A DIFFERENT OUTLOOK ON ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Building new active citizenship policy on the heritage of supportive practices amongst Afro-Caribbean women in Amsterdam Southeast.

Ama Koranteng-Kumi

Student no. 4006291

Utrecht University

MA Gender Studies

Supervisor: Phoebe Mbasalaki
Second reader: Domitilla Olivieri

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 2

INTRODUCTION 3

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 9

1.1 Accountability of chosen theories

1.2 Intersectionality

1.3 Critical frame analysis

2. ON CITIZENSHIP: HISTORISING AND CONTEXTUALIZING 14

2.1 A literature review of active citizenship

2.2 Historical thought and debate on citizenship

2.3 Multiculturalism

2.4 Culturalisation of citizenship

2.5 Active citizenship: new meanings, new dimensions

3. COULEUR LOCALE OF AMSTERDAM SOUTHEAST 24

3.1 The Bijlmer

3.2 Informal supportive networks and strategies

3.3 New do-dynamics of active citizenship

4. POLICY OUTLOOK ON ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP 35

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 43

REFERENCES

Acknowledgements

The completion of my thesis has been a long journey. I lost confidence so many times and have been on the verge of just giving it all up. Therefore I want to take this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to all those who have been instrumental in the completion of this journey. First, I would like to thank my supervisor Phoebe Mbasalaki for her time, patience and commitment throughout these last months. I'm so thankful, because without her guidance finishing my thesis would not have been possible. I also want to thank Domitilla Olivieri for her willingness to be my second reader. And in general, thanks to all the (former) staff of the Gender Studies' department whom have guided me over the past years (with a special thanks to Eva Midden, Iris van der Tuin and Gloria Wekker). Words cannot express how grateful I am to my parents and siblings for their support and encouraging words and finally to my wonderful partner for his unconditional love and support.

Introduction

> "Good morning all present, I think you will agree with me when I state that Amsterdam-Southeast is a woman city. We have a rich tradition of women who support each other and others in the community with their activities.
> (…) Half of our residents are single mothers caring for the youth of tomorrow (…) the climate is changing (…) Still many more women that are difficult to reach, have to be reached […] how can we improve and strengthen our collaboration of empowering women". (Muriel Dalgliesh[1])

On November 14, 2014 in a warmly packed conference room with representatives of women organisations, community leaders, social workers, and myself, Muriel Dalgliesh, head of the district council of Amsterdam Southeast, faced a predominantly female audience and held an openings speech, with the self-assurance habitual to often being the guest of honour. We had gathered for the conference *SAMEN*[2], which dealt with the topic 'active citizenship' in Southeast and the changing (political) landscape in which the responsibilities of the government are being redirected to citizens. The intention of the conference was to engage with women organisations and 'active' women in this district on their role within these new developments. The key question was: how can we improve the connection between women's organizations and reinforce them within the context of 'active citizenship'. The indicator 'we' had two meanings in this case, both the district council, as the women themselves.

Both the timing and the topic of this conference was not a coincidence, but give witness to specific and interesting developments in the context of active citizenship that prompted me to write this thesis. Lets start with the timing. A few months beforehand the Southeast district council underwent a rigorous change due to the fact that the Amsterdam City council took up the policy development and legislation for the entire city, limiting the authority and tasks of district councils[3]. These changes had a tangible effect on the 'modus operandus' of the Southeast district council. With less responsibility and drastic budget cuts, 'active citizenship' has become a prioritized policy tool [4] in district Southeast.

---

[1] This opening citation is a part of the speech held by Muriel Dalgliesh on 4/11/2014

[2] SAMEN was a conference on active citizenship and the role of women (organisations) in Amsterdam Southeast. Commissioned by the local government.

[3] The districts are now run by newly installed Board committees that have limited authority and specific tasks.

[4] Active citizenship as a policy tool in district Southeast took shape in 2008 and is now also integrated in the area plans of 2016. https://www.amsterdam.nl/bestuur-organisatie/volg-beleid/gebiedsgericht/gebiedsplannen-2016/gebiedsplannen-zo/artikel/

The topic of the conference, exploring the role of women in this context, can also be looked at closely. As Dalgliesh stated in her speech: Amsterdam Southeast is a 'woman city'. This statement has a triple layer. Firstly, research[5] shows that Afro-Caribbean women are in the majority in this district; literally speaking it is indeed 'a woman city'. Southeast also has the highest poverty rate, compared to other districts and poverty in this case is gendered and ethicized: most of the children grow up in poor, single-parent households led by women of Afro-Caribbean descent[6]. These woman and children are therefore hit hard by the participative society in terms of the (decreasing) amount of (governmental) support they receive and at the same time, the increasing support that they have to provide. At the same time, this district also has a longstanding and rich tradition of women of Afro-Caribbean descent who support each other and 'their community' through their self-initiated activities[7]. Social researcher Susan Ogle (2011) states that the majority of Southeast inhabitants, mostly of Afro-Surinamese and Antillean origin, settled in this district in a mass migration wave in the 1960's and 1970's. Away from 'home', these migrant communities not only found solace in the spacious high-rise apartments and green surroundings, but also 'brought along' with them ´a culture´ of matrifocality, supportive close-knit family and communal ties (Wekker 1994, Ogle 2011). This climate of communal support and initiating activities amongst Afro-Caribbean women is self-regulating, and characteristic to the couleur locale (Van de Wijdeven 2014) of this district.

So, on that cold sunny day in November, the triple connation of 'a woman city' sparked my curiosity and interest. At that time, I had just set-up a social gardening project[8] for women in this neighbourhood and therefore held intensive contact with women, and women-led groups (formal and informal) in this district. These first-hand contacts and my own Afro-Surinamese background had made me very familiar with what I describe as the 'vital-vulnerable' paradox of this 'woman city.' On one hand, there is the 'vulnerability' that comes with the social-economic situation of many women in this district, but on the other hand there is also a 'vital' climate of active women (formally and informally organized) engaged in activities to ´empower´ other women and their community as well as informal communal support networks (survival strategies).

last accessed on 25 Dec 2016

[5] Onderzoek Verwey Jonkers http://www.verwey-jonker.nl/doc/participatie/3850_kansen%20in%20Amsterdam%20zuidoost.pdf

[6] Uitvoeringsnota Genderbeleid (Gender Policy report) Amsterdam Zuidoost, Maart 2013
[7] Uitvoeringsnota Genderbeleid (Gender policy report) Amsterdam Zuidoost, Maart 2013
[8] www.bloeiengroei.org

I find it remarkable, that with the ever-increasing policy-making and debate on active citizenship, this rich tradition of informal communal support networks, with women in the lead, are merely mentioned in policy reports or tapped into during policy implementation. During the SAMEN conference some women even jokily referred to this heritage of informal communal support as active citizenship 'avant a lettre'. Given the context of 'a woman city' as described above, shouldn't these local practices be recognized and taken into account for successful and fitting policymaking and implementation on active citizenship? In this case, there is a discrepancy and dis-identification between the (political) concept of active citizenship and the (existing) ´traditions´ of communal support in district Southeast. Illustrated by the fact that most participants of the SAMEN conference could identify with these past/existing traditions but had ambiguous feelings towards the concept of active citizenship. It is valuable to question if the lived realities and (intergenerational) practices in this district are actively part of the mainstream discourse on active citizenship. The notion of 'subjugated knowledge' (Foucault 1980) is in place here. A critical outlook on 'dominant' knowledge or practices regarding active citizenship is required in order to create room for alternative perspectives and existing dynamics.

So, active citizenship as a concept or policy tool is omnipresent, but it relates to specific people; groups and locations differently and there are also power dynamics involved. I consider this matter to be problematic because:

- In understanding and implementing active citizenship as a (policy) concept or tool, a specific form of existing 'agency' by local citizens is 'lost in translation'.
- This reinforces a vulnerable and subordinate role often imposed over migrant women (Ghorasi 2010) and is a recurring pattern of how old and existing practices often linked to the lives of migrant or 'marginalized´ groups, non-coincidently, are overlooked or devalorised.
- At this moment, there are missed opportunities in the potential that could derive from connecting these informal strategies (characteristic to this district) with formal strategies on active citizenship.

Therefore, my motivation and aim behind this thesis is to voice alternative conceptions of active citizenship, amidst this transition phase from a welfare state to a participation society. To question the knowledges and practices, that we include and exclude in our discourses and implementation of active citizenship, and finally to open up the possibility to imagine new

ways and the productive space that be found in building the new on the old. The research question states as follows:

How do formal (through policy) and informal active citizenship conceptions manifest in Amsterdam Southeast? And how can existing empowerment traditions and practices be (made) viable for successful active citizenship policy in the neighbourhood?

Sub questions

a. In which way is the actually existing ´supportive climate´ of women characteristic for the ´couleur locale´ of Amsterdam Southeast?
b. How is active citizenship manifested in Southeast policies?
    - Which visions or meanings are formulated on active citizenship?
    - Whose 'face' is that of the active citizen in Southeast policies?
    - In these policies does active citizenship - interfere and/or engage with existing empowerment practices?
    - Can existing empowerment practices create productive space for active citizenship?

In order to answer the research question and sub question, the conceptual framework of "intersectionality", coined by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) will be used. Intersectionality is the view that our lives are multi-layered, but are bound together and influenced by the intersectional systems of society. Examples of this include race, gender, class, ability, and ethnicity. Certain groups of women therefore experience oppression in varying configurations and in varying degrees of intensity. By using the framework of intersectionality I aim to disrupt underlying assumptions that active citizenship is a one-size-fits-all type of concept. With this framework I also address 'the face' of the active citizen and how active citizenship could 'work differently' for groups of citizens. From an intersectional outlook I also analyse a number of policies of Southeast district, identifying blind spots, and address how active citizenship as a (policy) concept and tool can be navigated and understood differently, creating room for existing, overlooked practices, new methodologies, forms of language, and other means of engagements. My research method is based on published studies, a critical frame analysis of several policy papers in district southeast, addressing active citizenship and participant observation in Amsterdam Southeast.

