

# **Towards Better Participatory Planning: Guide to Place-making**

**Master thesis in Spatial Planning**

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## **Prologue and acknowledgments**

The journey through the thesis often felt like a journey without an end, similarly to place-making processes. It seems however that this particular journey has been accomplished, nevertheless, with great amount of lessons learned in the last couple of months. Having left Warsaw to study in Utrecht I knew I want to focus on participation in the planning field, the social side of urban development has always been my core focus. I did not know about place-making field though and having discovered it, I have a feeling of being in the right place of planning.

Thanks to the conducted interviews I had an opportunity to meet great people, with open minds and open hearts, supporting others in changing their urban environments. One of the talks also lead me to start an internship at Stipo company, which I am currently enjoying to a great extent and discovering everyday new aspects of place-making but also the methods and strategies needed to work in the field. It also gave me an opportunity to participate in the Placemaking Week conference held in Amsterdam, with over 450 participants from all around the world. This experience showed me how many different projects are happening in those, often distant countries, yet all of them focusing on local places and local communities. The amount of energy and contacts gained during this week will stay with me hopefully for many more years. It is a shame that I got the chance to do the internship only in the last phase of writing the thesis, it seems there is still a lot to be explored.

I would like to thank everyone who supported me through this, often bumpy journey. I would like to thank my supervisor, Stan Geertman for offering guidance and supervision in the last, too many months. I would like to thank my family also, without whom this whole year in the Netherlands would never happen. Last but not least, I would like to thank my boyfriend Olek, who was during all these months listening to my struggles and moanings and giving courage and motivating to finalize the below thesis.

## **Abstract**

Planning field has been evolving at a fast pace towards much more decentralized structure. Move from government to governance, initiatives originating within the civil society and many drawbacks of traditional participation indicate that there is a need for different approaches to be researched. One of them is place-making, a movement stemming from the opposition towards top-down, expert based urban development. Until now, there have not been many papers analysing the movement, therefore in the thesis it is analysed in-depth in order to see how can it can be of benefit to participatory planning practices. Initially, a literature review was carried out to comprehend the existing knowledge on place-making. After, through conducted interviews with organizers and participants of the processes, a better picture of the process and cases in the Netherlands was obtained. Place-making process aims at redeveloping places with the use of local community and while appreciating local existing assets. It puts a great emphasis on activation and empowerment of the users of the place, to allow for better collaboration in the later stage of the process and ultimately transfer of lead to the users. Furthermore, it encourages creation of places in a sustainable way; via collaboration among diverse actors from the area, both from public, private and civic sphere. Lastly, place-making adds further steps than only gathering ideas, such as programming and managing of the place by local users, who feel the mental ownership of the place.

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# 1. Introduction

The path of planning processes has been changing rapidly during the recent years. In the times of modern planning, residents were not seen as valuable source of knowledge for urban development (Berman, 2017, p.18). Then, planning was top-down, mostly based on expertise and decisions of visionary architects and planners operating from ‘behind the desk’, like Robert Moses or Le Corbusier. Le Corbusier was an establisher of the modern planning school and published a manifesto in 1929, stating that a city and its houses need only to be functional and created based on scientific knowledge (ibid.). Postmodernist planning started to grow in the 1960s, with humanistic notions being recognized in geography field. From then on, lay input in planning started to be seen as advantageous and complementary to the expert knowledge (ibid.). Not only in planning, but in other fields, notion of decentralization of government; movement from government to governance is gaining popularity (Hordijk et al., 2015 p.128). In planning, it is a two-way process: not only governmental bodies seek residents’ engagement but also people themselves aim at having bigger influence on their surroundings (Nabatchi, Leighninger, p.156).

Public participation in planning is one of the tools allowing citizens to make use of democracy system, to “bridge the gap between those who govern and those who are governed” (Hordijk et al., 2015, p.128). Civic engagement in planning is crucial as these are local users of places that possess the greatest and often hidden for other actors’, tacit knowledge (Berman, 2017, p.11).

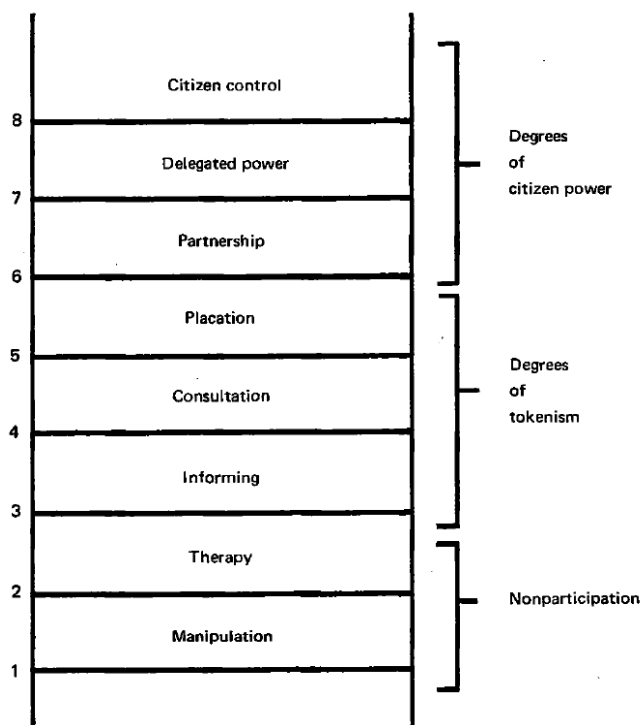


Fig. 1. Arnstein’s participation ladder (Arstein, 1969, p.217)

There are many levels on which citizens can be involved in planning processes. For the first time, they were categorized by Arnstein (1969). Arnstein (ibid., p.217) gathered all sorts of



participatory practices and constructed a, famous now, ladder of participation (see Fig. 1). Author makes distinction between types of participation, basing on the level of real citizens' power in each type. Lowest levels of citizens' influence are categorized as nonparticipation and it starts from manipulation and highest part of the ladder is named as citizen control and falls into a group 'degrees of citizen power'. Participation ladder shows, that there are participatory techniques which may treat people as equal but also as superior or inferior to the governmental authorities.

The type of participation with highest level of citizens' authority may however be difficult to reach. It requires a shift in planning processes from a long established hierarchical, rigid and often exclusive form, to a horizontal, flexible and inclusive one. There have already been many diverse attempts globally, to make the planning more participatory. There was community design, new urbanism (Palermo, Ponzini, 2015) or later, interactive planning or collaborative planning, introduced by Healey. Lately, participatory budgeting is becoming popular, with greatest success and biggest popularity in Latin America (Boonstra, 2015). Apart from these, there are also public surveys, public advisory committees or focus groups. Many of new participatory techniques also make use of technologies such as Information Communication Technologies, Geographical Information Systems or online applications to gather and spread information among citizens (Berman, 2017, p.28). Nonetheless, there are still many drawbacks of participatory planning processes as mostly, they are operating within governmental premises and so far, they were not fully successful (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011., p.99), which make the search for alternative techniques relevant.

“Improvement in both the quantity and quality of citizen involvement has become urgent, since there has been an unprecedented shift in the relative power of actors involved in spatial planning practice” (ibid., p.101). Reasons for that are, among others, growing individualisation, residents' empowerment and greater access to information for everyone. All these characteristics contribute to increasing demand for more complex setting in planning and also show that solely government is not a sufficient actor in conducting successful planning projects. Dutch government tries already to transform different processes to be more citizens-oriented and also to support self-motivation interventions (ibid.).

There are many tactics created and tested all around the world, to make participatory planning better, faster and more efficient. “The formulation of good practices and the selection of appropriate toolkits should derive from testing innovative participatory methods” (Palermo, Ponzini, 2015, p.7). One of the new techniques, which can be seen as a creative solution, carried out outside of the governmental premises, but combining bottom-up and top-down approach is *place-making*<sup>1</sup>. With participation being the central assumption of place-making, it has been chosen as a topic to be studied in the following chapters. Furthermore, there is yet no literature on how the process of place-making looks like or what is its relationship with participatory planning, which makes the research scientifically relevant.

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<sup>1</sup> The way of writing down 'place-making' differs around the world. There also exist 'placemaking' as a one word and 'place making' as two separate words (Place Leaders, n.d.). For the purposes of this paper, the hyphenated version will be used, as (see subchapter 2.4.1.) the process is dealing with the two components.

Movement of place-making was established in the 1960s in New York and since then it is spreading throughout the world. It originated as the opposition towards top-down planning initiatives, in which professionals play the biggest and decisive role. At the beginning, place-making can be defined as a way of improving a certain area with all the actors present or interested in a given place, citizens, but also private and public bodies. There is no single official definition of the movement and it will be elaborated on in further chapters.

In an era of constant quest for a more bottom-up planning, increasing demand for civic engagement and many drawbacks of traditional participation, successful place-making experiences can bring a lot of new, effective practices, to be later implemented in participatory planning projects or to become an alternative for it. Place-making can have a direct impact of how users of public space can relate to it and shape places themselves. Therefore, the subject is of great societal relevance, as we all operate in the public sphere in our every-day life. The field of place-making is already growing and needs thorough understanding.

With a lot of effort and many organizations involved in promoting the movement, 2016 was described as “the year the placemaking movement went global” (Kent, 2016a). During a conference for establishing New Urban Agenda<sup>2</sup> in 2016, a lot of issues regarding public places and placemaking have been included in the document. Education for place-making seems like a booming topic, with new undertakings on the way and big interest among universities and candidates. Pratt Institute in New York has been offering a programme in Urban Place-making and Management since 2015. In 2017, there was a summer school for place-making organized by University of Amsterdam. Place-making companies are also offering various workshops both to companies and individuals. Furthermore, many global events are scheduled for 2017, which shows, place-making is a very up to date and boosting topic, again justifying the relevance of the study.

Place-making in the Netherlands seems to operate for now mostly in regime of private companies or non-governmental organizations. The process is not yet officially used as a strategy by municipalities. It can be thus noticed, that a structure of the place-making process is more horizontal. It is organized by actors from the market who mediate between all the participants, while participatory planning is organized by public bodies, characterized foremost by a vertical structure. Regardless of the main organizer of a process, a range of actors involved in both participatory planning and place-making is still similar, thus research conclusions can be of benefit to participatory governmental processes as well. This learning pattern of getting good practices from place-making to mainstream participation, is already occurring, claims Parker (2017), the chair of Institute of Place Management operating in UK: “The traditional players are very willing to learn from this innovation [place-making]. There has been a huge recalibration from generic principles of 'best practice' unquestionably transferred from place to place to a genuine appreciation of the value of local insight, experiments and enthusiasm”.

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<sup>2</sup> An international agenda, aiming to guide cities' development in a sustainable way (UN Habitat, 2016)

Place-making can be localized on the Arnstein's ladder (see Fig. 1) in the top parts, within the category of citizen power. Depending on the part of the process, citizens have different range of powers; beginning of the processes may be seen as partnership and then the participants may take the initiative which would be classified as citizens' control. Often, classification of a given initiative in the ladder depends on the organizer of the project, as in some cases the initiative originates on a very low level- directly within civil society. Then such project would be classified as citizen control and could be also named self-organization. Different projects with different origins will be traced and analysed in the paper.

## **1.1. Research questions**

The above introduction to the topic shows that participatory planning has been evolving dynamically throughout the years and that there is a lot of space for improvement. Place-making movement can be seen as a practice bringing new approaches and insights, from which participatory planning could benefit. Even though it is developed mostly by the private companies it may be of relevance for governmentally lead processes. This possible future benefit has developed into the main research question of the analysis;

*How can place-making contribute to better participatory planning?*

- *What is place-making?*
- *How place-making differs from participatory planning?*
- *What can participatory planning learn from place-making?*
- *What are the success and failure factors of place-making?*

To grasp the relation between planning and place-making, firstly the comprehensive vision of place-making need to be identified. Initial literature review showed, that the topic is still not fully categorized and appreciated. Thus, the first sub research question aims to address an issue of comprehending the essence of place-making and giving the greater picture of the phenomena based on the literature review, including disadvantages of the process. Secondly, relation between place-making and participatory planning will be analysed, to gather how place-making differs from participatory planning. Thirdly, place-making process needs to be understood in the way to grasp how can participatory planning learn from it. Thus, what sorts of new aspects and parts of the process can place-making bring to the field. To answer these questions, both literature review and interviews will be analysed. Lastly, place-making processes themselves need to be investigated in detail to understand, what are the factors that make the movement successful or unsuccessful. Initial answer to this question will be given basing on literature review and further insights will be obtained basing on the interviews.

## **2. Theoretical background**

In this chapter, theory about participatory planning and place-making will be presented, based on the literature review. According to this information, an answer to the first sub- research question will be given.

### **2.1. Participatory planning**

To give a bigger picture of participatory planning in the context of the Netherlands, a brief history of practices will be presented. Boonstra (2015, p.30) distinguishes three rounds of Dutch public participation; public hearings, improving deliberation and participatory budgeting. The first round started in the mid-1960s by a left-winged party, Social Democrats. After protest movements and growing societal concerns about lack of possible influence on urban plans, the Spatial Planning Act was introduced in 1965 which allowed for making objections and appeals. In this first phase, people were enabled to take a stance on planning proposals, during what have been called, public hearings. This however turned out to be still too rigid process not giving citizens enough space and in a second generation of Dutch participatory planning, a ‘polder model’ was introduced. This, mostly USA-based idea called collaborative stakeholder planning, aimed to include businesses and entrepreneurs in planning and it was very successful in the 1990s. The third round includes participatory budgeting and community self-management. These practices allow citizens to have direct impact on governmental expenditures or make governments support financially ideas proposed by citizens. The last generation is relatively new, and offers much more power for the people, nonetheless outcomes of the projects still need to be in line with the public premises (Boonstra, 2015; Boonstra, Boelens, 2011, p.103)

This evolution of participatory practices shows their trajectory of climbing higher on the participation ladder; public hearings can be placed in ‘informing’ and ‘consultation’ category, second generation in between ‘consultation’ and ‘placation’. Participatory budgeting is already in the degrees of citizen power. Thus, a positive evolution can be seen in Dutch participatory planning (Boonstra, 2015).

#### **2.1.1. Advantages of participatory planning**

There are many aspects that make planning continuously developing in a direction of using more participatory practices. First of all, these are societal benefits that participatory planning brings (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011, p.100). By inviting people to co-decide they have an opportunity to meet each other and thus social coherence is being enhanced as often the reason for little cooperation between citizens is lack of common cultural background and general societal fragmentation. These problems can be then counteracted by participatory processes (ibid). It is of great importance in the Dutch reality, with growing number of immigrants and need for integration. So it is in all the other countries facing changes in the population structures. Furthermore, participatory practices empower residents in a way they teach them how to express their ideas (ibid).

Projects which involve participants from outside of government structures, are recognized for their 'adult-adult' relationship between participants and organizers. Unlike with 'paternalistic' approaches, where planners may or may not provide information about a project, in participatory processes, full information on the planning issues is given to the public. Importantly, organizers value positively the input of the contributors which further invites people to contribute (Nabatchi, Leighninger, 2015, p.159). Both sides have thus equal power to express their opinions. Participation changes share of responsibility for the space from an individual one, previously carried out by planners, into a common issue. When people are more involved, their support is also being strengthened. Furthermore, it also builds their awareness on matters such as sustainability, development or environment (Cilliers, Timmermans, 2014, p.419). In the longer-term perspective, contribution and involvement of people have a positive effect on the quality of the urban areas (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011, p.100).

Participants, while thinking about an area are also becoming more attached to it and create a feeling of shared ownership. There are also economic gains stemming from participatory planning; there is "a positive correlation between community attachment and local GDP growth" (Knight Communities, 2010, p.5). People are more willing to invest in the area, to which they feel bigger connections. Their contributions further attract other businesses, creating a multiplier effect. Greater sense of ownership influences positively sense of safety as people simply care more about their surroundings (Nabatchi, Leighninger, 2015, p.156). Another economic benefit regards the process of participation itself. It lasts shorter, due to improved social cohesion and thus it requires less financial outlay (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011, p.100).

### **2.1.2. Disadvantages of participatory planning**

Besides all its advantages participation in planning is also viewed by many as a threat to democracy, opening up new sources of inequalities between the involved parties. Participation plays an important role in a process of shifting the power from omnipotent state to the networks created jointly with other organizations from civil state and market. While many authors have already described this movement from government to governance (Rhodes, 2007, Jessop, 1998), Swyngedouw (2005) points to the fact that this, in theory, inclusive process, may lead to a repetition of power relations within participatory premises. As informal networks are organized without a formal protocol, they happen in an "institutional void" (ibid., p.1992). Thus, Swyngedouw (2005) argues that there is lack of democracy in the processes happening outside of the national rules. This in turn leads to conflicts concerning inclusion and exclusion and lack of transparency in organization of the process. Governance-beyond-the-state is then creating new arrangements but still supporting the strongest institutions – market forces, and neglecting the others (ibid.). Similarly, Cooke and Kothari (2001) say that participation is on the one hand empowering, but on the other may be "the new Tyranny".

Taking the criticism of Swyngedouw (2005) further, Nuissl and Heinrichs (2011, p.51) identify three pitfalls of participatory planning. Firstly, authors claim that "democratic principles of democracy, legitimacy, and reliability" are threatened when state is not the leading party of a

process. Secondly, they notice that in the end, parties with greatest resources will have greatest power, thus it leads more to discrimination of weaker actors than to equal integration of all. Thirdly, participation of diverse actors may not lead to greater efficiency but instead can become costlier due to longer time spent on consultations (ibid.). Furthermore, Hordijk et al., (2015, p.141) point out to the issue of representation within the participatory process. For instance, civil society organizations which in theory act as parties representing all its followers, may only represent some actors from a leading group. Secondly, internal regulations of those organizations might be undemocratic.

There are many arguments concerning inclusion of participants in a process. Hordijk et al., (2015, p.134-135) raise questions about who is invited to the processes, in what way, and why, arguing that the organizing party may have specific interests in gathering certain group and leaving some behind. Furthermore, there might be barriers in terms of language of conduct or the accessibility of the spot where the meetings are held. Additionally, there is a chance of self-exclusion occurring when people do not feel fully welcomed to the process, when there are some cultural or psychological barriers. Regarding the process itself, there are also no rules describing the exact steps of making the decisions and the way they are taken. Organizing party may influence the process so that it ends in a way beneficial only or foremost for them, especially when politics is involved (ibid.). Moreover, the case is often that those who get involved as participants, are only the 'professional citizens', so those who already know the field of planning, policies and procedures as it is easier for them to understand the process (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011, p.106). A question also arises, whether people really want to participate and devote their time, often on the long-run, to the process or they only want to have a choice to possibly pick from (Hordijk et al., 2015).

Despite many different trials of participatory practices throughout history, most of them were evaluated as disappointing (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011). The main reason for this negative outcome is that the process, even if it aims at giving equal power to all the participants, is still controlled by governmental bodies. Thus, participatory planning remains in the same scheme as top-down practices and represent an *inside-out* approach, meaning that the practices use similar notions as traditional planning and operate within the created path dependencies. As a result, procedures are time-consuming, controlled by formal authorities and lacking a democratic division of power. Furthermore, authors identify three inclusionary premises of the governmentally lead participation processes in planning: procedural, thematic and geographical (ibid.). Firstly, the process is still decided on by government in terms of who and when contributes, on what conditions and with what influence. Secondly, a topic of consultations is imposed from the above, again meaning governmental bodies. Thirdly, planning is often based on the administrative boundaries, preventing the real-life social and geographical connections to be noticed and taken into account (ibid.).

Another aspect making participation field less successful is that many innovative strategies are conducted outside of the official practices of governments (Nabatchi, Leighninger, 2015, p.156) and are still seen more as experiments or even, by some, as an unnecessary whim. Many also claim that participation in planning makes the process only more costly and time-consuming, while consensus is harder to reach with diverse opinions to be included. At the

same time, it demands more energy from both the organizer and participants sides, making the efficiency of the process less favourable to the one without public involvement (Hordijk et al., 2015). A big deficit in the aftermath of participation processes is also lack of evaluation and measurement of the results (Hordijk et al., 2015, p.141-142). All these bigger and smaller scale drawbacks indicate that there is still a need, and at the same time a lot of space for improvement in the participatory practices in planning.

### **2.1.3. Path towards self-organization**

Bearing in mind the mentioned aspects of growing individualisation, rising empowerment and greater access to information, recently, there is a growing number of initiatives that cannot be classified within category of participatory planning. Reason for that is that they originate directly within the civic society, outside of the governmental influence. Initiatives which originate outside of governmental influence can then be qualified as outside-in instead of inside-out (Boonstra, 2011). Such civil activities have been recently classified as self-organization (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011). Designation self-organization stems from complexity theory and depicts “spontaneous emergence of order out of unordered beginnings” (Boonstra, 2015, p.10), “emergence that is not imposed or determined by one single actor, but is rather the result of a complex and non-linear interaction between various elements” (Meerkerk et al. 2013, p.1632). Complexity theory<sup>3</sup> offers to see society as an entity which changes continuously, due to the ongoing interactions happening within it, between society, places, organizations. For spatial planning this growing complexity means more interconnections between places and users and between all the resources. Governments are not sufficient to provide good coordination between those resources and actors and thus there is a need for new modes of governance “that acknowledge non-linearity, fuzziness, and multiplicity” (Boonstra, 2015, p.56). Thus, governments are not the only decisive actors in the planning field, but all the actors within the civil society have the same power to exert their ideas in urban environment (Boonstra, 2015, p.46).

## **2.2. Project driven versus place and community driven approach**

As has been stated, traditional participatory practices still operate within governmental premises, within path dependencies (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011). As such, they can be classified as project driven approach, on the contrary to place driven approach inspired by community and place, classified as place-making. These two approaches differ a lot, in terms of course, undertaken steps, involved actors and focus.

As Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 show, those two approaches can be seen as opposite. Project driven strategy starts when a certain problem or solution is identified, which narrows the goals according to this identified plan, what has been described by Boonstra and Boelens (2011) as thematic inclusionary premises. Time is reserved for consulting the scheme with public during one or possibly more sessions. Nevertheless, consultations happen after a scheme has already been

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<sup>3</sup> Complexity theme became popular in planning in the 1990s, when relational approach started to dominate. Relationality concerned different connections between stakeholders and their relation with space they operate in (Boonstra, 2015).

made. Those schemes are made by an isolated group – professionals and experts, not connected with the neighbourhood. While the consultations may have good intentions, without cooperating with a local community from the very beginning, they may have opposite effects. Residents not involved from an early stage may feel alienated or there may be rising concerns over planned development (PPS, 2015a).



Fig. 2 Scheme of the strategy lead by a project or discipline (PPS, 2009)

### Place/Community Driven Approach

- Allows communities to articulate their aspirations, needs & priorities
- Compelling shared vision attracts partners, money & creative solutions
- Professionals become resources to communities
- Design is a tool to support the desired uses
- Solutions are flexible and build on existing successes
- Commitment grows as citizens are empowered to actively shape their public realm



Fig. 3 Scheme of the strategy lead by a place and community (PPS, 2009)



Project driven approach is often seen as a remedy for existing urban problems. Politicians expect “silver bullet” projects, solving all the needs and problems, but do not notice that involving community could bring them “100 silver bullets” (Kent, 2015). Furthermore, project driven approach praise and expect the perfect final product and ranks it over the process, which in turn is much more important in community driven projects. Kent (cited in Silberberg et al., 2013, p.27) describes those finished products as “anathema to great places”.

Project driven approach may therefore not leave enough space for using the local assets and human connections to their full potential. Community and place driven approach can be thus seen as more advantageous, fitting better local needs as ideas originate at the spot, among the users (Meerkerk et al., 2013) and not from behind the desk. Community- and place lead strategy is broader in a sense it does not start with a predefined view but first a research is done on existing conditions and stakeholders. It focuses on existing social and physical assets and the goals of the project are defined jointly with existing actors from the area. Design is not a goal on its own but a “tool to support desired uses” (PPS, 2009). Implementation of this second scheme is much more flexible and includes a lot of testing and evaluating throughout the process. Importantly, it involves both short-term experiments and long-term visions (ibid.).

