization of BetterNeighbors, which through its combination of professional and civic organizational elements ensures that citizens are both able and willing to do the work. For that reason, it can be concluded that on the operational level of neighborhood mediation, *the public value of civic self-reliance is created through civic-professional organization*. The second level of analysis addressed the institutional context that allows for this organization to exist and be effective.

For the institutional level of neighborhood mediation, the thesis posed the question: *how do institutional partners relate to each other in the practice of neighborhood mediation, and how does that relationship affect the intervention?*

Here, the study found that the civic-professional organization of BetterNeighbors is both enabled and constrained by its collaboration with institutional partners: the municipality, the housing corporations and the police. BetterNeighbors is enabled by this collaboration, because the partners provide the organization with the resources that it needs to exist. The partners are willing to provide these resources, because neighborhood mediation helps them to also reach their goals: creating civic self-reliance for the municipality, and dealing with neighborhood nuisance for the housing corporations and police.

However, because the dependency of BetterNeighbors on resources is so fundamental, the collaboration not only enables but also constrains the organization in two important ways. First, because BetterNeighbors depends on funds, the intervention of neighborhood mediation remains unstable: if partners decide to discontinue their funding, neighborhood mediation could no longer exist. Secondly, because BetterNeighbors depends on case referrals, the quality of the intervention is at risk, as partners may put pressure on BetterNeighbors to handle cases of nuisance that are not suitable for neighborhood mediation. BetterNeighbors seeks to deal with both constraints by - most importantly - becoming less dependent on its partners: it strives to make neighborhood mediation a basic provision of the social domain, and also invests in making neighbors more familiar with neighborhood mediation. Nonetheless, as of yet, BetterNeighbors is still in a dependent position, forcing it to continuously deal with the challenges of dependency.

In sum, it can be concluded that on the institutional level of neighborhood mediation, *the institutional partners provide BetterNeighbors with resources, because BetterNeighbors creates a public value that aligns with their own goals. Nonetheless, because the partners control resources, BetterNeighbors is fundamentally dependent, which may negatively affect the stability and quality of the intervention.* With the

sub research questions answered, this thesis can now turn to the main research question.

How government-citizen collaboration creates public value

This thesis asked the following main research question*: in the practice of neighborhood mediation, how does the collaboration between citizens and public institutions create public value?*

When connecting the analyses of both the operational and institutional level of neighborhood mediation, one crucial element emerges in the collaboration of government and citizens in the practice of neighborhood mediation and its public value creation: the civic-professional organization of BetterNeighbors. It is due to BetterNeighbors' organization that civic self-reliance is created, because it attracts and train volunteers for effective neighborhood mediation. Furthermore, it is due to BetterNeighbors' creation of civic self-reliance that institutional partners can meet their own goals, thereby allowing them to provide BetterNeighbors with the necessary resources. Therefore, rather than occurring top-down or bottom-up, public value in the practice of neighborhood mediation is created from the middle, in what can be described as a *'middle eight' movement*. See figure 7 for a visualization.
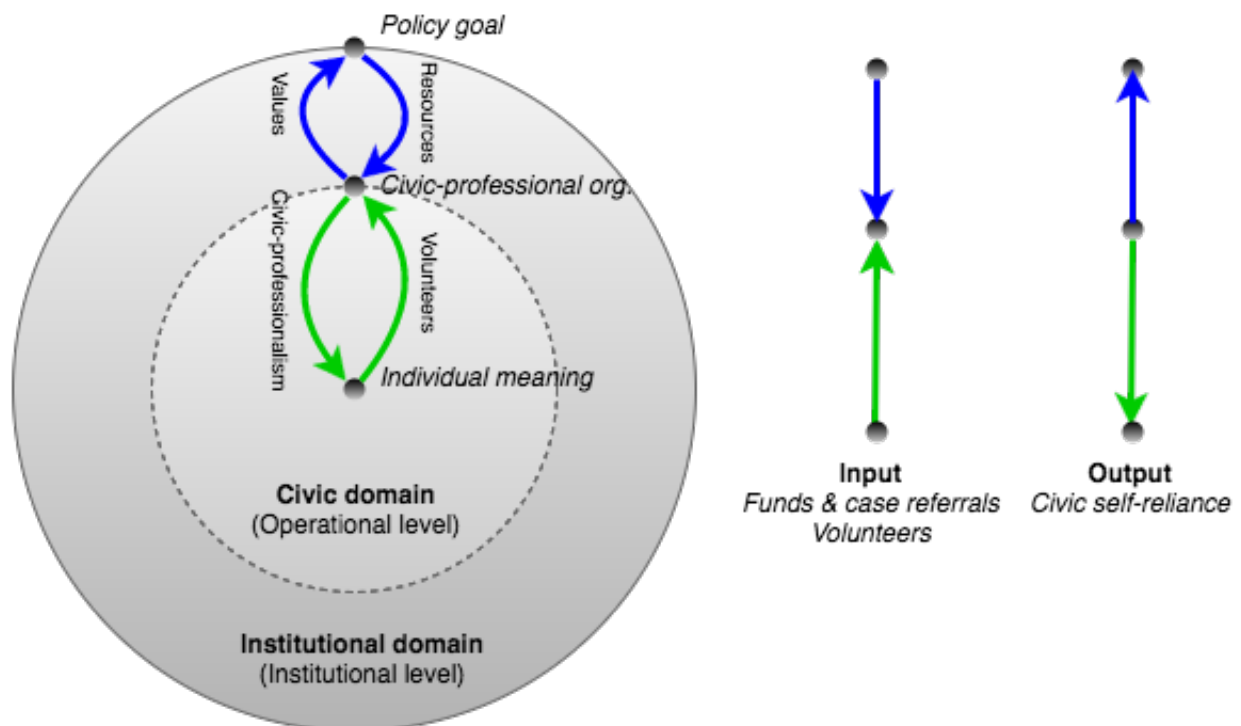