The reminder of this thesis is organized as follows. Chapter 1 theoretical chapter on intersectionality, and critical frame analysis, which will also discuss my choice for the intersectional framework as the conceptual lenses to explore migrant women's realities in the Netherlands. The next chapter will review the literature on active citizenship, on one hand, *what it means*, the description of active citizenship and types of active citizenship. On the other hand, *how it works,* its historical development, the culturalisation of citizenship and the exclusion mechanisms and power structures embedded within the notion of (active) citizenship. Subsequently, I will explore district southeast within the context of a 'woman city', addressing the heritage of informal supportive networks of Afro-Caribbean women, as a couleur locale of district Southeast. An intersectional analysis of these practices is made, with three factors (identity and migration, solidarity ethos, matrifocality) that I argue, have formed and shaped the practices of informal communal support networks. Finally, in in which way these practices interfere/ engage/ similar with the (potentially) 'active citizen'. Whose 'face' is that of the active citizen? (chapter 3). The next section is critical frame analysis on policy papers in district southeast, addressing active citizenship. Who are the activators and executors of these policies and which structures of power / hierarchy are embedded or created? Does the 'active citizen' – in these policies, interfere and/or engage with existing empowerment traditions/ movements, where are the blind spots? (chapter 4) Concluding with how an intersectional and inclusive notion of active citizenship 'empowers' and creates productive space 'within' existing empowerment traditions and movements and the existing policies in Amsterdam Southeast and is therefore a fertile ground for viable active citizenship. (chapter 5)

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1 Accountability

I will follow the conceptual framework of "intersectionality" coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. According Wekker (2016) intersectionality addresses identitarian issues, but also a host of other social and psychological phenomena. It is a way of looking at the world that takes as a principled stance that it is not enough merely to take gender as the main analytical tool of a particular phenomenon, but that gender as an important social and symbolical axis of difference is simultaneously operative with others like race, class, sexuality, and religion (Crenshaw 1989, Wekker 2016). Therefore intersectionality encourages a contextual analysis that probes beneath single identities, experiences and social location. By using the framework of intersectionality I aim to disrupt underlying assumptions that active citizenship is a one-size-fits-all type of concept and address the fact that active citizenship could 'work differently' for groups of citizens. The methodology of critical frame analysis allows for systematically analyzing and explaining inconsistencies, blind spots or silences and power dimensions in policies. A frame analysis approach can be used to evaluate policies based on criteria deduced from general features of policy documents and a theory-based evaluation approach.

1.2 Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to categories of difference that we embody simultaneously (race, class, gender, sexuality, level of abledness, and so on) and how these categories interact with each other on an individual, institutional and symbolic level. The outcomes of these interactions create different power positions, which means we all inhabit different levels of privilege and discrimination (Jouwe, 2015). As an analytic and political tool, intersectional thinking can be used to deconstruct these social categories of difference. On one hand it shows that this differences do not work in a cumulative way, as exemplified by notion of 'triple oppression'. This was basically a claim that Black women suffered from oppression from three different angles: as Blacks, women and members of the working class (Yuval Davis, 2006, p 195) Intersectionality refutes this 'triple oppression' approach with a more sophisticated argument, stating that there is no such thing as suffering from oppression 'as Black', 'as a woman', 'as a working-class person' (p.195). Being black, for example, is always inter-related with other social divisions and these different social divisions inter-relate

in terms of the production of social relations. Oppression therefore comes from several ‘crossroads’, and is a consistent interaction on multiple and simultaneous levels. An intersectional approach lays bare the hierarchies and power structures that exist between social categories, given the context, but it is also a useful tool for empowerment (Jouwe, 2015). Both in everyday life as well as in the development and implementation of government and institution policies that would like to function in a gender-conscious and intercultural ways, intersectional thinking, is an instrument that is indispensable (Wekker, Lutz, 2001).

Historising and contextualising intersectionality

The term “Intersectionality” can be traced to the United States, coined by the Critical Legal and Black Feminist Scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. Yet, it is important to note that practice of intersectional thinking did not appear out of the blue. According to Jouwe (2015), intersectionality was a lived reality before it became a term. From the 1960s/70s, Black feminist theorists and activists, notably (but not just) in the US, highlighted how mainstream feminists took the white woman as the essential norm while anti-racism thinking and activism used the black man as the norm. In the introduction to her book Ain’t I a Woman, bell hooks (1981) poured scorn on the then common analogue many feminists used between the situation of women and the situation of Blacks. ‘This implies’, she argued, ‘that all women are White and all Blacks are men.’ As Jouwe states (2015), it meant that white women could be just ‘women’ and stand in for all women, just as black men could stand in for all blacks. Within this discourse women were twice excluded from the norm, black women were rendered invisible, leaving little to no room for their experiences, positions and insights. Arguably, in order to avoid this pattern of ‘rendering invisible’, it is crucial to position the concept of intersectionality in a long legacy of radical feminist thought and political work by ‘women of colour’. Just as Kimberle Crenshaw introduced the metaphor of intersectionality to critique the single-axis framework dominant in antidiscrimination law and in social movements, so did the Combahee River Collective in Boston in 1977. They published the now famous 'A Black Feminist Statement' which described the entanglement of the systems of oppression under which black women live: 'The most general statement of our politics at the present time would be that we are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of

oppression are interlocking. The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives' (p. 210).

Intersectional thought can also be traced to the Netherlands and its Women's Movement. According to Jouwe (2015) the Dutch rise of Black feminism started in the late 1970s and culminated in the early 1980s. The term 'Black' was a political and relational term. It a) referred to solidarity among non-white women, b) engaged in a common struggle (sharing a colonial past and being victimized by racism), and c) critiqued the dominance of white, middle class, heterosexual norms of mainstream feminists. Jouwe states (2015) that this Black women's movement evolved into a Black Migrant Refugee women's movement, taking into account the differences within the diverse groups of women of colour. Therefore the term BMR women's movement ('ZMV vrouwenbeweging') was according to Jouwe (2015) already an intersectional intervention. Wekker and Lutz (2001) highlight the complexities of the BMR women's movement: "The Dutch movement of black, migrant and refugee women has its roots, on the one hand, in the black anti-colonial, left-wing movement and later the movement of labour migrants and the white women's movement, on the other hand. This complex situation is typical of the position of black, migrant and refugee women: they participate in the experiences of both categories (p.16). With black and migrant men they share experiences of racism; with white women they share experiences of sexism, but both 'party lines' do not take the complexity of their situation into account (Pattynama, 1987, as cited in Wekker and Lutz, 2001). An example of this complexity as stated by Wekker and Lutz (2001) is the preeminent essay 'Het onbehagen bij de vrouw' by Joke Kool-Smit (1967), which represented the beginning of the second feminist wave for many highly educated white women. However this essay was met with little response from black, migrant and refugee women. Wekker and Lutz argue that this is because in many ways their experiences differ from those of white women, because they experience the power of gender in a different way. So, intersectionality elucidates just some of the ways in which people's experiences, access to aid and rights, 'mainstream' visibility, knowledge validation and so on, differ due to their difference in positionality, or positioning of privilege. In that sense, the success of intersectionality is that as a framework it helps to navigate through and understand the social world. As Mohanty states, (1991): "We, our knowledge and our subjectivities are constructed in histories which are cut through by differentially constituted power relations (Mohanty, 1991). But at the same n time by asking the other question What does intersectional thinking mean in daily practice? (Wekker, Lutz, 2001), it also 'opens up' op many levels – e.a.

grassroots, academic, personal - new methodologies, forms of language, and other means of engagements. Intersectionality does not exist without criticism. In "Speaking into the Void? (May, 2014) many intersectionality critiques are addressed. According May (2014) for instance, some object that intersectionality undermines feminism's philosophical and political coherence and call for a renaissance of gender-first think- ing as a counter-measure and others question intersectionality because it does not fit a hierarchy of oppres- sions they see as more adequate; for example, some see class as primary (p.102)

1.3 Critical frame analysis

Contemporary feminist scholars have become more aware of the risks of essentialism and homogenization present within the feminist movement, thanks to the theorization of differences such us intersectionality. Next to structural intersectionality (inequalities and their intersections as relevant at the level of experiences of people), Crenshaw (1989) refers to political intersectionality to indicate how inequalities and their intersections are relevant at the level of political strategies. Verloo (2005) defines a policy frame as an "organizing principle that transforms fragmentary or incidental information into a structured and meaningful problem, in which a solution is implicitly or explicitly included" (2005: 20). A policy frame analysis is the study of how "public policies rest on frames that supply them with underlying structures of beliefs perceptions, and appreciation" (Fischer 2003 as quoted in Verloo 2005: 144). According Dombos (Dombos, et al, 2012) the concept of frame analysis is traced back to Goffman (1974) and Snow et al. (1986), its introduction to the field of policy analysis can be attributed to Schön and Rein (1994). The question of intersectionality in the political arena steers the debate towards more complex ways of thinking and treating gender and other inequalities. Next to structural intersectionality (inequalities and their intersections as relevant at the level of experiences of people), political intersectionality indicates how inequalities and their intersections are relevant at the level of political strategies. According Verloo (2007) overall, very little attention is paid to both structural and political intersectionality in policymaking. The methodology of critical frame analysis, however, allows for systematically analyzing and explaining such inconsistencies, blind spots or silences and power dimensions in policies. A frame analysis approach can be used to evaluate policies based on criteria deduced from general features of policy documents and a theory-based evaluation approach. The concept of frames is used by different authors with quite different meanings. These differences cluster around questions of generality, intentionality and normativity. (Dombos, et al, 2012). "Deep cultural meanings" (Bacchi

2009) also affect framing processes by forming part of the "discursive opportunity structure" (Ferree and Gamson 2002) that framing processes have to align to if they aspire for success. Thus from a macro level point of view such deep cultural meanings matter more than the 'intentionality' of the framing process by specific actors. Based on these considerations each analysis must differentiate between three levels of frames: issue frames, meta frames and document frames. The first step of frame analysis has to be the identification/ construction of issue frames. The framing of policy issues by particular policy actors or in particular policy documents can be analyzed with reference to how it combines various issues frames. Metaframes can be analyzed by finding common normative claims in issue frames belonging to different policy issues. Thus finding issue frames is a crucial intermediary step both for the analysis of metaframes and for the analysis of framing processes in specific documents. When analyzing particular documents these features can be translated to questions such as: What is the problem to be solved? Who is affected by it? Who/what causes the problem to appear or reproduce? What is the objective? What needs to be done? Who should do it? What references are used to support the claims? These and similar questions can be called sensitizing questions (Verloo and Lombardo 2007: 35) that provide a certain interpretative tool when reading policy document in search for policy frames. Issue frames can be identified/constructed by searching for similarities and differences in what documents say about these questions.

2. On active citizenship: historising and contextualizing

Citizenship is in it's core, in essence, a controversial term (Gallie, 1956)

Dutch society is in a transition phase from a welfare state to a participation society and 'active citizenship' has become a buzzword and umbrella term that captures this changing relationship between government and citizens. Active citizenship is notoriously ambiguous as a concept. In 2013, Tilburg School of Politics and Public Administration was commissioned by The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK) to conduct a literature study on existing scientific knowledge in the field of active citizenship. The outcome of this extensive study was the report Actief Burgerschap, Lijnen in de Literatuur (Van de Wijdeven, De Graaf, Hendriks, 2013) that focussed on the (changing) relationship between government and citizen.

According to Wijdeven et al (2013) the academic debate on this active citizenship is evidently bulky, and getting a grip on the essential expressions and leverage is notoriously difficult (p.4). Three challenges are mentioned: Firstly, there are many different initiatives, many experiments and much research so that one consistent summary is hard to give (p.4). Secondly, scholars, policy makers and citizens are still in the middle of the evolution from x to y, and are mostly looking at a moving landscape. Thirdly, the theme of active citizenship is analytically and conceptually complex. There is a considerable amount of different types of interactions and practices to distinguish, and a variety of different forms of active citizenship. 'Old' analytical distinctions are not always fitting, and there is an (academic) on going quest for new meaningful and practically useful analytical ordinations (p.4). The question 'what is active citizenship' has therefore become a philosophical quest, for the brave. In this chapter, I will explore different meanings of active citizenship and also how this concept has historically developed in the political thought of Europe and the Netherlands. I will also explore the way in which active citizenship works within our multicultural society, by bringing forward how the culturalisation of active citizenship also leads to the exclusion of citizens. Finally, I will dwell on new meanings and dimensions of active citizenship, such as the do-democracy.