Focus of those two approaches also vary – traditional planning is centred on infrastructure and built environment whereas place-making focuses on “social realities (in terms of movement patterns, behaviour patterns, interaction patterns) and needs (in terms of social structure, public places to socialize, adhering to the individual’s perspective and vision)” (Ciliers, Timmermans, 2014, p.414). Place and community driven approach can be then see as more ‘soft’ and less technical.

### **2.2.1. Planning Professionals**

Last important divergence in the above schemes is noticeable in a role the professionals play in the process. By professionals meaning people leading the processes. In the project-driven approach, professionals such as architects or designers are seen as experts and have decisive power regarding steps in development. Madden (2011, p.654) states that in place and community based approach, it is not anymore about the professionals delimiting the scope of the projects, but about the community ideas which may use their expertise to carry out the necessary changes. “What placemaking requires is not an expert leader who understands the intricacies of zoning or landscape design, but a savvy generalist who knows where to find these [local] people and how best to use them” (Silberberg et al, 2013 p.56). Professionals in the place-making processes only act as supporters and as “resources of the communities” (PPS, 2009) and not the leaders (Palermo, Ponzini, 2015, p.6). Additionally, Smith (2015) proposes, that expert knowledge should be left out of the process until consensus is reached with the community and only then should the professionals be involved again to help execute a project.

As place-making is not a governmentally led process, theory about behaviour of planning professionals will be derived from self-organization projects. Boonstra (2015) analysed three case studies of self-organization in urban environment to find out, among others, what planning strategies fit best in the age of active citizenship. As one of place-making’s aim is to empower

and activate citizens (see below), it can be considered to match this analysis. One of the conclusions of Boonstra (2015) concerns planners; their role in civic initiatives is foremost to be navigators and to establish connections. They should be willing to accept ideas of others and act as boundary spanners. Boundary spanners are people with very good networking skills, who can connect all the different actors, from public, private and civic sphere and communicate well with various users (Meerkerk et al., 2013). Furthermore, they contribute to data sharing between the involved people and also to establishing a common meaning for this data among different actors. Importantly, they negotiate in these interactions a better ‘fit’ between users and their environment (Meerkerk, 2014, p.36). To do that, they connect people across organizations, look for information on both sides of the boundary and later, explain it to the other side as well (ibid.). Being a listener and a translator of needs, helps them to set up long-lasting relations (Specht, 2012, cited in Boonstra, 2015, p.347).

Van der Stoep (2014) identifies, that successful civic initiatives need to act as attractors, ‘sticky stories’, to be able to trigger off action. For that purpose, people responsible for leading these actions need not only to act as boundary spanners but also to be able to ‘sell’ the initiative to others, attract attention, mobilize larger networks and navigate the initiative. With this, as Boonstra (2015, p.348) notices, a certain direction to the process is given, direction though, with no defined destination. Boonstra furthermore refers to the notion of ‘strategic navigation’ (Hiller, 2010, cited in Boonstra 20015) which is “in the context of civic initiatives (...) an ongoing experimentation toward possible futures” (Boonstra, 2015, p.348). People who organize, seek improvement among the involved actors and make sure that the safe conditions are created for the process to take place (ibid.). Boonstra (2015) concludes that planning with active citizens should create consistency, which “does not follow from disciplinary frameworks or inclusionary procedures, but much more from the ability to relate, to empathize, to build upon the performances of others, and by making strategies as open and known as possible” (Boonstra, 2015, p.14).

Planners in those initiatives should recognize opportunities for longer-term goals, try to link together actions undertaken by private, public and civic initiatives. In this process of self-organization, where many independent actors interchange resources, planners are again, not the leaders, but act at the same level as all the other users (ibid.). As can be seen there are many differences between project driven approach and place- or community- driven approach. To understand better how the latter one operates, the literature review of the movement is presented below.

### **2.3. Place-making origins**

Place-making strategies are not recent phenomena. The origins of the approach can be traced back to the 1960s when new way of thinking about planning emerged. Back then, innovators, such as Kevin Lynch, Jane Jacobs or William Whyte, demanded that the cities are created foremost for people to encourage their interactions and not for transport infrastructure. Lynch in *The Image of the City* (1960) as a first researcher studied the way people orientate themselves in cities and how they actually react to the surrounding built environment. Jacobs was a proponent of community activism and supported residents in making use of their streets for

their own purposes (PPS, 2009a, 2010a). For her research, Jacobs mostly used her own observations and experience from the New York City (1992). Whyte in turn created a framework of necessary components that contribute to making public spaces full of life (PPS, 2009a)<sup>4</sup>. Whyte, for the first time, conducted a study on behaviour of pedestrians in public spaces with the use of both researchers and time-lapse cameras (PPS, 2010b, Silberberg et al., 2013). Another author who contributed to this new movement was Alexander. Alexander et al. (1977) claimed that design of a city should be done by people and for people, criticizing too broad authority of architects. This is because Alexander et al. (1977) observed that the greatest places are not created by architects but by the people themselves. Non-professionals should thus be allowed to design streets, squares, houses on their own. Alexander's ideology of community creating a design is central for place-making (Silberberg et al., 2013, p.6).

Place-making movement was also created based on the works of Henri Lefebvre and subsequent author, David Harvey. Both authors focused on the essential right people have towards their living space. Place and its production has for a long time been recognized as a domain over which architects, planners and other specialists have decisive powers. This dominant role of professionals was criticized by Lefebvre (2014 p.99,182) as he called architects 'demiurges', arguing that planners only see "buildings and neighbourhoods, from above and afar. These designers and draftsmen move within a space of paper and ink". In the *Production of Space* (1991) Lefebvre claims that specialists create their own representation of space, separating from others, non-specialists. He felt, that those expert-designed places exert specific influence on the social bonds in the area and that the designing part should be given to people who inhabit an area and architects should only be acting as guides.

Harvey (1996, p.265) claims that "placing and making of places are essential to social development, social control, and empowerment in any social order". This statement shows the importance of place-making strategies for the societal progress. Harvey (2008) named the right to redevelopment of cities as one of the forgotten human rights and continued, saying that by changing the city, one can also change him/her self. The famous now 'right to the city' phrase encouraged people to force their decisions on the cities. Project for Public Spaces elaborates on the 'right to the city', stating that it is "also a right to create, to participate, to be represented—it is the right to see oneself reflected in the place they live" (PPS, 2015a). Which briefly shows the role and rights of individuals, which are implemented in place-making processes.

All the above described people-centred approaches, were back then contrasting with the dominant type of planning (Silberberg et al., 2013, p.2). By dominant type meaning the planning that was a top-down, expert-based approach and deprived civilians and communities of any influence on their neighbourhood. "Present-day placemaking is a response to the systematic destruction of human-friendly and community-centric spaces of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century" (ibid., p.5). Starting from such an unstructured opposition movement towards the

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<sup>4</sup> Whyte was also a mentor and inspiration for establishing Project for Public Spaces, an organization promoting place-making movement (see subchapter 2.3.3.).

visionary practices, place-making grew to address issues such as social inequality, economic impasse and many others (ibid.).

### **2.3.1. Around ‘place’ theme**

Secondly, some theory about places is needed to understand the roots and reasons for place-making to become an important concept, and will be briefly described below. The literature treating of meaning of the place is present in many different fields of science; geography, architecture or planning, but also philosophy (ibid.). Place can be seen as an ill-defined subject, meaning everything and nothing, Cresswell (2004, p.12) calls it a “contested concept”. Place definition becomes more meaningful when juxtaposed with the term space. Place is often described as “space with meaning” (Cilliers, Timmermans, 2014, p.414). This transformation from space to place was first described by Tuan (1977, p.6) who stated that the space is changed into place when people link the importance and value with it. The term space is associated with something abstract, strange, whereas place is already familiar, recognized and safe. Furthermore, place is characterized by being enclosed and has its established values, while space on the contrary is open and characterized by greatness and danger. Lastly, Tuan (1977) states that places are correlated with pausing and spaces on the contrary with moving. Places are thus areas for staying and not leaving. Years later, Madden (2011, p.654) also makes a distinction between places and spaces. Places are busy, as there are many ways of using them, i.e. they have multiple functions, thus attract a lot of people. Spaces on the contrary have no pulling factors, stay empty or even discourage people from lingering there. Place Leaders (n.d.a) compare this juxtaposition with a similar to the distinction between house and home.

Agnew (1987) analysed place from a political perspective and saw three main elements of it. Firstly, place is constructed from locale, which is the base for social relations to be established. Secondly it is location, so the geographical orientation, providing an answer to a question ‘where?’. Third part is the sense of place, described by the author as “the local structure of feeling” (ibid., p.28). Cresswell (2004, p.7) interprets this aspect as the attachment of man to the area. Agnew (1987) moreover, stresses that place constitute setting for social connections and that at the same time place is the source of identification for people. Places as a source of identification are getting more and more important with other resources, capital, information become increasingly mobile (Place Leaders, n.d.a.).

Pred (1984 cited in Cresswell 2004, p.35) highlights that place is more of a process than a stable composition, due to the ongoing changes. “Places are never ‘finished’ but always ‘becoming’ (ibid.)”. Cresswell (2004) adds, that this is mostly because of the social reiterative practices happening in the place. It is also true according to a post-structuralist view on planning, where places are “not closed and contained, but open and relational” (Boonstra, 2015, p.46). Places are thus not only geographical locations, although it is their necessary element, but also roots of identification and an area for citizens from different groups to mingle.

The above descriptions of place indicate that place is constructed by the people who use it, meaning they are always socially constructed. Place can therefore be seen as reflecting the existing social arrangements. It can be argued that spaces are not fully considered as places

until social action is undertaken by the users within the area. Therefore, place-making can be seen as a way of forming a place to its full potential.

### **Trends in public space development**

The socially constructed places nowadays are foremost public places, as these are the ones that everyone have access to, unlike the private spaces of living or business. Historically, public places were of extreme importance and constituted space for meetings. Greek agoras and Roman forums were areas for public speeches and later they also acquired religious and political meaning. In the middle ages, public squares were dominated by trade functions. This short description of the evolution of public spaces shows that they always played a central role for the communities and reflected the needs of the society (Webb, 1990).

More importantly however, these places were created by people and for people. Sennett (1977) saw the main role of public spaces as giving the opportunity for diverse group of people to meet, that otherwise, without existence of public realm, might not have met. Sennett gives the example of 18<sup>th</sup> century Paris illustrating such case, however this function is still very relevant, as today cities are hosting more and more people of various, often foreign backgrounds.

This trend of people-centred approach has changed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, giving way to big scale, top-down developments, which often created bad quality public spaces, with no human-scale and no involvement from the public (Silberberg et al., 2013). In the post-industrial era with increasing privatization, many of the public spaces lost their function of being the catalysts for creating and supporting social relations (Madanipour, 1999). The negative impact of privatization is that it may lead to social fragmentation and stratification. As the space is created to cater only for certain groups and excluding others, mostly those who are already in lower socio-economic groups (Chakravaty, 2008). Many authors call this change commodification of space, as it no longer belongs to the people but to private owners and can be managed and sold just like other goods (Madanipour, 2000 cited in Akkar Erkan, 2007, p.126). Public areas are being sold out to raise the value of space and bring profits to the owners. This process is often a tribute to gentrification, happening now not only in countries of the global west, but also elsewhere. “Public spaces, therefore, cannot be genuinely public as long as they are planned, produced, and controlled under the hegemony of a specific group or groups. Real public spaces can only emerge if they are planned, designed, developed and used through the involvement of as many and variety of groups as possible” (Akkar Erkan, 2007, p.131). Place-making which is exactly the involvement of greatest number of actors can thus be seen as a tool to counteract problems which public places are facing nowadays.

### **2.3.2. Project for Public Spaces establishment**

In 1975, Project for Public Spaces, PPS, an organization focusing on education, design and planning, was established by Fred Kent. Kent accompanied Whyte in his research about people’s behaviour in the cities. A major work describing Whyte’s analysis was *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* which, along with his other methods, were inspirational for

activities undertaken by PPS (PPS, 2010b). Kent in his work is foremost trying to help communities to improve places of their everyday life (Peirce, 2015).

Project for Public Spaces is currently the core organization recognized for introducing place-making methods in the United States but also globally. Their actions aim at creating and sustaining public spaces which strengthen existing communities. Organization views placemaking as a way of helping “citizens transform their public spaces into vital places that highlight local assets, spur rejuvenation and serve common needs” (PPS, n.d.). The first famous redevelopment project took place in 1981 in Bryant Park, New York. The park was deteriorating and infamous for drug dealers (PPS, 2005, see Fig. 4). Major problems were, that the inside of the park was not visible from the outside and there were only few entrances made in the iron fence (ibid.). PPS with the help of Whyte carried out a research, based on a video analysis, interviews and mapping the behaviour of the users. Among interviewees there were both users and workers of the surrounding office buildings as well as the drug dealers operating in the park (ibid.). Redevelopment of the park which followed, focused on improving the visual access to the park and installing various spots of activity, such as kiosks, ticket stands or restaurant. Since then, it “enjoys perhaps the highest use and best maintenance of any urban park in America, due to a combination of (...) design changes, and an innovative and flexible management program” (PPS, n.d.). Not only the quality of space within the park was improved, but also the whole neighbourhood experienced positive boost. Currently, an outstanding programming of the park keeps the place busy at all times (see Fig. 5). This regeneration success proved that the thorough social research and involvement of users is crucial for good urban redevelopment.



**Fig. 4** Bryant Park in the 1980's (Bryant Park Blog, 2016) **Fig. 5** Bryant Park nowadays (Bryant Park)

PPS has been working in 50 US states and 43 other countries around the world, with more than 3000 communities, since its founding (PPS, 2009a; Peirce, 2015). Focus of their work was mostly developed around good management of inner cities. During the projects, various spheres are brought together, such as transport infrastructure, economy or health, all seen “through the lens of Placemaking” (PPS, 2014a). The organization has also contributed to development of, among others, BIDs – Business Improvement Districts. PPS focuses on the progress of these special areas towards community building and place-making (Kent, 2013). Organization is continuously involved in various projects around the world and has recently started to collaborate with Southwest Airlines – a big private company, on enhancing public spaces in cities where the company operates. In 2013 a Placemaking Leadership Council was

set up by PPS, which operates as a consolidating body for the movement of place-making around the world (PLC, n.d.). From the literature review it seems that PPS is the leading body of knowledge and experience in the field of place-making.

Since place-making establishment, it has been spreading around the world at a fast pace. PPS is also actively seeking to include issues linked with place development in global agenda. Up until 2011, when a resolution on public spaces was adopted by UN Habitat, topic of public places was not sufficiently present in global official documents regarding urban development (Kent, 2016b). Currently, there are global meetings organized on the topic, such as conferences *Future of Place*, held in 2013, 2014 and 2015, attracting speakers from all around the world. Importantly, during the last one, a set of priorities regarding places was created, which was later implemented in New Urban Agenda – both placemaking and place governance were included in the documents for UN conference, Habitat III (Peirce, 2015). Even though *place-making* still does not translate into many languages, projects which include the approach, are carried out in locations as distant as India or South Korea (Peirce, 2015). On the other hand, what is still being noticed, is the opposition towards place-making of professionals. Different formal experts; architects, planners, engineers, are possibly losing control and exclusivity over design (Kent, F. cited in Peirce, 2015).

## **2.4. Place-making definition**

Debates about what is exactly place-making and how it should be categorized are ongoing. Different scholars refer differently to it: “as an ideology, a theoretical framework for urban policy and design, a technique or set of tools for practitioners, and more recently by professionals and academics as an “art” and a “science”” (Fincher, Pardy and Shaw, 2016, p.519) or as a phenomenology (Palermo, Ponzini, 2015). Yet Smith, a former CEO of a city council in Adelaide, Australia views it as a “sustainable urban development strategy” (2016) or even broader, as a “tool for transforming a city’s politics, management and culture” (2015). Madden (2011, cited in Palermo, Ponzini, 2015, p.3) states that place-making is a choice next to standard planning and design mainstream.

Place-making has been discussed both within the topic of planning and within the scope of geography, focusing on the importance of place attachment (ibid.). Kent (2011) claims that it “is not a new profession, discipline or field of study, but a growing movement that is bringing out the best of professional knowledge and skills”. As many other planning concepts, on the conference titled *The Art and Science of Placemaking*, it has been described as “ethereal, ambiguous, and intangible (...) for which there is no universal definition or consensus among the academic or practitioners’ community” (Anon, 2014, p.1). Therefore, below, the spectrum of it will be elaborated on.

There are also many diverse definitions of place-making. For instance; “(..) creating, or re-making, safe, meaningful places for residents to meet and interact” (Jarvis, 2014, p.2), or that it is “(..) a socially constructed process that is shaping cities largely through capital investment designed to generate economic growth and promote cultural tourism” (Cilliers, Timmermans, 2014). It is also defined as “empowerment and engagement of the individuals in a community

to participate in, understand and contribute to the evolution of the spaces that define that community” (Kent, 2011). These short examples of definitions seem quite different; therefore, a literature review combined with qualitative interviews aim to grasp the most common characteristics of the movement.

However, Fincher, Pardy and Shaw (2016, p.517), in their study of place-making as urban redevelopment, state that place-making “is articulated primarily as a practice charter, rather than a normative paradigm”. Moreover, their findings show, that the theory of place-making is rather being built on the experienced practice – “theorised retrospectively” (ibid.), than other way around. Fincher et al. (2016) claim that as the theory is created after the action, also the whole method is promoted as a way of managing places and not as an academic field. While it is true that there are not many theories and academic papers yet written about the field, there are still some which may bring more light on the process.

Flemming (2007 cited in Stout, 2008, p.14) describes place-making as “part of urban design that makes places livable and meaningful”. In the definition by PPS (2009a) place-making is something more than good urban design and it further includes social, physical and cultural character of the place and helps in its development and evolution. Place-making is thus something above urban make-over, however it includes the makeover as one of its part. Similarly, Fincher, Pardy and Shaw (2016, p.518) see place-making as the one with normative and moral dimensions. On the contrary, authors claim that classic urban renewal is deprived of those dimensions.

#### **2.4.1. Place-making content**

There are many objectives of the place-making projects. As stated before, from simple opposition movement, nowadays, the goals of place-making have evolved to be much broader than to solely counteract the top-down development. “Place-making is concerned with belonging, meaning, attachment, inclusiveness and community” (Frinch, Pardy and Shaw, 2016, p.518). In the MIT report, (Silberberg at al., 2013) *Places in the Making: How placemaking builds places and communities* the most important goal is improvement of public domain and creation of the “sense of place”. Furthermore, the intentions are also to trigger public debate, to induce people’s pride, bring the residents closer together, enhance health and safety standards, increase social equity, boost economy and foster environmental consciousness (ibid.). “The key elements of placemaking (...) are an empowered community of makers, a complex network of cross-sector alliances involving individuals and groups with different roles and areas of expertise” (Silberberg et al., 2013, p.12).

The process aims at including everyone from the place where a project is undertaken. PPS highlights that in the process, “community is the expert” (2009a) and that place-making should profit from existing social values, meaning that the local knowledge is the greatest source of ideas what should happen in the neighbourhood. PPS claims that place-making is an inspiration for the community to collectively restructure their neighbourhood. Therefore, these are the actual users of space that are involved in creating and making better places (Cilliers, Timmermans, 2014, p.414). Necessary for successful place-making is thus involvement of



diverse actors from the area (Kent, Madden, 2016). For the diversity to occur throughout a project and in the outcomes, place-making must not be an individual process, but a push to look beyond specialisations of single people, through collective wisdom (Walker, 2017). Not only inhabitants, individuals but also institutions and groups present in the area, companies and anyone who is interested in contributing a share from their perspective (Silberberg et al., 2013). For that to happen, existing local networks of cooperation between actors and resources need to be identified (Kent, 2013). Additionally, historical perspective of place is needed and understanding of how a place functions on everyday basis (PPS, 2009b).

Among the involved actors, a very important role are the leaders of the process, called “zealous nuts” (Silberberg et al., p.26). Mostly they seem to be the citizens who have great knowledge about the place and are fully devoted to a project (Kent, 2009). Furthermore, their vision on possible solutions is not limited by any boundaries and they are willing to take up all the risks necessary to fulfil a successful process (Kent and Madden, 2016). Silberberg et al. (2013, p.55) also add that leaders are simultaneously operating as salesmen, infecting all others with positive approach about a project and exceed possible scepticism.

Similarly to Harvey (1996), Kent and Madden (2016) highlight empowerment as an important aspect of the place-making process. Empowerment concerns not only residents but also local business and public bodies who together contribute to the remake of an area. Place-making also enhances social capital, by both getting people involved in the process and making them work together, collaborate, exchange ideas. Silberberg et al. (2013, p.3), notice that the empowerment happens exactly through collaboration, central for place-making. The process should also enable situations of social friction, what already Sennett (1977) was writing about, which are nowadays getting less and less frequent (PPS, 2015a). Furthermore, places which are built or reshaped as an outcome of the process, aim to be designed foremost for the people, thus in the future encourage them to interact, mingle and continually strengthen social capital.

Place-making is also advantageous to improvement of the level of civic engagement. By transferring power to the people to jointly decide about the spatial changes, they are more willing to participate, and it may later have positive influence on other civic projects. Extensive social capital in turn has a positive influence on economic stability (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011, p.101). Next to the urban transformation and improved social cohesion, founders of PPS also point to that fact that the process supports economic change in the area (Kent, Madden, 2016).

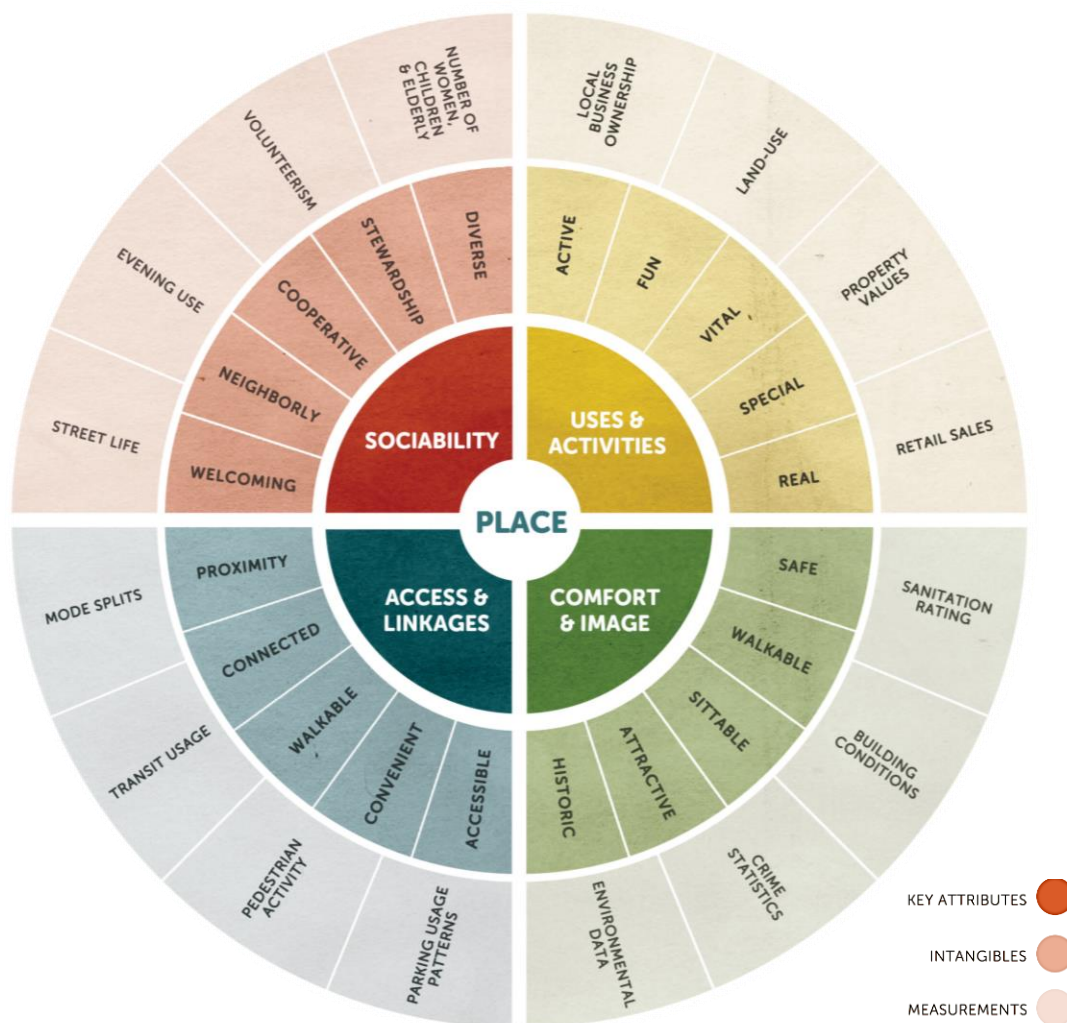
As people are getting involved and operate in their neighbourhood, the sense of responsibility and ownership is also being enhanced (PPS, 2015a). This in turn increases attachment to place and makes people pay more attention to what happens in the neighbourhood. This attachment of people to the inhabited place should be deep and even emotional (Kent, Madden, 2016, p.28). When people are connected to place they are also more willing to relate with others in that place (PPS, 2015a).