Figure 7 The 'middle eight' movement

In this 'middle eight' movement, public action starts from the middle with the civic-professional organization of BetterNeighbors. This organization creates the civic-professional intervention of neighborhood mediation that is able to effectively help neighbors resolve their

own disputes (arrow down). The professional nature of this work, on its turn, attracts the necessary volunteers to become neighborhood mediators (arrow up). As a circle, the bottom two arrows together show how the public value of civic self-reliance is created: by helping neighbors to rely on themselves through the assistance of volunteer neighborhood mediators. This public value allows the civic-professional organization to move 'up' in the institutional domain, where it can align this value with the policy goals of institutional partners (arrow up). As this means that the partners have something to gain from civic-professional organization, they are willing to provide the organization with the necessary resources (arrow down). These resources finally allow the civic-professional organization to organize its civic-professional practice in the civic domain, thereby repeating the circle. Essential to this movement is the middle point: the civic-professional organization of BetterNeighbors functions as an intermediary structure that is able to both *attract* input from government and citizens – thereby constituting a government-citizen collaboration – and to *produce* the output of civic self-reliance on both an individual and policy level – thereby creating public value; see figure 7 for a visualization of both.

With this finding, the main research question of this thesis can be answered in the following manner: *in the practice of neighborhood mediation, public institutions and citizens can together create the public value of civic self-reliance through the intermediary structure of civic-professionalism.* What is hidden in the 'black box' of public value creation through collaboration, is now revealed to be a *structure* that actively incorporates the logics of both government and citizens: *the structure of civic-professionalism.*

Although this study's findings unravel the complexities of successfully bringing a government and citizen logic together, it does not yet answer the other question that was also raised in the introduction of this thesis: can this collaboration also prevent the 'top-down' government logic to overrule its counterpart of the 'bottom-up' citizen logic? To this question, the answer is: no, not completely. Because BetterNeighbors ultimately depends on its partners for resources, the partners still hold a power to 'overrule': if partners withdraw their resources, all other elements of the 'middle eight' movement will fall like dominos. BetterNeighbors will not be able to organize its civic-professional intervention, leading citizens to refrain from taking up an active role, finally causing the public institutions to also no longer meet policy goals of civic-self-reliance. One can question whether this actually will happen, as in the current Dutch climate of the 'Do-Democracy', public institutions strive to support citizens' self-reliance, making it seemingly contradictive to shut down an initiative that entails just that. Still, this study shows that there are forces at play that may override the public value of this practice: enabling neighborhood mediation is not only a collaborative choice made BetterNeighbors and its partners, but also a political choice made by the municipality and an economic choice made by the housing corporations. Therefore, this study concludes that although the practice of neighborhood

mediation demonstrates how a structure *enables* public value creation through government-citizen collaboration, it also stresses that this structure is not an all encompassing solution. What will always be needed in the public domain, is a process of democratic deliberation, in which people together answer the fundamental question: *what should we do to create public value?*

With this conclusion, the thesis will move to its last part – the discussion – in which the study's findings will be used to reflect on three theoretical debates.