2.1 A literature review of active citizenship

An interesting formulation of active citizenship is that of academic Jan Steyaert; 'active citizenship refers to the social behaviour and self-reliance of citizens, and the way in which service providers and policy, invites citizens to social behaviour and self-reliance, and supports them in this' (Steyaert et al, 2005, p 23-24). In this definition the emphasis is on the (implicit) expectation that the citizen takes up responsibility. The citizen must also actively contribute to the society, as a co-producer. It is not just about enjoying the level of social development reached by the society, but also 'putting in hard work'. Sociologist Evelien Tonkens (2008) argues that the terms 'active citizenship' and 'own responsibility' are closely related policy-wise and even more or less applied in the same way. The call for more 'active citizenship' is synonymous to the call to take on more individual responsibility on the part of the citizen. But, it is worth noticing that both terms do not have the same connotation. According to Tonkens (2008, p.9) 'own responsibility' focuses our attention primarily on the division responsibility between citizens and government - usually involving more responsibility for citizens and less for the government. The concept of 'active citizenship' focuses our attention on an (active) attitude and responsibility in relation to the public interest or the other (citizens).

As multi-faceted as active citizenship can be, still, Van der Wijdeven et al (2013), identifies certain core developments that can be attributed to this concept:

- The changing role between government and citizen in the 21st century (in the period after the financial crisis of 2007-08),
- The promotion of a participative society,
- The ability of citizens to take care of their own welfare, and that of those around them.

For a better understanding of active citizenship and the recent appeal for 'active citizens' in Dutch policy, it is worth looking at how the concept of citizenship historically developed in political thought – in Western Europe and the Netherlands.

2.2 HISTORICAL THOUGHT AND DEBATE ON CITIZENSHIP

The modern view of the 'active citizen' as a pivotal figure and a 'partner' and 'initiator' in the pursuit of goals in the area of quality of life, safety, sustainability and social cohesion can be traced back to British Big Society thought. [9] In the Netherlands this thought and debate was also influenced by multiculturalism and the integration debate of the early 90's.

The 'birth' of the theory and ideology of citizenship is often attributed to the ancient Greek city-state, where men of a certain age and status met on the town square (agora) as "free and equal citizens" to discuss public affairs with each other. Consecutively, in the centuries that followed, there were several periods in which this concept flourished. In the ancient Roman Empire, the Roman Forum and other civil practices, legislation, civil rights, (military) battle and a 'proper life' where in line with each other. In the nineteenth century civil rights were supplemented with political rights for the same segment of society: the right to vote, voting rights and the right to participate in democratic affairs. With the struggle of the labour movement and other social movements and the construction of the Western welfare states in the 1960s, social rights were added.

Theorist Linda Bosniak, who works at the intersection of feminist legal and political theory, questions the desired condition of citizenship. "Citizenship is commonly portrayed as the most desired of conditions, as the highest fulfilment of democratic and egalitarian aspiration" (2006, p.1). She states this as a "habit of citizenship romanticism that tends to obscure the deeper challenges that the concept poses"(2006, p. 1). According to Bosniak, citizenship as an ideal is understood to embody a commitment against subordination, but citizenship can also represent an axis of subordination itself (2006, p.2). In defining what citizenship is, Linda Bosniak (2006) makes a distinction between four dimensions of citizenship, some of which we recognize from the previous paragraph: (1) citizenship as a legal status; (2) citizenship as having certain political, social and cultural rights; (3) citizenship in the form of participation in the political arena and active involvement in the civil society, and (4) citizenship as a process of identification. Last mentioned, as she further explains, are the 'affective elements of identification and solidarity that people maintain with others in the wider world' (Bosniak 2006, p.20; see also Bauböck et al 2006, Bloemraad et al 2008). The first two dimensions embody an egalitarian liberal and neo-liberal perspective on citizenship, that prevailed in Western Europe in the decades after World War II up the to

[9] Launched by David Cameron (VNG, 2010; Norman, 2010; Blond, 2010) and which inspired the Balkenende cabinet in drafting the Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning, participatie wet.

70’s; citizenship was a matter of freedom and emancipation for access to people from disadvantaged or deprived groups (Fermin 2009, p.13). In this classical liberal interpretation of citizenship the emphasis was on individual rights and citizenship as a formal legal status attention. The way in which the obtained citizenship was executed was hardly a matter of concern (Gunsteren 2009; Van de Wijdeven 2013). Such a conception of citizenship can be viewed as the most ‘inclusive’ and less demanding of citizens (Fermin 2009), although it is also frequently labelled as "passive” or “private” citizenship (Van der Wijdeven et al, 2013, p.22). Bosniak’s approach to highlights the dilemmas of inclusion and exclusion implicated with the concept of citizenship and as I will later argue, mostly overlooked when approaching active citizenship.

At the end of the seventies, the common belief arose that the democracy, judicial system and welfare state in a Western-European setting – which, for now, will be treated as one homogenous space - were being overwhelmed by, on one side, increasingly assertive citizens and, on the other side, the private sector that wanted to be freed from restrictive government regulations. The welfare state had reached its limits and the (partly unconscious) assumptions of earlier decades – being: a constant economic growth and an equivalent growth of rights and social protection – had not held up (Van Gunsteren 1992,1998, as quoted in Van de Wijdeven 2013). Concerns amongst ‘new right’ cabinet Van Agt (1977-1982) in the Netherlands were growing that the welfare state contributed to a passivity, especially amongst already underprivileged groups. The ‘passive’ conception of citizenship underestimated the importance of participation - and fulfilling duties towards the society – in becoming *a full member of society* (Van de Wijdeven 2013, p.20).

So whereas in the beginning of the seventies it was about ´acquiring´ citizenship through social and political rights, in the eighties the accent shifted to more active visions on citizenship; which meant questioning the ´desirable´ form of citizenship. This active visions on citizenship brings us back to Bosniaks last two dimensions; *participation* and *shared identity*. The attention shifted to citizenship as ‘good behaviour’, duties to the community, a shared moral and active involvement (Van de Wijdeven 2013; Fermin 2009). According to social researcher Alfons Fermin (2009), citizenship always implies inclusion and exclusion, but in the latter two perspectives, the notion of ‘exclusivity’ is most prominent. The following sections, will explore how parallel to this ideological shift to an *active* form of citizenship – within the context of our multicultural society - a culturalisation of citizenship also took place.

2.3 Multiculturalism in the Netherlands

The eighties witnessed the acknowledgement by the government that the majority of 'guest' labour migrants, who had come to the Netherlands from the end of the 1950s, would not go back to their countries of origin and that a longer-term policy was needed. A majority of Afro-Surinamese and Antilleans also settled in the spacious high-rise apartments and green surroundings of the Bijlmer after a mass migration wave in the 1960's and 1970's. The presence of these 'newcomers' resulted in the first governmental Draft Policy Paper on Ethnic Minorities in 1981. (Wekker 2014, p. 53). The attention for participative citizenship in this ethnic policy was indeed new, but this together with - the acceptance of the cultural diversity of newcomers – was nevertheless situated within the emancipatory efforts of the classic notion of citizenship. It brought no new notion of citizenship *yet* (Van Gunsteren 2009).

This changed in the nineties within a distinctive political discourse in which the conception of citizenship can be linked to *multiculturalism* and the so-called 'integration debate' (Fermin 2009). It is worth examining more in depth how the conception of (active) citizenship in the Dutch political discourse has developed in close relation to the integration debate on immigrants. Arguably multiculturalism in the recent decades has shaped the *meaning* and connotation of (active) citizenship. According to British cultural theorist Stuart Hall the 'multicultural question' addresses 'how we are to envisage the futures of those many different societies now composed of peoples from very different backgrounds, cultures, contexts, experiences and positions in the ranking order of the world; societies where difference refuses to disappear.' (Hall, 2000: 209) Multiculturalism as a concept always intersects with the politics of inclusion and exclusion of multiple cultural forms within nation-states. Hall distinguishes the concept of 'the multicultural' as expressed by the adjective 'multicultural' from that of 'multiculturalism' as a noun. The term multicultural as adjective addresses problems of society and of governance that stem from different cultural communities coexisting within the same nation-state while at the same time retaining and protecting something of their 'original' culture and identities. In contrast, 'multiculturalism', as a noun, refers to 'strategies and policies adopted to govern or manage the problems of diversity and multiplicity which multi-cultural societies throw up' (Hall, 2000: 209).

Thus, 'the multicultural' indicates a theoretical and contested discourse whereas 'multiculturalism' is a governing policy of specific nation-states and may be accompanied by a seemingly value-free 'realism' (Prins 2000). In the same line, that is, indicating clearly how these two definitions or realities of multicultural/ism are conflicting, Dutch feminist political

theorist Evelien Tonkens brings forward how active citizenship seems to be a bandage for a broken social cohesion (Tonkens et al, 2011).

2.4 CULTURALISATION OF CITIZENSHIP

In the nineties a widespread political debate on integration and migration was practically non-existent in the Netherlands. According to feminist policy researchers Mieke Verloo & Conny Roggeband (2005) the government coalitions Purple cabinet I and II[10], echoed a rhetoric of multiculturalism and there was hardly any political contestation by political parties on this multicultural dominant frame. In the proposed policies cultural diversity is presented as a source of richness for society:

> "There is nothing wrong with expressing the hope and expectation that our society is becoming a multicultural society. [...] The government does not have the right to deprive minorities from expressing their cultures.[...]". (Verloo & Roggeband 2005:10).

Van der Brug et al (2009: 1-10) states that discussing this dominant frame was a taboo and political parties lacked a clear vision on this matter. This resulted in an inconsistent and mixed minority policy based on segregation, welfare and development.

In his influential essay 'The Multicultural Drama' (2000), Scheffer reflects on this period, stressing that the Dutch political elite, had a clear 'civilisation mission', but neglected this mission and carelessly ignored the rising problems of the multicultural society; criminality, unemployment, poverty and the role of the Islam. According to Scheffer, this 'culture of tolerance' went hand in hand with a misleading self-identity of cosmopolitanism. Nonetheless, amidst this 'culture of tolerance' the 'multicultural question' was raised by leading man of the right wing party VVD: Frits Bolkestein. On the 6th of September 1991 at the annual conference of the Internationale Liberale in Luzern he held a speech disputing the policy of integration with retaining ones own cultural identity. He claimed that this duality creates a tension with several fundamental universal values of liberalism, which are not subject for negotiation. Six days later on the 12th of September 1991 this speech was the base for a controversial article published in the Dutch national newspaper *de Volkskrant*, in which he stated that the Western and Islamic culture are not equal to other, but the latter inferior. The last paragraph of this article read:

[10] Political parties PvdA, VVD en D66

The integration of minorities is such a difficult problem that it cannot be solved with courage and creativity. In this there is no space for permissiveness or taboos. There is need for a major debate by all political parties in which is discussed what is allowed, what is possible, what is necessary and if not what the threat will be" (translated paragraph of the article 'The Integration of Minorities', *de Volkskrant*, 12 september 1991; my translation).

