



# The Governance of Self-Organization

Analyzing the governance relationship between municipalities and  
community-based collectives

José Nederhand



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# **The Governance of Self-Organization**

Analyzing the governance relationship between municipalities  
and community-based collectives

## **Het sturen van zelforganisatie**

Een analyse van de sturingsrelatie tussen gemeenten en  
burgercollectieven

### **Thesis**

to obtain the degree of Doctor from  
the Erasmus University Rotterdam  
by command of the  
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## Chapter 1

# **Introduction: The Governance of Self-Organization**

## 1.1 Introduction: The Governance of Self-Organization

The preservation of modern welfare states is under pressure. As the result of an ageing population, health care costs will rise substantially to a level that countries are ill prepared for.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in the Netherlands the current welfare system is rapidly becoming untenable for governments to uphold. Social care budgets have already been cut up to an average of 22% (Binnenlands Bestuur 2015). Hence, relying on community-based networks increasingly becomes instrumental in continuing the realization of affordable and effective social care services (Pestoff 2006; Coule and Bennett 2016). We see a rapid increase of community-based collectives that define and provide local social care services (De Moor 2015; Bokhorst 2015).<sup>2</sup> It seems that the number of care collectives have almost tripled from 2014 to 2016 (De Jong 2016). These collectives provide services that range from providing social activities and social care, to providing residential long-term care facilities. Although the increasing importance of community-based collectives has been acknowledged by governments, research shows that many collectives in reality proceed with difficulty, particularly when they conflict with established rules and institutions (Baker et al. 2009; Termeer 2009). Indeed, politicians and public officials are struggling with defining, adjusting and implementing governing strategies to react to and stimulate community self-organization (Gofen et al. 2014; Torfing et al. 2016; Kleinhans 2017). Their struggle is a complex one, as systematic insight into which governance strategies are actually preferred by involved stakeholders and how these strategies affect community-based collectives is lacking. This lack of knowledge is problematic as the governance efforts of governments are essential to safeguard the development and performance of community-based collectives in today's highly institutionalized and regularized society (Sørensen and Triantafillou 2009; Termeer et al. 2013; Edelenbos et al. 2018). Hence, a better understanding of how to govern community-based collectives is required.

The studies in this dissertation are aimed at unraveling effective governance strategies to support community-based collectives. The first aim is to investigate how

<sup>1</sup> Recent estimates at the OECD level indicate that, whereas in 2015 there were 28 elderly people for every 100 working-age people, the ratio will have almost doubled to reach 53 out of 100 in 2050 (OECD 2017).

<sup>2</sup> We use the term community-based collectives to refer formally organized, independent, non-profit distributing organizations, such as cooperatives, foundations or associations, that are initiated, owned and controlled by local community members (see Lindsay et al. 2013; Kleinhans 2017; Van Meerkerk et al. 2018).

the governance strategy of municipalities should ideally look from the perspective of key stakeholders at the national, local, and community level. Furthermore, because the governance strategy is not only designed in advance but is also—and mainly—the result of a complex interaction-process between actors, the second aim of this dissertation is to examine what form of governance is actually used and is effective in practice. The third and final aim of this dissertation is to examine how the governance strategy of municipalities affects the performance of community-based collectives.

## 1.2 Measuring performance

Since performance is an important element in this dissertation, but also an essentially contested concept (see Johnsen 2005; Steward and Walsh 2009), we first elaborate how we define performance. The academic literature has examined performance, and its dimensions, in many different ways. In this dissertation, we focus on the dimensions ‘effectiveness’, ‘quality’, ‘legitimacy’ and ‘resilience’ to determine performance (see Hood 1991; Emerson and Nabatchi 2015). Accordingly, we define performance as perceptions of the effectiveness, quality, legitimacy and resilience of community-based collectives. The items that we use to further operationalize these four performance dimensions are based on the work of Igalla et al. (2019), who translated these performance dimensions in the context of community-based collectives: Does the collective achieve its objectives, deliver high-quality services, is considered important by the community and continues to exist if specific resources or people are omitted?

The literature on performance further distinguishes objective and subjective measures to determine the level of performance. In this dissertation, we focus on subjective measures. Following Provan and Kenis (2008), we argue that measuring performance is a normative task. First, multiple actors have different beliefs about the criteria of performance, and, thus, selecting the preferences of one group over another or assigning weights to preferences is a normative decision; and second, the criteria for measuring performance are normative (Kenis and Provan 2009). According to Simon (1976), assessment criteria are elements of value rather than elements of facts. In this dissertation, we combine two different kinds of subjective measures: self-evaluations and external-evaluations. Combining these measures may help to overcome the limitations that are associated with each of these measures (see Meier and O’Toole 2013; Wang 2016). Whereas self-assessment measures are prone to personal bias, external-assessment measures lack in-depth knowledge and, thus,

may capture only the surface. Here self-evaluations will be based on the assessment of board members and key volunteers of collectives who have a broad oversight of the community-based collectives' organization and services. External evaluations will be based on the assessment of public officials in the municipality who are familiar with the community and the collectives' services.