Basing on the above description of place-making and its origins, two main factors seem to constitute the place-making processes: neighbourhood redevelopment and community involvement, so the *place* and the *making*. Different researchers emphasize differently which

one is the more important factor, however without these two one cannot speak about the place-making process. From the desk research it seems, that most of the authors see *making* as the more important factor out of the two; process is viewed over an outcome (Silberberg et al., 2013 p.10). Conclusion from the 13 analysed cases in the MIT report is that „the most successful placemaking initiatives transcend the “place” to forefront the “making”” (ibid., p.3). Similarly, Palermo and Ponzini (2015, p.7) state that form, architecture and design should not be seen as an autonomous variable. Most important aspects are then empowerment, building connections and creating civic engagement (Kent, cited in Silberberg et al., 2013, p.9).

### Creating better places

One of the goals of place-making process is creating better places. PPS after co-creating thousands of places around the world has come up with the diagram of aspects that are important while reshaping a place (see Fig. 6). There are four key identified areas in the middle of the diagram. Further, there are given the ‘intangibles’, which means the qualitative values that should be created within a good place and the presence of which can be researched to check if a place works well. Thirdly, in the outer ring, there are the quantitative aspects, that can be measured for the same purposes.



**Fig. 6** Factors contributing to success of place (PPS, 2009c)

One of the four aspects which makes a good place is accessibility. To keep the place busy, there must be many connections, both physical and visual with adjoining spaces. Furthermore, there should be many access points made in a safe and active way; edges of the place are thus very important. Aspects of easy navigation and getting around a location also have to be taken into account. Secondly, the place needs to be social. This is possibly the hardest goal, but when achieved it can be seen as the most beneficial. To obtain a social place, it needs to welcome everyone, so also focus on diversity of users and adjustment that need to be done to cater for this diversity. A social place encourages social interactions, meeting with friends but also with strangers. Thirdly, a place needs to be perceived as active. There must be many reasons for people to come to a place. Therefore, uses should be created in a way that diverse groups of people and cultures can use them at various times of a day, throughout the whole week, in different weather conditions etc. Lastly, places need to feel comfortable to succeed. In this category there are aspects such as safety or cleanliness. Additionally, into a comfort measure falls also the availability of places to seat, which preferably are movable, so that people can adjust their place and orientation according to their wishes (PPS, 2009c).

Places changed throughout the process become more useful for people who co-create them and also become more adjusted to users who vary in terms of age, abilities or socio-economic background (PPS, 2015a). By making use of local assets in each location, places created as the outcome are unique, so place-making can be seen as a tool preventing homogenization of space and by involving residents also as a tool preventing commodification. Furthermore, creating good places, causes, that “people actually compete to contribute to this shared wealth” (Kent, 2011), thus creating a multiplier effect and further improving places.

#### **2.4.2. Process**

Place-making process, just like place itself, is never a final product, it is just a “mean to an end”, throughout which community decides on its own goals (PPS, 2015a). Furthermore, it is often “a journey without end” (Place Leaders, n.d.) at all, meaning there are more actions to undertake, assess, programme. Additionally, both people and environment are changing, so places need to further adjust (PPS, 2009b).

Place-making can be seen as a two-way process. Both place shapes the community and community influences the space (PPS, 2015a). Residents have an impact on the space, redevelop it and then the influence is bounced back, as the changed environment has different meaning for the community. This mutual connection is called “virtuous cycle of place-making” (Silberberg et al., 2013, p.3). Place-making is described to have a cyclical rather than linear dynamic, with fluid process and many point of entry for the willing actors (ibid., p.11). Similar relation was described already by Lynch (1960, p.6), who claimed that the image of the environment is created by the observer, but at the same time, environment exerts its influence on people who use it. In that sense, such an image is dynamic, as it is formed during the interaction between the observer and the place.

Not only the image changes dynamically, also the social side of the process is more dynamic than ever. Complexity of the society is growing (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011, p.99) and its needs

are changing “with regards to social, sustainability, and economic issues” (Cilliers, Timermans, 2014, p.414). On the contrary, built environment alters much slower in comparison to the social demands, thus it is a challenging task to make those two worlds compatible. Place-making however as a dynamic process itself (see below) could be seen as a solution to this described tension.

To illustrate the dynamic, flexibility and also complexity of place-making processes, a model of how it operates has been created in the MIT report (Silberberg et al., 2013, see Fig.7). What is highlighted there, is the fact that anyone can join at any stage, which indicates the openness of the process. It may seem chaotic and difficult to govern but at the same time it gives many opportunities of exchanging opinions of diverse people and groups, who may contribute at a chosen moment.

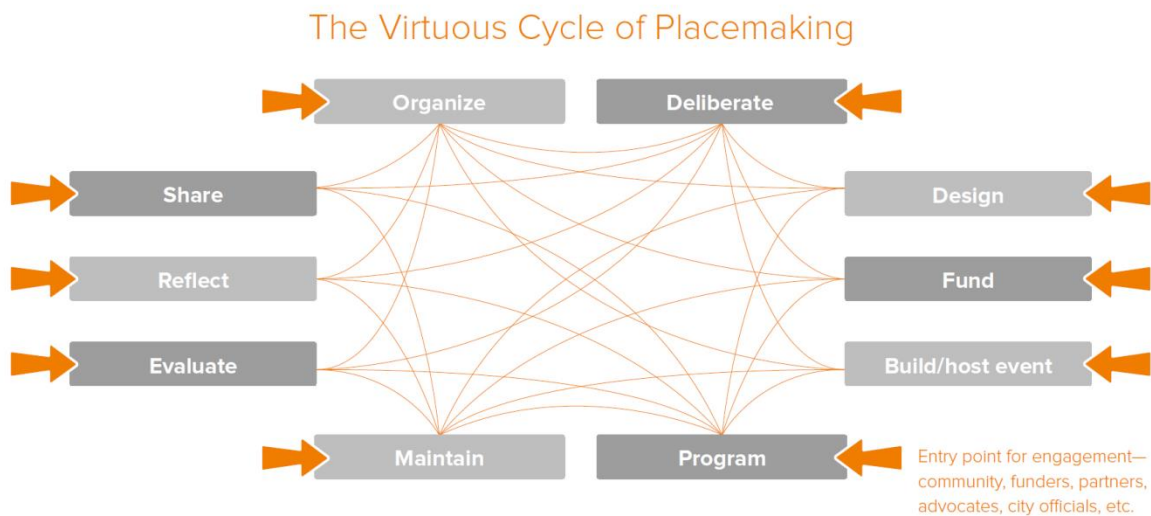


Fig. 7 Model of place-making process (Silberberg et al., 2013, p.12)

Definition of a process adopted is the following; “A process that is set up to run indefinitely, ever course-correcting to improve the place and better serve the community” (Silberberg et al., 2013, p.12). This quote moreover shows that the projects are ‘self-improving’ – adjusting their paths to the possible changes occurring throughout the time. There is no end to the process, as after leaders are gone (if there are external leaders), there is still a need for further development and it is mostly done by programming – “fostering of community around a physical location” (ibid.). Aims of programming are among others to bring people closer together or to mix otherwise distant social groups. It may be adjusted to changing needs of the users of the place and also be inviting to the newcomers in the area (ibid.). Details of the process will be described based on the conducted interviews, as there is no more data about undertaken steps in the literature.

### Place governance

To make such a process happen, another aspect that can be distinguished in place-making is *place governance*. It encourages all the actors operating in the city, both within and outside of the public bodies to focus on places (Kent, 2013). Foremost, place governance has been popularized by PPS, but it seems to be a rising issue taken up by other activists and organizations, operating for instance in Australia. Place governance appears to be taking place-

making a step further, from separate, dispersed actions to exactly, governance level. It is “a placemaking approach that extends from the initial design and creation of places through to ongoing management and programming” (Silberberg et al., p.26-27). Place governance is thus a type of open governance, which “meets people where they are” (PPS, 2013b) is “more compatible with constructive participation” and is “enabled by a shared focus on place” (Kent, 2013). To make the shared focus on place possible, place-making is most successful when it operates in places of small scale (Lydon, 2012, cited in Palermo, Ponzini, 2015, p.8).

The aim of place governance is to bring all the interested parties together and allow for easier and more effective place creation. It is moving from governmental ‘silver bullets’ and design-led projects to the place-led approach (Smith, 2015; see Fig. 2 and 3). To do that the “thick silo walls around government” must be knocked down (PPS, 2013b). Especially as today governments are still often creating dependency through control instead of supporting self-sustainability of citizens (Smith, 2016). Smith (2016) thus suggests, that there should be a transfer of the power from state bodies to local actors. He gives an example of the successful New York City’s Times Square Alliance, which is also a Business Improvement District, comprising of voluntary candidates. Alliance is now responsible for management of the square, previously in the hands of the city government (Smith, 2015). A goal of place governance is also to change the whole approach of public workers, so that they communicate better with the residents and furthermore to allow quicker changes by deregulating the rigid laws (ibid.).

Place governance is also supporting citizens, so that they have an easier and more accessible path for influencing their area (PPS, 2013b). Smith (2016) calls this creating community capacity. An example for big community capacity is how it operates after a natural disaster, when public bodies are not able to fully help and are just assisting with basic needs while people must organize themselves (ibid.). “By building community capacity instead of providing support services you’ll get co-contribution and participation” (Smith, 2016). More broadly, it encourages people to ultimately overtake the responsibility for the area and also to trigger their thinking of how can they, with their knowledge, contribute to the development of the place (PPS, 2013b). This also very much shows that place governance leads to growth of self-organization and supports such bottom-up initiatives.

Place governance has also its positive aspects in terms of financing (Kent, 2013). With more parties involved, there are more possibilities to support the project, making it more economically sustainable when the whole burden is not placed on the public side. Places created in that way are also more socially sustainable as more parties are involved in their formation and maintenance. The aim of place governance apart from bringing diverse stakeholders together, is also to converge different disciplines and movements together and make place management multidisciplinary (ibid.). Place governance could be thus seen as a part of place-making movement which focuses more on organizational side and involvement of different institutions. On the other hand, it can also indicate a broader movement from government to governance, with the specific aim of focusing by all the private and public parties on the place, thus allowing their more sustainable creation, maintenance and programming.

### 2.4.3. Types of place-making

Place-making processes, as the above description show are usually long-term and require a lot of organization. This main type of place-making is referred by some to as strategic place-making, to distinguish it from tactical and creative place-making. The strategic place-making involves both short- and long-term goals and this distinguishes it from tactical form, operating only on short-term, with ‘quick wins’ and different experiments. Creative form can be both on short- and long-term, just with the distinction of using art in the process.

The exact steps and course of strategic place-making will be investigated in the interviews, while mostly the schemes are not replicable and depend on the location and community needs. However, there are projects that already became flagships of placemaking. These are mostly the tactical forms, which got popular during the financial crisis time, when there was less money to invest in urban development (Mahar, 2016). This is a specific kind of projects, they are small scale, short-term and some are replicable. In these projects community is still broadly involved or often these are citizens themselves who organize the events like Parking Day, guerrilla gardening or street painting.

In this category, there is *tactical urbanism* also referred to as *guerrilla urbanism*, *pop up urbanism* or *D.I.Y. urbanism* (Lydon, 2012, p.1) and *lighter, quicker, cheaper* approach (Wyckoff, 2014). The division is however not that clear, as some researchers see all of the mentioned approaches as the same level of projects and using all the names interchangeably (Pape, 2012; PPS, n.d.a). Indeed, they seem to be very much linked together.

Tactical undertakings are often created as experiments; therefore, a lot of testing is involved. As projects are small scale, they can be easily changed, depending on the input of the citizens (Mahar, 2016). With little expenditures involved and various solutions being tested, mistakes are also acceptable in this form of place-making (Kent cited in Silberberg et al., 2013, p.27). On the other hand, many small-scale urban interventions which proved to be successful often spread from one, original location to other spots and are now recognized globally (Berg, 2012). Such projects are for instance roundabouts painting for limiting vehicles’ speed or organizing open streets festivals. One of the conclusions from the MIT report is that there is a rise in the tactical urbanism projects, which may indicate a growing involvement of civil society in creating their surroundings. Facilitating factors to such growing popularity is that tactical urbanism projects are done quickly and usually with no needs for permissions or experts involvement.

Similar experiments often also fall in the group of projects named “lighter, quicker, cheaper”. This category of projects is characterized by an immediate impact, while keeping the financial expenditures on a lower level. These are usually small-scale undertakings, such as outdoor cafes, use of art (murals) or pedestrian havens (PPS, 2009b). A good example for LQC may be initiatives happening in Detroit. With the city stating bankruptcy and with many public places deteriorating at enormous pace, projects undertaken by resilient inhabitants aim to bring the life back to the places they still reside in (PPS, 2013a). LQC are also of great importance in

poorer areas, as they require little finances and are intuitive (Peirce, 2015). Similarly, they can be of use, where the regulatory conditions are not perfect (Silberberg et al., p.27).

One of the most famous temporary project is Park(ing) Day (see Fig. 8), happening yearly on the third Friday of September. An initiative in which one parking spot was transformed into a public place started in 2005 in San Francisco (Park(ing) Day, 2012). The idea behind the initial intervention was to show the relation between the car-occupied space in the cities, which could be, after paying for parking spot, used for any purposes. During the one day in September, people claim parking space for their purposes, mostly adding greenery and sitting, but also organizing some small art exhibitions, concerts or other community activities (ibid.). Since then the idea has become globally used and has been undertaken in different places, by local people or organizations. The initiating institution (Park(ing) Day) created a manual for everyone willing to transform their car park into a public space<sup>5</sup>.



**Fig. 8** Parking day on one of the streets of Nashville (Nashville Civic Design Centre, 2017)

Another popular example of such project is the guerrilla gardening – self organization on wild plants. The first action like this took place in New York, in 1973 when a neglected private land was transformed into garden (Lezon, 2014). Guerrilla gardening may take place on very small empty pieces of land in the city, on bigger areas operating as community gardens or also on the vertical walls of the building, by installing flowerpots and creating vertical gardens. The aim is to simply grow plants or crops on the vacant land and by this to beautify the surroundings and bring the community together. At the same time, citizens who use the cultivated crops contribute to sustainable food production (Lydon, 2012).

Lastly, a group of projects which has recently become popular encompass those focused around art (Nikitin, 2013). They already have the separate name and are called *creative place-making*. The idea is the same as in normal place-making, to “shape the physical and social character of the neighbourhood, town, city, or region”, just additionally to do it “around arts and cultural activities” (Markusen, 2012). Creative place-making is said to build cultural diversity and enhance innovation (PPS, 2015b). Engaging art and culture in the process aims to bring out the

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<sup>5</sup> Available here: [http://parkingday.org/src/Parking\\_Day\\_Manual\\_Booklet.pdf](http://parkingday.org/src/Parking_Day_Manual_Booklet.pdf)

uniqueness of the place. It is important to remember though that artists should not be the leaders and the piece of art should not be the final goal (ibid.). Especially as there have been cases of artists and art being privileged over other participants and over other domains (Nikitin, 2013). Instead, community involvement should be equally central (PPS, 2015b).

All the described projects show that place-making, also in the small-scale projects, aim to combine reshaping of the urban environment and community activation and involvement in the process. Furthermore, the message that arises from those initiative concerns creating better places in the cities, adding greenery or claiming car-oriented space for pedestrian use. Interventions, that on a bigger scale contribute to the capital of human-scale, healthy urban places.

## **2.5. Disadvantages and challenges of place-making**

As with all spheres of life, also place-making did not make it without voices of concern. Therefore, to give a thorough picture of the movement, disadvantages of and challenges in place-making will be presented. First, many researchers see place-making as a buzzword similar to sustainable development, which is impossible not to be in favour of (Palermo, Ponzini, 2015, p.2). It is also described as “a rhetorical gimmick spreading across the urban-development wonkosphere like kudzu” (Russel, 2015). It is a kind of phenomenon that everyone wants to sign up to, also the developers as it is a good selling product (ibid.).

What is missing in place-making is the analysis of how the material consequences of the process influence the social side. Whereas physical makeover is easily seen and evaluated, “symbolic, anthropological, and social analyses continue to be schematic or merely hypothetical” (Palermo, Ponzini, 2015, p.6). Place-making has furthermore not been critically evaluated and there seem to be missing both analytic and methodologic study of the movement (ibid.). Also lacking is the description of how the outcome is pursued as by only involving the community obtaining the redevelopment itself and the design of a place seems challenging.

Palermo and Ponzini (2015) highlight that division between the project driven and community driven approaches are not that black and white in real life and it is often a combination of both. Furthermore, Russel (2015) claims that architects and other experts who prepare the project driven plans, have already for a while been aware of the importance of community involvement. Therefore, they are also able to conduct a project, which is design-driven, with a well involved community.

Place-making, as has been stated, operates best on the small scale. This can be seen as a disadvantage, as projects need to be coherent with both bigger picture of the city and with long-term, strategic development plans (Palermo and Ponzini, 2015, p.9). Furthermore, projects belonging to tactical place-making should not be seen as a substitute for exactly those longer-term strategies, involving aspects such as affordability or equity in urban environment. Bigger scale research is therefore needed to identify and deal with the problems in a long-term (Saitta, 2013).



Many authors (Walker, 2017; Noll, 2010; Palermo, Ponzini, 2015) notice, that place-making is not really a new phenomenon or that it is too easily seen as a new phenomenon, and not focusing on analysis of existing problems in places. Noll (2010), landscape architect, claims that the rules of place-making, to simply make good, human-scale places, have not changed for centuries and that they are now only refurbished by creators of place-making movement. Walker (2017) adds that already our ancestors were using the assets of the inhabited spaces and that their knowledge should not be forgotten.

Regarding the process itself, the most important ingredient is the community, a proper involvement of which has been identified as one of the biggest challenges (Silberberg et al., 2013). What needs to be remembered, is that people who constitute a community, often do not know each other or even are not aware of each other's existence (Nikitin, 2013), making it harder for mutual connections. Goals of separate residents may differ, and it may be that not all the demands will be fulfilled. Central is however, that all of the voices will be heard (ibid.). Building mutual trust between all the diverse actors in a way they are willing to collaborate and jointly contribute to the success of a project plays another challenge (Silberberg et al., 2013 p.14). Furthermore, involved users need to be willing to partake in the development of the area after the 'making' phase has ended, so to have people stay involved on the long-term is yet another challenge (ibid.).

Lack of expertise knowledge was identified as a next challenge. By expertise meaning not professional knowledge, but rooted deeply in the community – knowledge of local context and assets (ibid., p.14)<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, the process of place-making is always dependent on the context of legal framework that it is emerging in. Best possible option for place-making is to have creative approach in all sectors of urban governance, allowing for experiments and also public workers willing to take a risk. However often the barrier are the governmental bodies, claiming that certain solution will not work (ibid., p.15).

Another crucial aspect is a mundane challenge of funding of the whole process. As has been said, actors taking part in the process are very diverse, so can be the options of funding. However, it is worth noticing that it may be challenging to find sponsors for place-making, as often the undertakings are experimental, with no clear goals and thus risky. Moreover, the funding scheme cannot end when the process is finished but must foresee a need for post-making evaluation and also a need of programming in the future. All these aspects together may contribute to the fact that “reliable funding sources are scarcer than ever” (ibid., p.15). Having no clear ways of funding the place-making can be seen as disadvantage of the process.

A drawback which place-making shares with traditional participation is issue of measuring the outcomes (Hordijk et al., 2015). Firstly, as Kent (cited in Silberberg et al., 2013, p.27) notices, the results of place-making processes are much less tangible than the visible physical changes or economic profits gained through traditional planning. The wins of place-making are more 'social' – “happiness, smiles, diversity of users, people taking photographs” (ibid.). Therefore,

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<sup>6</sup> Finding such context-experts is more difficult in areas which previously suffered from bad planning management or those which dealt with mistrust issues before (ibid).

it is more difficult to grasp those qualities. However, it seems that there are no evaluations or measurements done at all in the field of place-making. Silberberg et al. (2013, p.15) claim that a lot of organizers avoid making the measurements due to an omnipresent pressure for place-making to be successful. This further creates the “inertia in assessment efforts that hobbles shared learning and is detrimental to the field as a whole, as valuable insights are left undiscovered, and the same mistakes are made over and over again” (ibid.).

The above arguments, that place-making movement is not new and in the end, may be seen as a buzz-word are true on the one hand. On the other though, it seems that it is really combining all the efforts to create a good place that have existed and given it a ‘new package’ which is spreading throughout diverse communities and supporting them in creating better and more inclusive places.

## **2.6. Synthesis**

As has been presented in the above chapter, place-making can be seen as a process giving new insights into participatory practices. The movement established as opposition towards top-down, expert-based urban development has been spreading for over four decades and is still on the rise, which is reflected for instance in presence of place-focus in formal documents such as New Urban Agenda. The movement has its roots in the work of several researches (Lynch, 1960; Alexander, 1977; Whyte, 1980; Lefebvre 1991; Jacobs, 1992; Harvey 1996) who explored cities in a search for their human-scale, for the first time discovering, observing and video-taping the city and citizens themselves. They also strongly supported the shift of power in developing urban environment from architects and planners, to users of the places.

Places themselves can be defined in comparison to spaces. Places are familiar, inviting to stay, have many functions and pull factors and tend to be busy. Spaces on the other hand are unknown and are designed to be moved through (Tuan, 1977). Places are furthermore settings for social relations and sources of identification for people (Agnew, 1987). Public places have undergone a tremendous change throughout the history and evolved from areas of public interactions to currently often being privatized and commodified and thus not being inclusive locations anymore.

All these notions were gathered by Project for Public Spaces organization, which is popularizing place-making movement around the world. Organization helps communities around the world to redevelop places they live in and do it in an inclusive way. They add to the idea of ‘right to the city’ by Harvey (2008), the notion that people should moreover be able to reflect themselves in the city.

Main objective of the process is reshaping of urban environment; however, it is never a goal on its own and there are many side-aspects that are equally important. It shows that the definition by Flemming (2007) classifying place-making as part of urban design, is not right. Rather, urban design may be, but does not have to, be one of the variables of place-making (Palermo, Ponzini, 2015). Similarly, after the literature review, the definition by Cilliers and

Timmermans (2014) that place-making is about shaping the cities through capital investment is not acceptable. The most accurate definition of the process seems the one proposed by PPS (n.d.); it is about helping “citizens transform their public spaces into vital places that highlight local assets, spur rejuvenation and serve common needs”

It is also an inspiration for people to work collectively to restructure, improve their neighbourhoods. The process starts from meeting with community and the place the community is rooted in. Process is based on the knowledge that that users have, and professionals are only used as resources for communities (Palermo, Ponzini, 2015). The aim is to include all the needs of the local stakeholders, so that they have a bigger ownership of the place, further leading to better future maintenance and greater safety. Qualities created throughout the process are; belonging, meaning, attachment, inclusiveness (Frinch, Pardy, Shaw, 2016) and sense of place (Silberberg et al., 2013).