Although Bolkestein received a lot of criticism for what was seen as generalising and populist views, his caution for the multicultural society did leave a footprint and unrest. It was no longer taboo to question the fundamental differences in identities of citizens of the same state (Van Gunsteren 2009). Initially Bolkestein was vehemently criticized, but gradually he got more applause. Many began to see 'social cohesion', as an urgent political concern. Van Gunsteren (2009) states that in political debates increasingly the phrase 'good citizenship' appeared. A 'good citizen' is someone who, through his active and exemplary behaviour, promotes social cohesion. According Van Gunsteren (2009) this 'morality' of normative of citizenship was a 'break' from the classically liberal citizen understanding, since a distinction between good and less good (or bad) citizens is difficult to fit into this 'neutral' view. Tonkens (2011) refers to this shift as the 'culturalisation of citizenship'; meaning that for citizenship the emphasis was less on socio-economic and political-legal issues and more on culture - on norms, values, customs, traditions and loyalty.

The year 2000 kicked off with the essay publications of the 'holy Paul trinity'; Paul Scheffer, Paul Schnabel and Paul Cliteur, which had a fundamental impact in the redirection of Dutch political thought on citizenship. Although the works of the first two mentioned had a more apocalyptic and pessimistic edge to them - 'threat towards peace in society', 'the worrisome development of a large allochtonous (Muslim) population by 2015' (Scheffer 2000, Schnabel 2000) - all three were unanimous in their conclusion: The Dutch multicultural society is a failure, not (necessarily) by the social-economic disadvantage of minorities but especially by the differences in cultural norms and values between the autochthonous (western) and allochthonous (muslim) population. They attack cultural relativism by arguing that inferiority in culture does exist if some culture tampers with universal (western) values like democracy and gender equality.

The Netherlands (read: the Dutch political elite) should explicitly consider the value of its historical and cultural heritage and re-instate Dutch norms and values as an inevitable and

monolith embodiment of successful integration and good citizenship. (Scheffer 2000, Schnabel 2000, Cliteur 2002).

It is worth addressing that the terms autochthonous and allochthonous, will only be used in this context and no further in this thesis. Philomena Essed (2008; with Trienekens) points out the problem with the term allochtonous and its asymmetrical hierarchical relation with the term autochthonous, its seemingly neutral counterpart. According to Essed (2008), the mutually exclusive categories of allochtoon and autochtoon – was an invention by Dutch policy makers in the 1970's- set apart 'US' from 'THEM'; the real Dutch (autochtoon) from the not-quite-Dutch (allochtoon). Of which the last category is used with negative connotations, and informally considered and treated as second-class citizens, never quite the norm, always considered as aspiring, as a problem, lagging behind (p 58).

So nine years later, Bolkenstein's insight was echoed by Scheffer, Schnabel and Cliteur, but this time the debate on 'Dutchness' and the multicultural society becomes full blown in the political and public sphere. Subsequently, events like September 11, 2001 and the murder of Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn on May 6, 2002 and Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh on November 2, 2004 gave impetus to this debate. This shift in the political debate on citizenship had clear characteristics. The emphasis was on issues of integration, linking this to culture and most specifically the Muslim culture. This 'cultural conflict' discourse, pregnant with dichotomies, was fully and happily embraced by the ruling Dutch parliamentary coalition (Balkenende I), even more so because of the 'sudden' electoral success of new right wing parties like LPF (headed by Fortuyn), Rita Verdonk and Geert Wilders. The importance of attaining Dutch norms and values and 'we' versus 'them' rhetoric became the lingua franca of the Dutch political landscape and of the man/woman on the streets. As intersectional feminist theoretist Gloria Wekker (2014) points out, the earlier goals of "commensurate participation in society" and 'later integration', while holding on to one's ''own identity" had given way to the general insight 'that for successful integration it is necessary that we should build on a foundation of shared values'. Migrants should not only know the key values of Dutch society, but should also *internalize* them" (Agenda Integration, 2013). These values involve, matters like, the acceptance of homosexuality, the acceptance of (religiously) mixed marriages and the equality of women (ibid.: 2). The – in hindsight - generous and liberatory ethos of the early years had, and still has, given way to a much meaner and leaner disciplinary regime. (Wekker 2014)
As of the late nineties / early two-thousands the question of citizenship in the Netherlands shifted to what makes a 'good citizen', and a value system of Dutchness. So whereas

the earlier emphasis was on holding on to one's own cultural identity, which was facilitated by subsidies for self-organizations and cultural activities, was seen as a fruitful take-off point for participation in society. This fruitful take-off point for participation in society changed into an undiluted policy preference for assimilation tout court. A strong cultural identity is now, on the contrary, seen as the cause of the lack of integration of ethnic minorities [and problematic] own emphasis (Wekker, 2014).

As outlined above, in the past decades a 'culturalization' of the citizenship debate has simultaneously taken place with the gendering of minority policies and ethicizing of emancipation policies. In the early 20th century, this gave rise to a strong sentiment to re-assert a strong national identity according to Dutch norms and values (Dutchness).
Fermin (2009,p 17) argues that in this line of thought the concept of citizenship and expected public moral than can be viewed as a 'disciplining measure' towards minorities. The instalment of the Balkenende IV[11] cabinet early 2007 can be seen as a turning point in this discourse. The attention shifted to social segregation and polarisation. Minimizing social distance became a focus point. 'Citizenship also has to do with knowing that you are part of the Dutch society' (Ministry Vrom 2007a).

2.4 New meanings, new dimensions

The previous section highlighted how there was a strong accentuation on the emotionalization and culturalisation of active citizenship (Tonkens, 2011). According Tonkens, the 'moral ball' is often kicked in the field of the citizens (Tonkens, 2008, p.9), meaning that there is an appeal to citizens to take care of each other and this appeal also has a prescriptive character: 'a good citizen is therefore an active citizen'. Active citizenship within the context of our multicultural society also took on new meanings and dimensions.

Another new dimension of active citizenship is the increased policy attention for what is called the 'third-generation' of active participation´ or the ´do-democracy´, which primarily concerns informal citizen initiatives, mostly small-scale and local. This form of active citizenship is distinct. According Van der Wijdeven (2013), from the 70's tot the 90's, issues such as political participation where high on the agenda for Dutch citizen. In the new 'do-democracy' the relationship between government and citizens has turned 180 degrees: the civil society initiates and the government participates. Citizens themselves start concrete initiatives (in the public domain) that are of importance to them. For example refurbishing the neighbourhood playground, giving homework lessons to neighbours, maintenance of green,

[11] This government was formed after the elections of November 22, 2006 from the coalition CDA, PvdA and Christian Union.

et cetera (Van der Wijdeven 2013). According to Dekker & De Hart (2009) in comparison to the "traditional" manifestations of involvement based on the religious compartmentalized (‘verzuilde’) volunteering groups, nowadays, 'light communities’ or 'informal citizen initiatives’ have arisen in which connections are looser, more open and informal and of shorter duration (p.18). However, it remains difficult to get a good view of these new initiatives, which is also inherent to the phenomenon: movements that (largely) develop from bottom-up, locally, all have a ‘couleur locale’, and the local implementation is often connected to the personal dynamics of the life of citizens (Van der Wijdeven et al, 2013, p. 16).

The ambiguous nature of active citizenship shows that as a theme it is receptive for different angles of interpretation. Due to its competing definitions it also has a (inevitable) normative character (De Haan, 1992, p. 163). Meaning that active citizenship is flexible, constructed, and changeable given the context. But at the same time also loaded with associations. In the following chapters, I explore how certain dynamics of the ‘do-democracy’ are recognisable in informal supportive networks in the district Amsterdam Southeast and distinctive to the couleur locale of this district.

3. Couleur locale of Amsterdam Southeast

"Gender does not stand alone, but always goes along with other important grammars of difference". *Gloria Wekker*

In this chapter I will highlight through intersectional prisms three topics, that I argue, are crucial to understanding the multi-differential lives of Afro-Caribbean women in this district and are key factors to the phenomenon of informal female communal support networks.
(1) Migration to the Netherlands, (2) a prevalent solidarity ethos, and (3) the Caribbean family pattern of matrifocality. These topics were also indirectly addressed – in the stories shared amongst participants - during the SAMEN conference held on November 14, 2014. Southeast has a rich tradition of these 'support networks' and it can be viewed as a form of social capital. Participation within these networks gives women the opportunity to mobilize resources and certain types of support (Ypeij, Snel, 2002, p 73). Classic examples of how these 'support networks' function can be found in the loan-banking system, Kasmoni, (Bijnaar, 2002), and in how the care of children and the elderly is informally organised. I also specifically look at the role of gender and ethnicity in these 'support networks' but also how class, religion, etc. intersect with this phenomenon. I argue that these 'support networks' are exemplary as do-dynamics and are essential ingredients of the *couleur locale* - the characteristic landscape – of district southeast. This *couleur locale* of Southeast is very much imbedded in 'super diversity'. 'Super-diversity' is a term intended to underline a level and kind of complexity surpassing anything previously experienced in a particular society (Vertovec, 2007: 1024-54)' According Vertovec (2007), super-diversity does not only refer to diversity of origin. On the contrary, it emphasizes, the diversification within the diversity, even within a single ethnic group. From this angle, it addresses aspects such as migration histories, gender, class, legal statuses or even generation avoiding the 'God trick' (Haraway 1988) and allowing a more reflexive understanding of the notion of *couleur locale.* Van de Wijdeven (2013) states the importance of acknowledging the *couleur locale* of a district: 'it gives rise to bottom up movements with an own local specificity, linked to the personal dynamics of the lives of residents' (p. 16). In this chapter, I argue that attention to the 'couleur locale' of a district does not only create valuable insights about the different types of citizen initiatives, but also more validity about 'the faces' of active citizens. According

Tonkens & Verhoeven (as quoted in Van de Wijdeven 2013) the mistake is often made to think that active citizens only consist of the highly educated citizens and usually also white, male and middle-aged. Initiatives of the do-democracy in comparison to the 'deliberative democracy' (initiatives based on political participation) tap into a more diverse group of citizens. 'Active citizens can be found more among women, people of lesser education with low incomes, migrant citizens'. (p.19) 'Active citizens prove to be residents with a strong network in the district, and therefore have a strong local social capital (p.19). Therefore, the ambiguity and complexity of active citizenship as a (political) concept inevitably creates blind spots for existing ways, practices and traditions in which citizens already 'actively participate' within 'their communities'. Also, it is often the case that *the concept* of active citizenship does not resonate with citizens and their daily practice. 'The notions of citizenship amongst citizens do not even approximately reflect citizenship conceptions in the political and philosophical discussions' as noted by Dekker en De Hart (2002, p. 33). In this chapter I identify and describe an active climate of 'support networks' characteristic to the *couleur locale* in Southeast and built on three key notions. I further explore *if* and *how* these informal 'do-dynamics' (could) engage with the concept of active citizenship.