Discussion

This study has concluded that in the practice of neighborhood mediation, public institutions and citizens can together create the public value of civic self-reliance through the structure of *civic-professionalism*: a structure that entails both civic and professional elements, thereby incorporating both a government and citizen logic. In the next paragraphs, the findings of this study will be related to the three theoretical debates that were included in this study: the debates on active citizenship, professionalism and governance. Although the implications of the findings vary per debate, they share one common thread: *the concept of civic-professionalism demonstrates how the role of agency is often over appreciated, while the importance of structure is underestimated.* For a summary of these implication, see table 5.

The debate on active citizenship

First, with regards to the debate on active citizenship, the findings of this study challenge the perspective of active citizenship as a *bottom-up phenomenon*. In the wake of developments such as the Do-Democracy in the Netherlands - but for instance also the 'Big Society' in the United Kingdom (Verhoeven & Tonkens, 2013) - the contemporary debate on active citizenship focuses on how citizens are independently taking up tasks in the public domain, and/or how government tries to make citizens to do so. With names as "everyday makers" (Bang & Sorensen, 1999: 326) or "political do-it-yourselfers" (Verhoeven et al., 2014: 3), active citizens are frequently framed as people who want to be societally engaged, but in their own practical and self-organizing way. Subsequently, from a policy perspective, the debate focuses on how government interacts with these self-organizing citizens, therein often finding that the interaction comes with complications. In the introduction of this thesis, these complications were summarized as two opposing problems: either government seeks to support active citizens but then has a tendency to 'take over' and thereby discourage citizens (Van Dam et al., 2015; Tonkens & De Wilde 2013; Vrielink et al. 2013), or government lets active citizens run free, but then accepts that 'vulnerable' citizens will be left behind (De Wilde et al., 2014; Kampen et al., 2013). Interacting with *bottom-up* active citizenship thus puts government in a bind, in which intervening undermines "the very essence of civil self-organization", while not doing anything causes "a degree of 'localism' that is destructive to established public values" (Brandsen et al., 2015:14).

The practice of neighborhood mediation, on the contrary, does not suffer from these problems: government indeed needs to be involved to make neighborhood mediation possible, but its involvement does not lead it to take over and thereby discourage neighborhood mediators. This is possible, because the two groups - government and citizens - do not *directly* interact with each other. Instead, BetterNeighbors constitutes an intermediary structure that connects the

various public institutions with citizens, while allowing them to stay within their own domains – institutions in the institutional domain, citizens in the civic domain. What this demonstrates, is the value of *organizing* citizens, as opposed to letting them organize themselves. When government interacts with self-organized citizens, it forcibly comes down to agency to make it work. Are citizens able to cope with institutional hassle? Are government workers able to tread the fine line between supporting and taking over? In neighborhood mediation, structure resolves these questions; thereby not relieving all tensions between government and citizen logics, but providing a buffer that prevents a direct confrontation between the two. In conclusion, the study's findings provide an argument for focusing more on organized forms of active citizenship.

The debate on professionalism

Second, with regards to professionalism, neighborhood mediation entails a form of professionalism that has gained little attention in the theoretical debate: professional work that is done by citizens. Although this form is interesting in itself, it also provides an important reflection on the contemporary debate on professionalism as a whole. In this debate, current perspectives on professionalism maintain a separation of the two roles, but emphasize the need for professionals to engage with citizens. Noordegraaf, for instance, argues how professionals should now 'link' their expertise to citizens - amongst other stakeholders - and also exercise authority by "securing connections" with those stakeholders (Noordegraaf 2015: 15). Dzur argues how professionals should become 'task-sharers', who both "exercise authority and share it" with citizens (2004: 12). This thesis summarized such perspectives with the *New Public Governance*-related 'connective' professional: a professional that still has expertise and authority, but needs to actively connect them with clients and the environment as a whole.