One of the goals of place-making is to simply create better places. PPS (2009c) offers a diagram which sets a framework of aspects that need to be taken into account when creating a new or re-creating existing place. Jointly created places reflect social structure of the area and are more useful and adjusted to needs of the community. It is done by including social, physical and cultural character of the area (PPS, 2009). Lastly, as the process focusses on local assets, created places are unique and thus prevent homogenization of space and while involving local residents, it also prevents commodification.

There are two major types of place-making; strategic ones which are long-term and place-specific and tactical place-making, also called tactical urbanism or LQC – lighter, quicker, cheaper, which are short-term and can be replicated. The latter one involves low financial expenditures and a lot of testing.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Research methods**

For the purposes of this study, three research methods were used, which makes it a mixed method approach, within the category of qualitative study. Firstly, desk-based literature review was used for the identification of the scientific gap. Secondly, at the initial stage of gathering information about place-making in the Netherlands, a participant observation in place game was used (see subchapter 4.1.3). Place game is a meeting of all people from the area willing to participate in the project. Thirdly, eleven semi-structured interviews were conducted. Eight with professionals involved in place-making (of which one was obtained by e-mail) and three participants of the process (see Table 1).

The paper thus includes both primary and secondary data. Desk-based literature review was mostly used to answer sub-question one, and partly two, three and four. Review was utilized as both a source of data for defining the place-making and its aspect and for discovering existing information to create the interview questions. The method was a narrative review, which seeks “to arrive at an overview of a field of study through a reasonably comprehensive assessment and critical reading of the literature” (Bryman, 2008, p.102). It aimed to encompass all the available sources of information; printed and online publications, articles and interviews. Taking into account that place-making is still quite a recent phenomenon, the majority of publications were online, and the encountered problem was that the newest printed publications were not available, thus could not be used for the study.

Interviews were on the other hand used foremost to provide an answer to the second, third and fourth sub-question. An approach in the analysis is purely inductive, as there are no theories given on the topic and it is still partly undiscovered process. That is why this paper might be of use for systematizing existing knowledge on place-making and hopefully constitute a base for further research.

#### **3.1.1. Participant Observation**

Participant observation was used during one of the place games held in the in Stadsblokken – Meinerswijk neighbourhood in Arnhem, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April, 2017. It may not be participant observation in its full meaning, as it is usually done over a long period of time (Bryman, 2008, p.431), however still the author’s role was both participation and observation at the same time. (I was invited to join and participate in this daily event, after contacting a founder of a company Placemaking Plus). It was an opportunity to see how both organizers and participants operate, what is the procedure during the event and most importantly, feel the atmosphere at the spot. To help memorizing the observations, field notes and pictures were taken. Second participation experience took place at an informal event, gathering people organizing place-making in different locations all over the world. This meeting was however more about listening to the participants than an observation. Whereas in the second meeting the language of conduct was mostly English, due to the presence of international guests, the first one was conducted in

Dutch, as it was about contacting and involving local community. The fact that I can only understand little of Dutch was for sure an obstacle to gather all the information, still however the basic notions were understandable and for feeling the atmosphere, language is not needed. On the other hand, the fact that there was a need to explain the author's role to people, allowed to get more insights than it would be when only participating.

### 3.1.2. Interviews

Most importantly, source of primary data were the interviews conducted with eight people involved in organization of place-making, in one case the answers were obtained by an e-mail. The aim was to gather people involved in organizing place-making, with as many different backgrounds as possible. People experienced in place-making organization were chosen as they can provide answers concerning the overview of the process. Furthermore, three interviews were conducted with participants of two place-making projects (in Arnhem and in Nieuwegein), who were intensively involved in the process and were also a part of place management team (see subchapter 4.1.3). One of the participants of the process was also a municipality employee. All the participants are listed in Table 1:

Name	Date	Time [min]	Place	Education	Years of experience	Company
Berta (B)	17.05.2017	48	Office	Urbanism	1.5	Placemaking Plus
Anna (A)	25.05.2017	86	Office	Sociology, Urban Planning, City Design and Social Sciences	3	PlaceMakers
Peter (P)	05.06.2017	101	Cafe	Self taught (education not linked)	15	Placemaking Plus
Vivian (V)	06.06.2017	70	Skype	Urban and Spatial Planning and Development, Urban Geography	4	Stipo, currently independent
Lex (L)	10.06.2017	78	Cafe	Construction, GIS	3	Placemaking Plus, Freelancer
Donica (D)	17.06.2017	55	Cafe	Communication Science, Film and TV science	8	State of Flux
Hans (H)	21.06.2017	104	Cafe	Urban Planning	>15	Stipo
Katasha (K)	05.06.2017	-	Answers obtained by email	Sociology	8	PlaceMakers
Jan (J)	28.06.2017	49	Office	Not linked	1.5	-
Philip (Ph)	29.06.2017	29	Skype	not linked	2	-
Esther (E)	24.07.2017	20	Office	Not linked	2	Municipality Nieuwegein

**Table 1.** Interviewees details

Eight interviews were conducted with professionals operating in the field, with experience ranging from 1.5 up to 14 years. Interviews took place between 17<sup>th</sup> of May and 24<sup>th</sup> of July 2017, in Amsterdam, Utrecht and Nieuwegein. The exact locations were either work places of the interviewees or the chosen other convenient locations. Two interviews were conducted via Skype as the person currently works in Thessaloniki, Greece and for the other it was more convenient than meeting in person. All the interviews were recorded and were of fine quality (see Appendix C). Duration of the talks was between 20 and 104 minutes, on average the interview lasted 64 min. Again, the language of the interviews was English, which could have had an influence on the sample choice, however there was no case of people refusing the interview due to the language.

Most of the contacts were acquired directly, some via internet and some were gathered by recommendations of the previous interviewee. Furthermore, organizers of place-making advised on the participants worth interviewing. Thus, some of the contacts were gathered through a snowball sampling method (Bryman, 2008, p.202). The issue concerning this method is that the sample may not be valid externally and that they may be not that easily generalized. However, with qualitative research, these aspects do not play that of a big role as in quantitative one (ibid., p.203). The aim in this paper, was to get as many insights as possible, thus the recommendations can be seen as advantageous.

Interviews were carried out in a semi-structured way. In this kind of study, interview is done according to an interview guide, which provides a combination of questions, but also leaves freedom to modify them when needed (Bryman, 2008, p.71). Same set of questions was used for all of the organizers (see Appendix A) and a different one was created for the participants (see Appendix B). Semi-structured interviews allow for changes in the order of questions and also leave a lot of space for possible initiative of the interviewees. Mostly however, similar questions were asked in all the talks with organizers, to allow for comparison of different experiences between different organizers. The first interview was treated as a pilot interview and the interviewee was asked to give feedback on questions. The questionnaire was slightly modified after. Furthermore, along with writing the literature review and getting insights from the previous interviews, discussions were also getting more in-depth. Additionally, after two meetings, a discussion continued during a, what can be called, unstructured interview. Not all of the information from the discussions were useful, but those that were, were also transcribed in the end of interviews (see interview 3 and 5, Appendix C).

After careful transcription of the interviews (see Appendix C), the analysis started from coding all the interviews (147 pages) according to common themes, with the use of Microsoft Word headings. Later, themes were categorized to confront, complement and answer sub-questions two, three and four. Therefore, first conclusions from theoretical chapter were recapped at the beginning of the two themes; correlation of place-making and participatory planning and factors of success and failure in place-making. Later, insights from the interviews were added, under themes that emerged from theory.

### **3.2. Limitations and generalisation**

In qualitative research, the biggest concern regards generalisation of findings. Reasons for that are that focus of the research is specific, undertaken at specific time, with specific people. Bryman (2012) identifies three categories to evaluate social research; reliability, replication and validity. Reliability aspect checks if measures of the research are consistent (ibid.). With a comprehensive literature review and thereafter created questionnaire, research aims at providing a coherent structure and answers to the central- and sub-research questions. Next, replication concerns an issue of the study being repeatable in the future (ibid.). In that sense, this study could be seen as replicable, as the details of the interviewees for both organizers and participants are given (see Table 1, Appendix A and B). However, aspects such as a specific time the interviews were conducted, when projects were at a given point (mostly in the process or shortly after finishing) might cause that the repeated study will not give the same results. Similarly, each respondent may answer differently when asked again the same question. It is not surprising though, for qualitative research, as Bryman (2012, p.47) claims, “replication in social research is not common”. Lastly, validity of the research is defined as the integrity of conclusions, so their foundation in the analysis. For this qualitative study, only external validity can be considered. External validity treats about the possibility of generalizing research outcomes for setting outside the research itself (ibid.). As has been highlighted, the research is conducted based on the Dutch place-making cases, therefore generalization outside of this context should not be made. Furthermore, participatory processes and place-making, depend on many local conditions, such as legal framework or level of citizens activity which make it impossible to generalize the outcomes of the study for other locations.

## **4. Analysis**

From the conducted interviews, a lot of new data has been gathered. More and in-depth information was acquired on the topic of the process itself, the exact undertaken steps, the overall vision of the movement and the relation with traditional participatory planning. The following chapter will be divided into answering second and third sub-questions (4.1) and fourth sub-question (4.2), firstly briefly summarizing the theoretical explanations and later juxtaposing them with empirical findings.

### **4.1. Place-making versus participatory planning**

#### **4.1.1. Literature synthesis**

There are quite many advantages and disadvantages of participatory planning. They will be summarized here to see how place-making differs from participatory planning and what can participatory planning learn from place-making. It appears that place-making movement is using the already existing advantages of participatory planning, such as increasing social coherence throughout the process (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011; Silberberg et al., 2013). Similarly, place-making aims at sharing responsibility for the place among all the involved actors (Cilliers, Timmermans, 2014; PPS 2015a). Furthermore, both processes aim at rising awareness on environmental sustainability (Cilliers, Timmermans, 2014; Silberberg et al., 2013) and on the larger scale, improve the quality of urban areas (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011; Silberberg et al., 2013).

On the other hand, Swyngedouw (2005) saw participation as repetition of power relations existing in the planning field and that as it happens in the ‘institutional void’ with lack of transparency, it may only support the strongest actors. Nuissl and Heinrichs (2011) notice that in participation processes, democratic principles are threatened when the process is happening outside of government. Nuissl and Heinrichs (2011) also say that actors with strongest recourses will have greatest power and that participation is actually less efficient than process without including actors with lay knowledge, as it takes longer. Hordijk et al. (2015) question the representation issue in participatory processes and notice that organizers may lead a process in a way that suits only their goals. Boonstra and Boelens (2011) claim that participatory practices still happen within governmental path dependencies, with procedural, thematic and geographical inclusionary premises and inside-out approach. Often people who join participatory actions are those who know already about planning field – ‘professional citizens’ (ibid.). Lastly, participatory practices lack evaluation schemes (Hordijk et al., 2015).

From the literature review, the biggest difference between place-making and participatory planning is that the first one does not start from a predefined goal or project with the inside-out approach, but first a thorough research is made on existing conditions, stakeholders, networks and only then jointly created vision is agreed upon (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011; PPS, 2009; Kent 2013). Furthermore, the structure of the process itself is not linear, but more cyclical, which allows for many points of entry for different actors. This also causes that the action is more open, adaptable if some unexpected circumstances appear along the way and therefore it can



be seen as self-improving (Silberberg et al., 2013). Place-making was also described to have a virtuous cycle, meaning that there is a constant interaction between environment and community (ibid.). Process itself goes further than just actors' involvement and stretches for engaging people into executing the plans (Cilliers, Timmermans, 2014).

Place-making as a movement not only aims at gathering ideas of people, but also at empowering them, stressing that "community is the expert" (PPS, 2009) and encouraging to take initiative on their own. This was described as creating community capacity, so instead of providing support services for participation, motivate citizens to self-organize (Smith, 2015). Empowerment should concern not only residents but all the actors in the process (Kent, Madden, 2016). It is mostly done by collaboration (Silberberg et al., 2013).

While participatory planning focuses on gathering external input into the planning processes, place governance proposes that all the parties and individuals; private, public and civil have a common focus on place and collaborate in order to create better places (Smith, 2015). It also offers further steps such as management and programming of places, which are missing in participatory planning. In the place governance notion, there are also postulates to make the laws more flexible and thus making interventions in places easier, not blocked by bureaucratic obstacles (ibid). In this way, governance of places could be seen as a counter movement to participatory practices by creating capacity in the society to self-organize.

Lastly, in place-making there is an emphasis put on the process rather than the form (Silberberg, 2013; Palermo, Ponzini, 2015). Design is not a goal on its own but a "tool to support desired uses" (PPS, 2009). Place-making during the process aims to also create or strengthen connection of people with the place; creating attachment is something that the process of place-making also includes (Kent, Madden, 2016). What is highlighted is the goal of having diverse participants, to promote social equity and bring residents and users closer together, creating situations of social frictions (PPS, 2015a). Diversity of involved actors is also needed to create places which are adjusted and fulfil the needs of those diverse individuals and groups (PPS, 2009c). Place-making organizers thus try not to invite people to them, but instead, look for them in the field (Silberberg et al., 2013). In that way, place-making can be seen as more inclusive than participatory planning.

#### **4.1.2. Empirical findings**

Respondents when asked about the differences between place-making and participatory planning, noticed that one must turn it a little bit in a cliché to make the difference really visible. This is exactly the criticism towards place-making and planning distinction that Palermo and Ponzini (2015) gave. One of the interviewees admitted that giving this cliché distinction between top-down "*bad urban planners, without any touch on the ground*"<sup>7</sup> (A) and bottom-up initiatives is somehow helping to justify place-makers actions. It gives a common factor to fight against (A). Another issue before explaining the differences is that also the planning field itself is changing a lot. Before, co-creation was a new approach for planners and "*now we have*

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<sup>7</sup> Quotes extracted from the interviews are given in italics to differentiate them from quotes stemming from literature.

*more or less citizens asking for it*” (H), confirming the growing popularity of self-organization. Place-making itself is also changing (L). The field is growing intensively, from many small, temporary projects to now having bigger scale investments, with large private parties on the board (H).

Yet, there was also a remark made, that the relation between participatory planning and place-making is not that clear. Whether it is an alternative or if it is under planning, like the position of transport is under the overall planning category (A). This also shows that probably some more years need to pass to see in which way exactly place-making movement will develop; while some claim it should be part of governmental planning other say that it is done easier without involving the city or involving it in a later phase.

### **Participation – in all phases of the process**

A very important difference is that in place-making, these are the people who decide and realize the project; *“these are mostly people that are doing it, that live already there”* (B). Actors involved in place-making get more responsibility and they can do things themselves (E). As noticed by a governmental worker, it is not that *“government decides something, and they show it and people can react”* (E). This is exactly the difference that PPS (2009) gave as the most important one between place-led and discipline-led approach.

There were many comments on the way place-making is participatory on each level. It was described as *“participation of doing (...) not of talking”* (H). Importantly, activation of the community comes first and then co-creation can be done in all the phases of planning (V). Involvement happens at the very beginning of the project, before there are any ideas for the place and not when *“municipality have a design, when it is almost finished, people can say something (...) you can tell which of the five trees can stay and that is it”* (L). Then it may be a more a source of conflict and protests than a floor for participation.

Place-making aims at involving people in the execution of the co-created plan as much as possible (D). Place-makers admit that sometimes you need a designer (D), as there is a necessity to give a technical drawing to the municipality (B), but whatever can be done by people is handed to them. Including the design that can still be done by people or tasks such as painting or collecting the items for sitting (B). Execution of the common ideas is thus also done by community (Cilliers, Timmermans, 2014). Lastly, place-making aims to go further than to only gather ideas, but to also include stakeholder in the management of the outcomes (V). Programming of an area is also important as putting a bench somewhere will not change the area (L). Programming is thus an additional part in place-making process compared to participatory planning (Silberberg et al., 2013) also highlighted in place governance notion (Smith, 2015).

### **Design follows, from liveability to loveability**

Whereas in the traditional planning design is the leading part, in place-making it only follows community ideas (PPS, 2009). Design is also a part of the process, however it comes in second, after bringing the community together (P). Importantly, an action might finish with new design,

but it does not need to. It may only include for instance new programming of the area, it all depends on what community wants (P). More often however the case is that place-making ends with even more design than traditional planning would, as people become empowered and aware of all their needs and want to do different things in the area (P). However, design as the outcome is not forced on the community, it stems from it. Then, as design is usually about liveability, “*it is not enough (...) it is mediocrity*” (P) design in place-making aims to be about ‘loveability’ (P). This shows that whatever is created in the process, needs to also create the attachment between people who co-create it and the outcome. The shift from liveability to loveability illustrates well the deep and emotional connection created between people and place through the process (Kent, Madden, 2015).

### **Outside-in approach**

While participatory planning has been mostly operating in the governmental premises, causing the described inclusionary premises (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011) place-making seems to originate on all kinds of levels. A project might be commissioned by a private company (DAK: case 3, Meinerswijk: p.56, ZOHO: case 2), by place-makers themselves (Highschool; case 5), by citizens themselves (Gare du Nord: case 4) or by citizens via a place-making company (Buurtcamping: case 1). There are also different actors which are described as ‘strange bad fellows’, who are not expected to be interested in place-making, but are, like Southwest Airlines cooperating with PPS (H). Interestingly, a party which is also starting to get involved is the health insurance business, as creating better places can be a preventive tool to health problems linked with badly designed cities – congestion, pollution etc. (H). Taking this diversity into account, place-making could be seen as offering more an outside-in approach (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011), as the initiatives originate among all kinds of stakeholders, not only governmental bodies.

Citizens with their ideas, may approach a municipality and then a municipality asks a place-making company or freelancers in place-making (L). It also happens that individuals may ask place-makers directly. For instance, Buurtcamping – the Neighbourhood Campsite, is a project the idea for which was originally proposed by Placemakers company but now residents can start the Buurtcamping themselves (A).

#### **Case 1: Buurtcamping**

Buurtcamping is a weekend camp in one of the city’s park, organized by local and for local residents to camp or join diverse activities during the weekend (see Fig. 9). The goals of the project are to “strengthen local social cohesion, to be accessible and inclusive to all, to introduce residents to local organizations and to stimulate the use of the city park” (Placemakers, 2017). The first camping took place in 2013 and since then it has been happening in new locations, with more and more people getting involved. In summer 2017, it was organized in 5 cities in over 13 different locations (ibid.). With this growing organizational structure, it is not really clear anymore, who is the initiator, it was originally the studio Placemakers, but now, these are the citizens approaching the studio, saying they would like to organize a camping in their area. “*On the other hand, it could only exist as a project, whether it is initiated by us or users, because government and following subsidies are supporting us*” (A).



**Fig. 9** Buurtcamping in Tilburg (Stadscampingtilburg.nl)

Place-makers state that the aim is to, even if the project is initiated by one party, to have everyone on board, to lead to comprehensive place governance (Smith, 2015). So, the organizers make further contacts with other bodies, “for example we go to investors that could invest in the project” (B). So that in the end the involved actors are really diverse; “governments, businesses, developers, housing corporations, civic groups, cultural and social institutions, and all sorts of residents” (K). Especially important is to have a combination of the institutional partners and the users; a combination of top-down and bottom-up (H). A good example of such cooperation is the described case of Zoho area, coordinated by Stipo company (see below).

### **Case 2: Area development in Zoho, Rotterdam**

“ZoHo is a new piece of city where creative people with different life skills together take care of the development of this area” (Gare Du Nord, 2017). Zoho is the name of an area located in the centre of Rotterdam and is a project classified in area development (see Fig. 10). It was a deteriorating business district, which was bought by a housing cooperation with a vision of redeveloping it into a residential area (Stipo, n.d.). Stipo, the place-making company is one of the three parties involved in developing the area, mostly acting as community developer. Other partners are the housing cooperation and Municipality of Rotterdam. The aim of the housing cooperation was to develop an area with the approach of slow urbanism in the time frame of at least ten years (H). This long-term perspective enabled stakeholders to really get involved and co-invest in the area. The role of Stipo was to create a community, which would contribute to sustainable development of the neighbourhood. It was established partially by existing uses and partially by new uses brought to the area. The aim was to gather parties who would be active not only economically but also socially (see Fig. 11). One of the requirements for the coming companies was to open up ground floors in the building they were accommodating (H). As the organizer explains, they could have filled the area only with architects or other professions, that after the financial crisis were looking for cheaper offices. Such solution would be beneficial for the housing corporation, as those companies would pay good rents, but then it would not be diversified. “We wanted social enterprises, who would also connect with the adjacent poor neighbourhood and set a project with them, so that does not become a hipster and really is an inclusive development, we wanted manufacturers, because we noticed there are a lot of people working with their hands who do not have a place” (H). The invited initiatives were also supposed to feel as the co-owner of the area (Stipo, n.d.). Project is so far very successful, within half a year, all the buildings were filled with new tenants, and they are all very diverse (H). It

includes design, technology, media, art, culture, food, architecture and urban planning (Gare du Nord, 2017).



**Fig. 10** Vision of Zoho (Zohorotterdam.nl)



**Fig. 11** Zoho opening party (Author; Johannes Odé, Source; Noord010inbeeld.blogspot.nl)

Interviewees agree that both approaches; top-down, represented by a city and bottom-up, represented by all the other actors, are needed to make a successful place. Place-makers are usually not the residents who initiate the actions, but also not master planners. Place-makers are seen by themselves to be in the middle, between bottom-up and top-down (A). *“It is neither top-down, nor bottom-up, we need all those worlds, sitting as equal partners at the same table, respecting each other’s knowledge, (...) both the lived world and the planned world”* (H). Making everyone equal, whether it is an individual, a company or an organization, makes place-making more than traditional participation is. It is starting with a flat structure of the process. In this way, the criticism of Swyngedouw (2005) about repeating power relations, is not present in place-making. Therefore, place-making should not be seen as *“a trick or gimmick or a new silo”* (P). It aims to encompass all the aspects together.

### **Reverse city involvement**

While, as has been written, participatory planning is organized by public bodies, there is quite a difference in the approach towards public institutions in place-making. In any case, city needs

to be involved, as the projects deal with changes in the urban structure. Also, it holds plans, knowledge and contacts in the area, necessary in the preparation for the process (P). Involving the city and convincing it to accept a project is also a big part of the preparation to the process (H).

However, the city should not be the only organizer of a project. There were many examples given about projects that were lead only by public bodies, majority of which ended up in the drawers (L, P, H, D); *“There was a time, when I had too many experience, when the city asked, “ah, we love this idea of place-making, lets do a place game”. And then we did a place game and then nothing happened. So, I think those are the ones [aspects to make place-making successful], how to create communities before and coalitions and organize the money and then start doing this”* (H). This is similar to the difference described before; that place-making offer further steps than planning. Here it is shown, that this affects also place-making projects lead or commissioned by governments. It often happens that projects organized by cities, which are claimed to be place-making, are not really it, as putting benches or adding trees (L). Moreover, a difficulty maybe that (similarly when operating with private parties) cities need to classify the project in terms of hours, money etc, which place-making does not assume a priori (P). An example was mentioned, of refusing a project from the city by a company, as it required a traditional report with recommendations (P).

Financial dependency on a city or in general any party, would not lead to a sustainable model of involvement of other parties. One of the place-makers also refers to a case organized by a city, in which when a problem occurred, they wanted to resolve it only among themselves and not with all the involved parties (L). Another organizer admits, she quit one of her projects, as the city did not continue the process with the initial place-making assumptions (D). In the end, public space was created, but the city is not really a partner there (D).

As described in the above quote, a solution to these problems seems to be to create coalitions of various parties beforehand and approach the city when a plan for the project is ready, when coalitions are known, when there is already some funding gathered through the other parties (P). A city then; *“cannot really turn its back to it. Because if you have a lot of parties that together (...) invest hundred thousand euros in a public space you cannot as a city say “well good luck”. (...) this is an opportunity you cannot resist”* (D). With governmental institution as a partner, it can contribute financially and facilitate the process, help with permits etc (P). The successful place-making process can also benefit the city, not only by simply improving the urban area which is correlated with better quality of life. It can also contribute to the marketing of the city, as the DAK case (see below) and the media interest in it has shown (P). This way of approaching the city, only in the later part of the process, looks like the participation is reversed in the place-making; it is not the city asking citizens, but more the citizens, through place-makers, asking the city.