3.1 THE BIJLMER: VITAL AND VUNERABLE

Amsterdam Southeast is a leafy district in Amsterdam that covers an area of 2,211 hectares. Although popularly referred to as 'the Bijlmer', it consists of four residential areas: Bijlmermeer, Venserpolder, Gaasperdam and the village Driemond. Amsterdam Southeast has approximately 83,743 inhabitants and 123 nationalities[12]. The history of Southeast is characterized by a constant inflow and outflow of people. Built in the post-war period as a progressive architectural concept, the high-rise spacious apartments did not fit the needs of the desired Dutch middle-class families. They stayed away or left – also due to a lack of facilities – and instead large groups of disadvantaged people settled in the district, including many migrants from the former colony Suriname[13]. The district Amsterdam Southeast and in particular the area Bijlmermeer quickly gained the reputation of a 'failed area'. A high crime and unemployment rate, dilapidated housing, dreary surroundings and a monoculture of a

[12] http://multiculturele-ouderenzorg.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Kerncijfers-Stadsdeel-Zuidoost-2011-2013.png last accessed on 25 Dec 2016

[13] In the post-war period, there was acceleration in the change of demographics. With the independence of former colonies in the sixties and seventies many new people moved to Southeast.

high concentration of people of a low social-economic status gave this district a notorious reputation and labelled it as a 'no-go area' and a non-liveable place. By the end of the 1980's, it was clear that this area needed a rigorous renovation. In 1988, the mayor of Amsterdam installed the 'Werkgroep Toekomst Bijlmermeer' ('Workgroup Future Bijlmermeer') and in their findings four elements were summarized that contributed to the problems in the Bijlmermeer (Bruijne et al, 2002, p. 23).

1. The urban structure was too large scale, the segregation of functionalities, and a lack of differentiation in the architecture.
2. A non-cohesive, non-stable society, linked with a strong concentration of disadvantaged residents, who did not wholeheartedly enjoy living in the Bijlmer.
3. Limited social control. This was associated with a lack of quality of life and sense of security in the area.
4. Maintenance sensitivity of the buildings and area. This lead to continually increasing maintenance backlogs of the buildings.

These findings resulted in an action plan and in 1992 the 'Project Renewal Bijlmermeer' was established (Bruijne et al, 2002, p. 24). The major restructuring process that took place between 1995 and 2011 was based on tackling the physical appearance ('hardware') as well as the liveability ('software'), by taking factors as social cohesion and safety into account.

Nowadays, more than two decades later, drastic renewal measures have slightly altered the perception – not only of people living elsewhere but also of the 'Southeast-inhabitant'. Often heard expressions about this district are: 'The Bijlmer is home', and 'a great place to live'. [14] A stroll through this area has also become a different experience. The Bijlmer is now a colourful landscape of low-rise apartments, family homes, artist ateliers, multifunctional buildings and recreational facilities. The large-scale redevelopment of the Southeast district has been successful in improving the housing conditions for many and has contributed to a more positive image of the district, but it cannot mask the deeper layers of social issues in this district. Just to name a few factors: Southeast is the absolute leader in Amsterdam when it comes to the unemployment rate, especially amongst the youth. There is a high poverty rate, external migration (in- and outflow), and low educational levels. Southeast greatest challenge is poverty. The proportion of poor households is the highest of

[14] Voorbeeld van projecten die zijn onstaan uit een positief beeld en acclamation voor Bijlmer http://zozijnwij.amsterdam/fotos-zo-zijn-wij-op-schermen-bijlmerstation/ last accessed 25 Dec 2016

the entire city, approximately 23% compared to the average of 16.7% of the city Amsterdam.[15]

Poverty in Southeast is also gendered and ethicized. The majority of inhabitants in Southeast are women, and Afro-Caribbean women together with their children are negatively overrepresented in the poverty statistics. In March 2013, the local government of Southeast commissioned the report ´Uitvoeringsnotitie genderbeleid' ('Implementation Memorandum gender policy'). This memorandum was described as an important addendum to the existing diversity policies in Southeast, and specifically focused on gender. 'A necessary focus since there is a lot of room for improvement in the position of women in this district' (p.1).
On gender and poverty in Southeast, the report states:

> There is a high poverty rate amongst women of Afro-Surinamese and Antillean descent. They are overrepresented in risk groups: single-parent families and elderly people living alone. The percentage of single-parent families living in poverty is with 22.4% the highest in the city and a relatively large group of children/youth, namely 34%, grow up in minima households.

The above-mentioned memorandum further concluded that the high poverty rate amongst Afro Caribbean women and their families has made them a priority target group in the social policies of the local government in Southeast.

In the midst of this challenging environment the informal supportive practices amongst Afro-Caribbean women living in this district are *vital*. The term 'vital', as used here, is relevant in both its meanings: (1) of importance, essential, and (2) lively, active[16].
These distinctive practices of informal supportive networks and initiatives amongst Afro-Caribbean women (Bijnaar 2002, Ypeij & Snel 2002, Romer 1998) are of a longstanding tradition and enable Afro-Caribbean women to help each other to cope on a material, financial and care level (Ypeij & Snel, 2002). Well-known examples are Kasmoni, an informal loan-banking system (Bijnaar, 2002), childcare arranged in the informal sphere (often by an older female 'guardian' who takes care of a small group of children in her home environment – an affordable option than the official crèche) and the care for the elderly.
There is little academic research in the Netherlands on these informal supportive practices by Afro-Caribbean women and it is important to point out that the list of supportive initiatives is in all probability more extensive than will be dealt with in this essay.

---

15 Report Kansen in Zuidoost (Chances in Southeast), July 2011
http://www.verwey-jonker.nl/doc/participatie/3850_kansen%20in%20Amsterdam%20zuidoost.pdf, last accessed 25 Dec 2016

16 Definition by the Merriam Webster, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vital, last accessed 25 Dec 2016

3.2 Informal supportive networks and strategies

Muriel Dalgliesh, head of the district council, held an opening speech in which she referred to district Southeast as a 'woman city', with this she refers to the rich tradition of 'supportive networks' amongst Afro-Caribbean women. Ypeij (2002) concludes in a research work of single mothers in Southeast, that these informal supportive practices amongst women are in order to cope with life on a material, financial and care level. Also, the nature of these practices are also determined by a specific cultural-historical and social context which varies on the basis of the different backgrounds of the women who exercise these practices and have also been subject to changes in the course of time and place (Mohanty 1991, Ogle 2011). According Bijnaar (2002), one of these practices is the informal loan banking system Kasmoni, which came into practice after slavery was abolished in Surinam. During this period the access to the formal banking system was extremely limited, therefore Kasmoni functioned as a parallel banking system (Bijnaar 2002, p.24). Bijnaar argues that the existence of these supportive practices, such as Kasmoni, is not new: 'possibly, the historical answer to the origin rests in the very universality of human behaviour and the logic of collective action (Bouman 1995; 122, as quoted by Bijnaar 2002). However there is a historical specificity to such supportive practices and Kasmoni as the 'creole' version, originating in Surinam (Bijnaar 2002, p. 25-27) is a clear example. Understanding the context in which these 'supportive networks' come into being and thrive, involves an intersectional analysis that does not only encompass social factors such as gender, ethnicity and class, but arguably, it is also necessary to include intersections of constructs such as whiteness, masculinity, and economic privilege. According Ogle (2011) when Afro-Caribbean women migrated to the Netherlands they were also confronted by exclusion dynamics such as racism (p.11-12). Not only in the form of 'everyday racism' (Essed 1990) but as 'newcomers' in the Netherlands they were often excluded from mainstream white women movements and organized their own activities based on their specific experiences as 'black' women (2001, Botman, Jouwe, Wekker). They claimed their own subjectivity; addressing relevant topics like 'everyday racism', 'ethnization of poverty' (p.15) and gave shape to their identity in a new country through support groups, and being politically active (on district level). According Redmond, these empowerment activities in the Netherlands came in a multitude of forms; associations, foundations, religious groups, and informal groups. Afro-Surinamese women have a tradition of organisation, in their home country they are used to by being part

of cultural federation or a sub department of political party (Redmond, 1990, p.42). The role of migration to the Netherlands, settling in the district Southeast, the way Afro-Caribbean women subjectively experienced their daily lives in the Netherlands, in terms of inclusion and exclusion, discrimination and disadvantage, specific aspirations and specific identities (Yuval Davis, 2006) cannot be overlooked in the context of these informal supportive networks. For most single mothers and women of the lower class in Southeast, these supportive practices proved to be a social-economic 'safety net' (Ypeij & Snel, 2002).

In the following part I further examine three topics – *migration and self-definition*, *solidarity ethos*, and *matrifocality*, discussed during the SAMEN conference, and which, I argue, are implicated in the formation of these 'informal supportive networks.'

Migration and self-definition

In order to understand how informal support networks play out in the Bijlmer, it's important to trace the history and migration that has led to what this couleur locale is today. The majority of the Afro-Surinamese community immigrated to the Netherlands from the 1960 to the early 80's. Before this period, migration was mainly a matter for retired colonial civil servants and a small elite in Surinam, who sent their children to study abroad. In the 60's, the prospering Dutch economy became an impetus for a larger migration flow. Labour migration replaced study migration (Bayer 1965) and during this period a large group of skilled and educated Afro-Surinamese women find a place on the Dutch job market (e.g. nurses, teachers, administrative services) and/or aim for further study in the higher education. the migration wave hit its peak with over 80.000 people leaving the country (Zuurbier 2009) in during the period 1974 and early 80's Not only was the declining economy a reason to leave, but also the independence of Suriname, in 1975, caused a ' departure psychosis' Zuurbier 2009, p. 47). This last migration wave differed from the previous one's, the 'newly arrived' came from all walks of life and ethnicities. In general the educational level was lower, most had not completed secondary education (Zuurbier 2009, p.48). Whereas before the migration type and relatively high educational level of the first generation of Afro-Surinamese women contributed to their labour participation, the migration of 'lower-class' and middle-aged Afro-Surinamese women entailed more challenges.

The newly migrated Afro-Caribbean women found solace in the green surroundings and the high-rise spacious apartments in the Bijlmer (Ogle 2011), but 'home away from home'; they had to cope with the daily responsibilities of work, childcare, and finances in a different setting. Research done in the 1980's by Lenders & Van de Rhoer (1983) showed

that a large group of Afro-Surinamese middle-aged, single mothers dealt with extreme poverty, shortly after migration (Zuurbier 2009, p. 58) and had difficulties finding paid work. The need for professional and affordable childcare among this group was high, even for many an unpleasant consequence of migration.