However, the practice of neighborhood mediation demonstrates how difficult this 'connective' role may be. In this practice, neighborhood mediators - as civic-professionals - are able to 'connect' with neighbors, for two reasons: because they possess the professional skills that help neighbors come together in conversation, and because they – as co-neighbors - are fundamentally impartial, meaning that they have no stake in the outcome of mediation, nor the authority to enforce a solution. In other words, it is the structure of civic-professionalism that allows them to connect. The thesis demonstrated how the same could not be achieved by 'traditional' professionals, such as police officers and case managers of housing corporations. These professionals, namely, *do* have a stake in the outcome as well as the authority to enforce their will. For instance, if police officers are confronted with illegal activity, they are obliged to exercise authority, even though that means that their actions will go against the wishes of one or both neighbors. In other words, the study shows how exercising *authority* in a 'connective' way can be difficult, because the organizational obligations of professionals may conflict with the

individual needs of citizens; leading them to exercise authority in an 'overruling' way. This is not because professionals *want* to overrule, but because they are subject to organizational *structures* that force them to do so. Nonetheless, 'connective' perspectives on professionalism emphasize the role of professional *agency* in overcoming these conflicts. For instance, Noordegraaf states that "in organizing high-quality processes, professionals feel and see contradictions and are able to deal with them, in relation to (…) stakeholders." (2015: 16) This study's findings therefore make a case for directing more attention within the professionalism debate towards the question of what *structures* enable professionals to truly act connectively.

The debate on governance

Third and last, this study also provides input for the debate on governance. The practice of neighborhood mediation portrays a form of governance that relates to the ideal-typical mode of *New Public Governance* (NPG). As in NPG, the practice is made up of "multiple interdependent actors" (idem: 384) that engage in relationships to achieve "service effectiveness and outcomes" (ibid.). However, this thesis argued that the idea of NPG is incomplete: if relationships are the *functional need* of contemporary network governance, then relationships themselves cannot also be the *structural solution*. Rather, the solution lies in whatever enables these relationships to be sustained. This study found such a solution: the *structure* of civic-professionalism. In the practice of neighborhood mediation, the structure of civic-professionalism enables network coordination to occur. First, because it attracts citizens and trains them to do good work, and second, because it creates an organized practice of neighborhood mediation that allows institutional partners to support BetterNeighbors. In sum, it is due to the civic-professional structure that various actors are brought together in the network of neighborhood mediation; and it is also this structure that allows them to engage in productive relationships, in which they pool resources to address a common problem together. As New Public Governance itself is largely concerned with *agency* - for instance by stating that "trust, relational capital and relational contracts act as the core governance mechanisms" (Osborne, 2006: 384) - this study adds to that theory by emphasizing the need to consider structures that enable relationships, as well as the trust, capital and contracts that exist within them.

However, although this study demonstrates how a structure enables network coordination, it also shows that this does not mean that the structure relieves network coordination from its tensions. On the contrary, this study found that the network of neighborhood mediation is subject to power asymmetries - based on resource asymmetries - that may negatively affect the stability and quality of the intervention – or 'service effectiveness and outcomes' as Osborne would describe it (2006). Furthermore, the study also shows how other coordination mechanisms find their way into this network through these power asymmetries, subsequently causing tensions

themselves. First, the uncertain funding of the municipality portrays the tension of a hierarchical form of coordination, in which decisions are ultimately made by politicians at the top, regardless of the public value that a project entails. Second, the pressure to handle many cases of the housing corporations portrays a tension of market coordination, in which profitability and efficiency play a central role in decision-making, causing public value to be subordinated to financial considerations.

This study thus one the one hand underpins Rhodes' idea of a 'differentiated polity', in which network coordination predominates, while market and hierarchical coordination "co-mingle, compete and conflict with the new instruments of governance" (2007: 1253). On the other hand, it stresses that in the 'differentiated polity' the challenge of governance is not resolved, and that the search for effective governance practices thus continues ever more.