### **Case 3: Shopping Centre DAK in Schalkwijk, Haarlem**

This is an interesting case as it concerns a shopping centre located in Haarlem, so a semi-public space. The project was initiated by private company, owners of the centre, who asked Placemaking Plus company to help in the process. Later, along with citizens, there were also Shopkeepers

Association, The City of Haarlem, Triple Threat Community (an organization helping young people by promoting sports among them) and many other organizations involved. Schalwijk, a multicultural neighbourhood in Haarlem where the shopping centre is, was facing deterioration, “*people were throwing stones through the bus windows*” (P). Many of the shops inside the mall were closed. There was also a problem of racism, as some people were not allowed in the shopping mall.

Placemaking Plus company, after conducting a research in the area and meeting with different stakeholders, organized a place-game, inviting all the stakeholders and after also appointed a place management team. The idea that came up when wandering around the area during the place game, was to make use of the empty roof of a car parking. As one of the participants of the process explains; “*it is an amazing spot to do something unique or something that has never been done before*” (Ph). Within two months after the event, DAK – the rooftop was organized, with the combined forces of all the stakeholders. During summer period, various activities; sports, games, animations, were taking place there (see Fig. 12). But it was also simply a place to relax or meet with friends, accessible for everyone (Rodi, 2016). The project got very popular, was described in the local newspaper<sup>8</sup> and due to its success, shop keepers wanted a similar thing to happen inside the shopping mall, to also operate during winter months. OnderDAK opened in March 2017 (see Fig. 13), with a multipurpose floor and stage, it offers all the activities the rooftop did, including sports and workshops (Placemaking Plus, 2017). It transformed the shopping centre into more of a public space area. Triple Threat organization also got a pop-up store in the shopping centre, contributing to the activation of the community. The shops themselves opened again and with more visitors in the shopping centre, the project also lead to economic boost (V). Most importantly, place-making brought social cohesion and created community networks between various stakeholders (V). Next summer (2017) it was organized again as it was so successful and there are plans to continue in the coming years.



**Fig. 12** DAK Activities (Placemaking Plus, 2017) **Fig. 13** OnderDAK Opening (Placemaking Plus, 2017)

### Cyclicity versus linearity

Another aspect that differentiate participatory planning from place-making is the way in which the process is conducted. As has been described by Silberberg et al. (2013), place-making is a very open process, and this is also the aspect highlighted by many of the place-makers operating in the field. It is not about pursuing the design-driven, deliverable outcome in a linear way as happens at the beginning of the planning process, where certain moments are appointed to consult with public, often there are also delimited dates when public can give comments to the plan. “*We try to stay away from that, we try to create this organic process*” (H). So, the vision

<sup>8</sup>The article in Dutch can be found here: <http://www.rodi.nl/widgets/1715-nieuws/nieuws/1339040-jongeren-tillen-schalkwijk-naar-hoger-niveaudak-schalkwijk-in-eerste-week-al-zeer-goed-bezocht>

of the process is not build by one, but by many ideas. *“It is creating networks and movements around these themes of sustainability”* (H). The process also allows for an open end, many respondents say that they do not know what the outcome of the process will be. It is also about creating the receptive attitude in the area, to support and welcome the initiatives (see below).

#### **Case 4: Restaurant Gare du Nord**

A great illustration for the above description is the restaurant which has been established in the Zoho area, Rotterdam. It started as an initiative from a resident, who approached a place-making company working in the field, saying (as described by a Stipo company partner): *“I am a chef in the area, I would like to start my vegan organic restaurant (...) I want to learn, teach young kinds in the neighbourhood, poor neighbourhood, who eat fast-food all the time which is bad for their health and for their life opportunities (...) and by the way I also collect trains”* (H).

Not long after, the chef has established his restaurant in a restauration wagon in Zoho area, called Gare du Nord. It is very popular, and people come from all over the country to dine here. Yet, he employs kids from the area to help around, he grows his own vegetables in front of the train, making the food miles extremely short and the whole initiative very sustainable (see Fig. 14). *“The people in the area love it, so it is inclusive. (...) And this we could have never imagined, writing it down in a master plan”* (H). The project in its origins was then a type of self-organization, however facilitated by place-makers in the area, who were already *“actively seeking for these types of initiatives and had a vision for the area, to turn space into place, to turn dead ground floors, blank walls into active frontages. To create a community in the area, that is totally networked and is not steered by one but is steered by hundred uses in the area”* (H). As the organizer states, this is just one of the examples and as you create the right conditions more and more such initiatives happen.



**Fig. 14** Square in front of the restauration wagon (Zoho Facebook Page)

Place-making is also more responsive to the needs of people, as *“people need straight away, right now, and they do not want to wait three years for the planning to be finished”* (H). This shows another difference, namely the fact that place-making is along with the longer goals, also focusing on the short ones (B). This links to the fact that there is a lot of experimenting involved in the process and that you want to start as soon as possible to improve the area (D). So, the changes happen quickly and in the meantime, you think about longer-term actions. Thus place-makers call it also an iterative process, *“a constant process, rather than something with a beginning and an end”* (H). As the aims are then planned for decades, *“you are never done”*,



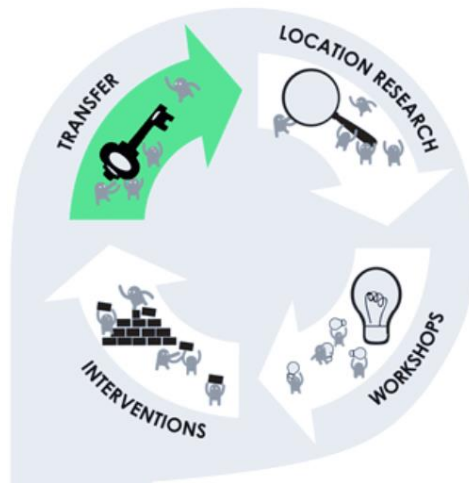
in the same way as “*the city is never finished*” (H). This resembles very much description of planning within civic initiatives of “ongoing experimentation toward possible futures” (Boonstra, 2015 p.348). Place-making process can be thus seen more as creating open strategies (Boonstra, 2015) than pursuing towards one goal of a project.

### **4.1.3. Process**

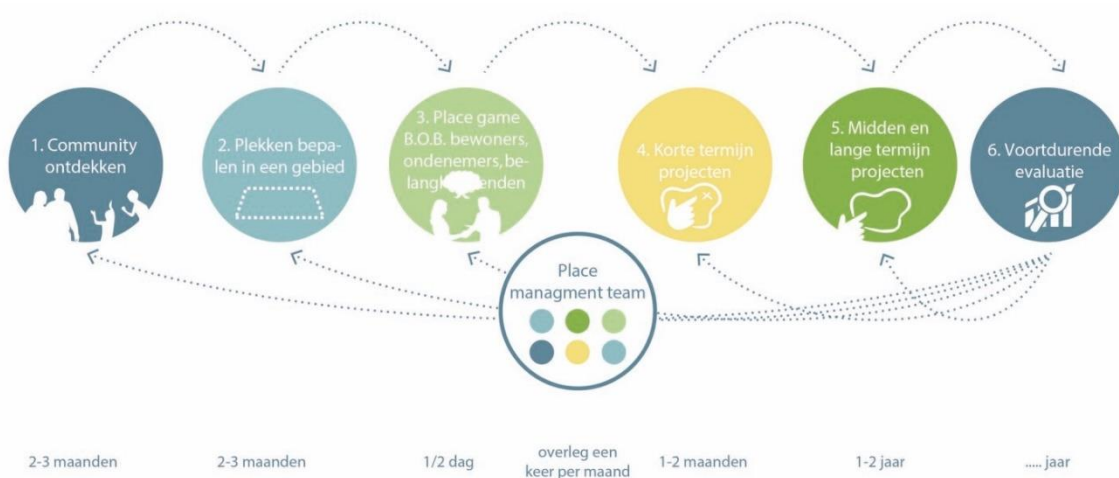
To see what can participatory planning learn from place-making, the process of place-making has to be described and analysed, what will be done below. The first action in place-making is always in-depth location research, connected with building networks in the area, and empowering the people. These steps take roughly two to three months. This initial phase is actually the most important and the necessary time should be devoted to make sure as many people as possible are involved for the place game (L). Only when all the different ideas are taken into account, something that belongs to everyone can be created (H), and that is what makes the change sustainable. After getting to know the area and its people, a larger-scale event is usually organized. Most of the times it is a place game, a one-day event when everybody come together and think together about the area. However, it can also be different kind of workshops, for gathering more ideas or to test some already existing ideas (A). During these happenings, the short- and long-term goals are decided upon. The task is to make it active and fun (A, K). If it is in a form of a place game, a place management team is then usually established, which includes a cross-section of the users from the area. This team will from then on, have meetings around once a month regarding the ongoing process; first the instant interventions and then the longer term, bigger scale initiatives. In both cases, the aim is to, as mentioned, transfer as much work as possible to the participants (B).

Projects are carried out in the way to first create conditions for actions to be possible on a long-term, in a sustainable way and then only start executing those interventions. A very important last step is transfer of process fully to the involved actors (see Fig.15). The aim is however, to transfer knowledge to participants throughout the process, making them more independent and in the future allowing them to conduct place-making processes on their own, to self-organize (V). This aspect, along with the fact that organizers devote time to include all the possible users, proves that not only ‘professional citizens’ are partaking in the process, which was seen as a disadvantage of participatory planning (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011), but everyone can come and will be empowered and informed to participate on equal terms.

Evaluation is depicted as the last part of the process by Placemaking Plus (see Fig.16), this however seems to be not yet a fully developed step (B). This is an aspect that was also criticized in traditional participation (Hordijk et al., 2015) and is also applicable to place-making (Silberberg et al., 2015).



**Fig. 15** Steps in the place-making process according to Placemakers company (Placemakers, 2017)



**Fig. 16** Steps in the process according to Placemaking Plus company (Placemaking Plus, 2017a)

### Proactive research and involvement

While the initial steps in the place-making process might be similar, the later steps will be adapted to a specific case (V). Nevertheless, all the projects start from a thorough research in the area; “*you start from what is there*” (A). This part of identifying place and stakeholders (PPS, 2009) is a crucial part in the place-making process, therefore will be analysed in more details. It is combining both soft- the social, behavioural data and hard- the physicality of the location (K). All the organizers highlight that they go personally to the area, to get the impression of it and meet with people. It then includes landscape analysis but also sociological observation of the place; sitting on the local bench, spending some time there, walking the streets, and through that; getting to know the stakeholders (H). “*Search for its visible and hidden identities*” (K).

Along with that, analysis of the already existing information should be conducted; all the documents, including statistics, masterplans, land values, interviews, internet research and every available hard data (K, D). The aim is to know the “*possibilities and obstructions for local development*” (K). However, it cannot be reading only for months and then approaching

the area, it should happen at the same time (D). Furthermore, historical background should also be discovered to better understand connections in the area (P).

The more resourceful part is however the local knowledge; *“listening to best experts in the field – the people who live, work and play in a place”* (K). The aim is to use the ‘collective intelligence’, ‘wisdom of the crowd’ (D), so to find all the existing actors. Often, for those who should be involved, the word ‘residents’ is used, but it is not fully accurate, as these are all the users that should be engaged; working there, having business, city governments, property developers etc (A, H). Another important aspect is *“demystifying the term ‘professionalism’”* (K), as users are also experts in their field. The distinction between professionals and residents or participants is wrong, while users are also professionals in their fields (L). This again shows the empowering attitude towards whoever gets involved (Kent, Madden, 2016).

One way of getting in touch with users is by approaching them during the observation; *“I go sit on their square, on a bench, if there is a bench I go sit there. I meet people very easily”* (P). Secondly, place-makers often simply knock on the doors of the residents. Another way is also using the informants from the area; in a project on Museumsplein, the best source of information was the owner of the kiosk *“he is there every day and he has been there for last 20 years, so he knows exactly what is happening”* (H). Similarly, street musicians or other ‘eyes on the streets’ could be asked. Street interviews may also be used for gathering information (H).

Furthermore, there are the already existing networks and groups, which need to be involved in the process, identification of which was noted as important by Kent (2013). The *“trick for me is always to find a key informant”* (H). An example of such is a student, whose university assignment was to create a vision of Lombok (Utrecht neighbourhood), so he knows everybody in the area, then *“within two or three handshakes you can always reach everybody”* (H). Often those key informants are the zealous nuts from the area (H).

The goal is to find allies in the area, in the municipality, local club, neighbourhood group, partners who will also help you to get better understanding of the area, community, framework and connect you to further stakeholders (H, V). In this networking way *“that is kind of via via, you find your way, enter different groups”* (H), ‘expand the circle’ (B), the community building is started, the coalitions are triggered (H). To describe this technique, a snowball effect or an ‘avalanche effect’ was used. As people who get involved will know other people who could join, the tactic is also to open up their networks (H). It is in a way creating a gathering of leaders (D). On the other hand, one needs to remember about such representatives of the community, about who exactly does (s)he represents (L). Additionally, organizers need to bear in mind that *“some people can just shout louder and are more articulate than the others”* (A). With all the methods of involving different actors, representation issue within place-making processes seems to be addressed better than in traditional participation (Hordijk et al., 2015).

Once the energy is cumulated in an emerging group, other actors want to be a part of it as well (H). In Nieuwegein *“we started with the people with energy and two years ago those were ten people (...) and now we have 260 people on the list”* (H). A very good example of such a

snowball effect is the project from high school in Thessaloniki, where students were involved in the first stage. Later, they started to activate their social networks; friends and families and in the end majority of the neighbourhood was involved (V, see below).

### Case 5: Highschool in Thessaloniki

One of the projects organized by a place-maker in Thessaloniki had its origins in the school. The project was initiated by the organizer herself, financed by a scholarship she obtained for experimenting with the place-making approach in Greece. It aimed at activating the youth first (see Fig. 18), as they have no experience with participation or co-creation and never had “a saying on what will happen to their school yard” (V). The organizer started “to co-decide, co-design and co-manage their school yard and then when they [the students] are ready and they understand the concept and they are empowered enough, we can also move to the rest of the neighbourhood” (V). With time, their actions spread towards the surroundings; a park, streets and pedestrian areas in the vicinity (V). This case illustrates very well the scale issue of place-making, start from small area, aim for big (see subchapter 4.2). Additionally, it shows how important is the prerequisite of having first the empowered participants.



**Fig. 17** Plants potting (Topio Facebook) **Fig. 18** Group discussion with highschool youth (Topio Facebook)

In place-making, organizers try to go to people’s meetings and also adjust to their customs, instead of inviting them to your meetings, which may be exclusive (Hordijk et al., 2015). It confirms what Silberberg et al. (2013) that it is not about inviting the people, but looking for them. *“It is a very fundamental thing, but 99% of the time that is what goes wrong with participatory processes organized by government. Because then you exclude. (...) Is it really us, should they be coming to us, or should we be going, reaching out to them?”* (H)

Place-makers try to reach out to the groups that already have their meetings and circles, but may not want to participate in gatherings outside their groups. Importantly, communities are always diverse, so it requires a unique, often creative approach towards each part of a community. Also, the way of consultation needs to be adjusted to the group (K). *“Every place, every area of a community is different, so there is no standard recipe for this I am afraid, but just to keep thinking”* (H). This was illustrated on the project carried out in Enschede, where 30% of the area is inhabited by Syrian orthodox (H). They flee to the Netherlands and settle in Enschede as their archbishop has moved there. *“They had the experience, that the government is the organization that kills your kids”* (H). So, they did not want to get in touch with the

municipality at all. Thus, to get into the structure of such hermetic group, it was: “*Via via via, be patient, these processes are not about planning they are about timing, sometimes you have to wait and do nothing and sometimes there is an opportunity, you have to jump in and act fast*” (H).

So, a lot of times the required skill is also to be patient and at the same time, ready to react when the possibility occurs, showing the flexibility of the process. Furthermore, as this example shows, often you need to adapt to the way the group operates; Syrians have the saying that you ‘only do business with people after you ate a kilo of salt together’ (H), so this is rather different from Dutch culture, where people are more straight forward. After a long process of entering the minority group, it started to invest in their neighbourhood as well, even though they have not done it before (H).

Another technique of gathering people is organizing an event in the area, to make the process more popular and to bring a community together – one of such events is place game, elaborated more below. By doing it, you make yourself visible in the area and it is also an opportunity to get contact details of the participants for further actions (A). One of the place-makers had also his office at the square that was redeveloped. It gives a chance to further observe the area. The temporary office was arranged to attract everyone give ideas and discuss, there were old pictures of the area hanged on the walls (L). As the office was present in the area for couple of weeks – time span was longer than in case of a single event and a more diverse public could be gathered. In this way, the information about what the users of the area want, what is their experience can easily be gathered.

Being there in person, either in the office or just doing observation, one can see who lives there, who are the stakeholders in the area. It allows for making a comprehensive choice on who is included; children, elderly, man, woman, etc, as each of groups have different opinions and thus create places adjusted to all the users (PPS, 2009c). Often these are also the people “*who would not come to rooms, community meeting organized by city government*” (H). Of course, there is a threat, that only the already active and ‘hip’ people will get involved and usually these are “*the higher educated, better off, normally speaking people with imagination and not the Turkish guy on the corner*” (H). And because of that, place-makers need to be especially aware, take extra steps to include also those less active users (D), while also empowering them. Knowing who are the users in the area and keeping this diversity throughout the process is central for place-making (H), what was also described by PPS (2015a).

Once the contacts are found, the meetings are organized, to get to know better the existing groups. As the place-maker who now operates in Thessaloniki notices; “*Here in Greece, we would need more meetings, that would have to do with engagement and empowerment of the citizens (...) That is why, unfortunately I am not very much in favour of just making one workshop and then just going into interventions. No, you need more meetings, you need much more workshops, you need much more work on the first stages of place-making*” (V). So, the time devoted to involving the citizens also depends on the level of empowerment the community is currently in. The place-maker with the experience from both countries (The Netherlands and Greece), admits, that Greeks do not have ‘mentality of active citizenship’. She

further points that even if a person comes to one meeting it does not necessarily mean (s)he will come to the next one. It then takes longer time to empower and activate the citizens than to actually do an intervention (V). This shows the empowerment done through collaboration that Silberberg et al. (2013) were writing about.

Organizers highlight that the contact throughout the process should be as personal as possible (P, H, B). It is highlighted, that looking for the contacts needs to be done with an active approach (P). With all kind of meetings, the most important aspect is to make deep contact with people and give them the power; *“You are not doing that for them, you are empowering them really, that they can do it, they do it. And you stay with them, you are always with them, but it is not me, it is them, we are the tool, they are the experts”* (P). Most of the place-makers therefore also organize one to one meetings with the users<sup>9</sup>. It does not exclude others from participating, but this is an initial way of gathering more in-depth information, empowering and building trust. This is how one of the participants from DAK describes his first meeting with an organizer; *“It was just walking around and scanning the place and opportunities and then we just sat down and talk about like Schalkwijk because he wanted the impression of Haarlem and the surrounding and the community. So, we talked, and we hit it off and it was a great experience and after that the place game came”* (Ph).

Individual talks may be time-consuming, but they also ‘give back a lot’ (H). During such a meeting, much more information can be obtained than when doing group meetings. It is both due to simply more devoted time, but also as there are no other stakeholders, whose ideas may clash. Furthermore, there is then a space for triggering imagination of the interlocutors. That was a case in a talk with Rabobank during a project happening in Utrecht. In a discussion between place-maker and bank representatives, it turned out the bank wants to have the image linked more with agriculture and food, as that is their type of bank, and they would like their office and entrance to represent that (now this big building is fully covered with venetian mirrors, with no connection to the surroundings). Then the place-maker suggested extending the office towards outside, to make people welcome already earlier when they approach the bank. *“They [Rabobank] have never thought about it, that maybe they should open up their ground floor more”* (H). So, this kind of ideas can happen during one to one talks, when you *“really seek the interest of the other person”* (H).

This very personal contact in place-making between place-makers and users requires certain characteristics of organizers; being friendly, open, enthusiastic, showing interest in what people say and do (H, A, P see subchapter 4.2). This type of setting makes it much more beneficial for building trust between the parties, sharing knowledge and empowering the actors. However, there is also a downside to this very personal contact in place-making. In some cases, people may not be willing to talk, due to some individual characteristics and cultural differences with an organizer (A). For instance, if, when knocking on the doors approaching a resident it is a woman or a man towards a woman or a man (A).

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<sup>9</sup> It is difficult to assess how many participants that means, as it varies per project, but one the respondents says the aim is to have 20 people for those talks (D), another one gives an amount of 10-15 interlocutors (H).

The issue of gathering the representative group in the process seems central, but also the most difficult and time-consuming one (Silberberg et al., 2013). Possibly, it is also a part of the process that makes it the most different from the traditional participation process. The thorough research is done to bring better understanding of the area, with no goals at the beginning, therefore the path dependencies (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011) are not applicable in place-making process. At the same time, organizing party cannot have interest in involving specific actors as the goals are only decided jointly, so also this argument against participation by Hordijk et al. (2015) is invalid in terms of place-making.

### **Place game**

A big part of the process, which is not used in participatory planning and at the same time is almost always used in place-making processes, is a place game. Therefore below, this part will be analysed in depth. After the initial, preparatory phase when usually one to one meetings happen, there comes a time of bringing everyone together. Although, there are projects when this phase is prolonged for more than one event, like in the case of having a temporary office at the square (also some projects do not have this big gathering at all, like Zoho). The most common type is place game, however different companies or freelancers do it in different way. *“I always did everything with the place-game first. There were projects done in last 15 years, 20 years maybe, without place-game, failed. It was a good lesson”* (P).

It happens on a previously announced date, when all the users are informed, there comes an event at the spot where place-making takes place, which lasts for couple of hours. It is important to remember, that even though it is a day, it is preceded by couple months of preparation. Often the cities say; *“lets do the place game and everything will be alright”* (H). But it should never be on its own, it should always be a part of a strategy, as there will be many ideas coming out from it and as expectations from participants will rise. After a place game, *“people want to do something and then if you cannot say yes quickly, then people get disappointed”* (H). Therefore, there need to be conditions created beforehand. This preparatory time, especially including one to one meetings, prevents a situation, when all of ideas clash. There are chances, that gathering all users without preparation would be successful, but usually there are too different expectations from people. This growing complexity of societal needs was described by Boonstra and Boelens (2011) and possibly that initial phase of gathering information to prepare a common ground can be seen as a response to that challenge. Number of users during a place game again, depends on location, is usually between 30 and 50, although, in the one on Museumsplein, Amsterdam there were two groups of hundred people (P). With such big groups, it can be indeed difficult to reach consensus, unless you have done a preparation before.

*“When you start the place-game, when you bring the people together, I already know, before we start, I have been working for two months, meeting people and I know that some of these people are going to meet each other, it is going to be this tremendous amount of energy, because they do not know each other yet”* (P). Place games are always open – anyone interested can join. While some people know each other already, from outside the place game (J), one of the aims of this event is to connect people from different circles, backgrounds, with each other. *“In a place game, a new combination, a new set of participants”* take part (J). This is exactly

when diverse, unknown to each other actors connect, and social friction occurs (PPS, 2015a). As participant from DAK explains; people from the community, entrepreneurs, managers, all come in contact and hear each other perspective, from which they can learn and after, join their forces (Ph).

Place game itself is organized as a special, local event. Atmosphere is very relaxed, at the beginning everyone gets a name tag to easily interact with each other. The aim is to make “*real contact (...) It is not a master class anymore. I start with the playlist, I have music (...) that relates to them, I know after two months, what music they like*” (P). Furthermore, organizers try to engage local musicians to perform after the place game. Similarly, to provide some local food and beverages to be served. These steps make the event really local, with intimate setting, which also encourages participants to meet more often, as the place-maker describes what a participant says; “*“you know, we can do it every Friday, we can have a get-together”*”. *But they did not know that before and now this is what they do*” (P). Place game simply gives a common experience for all its participants, which they can later refer to (J).

A place game during which the participant observation was conducted, was in Meinerswijk, Arnhem. Currently, there are no residential buildings at all. Placemaking Plus was hired there by a company which bought over 50% of the area, with an intention of future development. Stadsblokken – Meinerswijk is mostly a green area, located on the south of the city, with only some recreational activities there.