Linking the themes of migration and self-definition is important in understanding the phenomena of informal support networks. On one hand, there is a self-definition based on a formation in the home country. According Wekker (1992), in general Afro-Surinamese women similar to Caribbean women, have a long tradition of economic independence and authority within the household, but pinpoints that there is a class and age dimension involved. Surinamese women come in many colours, ethnicities, classes and sexual practices (Wekker 1997). Working-class women have relatively autonomous self-definitions in comparison to middle-class women. (p. 340). They do not perceive their identity in relation to men. Especially, working-class older women are set on maintaining their independence and self-reliance. Marriage and living together with a man is low on popularity and in fact considered to 'take them a step backwards' or create a 'loss of income' (Zuurbier 2009: 58) Paramount amongst working-class older women is the relations between women. Many relay on all-female networks for emotional, financial and sexual support (Wekker 1992).

On the other hand, the process of migration also had an effect on the sense of Self, one's position in Dutch society, but also on the level of participation. For example, according Wekker (1992) amongst the middle-class Afro-Surinamese women, migration to the Netherlands led to an acculturation of the dominant values such as the nuclear family. According Zuurbier (2009) many studies on trans-nationalism have shown that migrants live in receiving societies with a double social frame of reference; the receiving society and society of origin. This double social frame also differs for each generation and the level of participation increases when they migrate at a younger age. (p.390). According Zuurbier (2009), cultural identity should not be understood as 'an already accomplished fact', but as 'work in progress'. This means that ethnical and racial identities are no longer considered to be static or monolithic concepts. Cultural identities are composed as hybrids, they mainly acquire significance in an inter-local way, and as acting subjects they can be subject to negotiation, transformation and innovation (p.2). This can also refer to way in which the migration of Afro-Surinamese women (to the Bijlmer) had an effect on the sense of Self, but also created room for transforming 'old' traditions (from the country of origin) to a current context.

Solidarity ethos

The Afro-Surinamese community is characterised by the strong ties between parents, children, relatives and grandparents. Although this traditional family structure still is prevalent and 'imagined', it has undergone change through the assumption of Dutch values and practices and the effects of the social service system. Exemplary is how a grandmothers or aunt takes up the responsibility of upbringing children, instead of the biological mother. Reasons behind this vary: supporting the mother in work-care activities, installing 'proper traditional values', a temporary solution, etc. Bijnaar (2002) states that there is an obligation of mutual support within and outside the family sphere. She refers to this as a ´solidarity ethos´, partly caused by a lack of adequate public facilities in Suriname. So in adversity people depend on the informal networks of family, neighbourhood, associations and churches (p.160).

> (…) People provide the elderly and ´weak´, nourish foster children, divide financial advantages, and strengthen the sense of community through celebrations and rituals. (Bijnaar 2002, P. 160)

The solidarity ethos as described by Bijnaar (2002) is therefore on one hand embedded in a tradition of mutual aid among families, neighbours and colleagues and adequately responds to local needs than some formal facilities. On the other hand, according Bijnaar (2002) the sense of community in turn is reinforced by these joint 'supportive' activities (p.91-92). Arguably one can find the same solidarity ethos in the public sphere of the Southeast, in the do-dynamics of Afro-Surinamese women within the community. This district has a longstanding climate of active Afro-Surinamese women who organize diverse activities to 'empower' each other and their community. These women are active in a multitude of roles: representatives of women organisations, women activists, 'community leaders' and through associations, foundations, religious groups, informal and formal groups etc. The emancipatory tradition and activities by Afro-Surinamese women have mostly been within their 'ethnic/cultural group' and are focussed on Surinamese women (Redmond 1990). An effort to cluster, connect and strengthen these initiatives was the set-up of the Vrouwen Empowerment Centre (VEC) by the district council in 1998. VEC is a 'community building'[17] with facilities and support for all women groups and organisations in this district.

[17] http://www.veczuidoost.nl/pg-29375-7-97405/pagina/over_ons.html, last accessed 25 Dec 2016

The role of ‘solidarity’ in the do-dynamics of Afro-Surinamese women and their efforts to ‘empower’ one another was also reinforced by their exclusion from mainstream white feminist movements. The publication *Caleidoscopische visies* (Botman, Jouwe, Wekker, 2001) points out that there were national, regional, and community organizations/networks/activities by Surinamese and other migrant women with different viewpoints and concerns. These differences and concerns were often a blind spot, ignored or marginalized by white feminists and policy makers, ‘forcing’ these women groups to ‘retreat’ into their own organizations of strategic alliances in order to have a voice.

Matrifocality

According Bijnaar (2002, p. 72) matrifocality is sometimes also called the Caribbean family pattern: the mother plays the central role economically and emotionally, while the fathers are mostly absent or only marginally present. In this role, Afro Caribbean women are ´pre-eminent as parents, educators and breadwinners´ (Wekker 1997), but they have also developed ´systems´ of self-reliance and support that are of a longstanding tradition. Bijnaar (2002, p. 73) makes a very important point, namely, that there is often negative connotation attached to this form of family:

> (…) the Caribbean family pattern is mostly presented as an abnormal, incomplete and unstable societal form, that is inferior to the intimate caring Western nuclear family. This negative image is based on an ethnocentric bias, because matrifocality is a successful survival strategy, especially in the poor economic and social conditions that Creoles lived in during and after the slavery.

Annelou Ypeij and Erik Snel (2002) conducted extensive research[18] on matrifocality and (informal) existence strategies in which they compared ´poor´ single-mothers of native Dutch descent and Afro-Caribbean women. Their research was partly conducted in the Bijlmer. The results of this research stated that in the case of single mothers, informal support from extended family members (therefore mutual support) is crucial for them to shape their daily lives and to handle the situation of double taxation (care and income generation) and double scarcity (lack of time and money). Single mothers of Afro-Caribbean descent appear to be able to rely increasingly on large informal social support than native Dutch women.

---

[18] http://www.godfriedengbersen.com/wp-content/uploads/Armoede-in-Amsterdam-Zuidoost.pdf last accessed on 25 Dec 2016

According to the Uitvoeringsnota Genderbeleid (implementation memorandum gender policy) commissioned in 2013 by district Southeast, matrifocality is still prevalent: about 22.8% of the residents of southeast are part of a single-parent family with usually the woman as the head of these families. Single mothers are also an important risk group for poverty, since a significant proportion of single mothers has a minimum income, especially mothers with a low education (p. 5-6). In these single parent households motherhood does not take shape in relation to fatherhood, but takes shape in relation to others - especially other female relatives such as (grand) mother, adult daughter, sister, aunt and cousin (p.20).

> (…) women name their daughters, nieces, sisters, mothers and aunts as their major supporters. In addition, some female friends are part of the support network. If men are part, often they are family members, such as the brother, father, uncle, or cousin of the respondent. With maternal aunts, women often have an equally intimate relationship like with their own mothers and their children are like sisters. (2002, p 82)

> (…) Often for shorter periods family and friends are included in the household. Sometimes (temporary) extended households are formed with the purpose of resolving financial problems. The composition of the household is used in a strategic manner with the aim of adding incomes together, sharing expenses and for joining care. This dynamic construction enables massive support amongst each other. (2002, p 83)

So, regardless of their low-income, single mothers in the Bijlmer are able to gain social support and have survival strategies within the dynamic of their extended family (Ypeij & Snel 202, p.85). According Romer (1998, as quoted in Bijnaar 2002) this economic wisdom explains why matrifocality is still present in the Creole lower class.

3.3 New do-dynamics of active citizenship

The supportive strategies as described above are do-dynamics that take place within the realm of family and 'extended family', but can also be traced to a longstanding emancipatory tradition of informal and formal groups by women that organise empowerment activities in the neighbourhood. During the conference, panel member Jurenne Hooi, director of Madizo (a debt relief organisation) commented on how creativity is necessary to financially cope in this district. These informal coping strategies are also seen to provide relief for existing obstacles in the formal welfare circuit (Ypeij & Snel, p.97). During the conference the example was given that an extended family (mother, daughter and grandchildren) was a more

affordable way of living and dealing with (childcare) costs, but that this form of agency could also clash with official housing regulations. During the conference remarks were also made about how these supportive networks and strategies are diminishing. Two reasons were identified: firstly, that these practices are only being maintained and valued by an older generation and less by younger women nowadays. Secondly, a more individualistic culture in the Netherlands has had an impact on these practices. At the same time active citizenship, as a concept, hardly related to many women in the room. It was jokily said that active citizenship is a 'new industry' and that the do-dynamics of these supportive networks are exactly what active citizenship is about (before the word was invented). Still, concluding remarks were made on how women organisations, social workers and activists needed to collaborate more often and effective in order to reach 'difficult to reach younger vulnerable women'

These existing do-dynamics do engage with active citizenship as a theoretically. In the public sphere, they relate to what Hurenkamp et al (2009) describes as 'cooperative initiatives' and secondly as federative initiatives. According Hurenkamp et al (2009) the first mentioned are do-dynamics dedicated to achieving goals. 'There is a lot of contact and support within one´s own group but little with the 'outside world'. Federative initiatives are a more open type of do-dynamics: there is a lot of contact within the group and also with social organizations en local associations and churches' (p.113-114). According Hurenkamp et al, the last mentioned has the greatest potential in building both bonding and bridging social capital. In the following chapter, I will examine in which way the notion of active citizenship in the past years has been present in local policies of Amsterdam Southeast and *if* and *how* these notion engages with informal supportive networks as described above.

4. Policy outlook on active citizenship

As I have previously indicated, active citizenship has become a significant point of departure for policymakers in The Netherlands. The government is increasingly relying on the ability of citizens to take care of their own welfare and that of those around them. 'Civilian power' (Burgerkracht) is also on the political agenda in Amsterdam Southeast. This district been hit hard by the financial cuts[19] since 2014 and poverty in this district is increasingly growing, mostly affecting single women and households of single mothers (Ypeij en Snel 2002, P.1). In the midst of this vulnerability, southeast also has a rich tradition of informal supportive strategies amongst Afro-Caribbean women which, I argue, are part of a distinctive couleur locale and could potentially engage with the concept of active citizenship. In the following part I use a critical frame analysis to examine how active citizenship is manifested in Southeast policies. Critical Frame analysis starts from the assumption of multiple interpretations in policymaking and seeks to address implicit or explicit interpretations (Verloo et al, 2006, p.31). In this chapter I explore to what extend the notion of participation / active citizenship has evolved over the course of time, how policies are top down and designed irrespective of the informal make-up of Southeast. For this analysis, I focus on three Southeast policies that were drafted from 2008 till 2014:

- Visienota ´Van Diversiteit naar Burgerschap´ (2008, primary source)
- Visienota 'De Verbindende Kracht van Diversiteit' (2009, primary source)
- Programma Participatie Zuidoost 2012-2014 (2011, secondary source)

These specific policies highlight two concurrent and relevant developments:
First of all, they were drafted in period in which there was a decentralization of government tasks and a transformation in thinking about the role of citizen and government. On January 1, 2007 the Wet Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling[20] (WMO), an important Act on social support, came into force. This act played a crucial role in this shift in tone. According Tonkens (2007) it urged a communitarian idea of citizenship, in which citizens from a sense of duty, were to be responsible for the care of one another, both in the family domain, as in the local community. Secondly, the themes diversity, integration, and to a lesser extent,

[19] See report Monitor Bezuiniging 201, Gemeente Amsterdam , last accessed in 25 Dec 2016

[20] https://www.eerstekamer.nl/wetsvoorstel/30131_wet_maatschappelijke last accessed 25 Dec 2016

participation are intertwined in this three policies. This relates to my previous argument (see Chapter 2) on how integration and diversity policies shifted in focus from social-economic integration to social-cultural integration (Roggeband and Verloo 2007). The emphasis was on ‘good citizenship’, and the responsibilities of the citizen.