Civic-professionalism as 'enabling' structure

Debate on	*Three implications for three theoretical debates*
Active citizenship	This study challenges the emphasis on active citizenship as a bottom-up phenomenon. Where government interaction with *self-organizing* citizens is often problematic, this study shows how an *organized* form of active citizenship does enable government-citizen collaboration: through the intermediary *structure* of civic-professionalism, government and citizens can collaborate while staying within their own domain, thus preventing a conflict of logics.
Professionalism	This study provides reflection on *connective* perspectives of professionalism, by showing how organizational obligations may prevent professionals from acting connectively. Rather than emphasizing the role of professional *agency*, this study directs attention toward organizational *structures* that make professional connecting possible.
Governance	• This study adds to theory on *New Public Governance* (NPG), by showing how the *structure* of civic-professionalism enables network coordination. Civic-professionalism forms a *structural solution* for the *functional need* of NPG: relationships between actors. • Also, the findings of this study underpin Rhodes' concept of the 'differentiated polity' in which various governance mechanisms coexist, and demonstrate how each mechanism causes its own unresolved tensions.

Table 5 Implications of the study's findings on three theoretical debates.

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Annex 1 — Code tree

Code System	# of fragments
Code System	740
4 Self-reliance through organization	0
41 Neighborhood mediators as citizens	0
411 Motivation	0
4111 Skill-based motivations	0
41111 Using skills	8
41112 Personal development	10
41113 Work-related	2
411131 Resume	1
411132 Network	1
411133 "Hours of flying"	3
4112 Societal engagement	0
41121 Do something for society	5
41122 Do something for the neighborhood	4
4113 Hygiene factors	0
41131 Fun	14
411311 Like the group	10
411312 Enjoy working with people	3
411313 Success makes it fun	6
411314 Getting to know the city	3
41132 Flexible	8
41133 Spare time	6
41134 Conviently located	2
412 Personal background	0
4121 Work background	0
41211 Social	7
41212 Mediation	6
4122 Average characteristics of group lean towards..	1
41221 Pensioners	3
41222 White	3
41223 Female	3
41224 Highly educated	3
413 Attitude towards volunteer work	0
4131 Work must fit with profile	2
4132 Balance between giving and receiving	2
4133 Experience with volunteer work	0
41331 Did volunteer work before	3
41332 No previous interest in volunteer work	1
Extra: NB popular job	2
42 BN as civic-professional organization	1
421 Volunteer organization	0
4211 Limits to what you can ask	0

42111 "Voluntary but not without obligations"	5
42112 Time	1
42113 Expertise	3
42114 Safety	5
42115 Assessing cases (see 42241 Assessing cases)	0
4212 Attractive work environment	0
42121 No organizational hassle	10
42122 Active appreciation	3
422 Professional organization	0
4221 Recruitment	4
42211 Selection criteria	3
422111 8-10 cases a year	1
422112 Open to method of mediation	5
422113 Representable	2
42212 Recruitment good overall	1
4222 Training	3
42221 Learn the method	7
422211 Must be open to it	1
42222 Training must connect to needs	7
42223 NMs appreciate training	12
4223 Intervision	0
42231 Variation to keep it interesting	2
42232 Insightful how others see things differently	1
4224 Coordination	0
42241 Assessing cases	2
422411 Can be difficult	1
42242 Selective matching of NMs to cases	4
422421 Match weak NMs with strong ones	3
422422 Coupling done based what PL/Cs know about their NMs	2
42243 Managing performance NMs	5
422431 Problems usually solve themselves	2
422432 Monitor amount of cases NMs take	3
4225 Coaching	0
42252 Regular contact	2
42251 Giving advice	1
422511 Consulting	6
422512 Reflection on action	2
43 Neighborhood mediators as civic-professionals	0
431 What they do	0
4311 Facilitate conversation	0
43111 Features of method	0
431111 Give attention and time	7
4311111 Give free time	2
4311112 Show in personal story	1
4311113 Taking neighbors seriously	2