Place game started at 13.30 and lasted until around 18. As the area is mostly green, it was happening in an old barrack, where chairs and tables were arranged. After registering and getting a name-tag, so that everyone is approachable, and a short time of mingling with the provided snacks, there was a theoretical explanation of what place-making is and also about the history of the area and its assets. Additionally, some inspirational images with possible solutions for the area were showed. Moreover, some of the participants were introduced by the organizer, which gave the feeling, that there are not anonymous people anymore, but more of a friends’ meeting. At the same time, there were no more important and less important people, everyone was equal. During an introduction, also other people gave short insights into the area, representing the cross-section stakeholders; users, inhabitants, organizations, city. Similarly, city worker taking part in the Nieuwegein process says she told something about the plans for the area (E). Lastly, the approach that the organizer presented was very much about saying ‘you are the experts’; “*be aware, that after today, there will be things happening for you, which you dreamed about, for ever and now they are going to start happening, and you can actually do it*” (P).

Afterwards, participants were randomly divided in even groups and were randomly assigned to one of the ten spots previously chosen from the whole area. Each person was handed a small evaluation sheet, to be filled in at the spot. Everyone had around an hour to visit the spot, discuss within a group about it and fill in the form. In the group where participant observation took place, there was a nearby resident, an architect also living in Arnhem and a municipality employee. After that, groups met again at the main spot. There was a time to make a poster about made observations within each group and to try to come up with short- and long-term



ideas. Later, posters were presented to all the participants and some discussions on possible solutions took place (Fig 19). After this more formal part, there was time for live music and food from the local place. Along it was the time to brainstorm all the ideas, network between the groups and simply meet closer all the participants. The whole event was held in an informal setting and a very relaxed atmosphere. Simultaneously, a really strong engagement could be seen from all the participants. Importantly, all of the participants, no matter of their background and institutions they represented, were seen as equal partners at the table.



**Fig. 19** Groups presenting their posters during a place game in Arnhem (Placemaking Plus, 2017)

The interviewed participants of place-making processes, highlighted also the freedom they felt during the event, to brainstorm, to speak about their ideas (J). Although, Philip who took part in the DAK project, admits it took a while for them to learn to express themselves; *“Two years ago, we were still learning, so it was hard for us to express our thoughts, because we had amazing ideas, but the people who are working with us are like older men, grown people, they had a strong vision of things but we had the opposite vision for the centrum, so it was hard, but they always invited us to speak our mind and be a voice of the youth. Of all the teenagers of the city, so yeah, I felt free to do it, but it was kind of hard to do in the beginning”* (Ph). This quote moreover shows, the way place-making process is empowering its participants, helping to form their opinions and make their position stronger in a community. Other merit of the place game is the instant, positive interaction between participants. You can give your ideas and then *“people say that is a nice idea, but you can improve that idea by that, or this. Then you move... you switch place, and you do the same (...). You look at all the ideas, you say “hey!, this is easy to implement, or this is hard, we will need a lot of money for that. But do not need money for that”* (J). So, it is not only sharing the ideas, but also discussing, upgrading immediately to a doable form, using the opportunity, that there are people from different backgrounds and everyone can contribute according to their capacity.

Lastly, as place-game is organized at the spot, it can trigger new perceptions of the place itself. During the event, participants wander around the place, even if one is already familiar with it, by using all senses still new things can be discovered (J). *“What does this grass tell me. Maybe this is a bit vague, but this tree, I never saw this tree as a tree”* (J). Participant admits, that

although he has been for a while involved in managing of the fortress, where a place game took place in Nieuwegein, he has never focused on the actual place that much. And after the event “*connection with the space really changes*” (J). Especially as the place becomes differentiated into various spots, the different groups visit, so you start to analyse them in a fragmented way and not as a whole. Then one can discover or rediscover afresh “*wow, we had a view, I never realised that we had this view, or this is high or ugly*” (J). Place game contributes to better understanding of the area, knowing the area and then also to deepen the attachment to it (Kent, Madden, 2016).

### **Place management team**

After this day event, a place-management team is established which later coordinate the short- and long-term goals along with place-makers. It is not that other people cannot contribute, but this group provides an instant contact for different actors in the process and also assures that the project is pushed forward. Again “*with proper empowerment, you see the leaders coming out from the community*” (V). But apart from community members these are all kinds of stakeholders from the area. “*They pick themselves*” (P); the group is self-created, based on the group dynamics. Members of the team need to be enthusiastic, willing and committed to the project (V). At the same time, organizers bear in mind to keep the diversity of the group, so that it is representative of all the users in the area and possibly to include one of the place-makers as well (B).

It is usually between six to eight people, however it may grow throughout the time, as it happened with Bryant Park, where now there are 80 people in the group (H). The more complex projects, the more leaders you need (H). Place-makers help with organizing the meetings, which usually happen once a month, but do not influence decisions later and provide support if needed; “*and if they need help, if the city tries to pull back, we immediately jump on it*” (P).

Place management team is also a group that may further be reshaped into a team responsible for the programming of the area, or the management team of Business Improvement Zone (BIZ) as it is the case in the project of Delflandplein in Amsterdam (P). Having an established team, which is up to date with the process, makes it also easy to then combine it with some other organization in the area (P). Or to appoint one of the members as a manager of the place or spot. In the DAK for example, Philip, one of the participants, became a manager of the roof (Ph).

### **Creating conditions for self-organization**

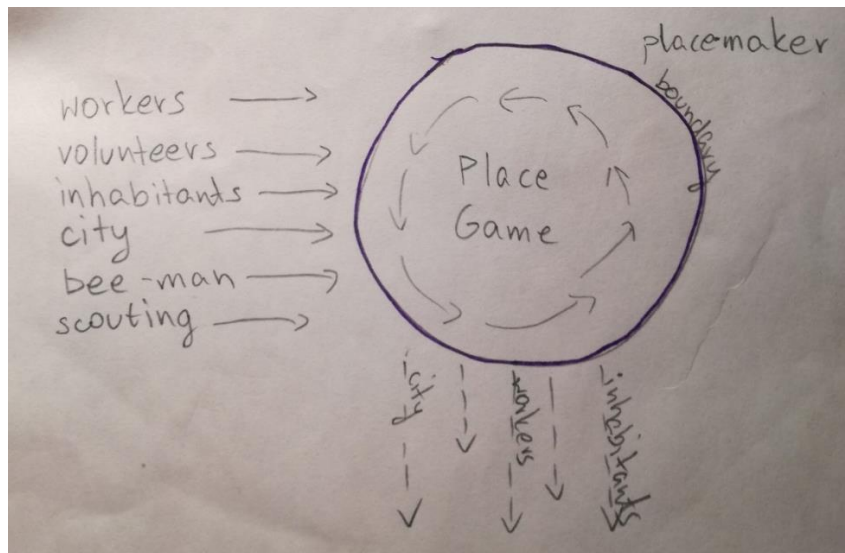
For everything to work out properly, there must be some preconditions, which delimit the place game spatially and psychologically. There needs to be “*a good balance between thinking space, creativeness, and limits*” (J). Spatially it should be limited as with too big projects, there are no shared, local values and it is difficult to focus and direct attention. Moreover, place-makers need to be honest and transparent from the beginning, on what is possible to realize in the area (L). They need to know then in detail, that there is enough space to create something both in short and long term (E). While municipalities often ask for ideas and then say something is not possible to accomplish, people are confused and discouraged to participate further. In

place-making, the organizers try to indicate beforehand the conditions and also explain, if some ideas cannot be realized and why (L). Transparency is one of the assets of place-making, for lack of which traditional participation was criticized (Swyngedouw, 2005).

Furthermore, there must be from the beginning the mentioned, empowering approach of the organizers towards all the users. Showing that the decisive power is at their side so that it can later turn into self-organization. That is how the participant of Nieuwegein place game summarized what happened after the event. So, for the self-organization to take place, “(...) *there is time, there is who, there is what, there is all kinds of questions that are not related to the contents, but to the premise, you need to set the right protocol*” (J).

A requirement of the right participants is important, as the place game is very much about the group dynamics and how actors cooperate with each other (J). “*If you put right things in, right things come out*” (J). Participants need to be able to work together to a certain extent, “*you have to be in the same value chain*” (H). In case of creating a new community as happened in Zoho, place-maker explains that they had to say ‘no’ to some of those willing, “*because if you say yes to everybody, you do not get a community*” (H). And then the whole area would be filled with architects only. Such situation happened with Broedplaats – breeding place policy, which aimed at creating creative incubators, with all kinds of creative industries. This should trigger new ideas to come out from the cooperation. The policy however did not control how exactly are the companies arranged and a good cooperation “*does not happen if you put a dance studio next to a planning agency*” (H). Therefore, the future uses, need to be in the same value chain.

Process, up until the place game has the goal of gathering knowledge, discovering users and creating networks, after the place game, there is no organization anymore, there is no ‘protocol’ (J). “*It is kind of little improvisation, who does what*” (B). With all the fulfilled preconditions, self-organization is automatically part of the process after place game. So, there are no strict rules on who is going to do what and fulfil which of the commonly decided tasks. “*You do not really need an action plan to have an action after an intervention that is aiming for creativity and ideas*” (J). Fig 20 shows the whole process according to one of the participants (has been replicated due to bad quality of the picture). All the participants come to place game, setting of which is controlled by the organizer, with the mentioned limits. Organizers control the time and keep the space. If a group falls out from the focus, it is better if participants themselves pull each other back and not if an organizer has to do that (J). By such attitude also the power is shifted from organizers to participants. After a place game, participants undertake the agreed interventions, on “*volunteer and non-coordinated basis*” (J). Then coordination from the organizers’ side is not that much needed, as it was provided before, to allow the parties to be saying ‘yes’ quickly.



**Fig. 20** Process of place-making according to one of the participants in Nieuwegein process

This way of working is also very different from the standard planning form, which divides the tasks, with the clear goals for each actor. Here, there are no roles assigned a priori, so everyone acts within their own capabilities, with the will to do something and in a position to do something (J) and place management team can help in coordinating actions if needed. As the participant from Nieuwegein process explains; *“Because we have decided on the future of fortress, and it has to be cultural, and has to be open, and we want art etc. And then in the action, the foundation stumbles upon a connection with artists and talks about art on fortress. And the government reaches out to the landscape designer. And nobody has to control each other anymore because we all know that the actions that are taken are the logical actions out of place game”* (J).

This shows, that the initial efforts of the organizers pay off in the later part of the process. In this case, up until a second place game, between 30 to 40% of the ideas that were agreed on in the first place game, were implemented or currently under way, even though no rigid steps or roles were decided (J). Interestingly, it seems that this self-initiative concerns not only participants but also the organizers, as in the above case *“the facilitators were inspired to do something”* (J) and they helped to raise funding. As both the organizer and participant admit, this particular process was very successful, but it is really difficult, to have all the circumstances at the right place.

#### **4.2. Success and failure factors of place-making**

Regarding the last sub-question, factors that make place-making successful, there were not that many aspects given in the literature review. The described process of place-making is definitely a key for success, which bases on different techniques of involving diverse actors and then making use of local assets together with the community, who is seen as the expert (Silberberg et al. 2013; PPS, 2009a). However, what seems also crucial for a success of a project are the organizers, who need to exactly gather and connect all the users. Leaders should be zealous nuts, fully devoted to the projects and willing to take up the risks (Kent and Madden, 2016; Silberberg et al., 2013). They should also act as salesmen, who are enthusiastic about the

process and spread this enthusiasm among others (Silberberg et al., 2013). Similarly, Van der Stoep (2014) sees the organizers as salesman of the initiatives and also those who mobilize larger networks and navigate the projects. Navigation is done with no specific destination and can be interpreted as “ongoing experimentation toward possible futures” (Hiller, 2010, cited in Boonstra, 2015, p.348). Basing on the description of place-making, it could be stated that the organizers navigate towards a place game and later the navigation is transferred more to the participants. Organizers are also responsible for creating safe conditions for the process to be shaped (ibid.). This also matches very much the description of creating the right conditions before the place game.

Furthermore, organizers should be resources for the communities and facilitate and help to implement the jointly created vision (PPS, 2009; Palermo, Ponzini, 2015). According to Smith (2015) expert knowledge should be left out of the process until consensus is reached. Boonstra (2015) sees planners in successful civic initiatives as navigators and those who establish connections. Moreover, they need to act as boundary spanners; networking and communication skills are crucial for them (ibid.). Boundary spanners are also responsible for creating a common meaning among various actors and setting up long-term relations (Meerkerk, 2014; Specht, 2012, cited in Boonstra, 2015).

Apart from the leaders who carry a very important role in the process, there are several other aspects which were mentioned in the theoretical chapter. First one is a flexible legal framework which makes place-making process easier (Silberberg et al., 2013). Secondly it is the fact that place-making should not be perceived as a new field but as a one which connects better existing ones. This was also illustrated by place governance idea. It implies interdisciplinarity of the movement (Kent, 2013). The fact that place-making encompasses both short- and long-term goals (PPS, 2009) can be viewed as a success factor as it allows to build a smoother process. Place-making to be fruitful needs to focus on a small scale to allow for the shared focus on place (Lydon, 2012, cited in Palermo, Ponzini, 2015, p.8). Another external factor mentioned is the financial crisis, which allowed for more experiments in the urban fabric (Mahar, 2016). A failure factor mentioned by Silberberg et al. (2013) is the scarce financial resources for place-making. Role of the organizers and all the other aspects discovered in the interviews, which contribute to success or failure of place-making process will be described below.

### **Prerequisites**

For successful place-making process. there appeared aspects in the interviews, that can be classified as prerequisites. These are the factors that cannot be changed by place-makers or by the process, but need to be fulfilled, before it starts. Firstly, experience of one of the organizers show, that unless the area where the process is conducted is safe and has basic infrastructure, one cannot talk about further aspects like empowerment or building the community (V).

Secondly, there is a necessity that the people participating, have ‘mental space’ for making better places (A). Mentioned difficult cases regarded areas of very low socio-economic status, where residents, even if they wanted to take part, could not find time for it, “*like single woman with multiple children*”. A comparison was made to Maslov pyramid and how far up, place-

making should be located in it. It seems that only when the lower needs, like food, water, shelter etc., are properly covered, making better places with people can be successful.

Lastly, as it was described, there are many techniques for meeting and involving the people, however place-makers cannot force anyone to join. Therefore, those who are taking part in the end are called ‘coalition of the willing’ and they are the ones that see at least some opportunities in the area (D).

*“I think, the best spot for place-making in an area, where there is a case of emergency”* (L). This emergency, or urgency was mentioned couple of times in the interviews. With these, respondents mean that something is not working as it should (V), programme of the area is forgotten, or it is simply not nice to live there (L). Deteriorating spaces facing decrease in customers’ turnout or lacking safety (D). These drawbacks make people much more involved, willing to help, as they want to solve problems in the area they live or have business in. On the other hand, in the more difficult neighbourhoods in the sense of socio-economic status, where place-making is really needed, it may be *“more difficult to get people involved, invested, spending time on it”* (A). Even though, empowering people in such areas might be of greater importance than in wealthier neighbourhoods (A). As mentioned above, a bottom line is that people need to have enough ‘mental space’ to take part in the projects.

Furthermore, what has been mentioned couple of times in the interviews is the context in which place-making happens. Partially it is specifically Dutch context, partially it is a global one – financial crisis which started in 2007/2008. Due to lack of funding or lower amounts of it, governments were more supportive for low budget solutions and more positively looking at experiments, which play an important role in place-making movement (D, K). Additionally, what have been indicated earlier (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011), *“over the past five years, there has been a growing call for flexible planning, ad hoc bottom-up responses and citizens initiatives”* (K). Cities are stimulating citizens to engage more in the spatial development in their areas. Again, shift of power from professionals to citizens seems to play central role in this reconfiguration (K) which is exactly matching the aim of place-making. Moreover, because of the crisis, there were more vacant spaces than usually in the cities, as less money was available for both private and public investments. One of the respondents says people simply saw opportunities in those derelict spots (D). This described Dutch context shows favourable conditions in development of place-making and the move towards self-initiatives, stemming from government itself.

A freelancer operating in the field tells about a project she initially took part in, which was mostly about experimenting with community development on the short-term but then using the knowledge on the long-term. However, as the *“official end of the crisis was the beginning of 2017”* (D), authorities changed their attitude and said they are only interested in the solid projects while there is *“a need for big money being made”* (D). An opinion that now it is again a shift towards top-down development only appeared once, however it might be true, and it may become more visible in the coming years. Nonetheless, these given conditions during the crisis were part of supportive premises for place-making development in the Netherlands.

The specific context of place-making was also illustrated on examples from other countries. Place-making is only possible where there is at least some allowance for it from the governmental side and there is some initiative which comes from citizens themselves. A respondent coming from Lithuania notices that there is a very top-down in planning in this country and also no mention about place-making (B). It can be stated, that there is yet no shift from government to governance there. On the other hand, it appears that in Nairobi, government is not really present in terms of urban issues, as it either does not have money or does not see it as important enough. Thus, there are many bottom-up, self-organization initiatives happening, originating among citizens, as they need to do things themselves. These tactics, as the interviewee claims, are not yet in the global place-making debate.

*“But maybe (...) where government is very present, there has never been a necessity for people to arrange for themselves”* (A). This argument seems legitimate, however it is again very context specific, as government may be active in many different ways – it can actively support citizens to take up their own initiatives, but it can be active in a negative way also. Meaning, that it is active in a top-down way, forcing only the development profitable from the governmental point of view, as happens in Lithuania. These foreign examples show that place-making role in planning is country specific and its characteristic depends on the broader governmental and legal context. Necessary conditions are then shift of power from government to other actors and secondly, presence of active citizens who want to shape their surroundings. Below, Dutch context will be further analysed, where these conditions are present.

## **Organizers**

A factor that also makes place-making successful are the organizers. As has been described in the subchapter about the process (4.1.3), they need to actively research and activate the area. One of the needs for successful process identified by Boonstra (2015) and Meerkerk (2014) is that the organizers act as boundary spanners. Translating different values and needs through languages of different groups is very visible in the behaviour of the organizers in place-making processes. Interviewees highlight that social skills are seen as the most important ones, with good communication being the first one. Initially, an organizer also needs some courage to approach all the diverse stakeholders; individuals, groups, companies, organizations (L).

Secondly, being able to talk to all of them and to make connections between them, is crucial for a place-maker (D, H, V). The task is to mediate between different languages, interests and *“between a hard (economic value) and soft (social value)”* (K). To connect ideas with right actors and bridge the disciplines (H, D). Place-makers can be thus described as connectors and as those giving access to all ‘doors’; *“Peter [an organizer] is just a professional, he just kicked open doors. He let us talk with like the winkel [shopping] centrum manager. And all those types of people. He kicks open the door with the gemeente [municipality] to talk about plans of ours (Ph).* This matches very well description of a boundary spanner (Merkeerk et al., 2013). Furthermore, an organizer needs to have passion and enthusiasm towards the process and towards the encountered people (P). One needs to have *“the power to inspire larger networks”* (H). This enthusiasm and power confirm the role of salesman which organizers should also carry (Van der Stoep, 2014).

Another aspect in the process is the atmosphere that must be created, mostly by the organizers, to make participants feel at ease and feel as part of the process. Furthermore, partakers need to feel free to propose any of their ideas. They need from the organizers *“willingness towards what you are working on and that helps you to go outside of your own boundaries and think new and out of the box because there is this inspirational organizer who lets you do what you want to do”* (J). Listening, being receptive and showing interest in what the actors say and propose is also very important (H). At the same time, the listening part needs to be done in an analytical way, to grasp a deeper meaning of what the participants tell and to find a common ground for the diverse needs, again adhering to the role of boundary spanner (Meerkerk, 2014); *“(…) to understand what drives all these different kinds of people. So, what drives an inhabitant? What drives an entrepreneur? You know what drives a developer? And you need to find common ground, in these drives to get everybody on the same page”* (D). The goal is to distil the ‘why’s’, from ‘why do you want a bench’. *“You know, we try to gather all these why’s together and make a bigger why”* (D). The skill is then to analyse the tacit knowledge of people, so, extrapolating from the casual, every-day stories, information and needs concerning a neighbourhood (A). And later, to make that knowledge apparent and make it a substantial input for the process.

Apart from these skills of organizers that contribute to success of the process, they also admit, that people expect organizers to contribute with their professional knowledge as otherwise experts would have no utility (H). Place games usually start with explanation of what place-making is and with the diagram of what makes a good place (see Fig. 6). As has been described, the aim is to transfer knowledge to participants throughout the process, making them more independent and in the future allowing them to conduct place-making process on their own, to self-organize (V). Organizers claim, that there is always plenty of local knowledge, which contradicts the challenge identified by Silberberg et al. (2013) who stated there is lack of this community rooted knowledge. Nevertheless, expert knowledge may also be needed to translate the tacit knowledge into realistic plans (K). Experts are a useful source of information for participants who may not have that much experience with planning, financial or legal aspects, what illustrates the use of professionals as resources for communities (PPS, 2009). It may be also needed later, throughout the management process, as a participant explains, who became a manager of the DAK rooftop in Haarlem: *“I thought that was easy because I managed it, but there were a lot of legal things to arrange like how to pay those guys, insurance, all those kind of things, and they help a lot with that (Ph). And they connected us with different parties, they guided me through everything but let me have the control, the creative control”* (Ph).

This quote also shows that it is providing expert knowledge, but keeping the influence on the minimum (P). Experts cannot affect ideas or decisions of the involved actors; however, it is beneficial if they provide some inspiration at the beginning. As the described talk with Rabobank, same happens at the beginning of place game or other interactions. It aims at triggering the imagination and extrapolating ideas. Asking someone directly about their ideas may not always work, but giving your own ideas may be much more efficient for a respondent to agree, disagree or think of something else. *“Sometimes, putting in your suggestions can be a way to extrapolate the knowledge. So, what can you think of as a resident, that I would have*



*never thought of, because I am just not familiar with the place. And the other way around, what can I think of as an expert” (A).*

While it seems a right path to trigger ideas, some other interviewees claim they avoid giving their own ideas, not to influence the process (P, V). It can be concluded, that the ideas are given only to bring inspiration or trigger a discussion and not to enforce the ideas of organizers on a community. Example of such an inspiration was observed in Arnhem, where participant observation was conducted. In the vicinity of the analysed area there is a bridge which is a connector between city centre and the area. At the beginning, pictures of diverse bridges were shown. There were all kinds of cases, some designed for people, where there was a lot of activity going on, like a Florence bridge (with shops and stalls) and some examples of design only made for transport or where no human part was present. Later, one of the outcomes of the place game was an idea to organize a festival on the bridge (P). This is how a participant recall beginning of another place game; *“It was like this is place-making, they showed different type of place-makings which they already did. Their dreams and their goals and their inspirations and after that we had the possibilities to express our ideas” (Ph).* This inspirational role of the organizers and triggering the ideas could be compared with role of the navigators (Van der Stoep, 2014) as by inspiring they give some kind of guidance, nevertheless it is up to participants which way the inspiration will lead them.

Role of the organizer switches however for the time of a place game. Then, solely a facilitating role is needed to guide the actors and to guard the mentioned physical and psychological limits of the event. To measure the time, provide the framework, be responsible for the technical aspects of the event. Importantly, this role should not mix with others; *“if you are in the role of facilitator it is a fixed role you cannot step out of it and start for instance discussing the outcomes that the team members have” (J).*

During a place game then, organizers give the floor fully to the participants, except the inspiration part at the beginning. Only later, once the participants decide on the results, can they offer their advice if needed. *“They gave us space and they kept a space” (J).* Accepting expertise of participants, leaving freedom for their independent decisions is yet another skill, which was included in the description of a role of a navigator (Boonstra, 2015). As a partaker from Nieuwegein explains, organizers need to *“accept the complete autocracy of the participants instead of their better knowledge because of course, they know better [the organizers]” (J).* During events such as a place-game, users ought to have a clear picture, that they have the decisive power. This is exactly the role that Smith (2015) was calling for from the organizers, to leave expert knowledge out of the process until the consensus is reached. Nevertheless, it seems that it only happens during a place game and in other times of the process, organizers knowledge is a useful resource for participants. In the end, the process also requires ability to leave, to let the community take care on its own (V).