The main questions that I want to explore in this section is:

- How is active citizenship implicitly or explicitly represented in these policies?
- What is active citizenship supposed to address (diagnosis) or solve (prognosis)?
- Which social actors are mentioned in the context of active citizenship?
- Is a ´figuration´ of the ´active citizen´ to be found in these policies?
- Is gender, class, and ethnicity addressed in these policies, in relation to active citizenship and how?
- What is absent in the policy frames?

Active citizenship first made a full-scale appearance in the memorandum `Van Diversiteit naar Burgerschap´(From Diversity To Citizenship) in September 2008.[21] This was a new development. Until then, ‘diversity’ had been the leading principle in the social policies of Southeast[22]. The motto so far was - *general where possible, categorical where necessary*; and the departure point for policy vision was the multicultural character of this district.

> (…) district Southeast is the city of the future. A vibrant city with an enormous potential, with the characteristic of diversity: Southeast is a multicultural society in optima forma (…). It is a city with an enormous dynamic; a great diversity. A melting pot of talent and dreams that has to be nurtured and stimulated by the new administration. (*Investeren in Kansen 2002-2010; own translation*)

From this perspective, funding was distributed categorically to ethnic institutions, represented by an ethnic group. The expectation was that these institutions would have a binding ability and an intermediary role between citizens, the council and other institutions: ‘bridge the ethnic islands’. This policy focus on ethnic positionings proved to be false hope. Social ties and ‘a sense of community’ were only strengthened *within* the ethnic groupings and there was hardly any cooperation between different ethnic groups, ‘ the archipelago of islands remained a fact’ (from the memorandum, September 2008).

---

[22] Since the memorandum ´Herrijking welzijnsbeleid´ diversity rode draad (2000), page 2

In the policy paper ´Van Diversiteit naar Burgerschap´(´From diversity to Citizenship´) the notion of active citizenship is ´brought forward as a solution for this ´problem´ of ethnic islands.

> (….) Southeast wants to further develop and shape the concept citizenship. Citizenship is the involvement of citizens in a society that is becoming increasingly international. But also their participation in this versatile society. It means that people become responsible citizens in their own community, in Southeast and worldwide. (2008, p.4)

In this policy paper three key terms defined active citizenship: involvement, participation responsibility and own community. Who the active citizen is or what an active citizen should be can implicitly be found in the words international and worldwide. So, apparently in this context an active citizen is a ´global citizen´, one who ´looks´ beyond the ´borders´ of Southeast. Further in this report, the social actors of active citizenship are centred round two parties: a) the local government and b) the civil society:

> (…) the needs of citizens must be signalled by the government and civil society (2oo8, p.4).

> (….) The assignment for this district administration - as ´producer´ of the local domain, is to establish connections between professional organizations and ´these existing networks´ so that all residents are reached optimally (2008, p.4).

Local government and civil society are defined as ´regisseurs´ (loosely translated: producers) of active citizenship. A precondition for social actors is stated: ´they should have a transcending role that surpasses ´group interests'.

> (…) For this bridge builders are needed: people who think in terms of the importance of community interest and citizenship, people who do not feel bound by group interests and who are able to translate needs in concrete group-transcending activities. (2008, p.8)

In this policy the term ´existing networks´(p.3) has the same meaning as ´a multitude of organisations and networks that have been created to provide ´support´ to citizens of a specific ethnic, cultural or religious group´(p.4). Apparently this informal, semi-formal, formal groups are described as 'very valuable': 'they provide residents the protection to emancipate in their own circles and familiar environment. In Southeast despite the urban problems caused this has a high degree of social peace, which contributes to well-being (p.4).

Still, the problem is identified, that these groups often lack the expertise to make the connection between the needs of their own community and the services of professional organisations. On the other hand, professional organizations often lack the ability to reach these groups. The role of the local district is formulated as: ‘ bridging these two groups’. (p. 5). Further in this policy, obstacles for ‘social participation’ are mentioned: ‘there is demonstrable link between self-reliance and participation on the one hand, and factors such as level of education, origin, Dutch language, income, familiarity with amenities and a social network (p.5). The social-economic position of citizens – poverty and unemployment - is emphasised as a major barriers for active citizenship ‘ (…) there are too many people in the margins’ (p.7).

In 2009 the memorandum ´De Verbindende Kracht van Diversiteit’ (´Turning diversity into prosperity´) revalorizes ethnic and local organisations as social actors of active citizenship

> (….) grants to local organisations have had a positive impact on relationships and the community spirit of their members. The emancipation was promoted within their own circle.
>
> (….) Amsterdam Southeast has now entered a new phase of development of the social domain; the district wants to expand the role of local organizations by building a solid bridge between the social priorities of the Administrative and activities of the local organization.

The two quotes above show that local and ethnic organisations were now viewed to play an important role in social cohesion, and citizen participation. Even though this role was still limited to their ‘own circles’, they were still a driving force in the empowerment of citizens. . Another noticeable shift of ´tone of voice´ in the memorandum ´De Verbindende Kracht van Diversiteit’ (´Turning diversity into prosperity´, 2009) is the explicit reference to the term ´active citizens; ´many active citizens live in our district´(p. 4) and ‘active citizenship’ as in the quote below:

> (…) Local organizations reach out to citizens when it comes to achieving their social objectives and thus provide an essential contribution to social cohesion and active citizenship.
> (2009, p. 11)

Interestedly these ´active citizens´ are defined by the following criteria:

> (..) in March 2009, 1019 foundations with an address in Amsterdam Southeast, are registered at the Chamber of Commerce.

> (…) Local organizations have many different functions in society: meeting, recreation, religion or education. The local government has no role in it.
> (2009, p.4)

The above statement shows that in 2009 the meaning of a ´active citizen´ also equals a local, *formal* organisation. In the same paper a few pages further the approach to active citizenship is defined;

> (…) Active citizenship is aimed at all citizens, regardless of ethnic, cultural or socio-economic background. It encourages activities that bridge divisions and results in more people knowing their way into our social infrastructure. Active citizens help build Southeast (2009, pg.12).

Arguably, this vision of active citizenship takes on a more inclusive ´tone of voice´ than the year before. The socio economic position of citizen is not framed as an ´obstacle´ for active citizenship. However, there is the assumption that the citizens are ethnically organized.

In 2011 the policy paper ´Programma Participatie Zuidoost 2012-2014´ (´Programma Participation Southeast 2012-2014´) was drafted. This draft is significant for two reasons. It is one of the last formulated visions on active citizenship before changes in the political administration of Southeast took place. And this draft was made as a response to a challenging context of budget cuts as a result of the financial crisis that also hit Amsterdam:

> (…) The social situation and the conditions in which district Southeast is in 2011, is anything but encouraging.
>
> (…) Continuation or consolidation of efforts in the coming years is financially a difficult task.
>
> (…) A large part of the budget that is currently used to encourage participation in SE, is under pressure.
>
> In Southeast a substantial group of vulnerable citizens are to be significantly affected by the cuts. This puts the social participation of major groups of residents of the district under pressure.
> (2011, p. 1)

This draft highlights a tension between the financial cutbacks and participation of citizens. Noticeably, in this policy frame ´participation´ is the central theme instead of ´active citizenship. In facto, these two terms more or less mean, the same, but one could argue that the term ´participation´ has a higher ´moral dimension´ which is to say that there is normative

component involved; expectations to how, to what extent and in what way one should participate as a citizen in society(Tonkens xx). Again civil organisations are identified as the most important actors[23] in reaching out to citizens and especially to also difficult to reach target groups (read; single poor mothers). There is also mention of ´enabling residents as much as possible to stand on their own feet through their ´own network´ to participate in society. This is a slight inclination to defining the systems of informal support and here, now, informal 'segregated' networks are again affirmed as having a positive role.

An analysis of these three policy papers gives a chronological overview of meanings and interpretations of active citizenship in Southeast. The table below gives an overview of how the concept of active citizenship is framed and/or implemented, according to the questions formulated in the introduction of this chapter.

	Diagnosis/Prognosis	**Social actors**	**Figurative active citizen**	**gender, class, ethnicity**	**absent**
2008	D: ethnic islands Pr: involvement, participation responsibility and own community Pr: bridge builders = (professionals?)	a) local government b) civil society.	No mention of active citizen but 'global citizen'	Class = obstacle Ethnic groupings/ cooperative initiatives = obstacle This is remarkable, since it does not correspond to the informal supportive networks of	gender

[23] Partners such us the organisations: DWI, Kansrijk, Madi, het Projectenbureau Primair Onderwijs Zuidoost

				Afro-Caribbean women	
2009	Pr: bridge builders = (professionals?)	Ethnic and local organisations + everyone	´active citizens = local, formal organisation	*Niet:* class = obstacle ethnic groupings/ obstacle	gender
2011 budget cuts	D: single poor mothers Pr: enabling residents to stand on their own feet = via ´own network´ participate in society	civil organisations + everyone	Participation systems of informal support		gender
Conclusion	vulnerable citizens social cohesion				Gender: ´supportive climate´ of women

Prognosis/Diagnosis

Active citizenship is foremost presented as a prognosis, a solution for social cohesion and a solution for ´vulnerable citizens´ or as Tonkens (2011) puts it ´active citizenship as a social bandage'. Interestingly, the factor of strong ethnic groupings that are active ´within´ their group is initially (in 2008 and 2009) formulated as an obstacle for active citizenship. Hurenkamp and Tonkens (2011) identify this *form of participation* as ´cooperative initiatives´: the involved citizens have a lot of contact and activities within the group, but less contact with the outside world.

Social actors

The solution for this obstacle was ´bridge builders´ (professionals?) outside these ethnic groupings, and with the ability to stand above the ´group interests´. From 2009 onwards, local

and ethnic organisations began to acquire a more prominent role in policy framing. The ´strength´ of local and ethic organisations is revalorised. They are viewed as both ´actors´ (necessary and vital in order to ´activate´ citizens) and at the same time executors of an active citizenship policy (an equal partner of the government).

Figurative active citizen

Who the active citizen is, is very ambiguous in these policies. On one hand, the active citizen are formalized local organisations on the other hand, everyone ´should´ be an active citizen.