431112 Apply skills	2
4311121 Communication techniques	11
4311122 Process management	3
4311123 Personal skills and expertise	0
43111231 In line with neighborhood mediation	14
43111232 Different from neighborhood mediation	1
4311124 Better with experience	8
43111241 Inexperience	7
4311125 Personal style	8
43111251 Different styles/ideas	5
43111252 Give feedback to each other	5
43112 Why professionals can't do it	0
431121 Lack skills	3
431122 Lack time	3
43113 When mediators deviate from method too much	1
431131 Lacking skills	5
431132 Difficult cooperation with other mediator	8
4312 Make neighbors responsible for solution	1
43121 Features of method	0
431211 Impartiality	7
4312111 Co-neighbors	1
43121111 Surprised about NMs being volunteers	5
4312112 Do not offer solutions	4
4312113 Dealing with own assumptions	7
431212 Confidentiality	1
4312121 Civic duty	4
4312122 Grey area	3
4312123 NMs want to report more	7
43122 When mediators deviate too much from method	2
431221 Being directive	5
43123 Why professional can't do it	0
431231 Professionals have authority	4
431232 Professionals have an interest	9
431233 Negative impact on neighbors	0
4312331 Professionals are initimidating	8
4312332 Professionals have escalating effect	4
4312333 Citizens expect professionals to solve the problem	4
432 What they achieve	0
4321 Why neigbors can't do it themselves	0
43211 Difficult to get into contact	7
43212 Subjective problem experience	6
4322 Effect of neighborhood mediation	8
43221 Knowing each other's story	7
43222 Finding common ground	4
43223 Finding solutions	3
43224 Condition: neighbors must be willing	9

5 Organization through institutional collaboration	0
51 Policy arrangement NM	0
511 Organization	0
5111 Actors	0
51111 Role municipality	0
511111 Policies OOV	1
511112 MZO	4
511113 'Subdriehoek' city districts	1
51112 Role housing corporations	0
511121 Right to living quality	1
51113 Role police	0
511131 Emergency assistence	1
511132 Illegal activities	3
5112 Resources	0
51121 Financial support	1
511211 'Small organization with enormous tail'	1
51122 Referrals to BN	3
511221 Neighbors unfamiliar with NM	2
511222 Type of referral	0
5112221 Self-registration	5
5112222 'Warm' referral	2
511223 Contact with referrers	3
5113 Rules of the game	0
51132 Stage intervention	2
511321 Limits intervention	13
511322 Assessing cases for referral	2
511323 Scaling up	1
51133 Information exchange	0
511331 No feedback	6
5113311 Police would like to know more	2
5113312 Only on request neighbors	1
511332 Get information from partners	5
512 Substance	0
5121 Discourse BetterNeighbors	6
51211 Lack of self-reliance	1
512111 Individualized society	2
512112 Citizens relied on government	1
51212 NM solution	1
51213 Organization necessary	6
5122 Discourse municipality	1
51221 Self-reliance difficult	1
51222 Facilitating government	3
5123 Discourse housing corporations	0
51231 Lack budget to deal with nuisance	2
512311 Nuisance responsibility housing corporations	2
512312 Care used to be elaborate	3

51232 Opportunity to forward cases	1
5124 Discourse police	0
51241 Saves time	7
51242 Addition, not alternative	0
512421 Mediating role of warden officer	3
5124211 Always pays a visit with report	2
5124212 Mediation is a way to 'know' the neighborhood	2
512422 Refferals not enforced by policy	1
513 Extra: ad hoc collaboration	0
5131 Professional present at mediation	8
51311 Experience NM	2
5132 Mediation at the police station	1
52 Tensions of collaboration	0
521 Fund dependency	1
5211 Mayor advocate of NM	2
5212 Risk of dependency on funds	3
5213 Response BN	0
52131 Financial buffer	1
52132 Further institutionalize intervention	5
52133 Make effects visible	3
522 Case dependency	0
5221 Cases that are too complex	0
52211 'Extramuralisering'	3
522111 NMs experience complex cases	4
52212 Pressure on limits	3
52213 Response BN	0
522121 Adapt to meet needs	3
522122 Protect boundaries	4
5222 Cases with a psysical cause	0
52221 Houses very noisy	11
522211 Sounds of living	1
522212 Need to be considerate of neighbors	3
522213 Social housing tenants cannot move	2
522214 Approach housing corporations for noisiness	3
52222 Physical solution needed	8
522221 NM cannot solve cause	5
522222 Housing corporations not eager to invest	6
5222221 Ask neighbors to take care of psysical solution	1
52223 Response BN	0
52231 Publicity for BetterNeighbors?	3
52232 Neighbors satisfied with nm itself despite solutions	4
5224 "Everybody keeps responsibility"	1
5223 Extra: 'mandatory' NM?	6