Leaders of the process should be zealous nuts who are willing to take up the risk linked with fulfilling a project (Kent and Madden, 2016). From the interviews though the image of the organizers that arises is not identical with this description. Interviewees agree that they act more as facilitators and those who are actually looking for the zealous nuts in the area. The

described techniques of analysing places and meeting people aim at identifying the zealous nuts in different places. The skill of organizers is then to track down the local zealous nuts. A similar relation between organizers and participants could be seen when considering the role of place-makers themselves. In the end, it seems a bit confusing who are the place-makers, are these the organizers of a process or are these the people who contribute, making changes in a place. Interviewees are slightly divided regarding that question. Whereas some agree to call themselves place-makers (P, L, D) others are not so sure about it, claiming that they are more facilitators of a place-making process, who “*create conditions for other people to be place-makers, the networks to be place-making networks*” (H). This is exactly what Boonstra (2015) described about the organizers, that they should be the ones creating conditions. They also then act as medium between top-down and bottom up. In this case, place-makers are more the people who participate and make changes (A, H). For example, participant from the DAK sees himself as a place-maker (Ph). Organizers need to be careful when they call themselves place-makers, as it might be interpreted that they are the ones ‘doing’ place-making and may deter others from taking initiative. But, as has been described multiple times, the power should be on the participants’ side (H).

Most importantly, to be a place-maker, a person needs to be an active citizen h(er)imself as otherwise (s)he will not be seen as credible (V). All the cases show that the organizers not only facilitate others in the projects but also support the initiative themselves. Be it with their expertise or with organizing financial support or with partaking in conducting the quick wins, like fountain painting (L). In that sense, it can be concluded that both the organizers and the participants are place-makers, maybe just “*there are different stages of place-makers*” (H). Perhaps organizers should be called more facilitating place-makers, however this might also be an issue for a future research. Nevertheless, their role in the process is for sure one of the success factors of place-making.

Additionally, what the organizers highlight is that they try to establish teams which consists of people with different types of characters. As place-making projects differ, each may need slightly different skills. The example given by one respondents regards her, being very structured, with difficulty to oversee a future complex process and her team partner who has a very good understanding of project management and can easily coordinate even a very flexible process (A). Another case is a combination of people who are more into acting actively, right away, using their hands, with the people who prefer to strategize, discuss and prepare for longer time (H). Division of tasks within companies is organized according to personality, soft skills of the person and not their profession, although those two things are also linked together. For instance, there is a worker who gets along very well with youth, so she is always responsible for that part of the process (P) and professionally, she is a social worker. This combination of different soft skills within the organizing team is also a success factor for the process.

The above description shows how many different sorts of skills is needed for the organizers of place-making. Furthermore, their function seems to change throughout the process, therefore, their flexibility can be seen as yet another ability contributing to success of the process.

## Scale

A very common answer regarding an aspect that might make place-making successful was the scale of the project. Making use of local assets (Silberberg et al., 2013) and using community as the expert (PPS, 2009a) seem to work best on the smallest scale (Lydon, 2012, cited in Palermo, Ponzini, 2015). *“True power of place-making lies in using (...) local knowledge”* (A). To make use of this knowledge of people, one needs to stick to the area where people operate in. In general, the smaller scale, the better and the easier (P). To identify these social connections, operating on a neighbourhood level seems the most common category named by respondents. However, not everyone is spending time in their neighbourhood and maybe it should be referred to as *“daily urban system scale”* which can be more linked with area of work for example (A). Especially as in place-making it is not only about involving residents but all sorts of users.

Bigger scales are possible, there are participation methods aiming at the national scale, however such scale does not bring the same results. People do not identify themselves with big areas. Small scale is tangible, users can relate to it, consider themselves truly as stakeholder and it is *“full of potential for community building”* (K). Working on a small scale allows for finding *“common ground among stakeholders, based on their share locality”* (K). Furthermore, it is much more difficult to envision changes that might happen on the scale that is not that well known to people (D). So, it is much more efficient to split bigger areas into smaller parts. Then local solutions can be found, in which each participant can have a share. It is then important to create linkages between good places, so during place-making to make a ‘connector’ to the other active area (P). One of the examples was a boat linking the Dappermarkt with a Casino in Amsterdam (P). Afterwards *“one only needs to zoom out to see a collection of hundreds of small initiatives that together create the liveliness of the city that we all appreciate. Think big, act small”* (K).

On the other hand, the small-scale setting of place-making could be seen as a failure factor, as it is difficult to upscale it to the city-, regional-, national- scale. (A). This is also what Palermo and Ponzini (2015) saw as a weakness of the projects. However, creating good places need to start somewhere and it is more beneficial to begin with small scale, but really well-developed places and multiply them, so that they compose bigger areas of great nodes.

## Diverse places and projects

Apart from the scale of the projects, organizers of place-making state that every plan can be realized with the community as a core, as the process is about working together and learning together. It is *“the trip, that you have together (...) you are in this together”* (P). The process is not about visual evidence but about social aspects which can be found in any location. *“It does not matter if it is a street, a square, a market, good neighbourhood, bad neighbourhood, good connections, bad connections”* (P). Even if the given area is doing well, but it was created by one or two architects, it can become excellent when broadening the scope of contributors, so adding the ideas of the community.

According to many interviewees, place-making can be realized even in those processes which seem to be closed for public intake. For instance, there was an example given of IJ film museum, which is an iconic building in Amsterdam. While a unique vision of Delugan Meissl Associated Architects may have been needed to create a specific design, it is also possible and beneficial to co-create the *“public space around it, and how that building relates to other facilities or things people might want in the area”* (D). Furthermore, there was a case of a building itself being co-created. People were invited to express what they want the building to feel like, which functions it should have, what kind of requirements it should meet. The future programme of the building was also discussed. The aim was to interweave public areas in the building as much as possible and to co-create both the space within and outside the building (D).

Additionally, place-making steps can be interwoven in a traditional way of planning, for instance when making a contest for design of public space. It is not fully place-making, but it is a step to transform the top-down approach. This example was given by a place-maker currently working in Greece (V). In a preparation for the briefing for an architectural competition, an organizer tried to consult with the community first, to then give the requirements for the contest.

In many cases of traditional planning, place-making could be of use, but it is still not. For example, when renewing the streets, it would be useful to ask people what they want (L). For smaller scale alley refurbishment, users would have a lot to say. Instead of just replacing the sewer, maybe a pavement could be widened and made more accessible (L).

Similarly, even in projects that at first may seem to be solely governed by specific organization, place-making can have some contribution. An example of such is water management in Thessaloniki. Municipality there tried to involve residents in the process when deciding on how to use the contaminated water. It was organized as a workshop, to gather the ideas. Again, it is not fully place-making, but by using some aspects of it, community is involved in a field theoretically dominated by private companies or government.

It seems that place-making can be conducted almost everywhere, at least partially. *“We got projects in various and so different areas, showing that you cannot really put a limit on what you can do with it”* (B). Moreover, there are already discussions going on about the future spaces where place-making could contribute. Areas under consideration are for example *“hospital or airport (...) where people tend to meet each other, to socialize and then to be active in a kind of social way”* (V). As the case of shopping centre shows (case 3), place-making can be successful in such semi-public places as well.

This shows, that place-making ideology can be implemented in all kinds of areas which stretch beyond public spaces only. It can also include co-creating building and its surroundings or can also be used in the semi-private places. Furthermore, interviewees state that place-making can function in the newly created areas as well as in the already built environment. On the one hand, place-making in newly built areas may be even easier, without the *“networked complexity”* (H) of the dense urban areas. Furthermore, there are then *“empty canvas to*

*develop*” (L) so this is an opportunity and gives a lot of freedom to create. Furthermore, as one of the respondents’ notices, there are always some stakeholders in the area, like the process in Arnhem shows. Even though there are no buildings there at all, *“it is never completely empty”* (P). As another organizer of this process notices; there are always some stakeholders there, or in the vicinity. In Arnhem there is a gym, there are people living on the boats and also, residents from other parts of the city are using it as a recreational area. Nevertheless, the fact that there are no existing social networks– future residents do not know each other and are not familiar with current residents, may be seen as a failure factor in place-making (A). There are cases when, there is already a list of future residents who bought their flats in the coming buildings. Then, basing on that you can organize some integrative actions, but such cases are rather rare (A). Importantly, there are also parts of the cities, that are already developed, busy, but still not really inhabited. Such a case was Museumsplein in Amsterdam, where *“you do not have many people living around the square, only big institutions”* (V). Such cases are more difficult as people cannot relate that well to the area, where they do not live or spend time in.

## **Financing**

Another factor which is needed for success of place-making is the issue of financing the process. As Silberberg et al. (2013) states, reliable funding for place-making is difficult to get. The goal in terms of financing place-making is to develop a sustainable business case underneath each project. The aim is to find more than one sponsor, so that the responsibility and ownership is shared among many actors, what was also described by Kent (2013). As the interviewees admit, in financial side of place-making there is still much to be learned and for now there is not one solution applicable to all cases.

Nonetheless, one of the steps to gather funding is engagement of private companies, which started to happen only recently (H, L). For example, a current project by Placemaking Plus in Delflandplein, Amsterdam was initiated by a coalition of three private brands; Albert Heijn (AH) food shop chain, housing association and a private developer. The project is about redeveloping a public square, on which AH has a central location. Such a shift is seen as beneficial from the point of view of place-makers, as *“we need them on board of this discussion, because they are the ones making decisions about the money”* (H). Not only because of bigger money, private parties are also very influential and can easily promote the sustainable way of creating places. *“AH has a saying which is ‘a belly of the neighbourhood’ (...) it really would be nice if AH became more consciousness with the people and the neighbourhoods in that they are in the heart of neighbourhood”* (P).

Delflandplein project is a first, pilot project between AH and Placemaking Plus company and if it goes well, the shop will use place-making for redevelopment of other locations (L). This would be a good opportunity to spread knowledge about place-making, also among developers’ community. Such a process would *“make it [place-making] more popular and make it something which is normal to use for project developers”* (L). There is also a rising interest in

place-making among private developers<sup>10</sup> (D, H, P). They are hiring place-making organizations as *“they know it is always better to develop when you have better contact with the people (...) they want to know better the situation”* (B). It also has a translation for financial gains. This explanation was given by a housing developer who is involving a place-maker in his project on the Buikslotermeerplein, Amsterdam; *“Why do you as a developer, as a person who wants to make money, want place-making (...)? Two reasons, well actually one reason, money. He says if the public space around my building is not good, the value of my building goes down”* (D). Furthermore, if public space around a building is not attractive, people will not live there long. And each moving resident adds costs for the owner, to hire a real estate agent, to rent the flat again, maintenance also (L).

Although, as on the one hand, involving private companies in the place-making projects may be seen as a success factor, at the same time there are concerns of entering into collaboration with private companies. One of the place-makers explains that it is difficult to make a financial business case for place-making, for a developer to *“put it under branding”* (A). Furthermore, it is also a question whether private parties are really on the same page regarding making better places, or is it only about financial gains. These issues though seem to be very case- and personal dependent, thus not solvable in this paper. A failure factor of place-making is thus that it is not that easily categorized and put in the tables of private companies.

Another aspect that appears to be dangerous with greater involvement of private parties is the possible commercialization of place-making. What has been described in the disadvantages section (2.5), place-making is indeed a good selling product (Russel, 2015). However, it seems that place-makers do stay on guard regarding a conduct of a process and primarily also choice of the projects. When asked about a possible threat of commercialization, an organizer said; *“Of course, it is a promotional thing, when you say that AH is socially involved in the area, but they are”* (L).

## **Legal framework**

As Silberberg et al., (2013) notice, one of the success factors for place-making is the flexible legal framework. Attitude towards this factor among place-makers and the city worker is that whatever can or cannot be done depends on the approach of people who work in public institutions (H, E). Legal framework is law on the one hand but on the other it is *“the daily interpretation and culture around [it]”* (H). Usually, when something is not possible to conduct, it is not because of the rules, but because of the way people are applying them (H). Going further, *“cities as organizations do not exist, so it is people, it is always people”* (H). In each organization, there are people who are more active, and those who prefer to operate in more traditional way (H). This is actually a drawback, as *“sometimes people who work at the municipality, may make or break your project”* (A).

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<sup>10</sup> Also at the real estate congress, there was a huge interest from the side of private companies towards the place-making movement, as Peter from Placemaking Plus explains. HB investments and Blokker are interested in co-organizing the place-making week in Amsterdam, 2017.

*“So the trick for us is always to find those people who are open and then we will find their colleagues”* (H). Once such people cooperating from the legal side, are found, the whole process gets much easier (H, A). Someone in favour of the project in the city, can also convince their colleagues, as (s)he is inside the structures, *“he can speak their language (...), he is one of their and we are not one of them”* (H). Additionally, (s)he understands the governmental procedures and can help to navigate through the process of rules and regulations (A). An example of such person is Jacco, who was involved in Zoho project, from the city side; *“Jacco basically said, we are going to say yes to it and we are going to make it possible”* (H). This was a case of turning an old office building into a hostel, also in the Zoho area. While usually such procedure lasts around a year and a half, with the help of Jacco, getting all the necessary permits happened within three months’ time. The organizer concludes that there was never a situation when they could not do something because of the rules, if they could not do something it was because *“somebody did not want to”* (H). It could be politician, office worker or any other actor. Therefore, the legal framework seems not to be the decisive factor, but the ability to find people who are willing to interpret this legal framework in a favourable way for a project.

### **Short- and long- term perspective**

PPS (2009) stated that place and community lead design should include both short- and long-term goals and indeed the cases show they include those two time frames (H). *So “start already and then vision in the meantime”* (H). Such approach has many advantages; people can see quickly the results and test them in real life, therefore, temporary solutions are also useful. If successful, they can be implemented on larger scale and longer term (D). Furthermore, ‘planning in the meantime’ allows to build on the smaller undertaken steps, on ‘scaling up’, what have been done (H). This resembles very much conclusions of Boonstra (2015) research, regarding planning with active citizens to be about building upon actions of others. By using the quick interventions first, also more insights and better connections with the community are established, which later pay off in the longer term (B). In a way, the short-term interventions are just preparatory to the long-term (B). It is also easier to establish financial support for the longer projects, if you collect stakeholders on the way and you can see that something works well. It proves more adaptive than having a complete plan for years ahead, in which case many projects stop when running out of funding (E). This combination of different time scales also gives broader spectrum for the actors to get involved; not only to participate in the instant interventions, but to plan for possibly generations ahead. So, it is both working *“with the perspective of 40 years, but also to work on it with perspective of 4 days”* (H). The aim is to have tangible quick wins as soon as possible, but more importantly, plan sustainably for the coming years. Such approach also resembles the attitude Boonstra (2015) found out in her research, namely, that projects with active citizens should aim at creating consistency within the heterogenous networks.

Almost all the cases planned for longer-term were carried out with this double perspective. For example, in Leidsche Rijn, there is a perspective of new buildings coming in two or three years’ time and in the meantime, there are cultural actions undertaken for and by local residents and also temporary buildings and facilities organized. Even in DAK, which can be considered as a

short-term project, there were both ‘quick wins’ and longer-term action, decided upon during a place game. In the first category, there was arranging a store for Triple Threat organization in the shopping centre and redesigning small things inside the mall. The longer-term was organizing the roof itself (Ph). Another example of quick wins may be painting and fixing with the residents, a broken fountain, located on the Delflandplein, where the whole square will be redeveloped (L).

In general, interviewees agree, that only the short-term, tactical urbanism actions like putting benches, or hanging plants on the walls will not turn space into place (H). *“It may be you know interesting as well and useful in the public space, but this is not place-making”* (V). That shows, that those short-term actions described as tactical place-making (see chapter 2.4.3.), can only be counted as place-making if they are a part of the longer process. It is also in accordance with the criticism of Saitta (2013), that these projects cannot replace the long-term strategies. Short- and long- reaching goals need to go along then to make the process successful.

### **Interdisciplinarity**

The idea of place governance is another factor that contributes to making place-making a successful movement. One of its goals is to bring different disciplines together (Kent, 2013). In the conducted research this multidisciplinary is well reflected in various fields which are involved in place-making teams. There is a great diversity among the people who organize the process. The mentioned professions are as follows; architect, planner, designer, city designer, graphic designer, urbanist, environmental psychologist, urban psychologist, landscape architect, economist, event organizer, sociologist, social geographer, public relations, community manager, communication scientists, social worker, fine arts. Organizers stress, that the best solution is to have a mixed team, with all the different backgrounds, so that they may complement each other. Such a combination was also appreciated by a participant, who said that with architectural questions he would approach a certain person and with more networking issues, he would direct to another person from a company (Ph). All the companies, both smaller and bigger seem to operate in that way. *“Place making is not about discipline, it is about connecting disciplines. Otherwise it is not place-making”* (D).

Multidisciplinary was also illustrated by the interviewees in terms of what possible education for future place-makers should consist of. It needs to engage many different disciplines, but most effectively it would be if the scope of already existing fields are widened, by for instance adding new modules about place-making to architecture, planning, sociology etc. The goal is to have ‘multidisciplinary learning environment’, as also the city has become cross-disciplinary (H). This goes along with how Kent (2011) perceived place-making, not as a new field, but as a movement, that connects existing ones. It should consist of different fields to try to combine the necessary aspects like; planning, urbanism, sociology, architecture, environmental psychology, design, area/place branding, finances, project management, social dynamics, human behaviour, community development, community activation. These ‘modules’ show that it is a combination of really various disciplines, yet they are all needed for a common goal of improving social and urban tissue.



## **Innovative techniques**

Lastly, there were two rather innovative techniques of involving actors and gathering ideas, presented by the interviewees. The use of such non-traditional methods contributes to make place-making interesting and successful.

One of the techniques described is organizing dinners for the actors involved in place-making, who have to pay for it. *“We believe, you do not only need to do workshop. Whenever that might be, but you need to, you not only need to think but also connect”* (D). And for the people to connect food is a very good way (D). Along with dinner there comes financial involvement of participants. The tactic is that all these participants who were chosen for one to one talks, representing cross-section of users, including representatives of institutions and organizations, *“need to pay to be able to think along with place-making objectives (...). The reason that we believe that, that is necessary, is because the one who pays usually has a bigger voice. Either in the process or after. And we really want a level plain field”* (D).

In this way, everyone has the same power and responsibility throughout the process (D). The fee is about 25 E, but at the same time, it is not exclusive if someone cannot afford it, as people may instead bring some food or if they can, share the spot where to organize dinner, or offer other barter solutions. The organizer used the technique twice and she states that she has not felt such a group energy in the other processes (D). Such a process also makes people more devoted and more persistent in the process. Moreover, it may truly make participants equal and avoid the case when those with bigger resources have bigger saying, as the critique of traditional participation claims (Nuisl and Heinrichs, 2011).

A second example is the use of Minecraft computer game in Nairobi. In a game one can walk through the area and easily add and change the elements of design. First the community was gathered, making sure all the stakeholders are included and the use of the game is done as a workshop, with everyone present in the room, so the interaction between actors is also possible. People are not doing it individually from behind their computers, but everyone work together. First there is a training, so that everyone can partake in virtual planning of the area, so in that sense technology is not excluding. Such use of technology may be seen as advantageous as people can have problems expressing some of their ideas verbally or in writing. Such tool as Minecraft gives them an opportunity to express ideas visually, which for some might be easier (A).

## 5. Conclusions

This chapter brings together all the theoretical and empirical findings to give an answer for the overarching research question. Firstly, each of the sub-questions will be answered and after an answer to the main question will be given. For clarification the research questions are repeated below;

*How can place-making contribute to better participatory planning?*

- *What is place-making?*
- *How place-making differs from participatory planning?*
- *What can participatory planning learn from place-making?*
- *What are the success and failure factors of place-making?*

### 5.1. What is place-making?

Place-making could be best described as a movement, as it encompasses many various dimensions. It was established in the 1960s in the New York and became more formalized when an organization Project for Public Spaces was established in 1975. The roots of the movement stem from the dissatisfaction with the top-down, expert based planning practices, still popular in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are couple of main researchers that place-making movement refers to as academic roots. These are; Lynch (1960), Alexander (1977), Whyte (1980), Lefebvre (1991), Jacobs (1992) and Harvey (1996). Whyte himself participated in the first redevelopment projects conducted by PPS in Bryant Park in 1981.

The above writers can be seen as innovators in their field as they started studying public space from the human, street perspective of daily urban living. They were observing the pavements (Jacobs, 1992) or as Whyte did, videotaping public squares to study people's behaviour there. Lefebvre (1991) and Harvey (1996) highlighted the right that people should have in creating their own surroundings, an area which was up until recently dominated by architects operating from behind their desks. Lefebvre (1991) called architects 'демиурges' and criticized their overly broad authority. Postulates of the writers mostly articulated to shift the power from omniscient architect to the everyday users, so that people can also have the influence on their public spaces. People should have right to be part of city redevelopment (Harvey, 1996) and to be able to reflect themselves in the place they live in (PPS, 2015a). "Placing and making of places are essential to social development (...) in any social order" (Harvey 1996). This shows the importance of the process for proper formation of communities.

The second part of origin of place-making can be traced back to the theory and development of place itself. The best way to define place is to juxtapose it with the term space. The latter one is unfamiliar, open, linked with moving and place is known, has its established values and is linked with pausing and staying (Tuan, 1977). One of the important aspects of place is its 'sense', so the "local structure of feeling" (Agnew, 1987) which can be interpreted as the attachment of man to the area (Cresswell, 2004). Places are always becoming and are never a stable composition (Pred, 1984 cited in Cresswell, 2004). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, places have undergone a big change from mostly catering for people social interactions to places dominated

by transport infrastructure and not focusing on human-scale (Silberberg et al. 2013). Public spaces started to face deterioration and problems such as privatization, commodification and gentrification (Madanipour 1999; Madanipour 2000 cited in Akkar Erkan, 2007). Having said all that, it can be concluded that place-making is bringing places back to the people and changing a location from space to place, by creating attachment to a place and establishing there values connected to a place.

Place-making process, after the analysis, seems to include a lot of various aspects and can be classified both as ideology, methodology and urban renewal tool. However, it cannot be seen as a part of urban design (Flemming, 2007) and especially not as a process of capital investments to attract tourist and create economic growth (Cilliers, Timmermans, 2014). It can be seen as an ideology as it is the way of approaching cities; starting from the place itself, with no predefined goals, with the users as central source of knowledge for the project. Methodologically, it offers steps to analyse public space, to activate and to involve community. As the combination of these two; ideology and methodology, outcome of the process is urban renewal, sometimes involving also design changes but may also include only programming of the area.

There are two main pillars of the movement – *making* with community and the *place* created in the process. It appears that community part is the more important in the process, as without it, the created place will not be seen as a shared, common value, taken care by all the contributors. By including all the users, the mental ownership of the place is enhanced, and it further leads to better maintenance. This in turn has positive correlation with safety and also powers social involvement and economic boost. Actors involved, are being empowered throughout the process to make use of their knowledge and professionals are only used as resources for communities. Values which are created during the process are belonging, meaning, attachment and inclusiveness (Frinch, Pardy, Shaw, 2016). By jointly working at the spot the sense of place is also created or enhanced by place-making (Silberberg et al., 2013).

There are guidelines provided by PPS (2009c) which show what aspects need to be taken into account when creating a place. There are four main areas of focus given, namely sociability, uses and activities, access and linkages, comfort and image (ibid.). These are only the guidelines which have to be adjusted to each specific location, again, using what is already there and focussing on the needs of local society. It is then not a directive for creating same places in every location, but more of a grid of what should be thought of when co-creating a place. Places created as an outcome support further the social interactions and as they are created with unique combination of local factors and local stakeholders, they create unique spots, preventing homogenization of cities.

Place-making as movement appears not to be very definite. It has been categorized as ideology, theoretical framework for urban development, but also as for example art or science (Fincher, Pardy and Shaw, 2016). Indeed, it seems to encompass many aspects at a time. On the one hand it appears as an ideology, as it originated to counteract the top-down development strategies. Furthermore, it includes objective of urban makeover, which could classify place-making as an urban development tool, especially as there are also clearly given aspects of what makes a

good place (PPS, 2009c). Nevertheless, it also brings along aspects of community involvement and activation and goes further to ultimately transfer the power of shaping and managing the places to local users (Smith, 2015). It can be thus viewed from more social side as an empowerment tool which supports diverse actors in shaping their surroundings, according to their needs. In that sense it can be classified not as a participatory tool but rather as a way of creating conditions for self-organization.