Gender, class, ethnicity

The role of ethnicity is unclear as well. There is no clear vision on this matter. Class (socio-economic position) is initially stated as a barrier for active citizenship and often addressed as a diagnosis for a ´lack of˝ active citizenship. This outlook confirms my former observation and argument the informal vital climate of supportive strategies amongst Afro-Caribbean women, are scarcely addressed or integrated in policies. Absent in all these policies is a gender perspective on active citizenship. There is no reference to how active citizenship *works differently* between men and women, or mention of the significant ´supportive climate´ of women in Southeast that aligns with what Van der Wijdeven (2013) calls third generation participation initiatives or the do-democracy. So, the role of the do-dynamics of this support networks in relation to active citizenship is missing in these policies and seemly a blind spot.

5. Conclusion

In this thesis the focus was not only on the discrepancy between the rich tradition of informal communal support networks amongst Afro-Caribbean women in district Southeast and local policymaking on active citizenship, but also a broader analysis of how the concept of active citizenship is not 'neutral' and does not benefit from a one-size-fits all approach. By taking the conceptual model of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) as a framework for this research, it was possible to explore how active citizenship 'works differently' for groups of people within society. Since our lives and experiences are located in different positionings as always there are power dynamics involved regarding the discourse on active citizenship, but also which knowledges and practices are involved, excluded and overlooked. Firstly, this thesis pointed out how the conception of (active) citizenship in the Dutch political discourse has developed in close relation to the integration debate on immigrants and multiculturalism. The strong accentuation on the emotionalization and culturalisation of active citizenship not only kicked a 'moral ball' in the field of the citizens but also shaped an exclusive *meaning* and connotation of (active) citizenship towards migrants: the 'internalization' of Dutch values ('Dutchness) is 'a good citizen.' This discourse on active citizenship is embedded into a particular ethnocentric frame of 'us' and 'them' and it is also a perspective that positions migrant women as passive victims, reinforcing their vulnerable and subordinate role (Ghorashi, 2010). Secondly, an intersectional outlook also concludes that the role of gender and ethnicity is unclear in Southeast policies that address active citizenship confirming that the informal vital climate of supportive strategies amongst Afro-Caribbean women, are scarcely addressed or integrated in policies. This *absence* of or *blind spot* for how active citizenship *works differently* in Southeast overlooks do-dynamics that are significant, and characteristic for the *couleur locale* of Southeast and that aligns with what Van der Wijdeven (2013) calls third generation participation initiatives or the do-democracy. Arguably this blind spot in the policies is an obstacle for creating new insights on active citizenship, but also for building on what is already there, regarding knowledge and practices. An intersectional outlook, not only elucidates a long existing *do-dynamics* of supportive networks amongst Afro-Caribbean women, informally within family and 'extended family', but also in the longstanding emancipatory tradition of informal and formal groups by women that organise empowerment activities in the neighbourhood. This also reinforces the personal agency and collective agency linked to these practices and discursively constructs other interpretations of active citizenship. Alternative perspectives on what active citizenship

means and *how it works* within the existing couleur locale could help local citizens identify stronger with active citizenship as a concept and provide valuable insights for policy.

In the midst of a challenging environment with financial cutbacks for the district council, women being hit harder by the participative society and a dis-identification with active citizenship as a concept, existing empowerment traditions and practices could create a viable bridge for successful active citizenship policy in this district. Viable ground could be created based on the following recommendations:

- **Recognising an epistemic community vital and relevant for policy on active citizenship.**
  The coping strategies as described are long standing practices that also relate to aspects such us matrifocality, solidarity ethos and self and migration. These aspects have contributed in breeding and shaping these supportive strategies. This shared set of norms, beliefs and positionality (e.g. single mothers) motivates common action such as these supportive networks.

- **A local and intersectional approach to active citizenship.**
  According Van der Wijdeven (2013) the *couleur locale* of a neighbourhood shapes the forms of active citizenship. Active citizenship as a one size fits all concept overlooks the specific needs of citizens and existing dynamics. Also important is the 'face' of the active citizen. According Van der Wijdeven (2013) the figuration of the active citizen is incorrectly that of the white, middle-aged, middle-class man. Migrants, (migrant) women are often overlooked as active citizens. In this thesis an intersectional outlook shows that communal support and coping strategies such as Kasmoni are present amongst lower class Afro-Surinamese women. Both a local and intersectional approach to active citizenship means understanding the different realities of citizens but also avoiding policies that exclude groups of people. Current policies focus more on executors of active citizenship and should be redirected from 'professional organizations' (outsiders) to existing groups and organisations that have an 'epistemic value' regarding empowerment and support practices. The realisation that active citizenship has 'many faces' could assist in building bridges with informal activities (which are more off the radar) and creates a more inclusive approach. Important questions to ask are who is being addressed in relation to active citizenship

policies? And how do these policies directly and indirectly affect groups of citizens.

- **Intergenerational approach**

There is an intergenerational aspect to the supportive networks. Semi-formal and formal activities (e.g. women foundations) are mostly led by middle-aged to elderly women. These women take on a ´grandmother´ or ´wise woman´ figure in the community (‘bigi sma’). Women of a younger age are hardly represented in semi-formal and formal groups or activities. This was also a point that often came up during the conference: the absence of a younger generation women due to a more ´individualistic attitude´ and the ‘gap´ between an older generation of active women in the field of empowerment. In the case of an epistemic community, the role of an older generation women is of course inevitable, but is important to build bridges by reaching out to a younger generation of women in this district. For example, through policies that facilitates a younger generation or even collaborations between the youth and elderly.

References

- Bacchi, C. (2009). The issue of intentionality in frame theory. The discursive politics of gender equality, 19-35.
- Bijnaar, A. E. (2002). Kasmoni: spaarzame levensgenieters in Suriname en Nederland (Doctoral dissertation, Universiteit van Amsterdam [Host]), 24-100.
- Bosniak, L. (2006). The Citizen and the Alien: Dilemmas of Contemporary Citizenship.
- Bruijne, D. (2002). Working landscape becomes city around Bijlmer ArenA: offices and businesses. Bruijne, Dick et al Amsterdam Zuidoost, Uitgeverij Thoth, Bussem, 23-27.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991) 'Mapping the margins: intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color' Stanford Law Review, Vol. 43, No. 6: 1241–1299.
- Dekker, P., & De Hart, J. (2009). Vrijwilligerswerk in meervoud.
- Dombos, T., Krizsan, A., Verloo, M., & Zentai, V. (2012). Critical Frame Analysis: A Comparative Methodology for the'Quality in Gender+ Equality Policies'(QUING) project.
- Essed, P. (2008) Who Wants to Feel White? Race, Dutch Culture and Contested Identities", Ethnic and Racial Studies. Volume 31, No 1. January 2008, pp 52-72. With Sandra Trienekens. (2008)
- Ferree, M. M., Gamson, W. A., Gerhards, J., & Rucht, D. (2002). Four models of the public sphere in modern democracies. Theory and society, 31(3), 289-324.
- Fermin, A. (2009). Burgerschap en multiculturaliteit in het Nederlandse integratiebeleid. Beleid &.
- Foucault, M. (1980). Knowledge/power. Trans. C. Gordon. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Ghorashi, H. (2010). 'From Absolute Invisibility to Extreme Visibility: Emancipation Trajectory of Migrant Women in the Netherlands.' In: Feminist Review, 94, 75-92.
- Gunsteren, H. V. (2009). Over diversiteit, representatie, selectie en indirecte controle. E. Tonkens (red.), Tussen onderschatten en overvragen. Actief burgerschap en activerende organisaties in de wijk, 142-151.
- Hall, S. (2000). Multicultural citizens, monocultural citizenship. Tomorrow's citizens: Critical debates in citizenship and education, 43-51.
- Haraway, D. (1991). 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of partial perspective.' In: feminist Studies, 14(3), 575-599.
- Hooks, B. (1981). Ain't I a Woman. Black Women and Feminism. Boston (MA): South End, 665.
- Hurenkamp, M. en E. Tonkens (2011) De onbeholpen samenleving. Burgerschap aan het begin van de 21e eeuw.

- Jouwe, N. L. (2015). Postfeminisme is het nieuws van gisteren.
- Kool-Smit, J. E. (1967). Het onbehagen bij de vrouw. De Gids, 130(9/10), 267-281.
- May, V. M. (2014). "Speaking into the Void"? Intersectionality Critiques and Epistemic Backlash. Hypatia, 29(1), 94-112.
- Mohanty, C. T., Russo, A., & Torres, L. (1991). Third world women and the politics of feminism (Vol. 632). Indiana University Press.
- Mohanty, Chandra (1988). ´Under Western Eyes..In Feminist Review, 30.
- Ogle, J. (2011). The continuously changing self: The story of Surinamese Creole migration to the Netherlands.
- Prins, B. (2000). Voorbij de onschuld: Het debat over de multiculturele samenleving. van Gennep.
- Redmond, R. (1990). Daar hoor ik bij: de zwarte en migrantenvrouwenbeweging in Nederland. Leiden: Stichting Burgerschapskunde.
- Scheffer, P. (2000). Het multiculturele drama. nrc Handelsblad, 29(01).
- Stadsdeel Amsterdam Zuidoost, visienota van Diversiteit en Burgerschap (2008)
- Stadsdeel Amsterdam Zuidoost, visienota de Verbindende Kracht van Diversiteit (2009)
- Stadsdeel Amsterdam Zuidoost, visienota programma Participatie Zuidoost (2011)
- Steyaert, J., Bodd, J., & Linders, L. (2005). Actief burgerschap, het betere trek-en duwwerk rondom publieke dienstverlening. Fontys hogescholen.
- Tonkens, E. H. (2008). Mondige burgers, getemde professionals: marktwerking en professionaliteit in de publieke sector. Van Gennep.
- Van der Brug, W., & Van Spanje, J. (2009). Immigration, Europe and the 'new'cultural dimension. European Journal of Political Research, 48(3), 309-334.
- Van de Wijdeven, T., de Graaf, L., & Hendriks, F. (2013). Actief burgerschap. Lijnen in de literatuur, 1-40
- Verloo, M., & Lombardo, E. (2007). Contested gender equality and policy variety in Europe: Introducing a critical frame analysis approach. Multiple Meanings of Gender Equality. A Critical Frame Analysis of Gender Policies in Europe, 21-49.
- Verloo, M & Roggeband, C. (2005) Dutch women are liberated, migrant women are a problem.
- Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. Ethnic and racial studies, 30(6), 1024-1054.
- Wekker, G. and H. Lutz., `High winds on a cold plain.., In: Botman, Jouwe and Wekker, (eds.) Caleidoscopische visies, Amsterdam: KIT, 2001, 1-54.
- Wekker, G. (2014). Diving into the Wreck: Exploring Intersections of Sexuality,"Race," Gender, and Class in the Dutch Cultural Archive. Dutch Racism, 27, 159.

- Ypeij, J. L., & Snel, E. (2002). Formele en informele ondersteuning in Amsterdam-Zuidoost, 70-100
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Intersectionality and feminist politics. European Journal of Women's Studies, 13(3), 193-209.
- Zuurbier, P. H. (2009). Roots Gaan Waar Je Vandaan Komt: Een Onderzoek Naar Betrokkenheden en Identificaties in Levensverhalen Van Drie Generaties Afro-Surinaamse Remigrantenvrouwen in Paramaribo, 1973-2003. Amsterdam University Press.