Lastly, what appears true is the observation by Fincher, Pardy and Shaw (2016) who said that place-making is theorized retrospectively, meaning that the theory is mostly created basing on the executed cases, which was also done in the MIT report (Silberberg et al., 2013). For now, there seem to be lacking the underlying theories, apart from the researchers that the movement originated from (Alexander, Jacobs, Lefebvre, Lynch, Whyte). Nevertheless, these are only the ideological roots, but more in-depth analysis of how place-making processes are conducted is missing. In that sense the criticism of Palermo, Ponzini (2015) that place-making can be seen as buzzword turns out true. On the other hand, it is also true that place-making focuses to a large extend on the social, soft side of the process (Kent cited in Silberberg et al., 2013), therefore the measurements of that may require different measurements and further research.

## **5.2. How place-making differs from participatory planning?**

Place-making seems to partially solve problems linked with traditional participation. It builds on the advantages of participatory planning, with aspects such as increasing social coherence (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011; Silberberg et al., 2013), creating shared responsibility for a place (Cilliers, Timmermans, 2014; PPS 2015a), rising environmental awareness (Cilliers, Timmermans, 2014; PPS 2015a) and improving public realm (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011; Silberberg et al., 2013). The process though, still happens in an institutional void (Nuissl, Henrichs, 2011) as there are no rigid steps for it. There is the general guidance given (see Fig. 15, 16) of how to proceed, nevertheless each process is unique and depends on local community and place itself. This could be seen as a disadvantage as exactly; no rigid steps are determined. A weak point also shared with participatory practices is that the process is time-consuming, with a comprehensive research, one-to-one meetings, it may be even more time-consuming than classic participation. Nevertheless, benefits of properly done preparation phase pay off in the aftermath of a place game. Furthermore, what the interviewees agree on, place-making lacks any sort of evaluation strategies, as does participatory planning (Hordijk et al., 2015), which makes the benefits of it hard to grasp.

As can be seen, place-making is focusing a lot on the process itself rather than on the outcomes (Silberberg et al. 2013) and on creating a comprehensive group of stakeholders for each initiative. Design may follow; however, it only stems from the need of community, it is never a goal on its own. Additionally, it has been noticed that it should shift from delivering liveable places to delivering loveable places, also highlighting attachment to place.

Place-making is on the one hand bridging the top-down with bottom-up approach, allowing for equal position of all public and private institutions and individual users. It is about bringing all the existing knowledge together, to create a sustainable and comprehensive plan, in which

participants are stakeholders and ideally have both shared their ideas and took part in making these ideas happen, by physically contributing to reshaping their areas. On the other hand, place-making is to a large extent triggering the bottom-up actions solely, contributing to making users self-sufficient, by empowering them, transferring expert knowledge, so that they are able to undertake urban initiatives themselves.

For everything to work out well, role of an organizer is still vital, projects can thus not be classified as self-organization (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011), but cannot be seen as participation as well, as users are given the power to decide and execute the plans. Therefore, place-making can be located in the citizens control category in ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969). Organizers are the ones who create conditions in the initial phase of a project, so that after a place game, actions can be undertaken independently by participants. Place-making then appears on a different level than participatory planning in a way it offers further steps for involvement and ultimately taking over responsibility for the place.

### **5.3. What can participatory planning learn from place-making?**

From the analysis, there appears many factors, that participatory planning could pick up from place-making. Firstly, there are no predefined goals in place-making, which prevents from operating with any assumptions for the process. There are no path dependencies and also no premises (Boonstra, Boelens, 2011), as there are no boundaries or goals set initially to the process. Place-making can be treated as an alternative for participatory planning in the future. As it has different starting point; not a defined project but a place and community. It has an outside-in rather than inside-out approach (Boonstra, Boelens. 2011), with anyone from any level of society being able to set a place-making initiative; individuals, private company or public sphere.

In place-making, there is a lot of emphasis put on the aspect of equalising all parties to be able to start from a flat structure, but at the same time include both the top-down and the bottom-up actors "*the lived and the planned world*" (H). There is also a big pressure on including everyone from the area, also those who would possibly not join the organized meetings, but the organizers try to reach out to them (Silberberg et al., 2013). Therefore, the inclusion and representation issue of participatory planning (Hordijk et al., 2015) is solved better in place-making processes.

There are many techniques used to engage actors and a lot of time is devoted for reaching out to the users and gathering their ideas, importantly everything is done in a personal way, what contributes to trust building. The methods include participant observation at the spot and talking to the users, knocking on doors in the neighbourhood, using informants from the area, who have eyes on the street at all times, such as kiosk sellers. Furthermore, organizers try to enter and connect to existing networks, however adjust their approach to each part of a community. Throughout the process, there is an empowering attitude towards the stakeholders and the time devoted for the empowerment is adjusted to the existing level of civic activation (V). The processes are "*not about planning they are about timing*" (H), so flexibility is needed to allow sometimes for patience and sometimes for quick actions to connect to different groups,

also those who would not come to meetings themselves, this illustrates also the self-improving way of process creation (Silberberg et al., 2013). Organizers aim for one-to-one meetings for more in-depth discussions and to have space for triggering the imagination of interlocutors. Other technique to get people involved is organizing an event in the area or also placing a temporary office outdoor.

Once this is done, a place game is organized, which is also not present in participatory planning processes. The game allows for people to interact, give their ideas, strengthen attachment to place or get to know it (Kent, Madden, 2016). Setting of a place game is very informal, relaxed and kept local. No one is prioritized and everyone, regardless their background has equally important voice. This adds a lot compared to often formally held public participation meetings, connecting with local music and food offers a truly engaging setting. Place game form also gives an opportunity to instantly connect ideas to actors who have the capability of fulfilling these ideas. After that, a place management team is established, which can be seen as a part of place governance structure (Smith, 2015), as the group represents a cross section of the users of the area.

A big part of the process, is creating conditions for the actions that happen after a place game. As has been described by one of the participants, there is a protocol of the process up until and including the place-game, but what happens after can be described as self-organization of participants. The role of the organizers is to set the conditions, meaning gather everyone who operates in the area, so that the decided changes can be sustainable. Place game is always only a part of a place-making process, never on its own, as the preparation is needed to build networks and create conditions for actions to be able to happen quickly afterwards. The whole process remains open for people to join (Silberberg et al., 2015), nevertheless, it seems from the analysis, that the place game event appears as central, a point in which everything comes together and when everyone and all the ideas meet and interact.

A big asset compared to traditional planning is the approach of organic, networked, cyclical, iterative process rather than one with a linear, clearly defined goal and apriori divided tasks. Place-making is 'planned' without an end, as the goal is to transfer the initiative fully to the local users, so that they programme it according to their needs. Programming is essential for place-making process, which is also not part of participatory planning. In general, the aim is to transfer as many tasks of the process to participants, also the execution and programming. This is part of the notion of place governance (Smith, 2015), which adds further steps than gathering the ideas and prolongs the process for managing the co-created place as well.

The whole process can be divided into two parts; firstly research, empowerment and involvement, levelling out different actors, and secondly self-organization part when all the stakeholders commit to the goals they can fulfil. It is not the same self-organization, which has been described by Boonstra, Boelens (2011) as the conditions are prepared by the organizers, nevertheless place-making definitely establishes new goals for civic engagement than to only participate in meetings organized by governmental bodies.

#### **5.4. What are the success and failure factors of place-making?**

There were several success factors identified in the literature review, namely having flexible legal framework (Silberberg et al. 2013), seeing place-making not as a new field but as bridging the existing ones, making it interdisciplinary (Kent, 2013). Furthermore, including both short- and long-term goals (PPS, 2009) and operating on a small scale (Lydon, 2012, cited in Palermo, Ponzini, 2015) have been identified as success factors. An external success factor is the financial crisis, during which tactical actions were seen as more favourable (Mahar, 2016). A failure factor is lack of reliable resources and lack of local, tacit knowledge (Silberberg et al., 2013).

A big part is also the role of the leaders of the process. Leaders in the process should act as zealous nuts (Kent, Madden, 2016), salesman of the process (Silberberg et al., 2013; Van der Stoep, 2014). They should be navigators, however without a known destination (Hiller, 2010, cited in Boonstra, 2015). They should be resources for the communities (PPS, 2009), although their expertise should be left out of the process until consensus is reached (Smith, 2015). Lastly, they should act as boundary spanners; be able to establish and connect networks and communicate across diverse stakeholders. Experts should also act as resources for communities (PPS, 2009)

From the empirical research it appears that there are also some external factors that can be considered as success factors of place-making. Firstly, there need to be basic infrastructure provided in the place of action, as otherwise place-making is a too far reaching goal from the basic needs such as sanitation or shelter. People in the area also need to have the ‘mental space’ (A) to be able to participate in the process. In neighbourhoods of very low socio-economic status it may be impossible to conduct. Nevertheless, what was also noticed is that place-making is more successful in the areas where there is an urgency to improve the place, people are then more devoted and involved. The key seems to find a balance between urgency and location where there is already enough ‘mental space’ among people to get involved in the process.

One of the success factors is the mentioned financial crisis (Mahar, 2016) which allowed for more experimental approach to planning. This was confirmed by the interviewees, who claim that public bodies were more supportive for bottom up initiatives during that time. Furthermore, financial crisis also caused that there were more vacant spaces left in the city, available for civic initiatives (D). Boonstra and Boelens (2011) notice, there is a general governmental movement towards a flexible planning, also making it possible for place-making to grow (K). Respondents also notice that in countries where there is yet no shift from government to governance, place-making will not happen, as was shown on Lithuanian case (B). On the other hand, in Nairobi, where government is not active in any form in urban activities, people need to organize on their own. Therefore, these two options can be seen as supportive conditions for place-making to develop.

Furthermore, the role of the organizers is very important and contributes to the success of the process. Social skills are depicted as key ones for the organizers. Functions of organizers which

were described by respondents overlap a lot with the roles identified by Boonstra (2015), Merkerk (2014), Van der Stoep (2014), who analysed planners' behaviour in the planning initiatives in the age of active citizenship. Making connections with different actors, and between them is crucial at the beginning of the process, translating different 'languages' and values and establishing a common ground, illustrating the role of boundary spanners (Meerkerk, 2014). A role of salesman (Van der Stoep, 2014) was also described by interviewees, who said they need to be able to inspire larger networks (H) and pass their enthusiasm to the other actors. Organizers furthermore need to act as resources for the communities (PPS, 2009) and indeed they claim their professional skills may help to translate the wishes into design and also help with legal or financial aspects. Organizers also use different methods to trigger the imagination of the involved actors, however highlight, that there is always plenty of local knowledge stemming from the community. This contradicts the failure factor identified by Silberberg et al. (2013). Inspirational role of the organizers can also be linked with the navigation they conduct in the process, as they try to push the actors towards a goal, but with no known destination (Boonstra, 2015). Lastly, role of the leaders as zealous nuts (Silberberg et al., 2013) appears not to be true, rather finding the zealous nuts among the local users leads to success of the process.

Organizers thus need to operate in many roles throughout a process, their flexibility and approach adjustment to a particular phase appears as yet another success factor in place-making. Initially (s)he acts as an expert, providing necessary information to the participants, triggering imagination, giving inspiration. Organizers also need to set boundaries for the place game, to limit it socially and physically, to make an event efficient. During a place game however, organizers turn into a facilitating role, only controlling the boundaries and framework of an event, which matches the postulate by Smith (2015) to leave the expert knowledge out of the process until consensus is reached. Lastly, after, organizers also participate in the self-organization that the process triggers; they undertake an action which they can fulfil from the agreed goals and also act as active citizens themselves. Their contribution is however more of one-time, for instance bringing in a new connection for financing a project, as later they need to leave the area, transferring the power and lead fully to local actors.

Place-making is successful when conducted on a small scale (Lydon, 2012, cited in Palermo, Ponzini, 2015), as only then local knowledge can be extrapolated (A), people can identify themselves with the place and get involved with a proper attachment and devotion (P). It is easier to establish a common ground and build a community. On the other hand, it can then be thought as a failure factor as larger scale projects cannot be developed in this way. Similarly, the fact that place-making is successful only on small scale makes it difficult to align with larger scale strategies (Palermo, Ponzini, 2015) and larger scale tasks within the cities such as equity or affordability (Saitta, 2013).

Another success factor is the fact that place-making can be done in all sorts of locations (just considering the mentioned before, external factors) as everywhere there is community or at least adjusting uses which can be brought into the process. Each place can be improved, created anew if the community was not involved before, both inhabited and newly built areas,



buildings, semi-public places. The ideology can also be interwoven in different kinds of processes, such as architectural contests or simple streets renovations.

An identified failure factor was lack of reliable financing for place-making (Silberberg et al. 2013). The organizers admit that this is a part of the process that still needs a lot of work. Nevertheless, one of the solutions which can turn this failure into success factor is the move towards engaging more private companies and showing how can they benefit from place-making process. At the same time all the other parties should be involved for comprehensive place governance.

Regarding the flexible legal framework as a success point (Silberberg et al., 2013), interviewees stress more the interpretation of the laws as an important aspect. Therefore, it is about the ability to find people willing to interpret them in a favourable way. Another beneficial condition is combining short- and long- term goals (PPS, 2009). This allows for building the community on the way, and also building on already implemented, tested steps. Furthermore, it gives quick, tangible results which is satisfying for participants. At the same time the aim is to create the vision for long-term, which is an ongoing process, with no ending, but with a continues experimentation. Interviewees conclude that a combination of both scales is needed for successful place-making, therefore the tactical urbanism can only be seen as an initial part of the process.

Kent (2013) highlights that place-making should not be considered as a new movement, but as a combination of existing ones. This also comes true in terms of combination of already involved disciplines in place-making, which includes a cross-section of all disciplines linked with planning. Lastly, what the interviews revealed as another success factor are the innovative techniques for involving the actors and conducting the process, namely organizing paid dinners, on which goals for the places are discussed and by having everyone pay for food, all the actors become equal. The other technique is using Minecraft game for jointly creating the neighbourhoods.

## **5.5. Final comments**

Finally, to answer the overarching research question, *how can place-making contribute to better participatory planning*, it seems that there are many techniques used in the place-making process that can be adapted in the participatory planning like the ways of gathering the local knowledge, place game idea, place management team, place governance, combining short- and long-term goals. However, what the research revealed is that possibly participatory planning conducted by government is not the best way for using the knowledge from outside of public bodies. Instead, the users should be given the power and support to reshape their surroundings themselves as only then can they feel as truly co-creating, co-owning and be willing to later co-manage the place. Therefore place-making as for now conducted by ‘third party’ of private companies appears successful, as it bridges top-down and bottom up, making those worlds equally important and creating conditions for actors from civil, private and public realm to self-organize on the jointly decided goals that stem from the place and the community.

Place-making can be seen as movement which brings too many aspects and disciplines together and as ‘old wine in a new bottle’, which combines all the good practices without deeper theories, clear steps and structure. Even if that is the case, it does offer those good practices in a nice package, which may not be a step-by-step method, but still a methodology that can be undertaken in many various locations and settings. Furthermore, it seems it is attracting people who are already dealing with public places with a bottom-up perspective and offers a common reference point for them. As it gains popularity it has a bigger influence in the planning field to involve cities, private companies and decision-makers, to jointly improve public places and even more importantly, to promote and support the active citizenship to spread.

## **5.6. Discussion**

Place-making seems like a good response towards the ongoing transformation of centralized governmental urban development towards the more bottom-up, self-initiated actions in the city. Place-making definitely shows how important is the social aspect in the process. The fact that interviewees say that personal contact is crucial for establishing good connections and that each approach needs to be adjusted to a specific person or group. This shows that spatial planning or rather any urban intervention requires also a lot of soft skills and individualistic attitude to gain trust and make the other side engaged. From the social perspective it also shows how important is the proper empowerment of people, before collaborating with them. This is applicable in terms of any social engagement, also outside the planning field. Lastly, the research shows that people need to feel the mental ownership of the place, to be willing to change it and later programme and maintain it. In this way the change is sustainable.

Another topic which rather shows the weakness of place-making is that as it operates on the small scale it is difficult to place it in the longer-term strategies and think of for instance the city’s resilience. Possibly if place-making is incorporated as a method in municipalities, it could be viewed as a more comprehensive movement. The small scale of place-making projects also poses a question of how can it be integrated to also support the bigger scale projects. It seems that the small, tactical actions like adding sitting, repainting fountains are very desired, however still the bigger design changes are also needed in the cities. Therefore, it can be stated that place-making cannot be used in all spatial planning processes as the city as a whole simply needs some coherence and larger-scale and longer-term strategies. A discussion is then how to bridge those bottom-up initiatives on the small scale to the bigger scale, top-down initiatives, with still, design-driven approach.

### **Reflection**

The research was rather challenging in a way the place-making field is relatively new and therefore no comprehensive theories are yet proposed. Having had that it would be easier to analyse the existing cases. Only in the interviews, more insights were gained on the steps in the process which revealed very diverse aspects, not considered in theoretical framework which made analysis part less coherent. Having heard all the stories from the interviews, quite a different angle and possibly different theories could have been involved to analyse what is

place-making and how could it be classified. Possibly, the Actor Network Theory (Latour, 1997) or vital actor relationships (Meerkerk et al., 2013) could be used.

Furthermore, as the aim was to gather as big overview of the topic as possible, the organizers of the processes were chosen as main sources of information. However, it appears, that the true place-making possibly lies in the initiatives that originate outside of the ‘connectors’ who lead the process. In that sense, either more participants should be interviewed to learn more about their exact paths in the processes or solely bottom-up initiatives should have been found out and analysed. With the mentioned theories and the approach of focusing only on actors’ relations in the process this could have been the main topic of the thesis.

Regarding the chosen methodology, interviews seem like an appropriate method to gather insights in place-making field. However, after the analysis it appears that the projects among the respondents, while similar in some cases, in others are very different. Therefore, possibly a deeper research should have been made initially to choose only similar projects. On the other hand, in this way a really broad picture of the place-making movement in the Netherlands has been established. Participant observation proved also very useful for getting an idea of the atmosphere and the general conduct of a place game. Possibly some more observations could have been done to experience place games in different locations and with different stakeholders. Still, the possibility to be part of the process for one day was definitely an eye opener, both in terms of writing the thesis and in terms of how different the setting of a place game is compared to the experienced public participatory processes.

Nevertheless, as the methods of co-creating cities has always been core interests for me, discovering the whole world of place-making has still brought great amount of new knowledge which I hope to use in my future professional life.

### **Future research recommendation**

The research revealed that there are still many aspects of place-making that could be analysed further. The thesis focused on more of the overall structure of the movement, however specific cases could be traced in detail, conducting interviews with bigger number of actors, also including representatives of different organizations. As has been written, possibly the pure bottom-up initiatives, without the external organizer could be researched to see how the place-making works without the role of a connector.

Another aspect which could be researched is the possible evaluation scheme for place-making. For now, it seems it does not exist, so finding out what sort of aspects could be used to evaluate the process, would be useful. A special task would be to consider the social benefits of the process. Possibly more social or even psychological measurements should be used to give a picture of how people who participate can benefit from the process.

Another approach would be to gather different cases, with different origins and trace what are their characteristics, how do they differ or overlap and how are the coalitions set up. In the thesis the cases were only used to illustrate some aspects, however they could be used as a core focus for revealing the connections between different actors involved. Simply following the

cases themselves, from the beginning to an end would give interesting results in how is the scenario of place-making reflected by different actors involved in the process. Additionally, the steps in the process could be further divided and the ways of dealing with possible obstacles (such as legal framework, scale, funding) could be identified.

A topic which appeared in theoretical part and was not analysed in the empirical part is the type of places being created in the process. It stems from the fact that place-making focuses more on the social side of the process, still however places are transformed somehow as a result. It would be very interesting to analyse the places re-created in the mentioned cases according to the guidelines given by PPS (2009c, see Fig. 6) and compare them according to this framework.

Lastly, a deeper theoretical discussion could be made on the content of place-making as, what has been mentioned it encompasses so many different aspects of the process, management, leaders, outcomes, rules of making good places, democratic representation, community activation and probably many more. In that sense it seems that the literature on place-making is currently still in puberty and can be easily filled with many new papers.

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Fig. 4 <http://blog.bryantpark.org/2016/03/bryant-park-name-adds-value.html>

Fig. 5 [http://bryantpark-prod.imgix.net/images/bryantpark\\_uploads/images/Park\\_carousel1.jpg](http://bryantpark-prod.imgix.net/images/bryantpark_uploads/images/Park_carousel1.jpg)

Fig.8 <https://www.civicdesigncenter.org/events/parking-day>

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Fig. 14

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Fig. 15 <http://placemakers.nl/en/method/>

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Fig. 17

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Fig. 18

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Fig. 19 <https://www.placemakingplus.com/meinerswijk-en>

# 7. Appendix

## Appendix A: Interview guide for organizers

Certificate: field of graduation (planning, architecture etc), company, years worked with pm projects

1. What are place-making (pm) projects?
  - What is place-making for you? Urban design method/set of tool/science...? or how would you describe it in your words?
  - What distinguishes pm from traditional planning?
  - What distinguishes projects suitable for pm from other projects?
  - Do you think pm can in the future replace traditional planning?
  - What kind of areas/places are usually redeveloped in the process? – are they empty (newly built) or is it always redevelopment projects?
  - Who is the initiator of the projects? (public/private?)
  - Which actors are involved in the processes and with what share? Do you know what's the background of the actors?
  - How are the projects initiated?
  - What are roughly the time-frames of the project?
  - How are pm projects conducted: what are the steps?
  - Do you use any kind of technology for the purposes of the process?
  - What is the outcome of pm? Plan/ scheme/recommendations/development/ redevelopment
  
2. What makes pm successful?
  - What are the strengths of pm? Weaknesses? Opportunities? Threats?
  - Are there patterns in what make pm successful – certain areas, certain groups of people that get involved (socio spatial characteristics)
  - Have you had any unsuccessful project? And if so, what failed?
  - How does pm relates to legal framework? Is there enough space for experimenting/ too rigid?
  - What are the techniques for involving different stakeholders? + are people willing to cooperate?
  - Its written, that pm leads to economic boost of the area, do you agree and if so, in what sense? (more businesses/ people more willing to cooperate?)
  - Are there leaders in the process? If so, who? (out of the organizers or participants?)
  - Do you see lack of expertise knowledge? (meaning rooted in the community)
  
3. How can professionals contribute to pm?
  - Do you act in the process as a professional – architect/planner... or as organizer or participant? Are your opinions as important of the participants?/ more/less
  - Do you use your professional knowledge in the process? And how, on which stage?
  - Do you actually prepare the plan later? Or outsource somewhere?

- (In which part are professionals the most important?)
- What about the professionals that come as normal residents, do you use their skills for something?
- Do you divide between you the tasks, according to your education/background?
- People from which field in your opinion fit best in the pm projects?
- What skills do you think are the most important for you in the process?
- How would you describe your behaviour in the process; are you open-minded and willing to take up other ideas or you have your own idea and you rather stick to it?
- Would you be willing to prolong the process just to get better ideas, cooperation etc?
- Do you think there should and will emerge a place-maker position? : job/education path

### **Appendix B: Interview guide for participants**

- Have you heard about pm before?
- What is your role in the process?
- What are your thoughts/impressions?
- What is pm for you? What is the most important aspect? Is it a technique/model?
- On what stage is the process you're involved in?
- What were the past steps?
- What are the future steps?
- How did you get involved? Where did you hear about it?
- With whom are you talking to? Participants/organizers?
- How do you assess the cooperation with organizers?
  - o Are you free to propose whatever?
  - o Do they support you, provide information that you're missing?
  - o How do you see the role of the organizers?
- How is the plan itself created?
- Is the structure of the involved actors clear? What are the power relations?
- SWOT of the process
- Possible improvements to the process

### **Appendix C: Transcription of the interviews**