### **1.3 Theoretical Contributions**

Governments have become more dependent on societal actors to achieve their goals because of the increasing complexity of the challenges they face, such as climate change, poverty, and digitalization. Community-based collectives have been acclaimed for their distinct set of resources (Smith and Lipsky 1994; Brandsen et al. 2017; Torfing et al 2016). They would be able to perform things governments can only dream of, such as reaching difficult target groups or setting up innovative services. In this light, the governance of community-based collectives is an important topic. We define governance in this dissertation as the strategic and reflexive attempt of politicians and public officials to steer developments and outcomes in order to realize particular public objectives (Kickert et al. 1997; Kooiman 2003; Klijn and Koppenjan 2016). Although we see a growing number of these community-based collectives and, accordingly, see a growing scholarly attention to how they are governed (see Lindsay et al 2013; Edelenbos et al., 2018), to date, some important theoretical challenges remain unsolved. These challenges range from examining what form of governance is preferred by policy officials and collectives, to what form of governance is actually used effectively in practice, to how governance strategies relate to the performance of community-based collectives. The major theoretical contribution of this dissertation is therefore threefold.

#### **Contribution 1: Perceptions on governance mixes**

The first contribution relates to identifying preferences for the governance of self-organization. Although the self-organizing ability of citizens has been a longstanding concern of academic inquiry within the social sciences, the fanning of this concern as being related to the state's governance, that draws upon and facilitates these self-organizing capacities of society is more recent (Sørensen and Triantafillou 2009). How should municipalities respond to the trend of community-based collectives; that is, which form of governance is appropriate for - and desired by - the actors involved? It is important to avoid such dichotomous and blunt thinking about governance strategies as 'market versus state' or 'hierarchical versus collaborative' (Howlett 2014), as administrative practice usually involves combining governance strategies

and instruments. The nature of these combinations and how behavioural aspects of policymakers lead them to favour one design over another remains, however, understudied (Bressers and O’Toole; Eliadis et al 2005; Howlett 2018). Have traditional governance modes and instruments lost their significance in relation to this new context, and/or what combinations of traditional and more novel governance perspectives are preferred? Within the public administration literature, it is possible to distinguish coherent clusters or waves that share a specific focus on how to govern state-society relations and to use policy instruments to achieve public goals (Kettl 2002; Pierre and Peters 2000; Van der Steen et al. 2016). We identify four governance modes, Traditional Public Administration, New Public Management, Network Governance, and Self-Governance. *Traditional Public Administration*: This perspective focuses on governance as achieving political goals and safeguarding legalistic public values, such as equality, democracy, and legality (Wilson, 1989; Weber 1978). From this perspective, safeguarding such public values is especially important now that collectives are becoming increasingly prominent in public service provision. To compensate for failures within civil society, government should use rules and regulations to improve the democracy and equality of the service delivery of collectives. Additionally, interaction with collectives should take place along the lines of clear regulations. *New Public Management*: This perspective focuses on governance as improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery. From this perspective, governments decide what they want, specify outputs, and then make use of business instruments (strategic and performance management techniques, performance indicators) to monitor the implementation (see Hood, 1991; Lane 2000; Pollitt et al. 2007). Interaction with collectives should take place along the lines of clear policy goals and performance indicators. Once performance indicators have been set, policy officials can take a more hands-off approach to their monitoring role. *Network Governance*: In this perspective governments relate to collectives in a more horizontal way, resulting in more intense interactions. Governing takes place through the usage of network management that is aimed at improving the interorganizational coordination, and quality of decision-making (Agranoff and McGuire 2001; Klijn and Koppenjan 2016). In this perspective, public goals and policies are defined and implemented through a process of interaction and negotiation. Managerial efforts of policy officials focus on activating actors, organizing joint-research meetings (joint fact finding), and composing a set of mutually agreed upon rules of behaviour. *Self-Governance*: This perspective focuses on governance as improving self-governance of collectives. The key point of this perspective is that the dynamics that produce public value start within society and, as such, government relates to these often-

uninvited actions (see Sørensen and Triantafillou 2009; Termeer et al. 2013). Self-Governance is not equivalent to a *laissez-faire* approach to government (see also Rhodes 1997). However, the policy instruments appropriate for the Self-Governance perspective are more restrained and facilitating. They include removing barriers for collectives to function, supporting them by providing fast access to public decision-making and encouraging collectives with small subsidies that do not damage the identities of collectives.

Effective governance of community-based collectives can thus be perceived in very distinct ways (see Table 1). Unravelling governance preferences would not only provide a first step to identifying what mix of traditional and more novel governance perspectives and instruments is perceived appropriate to govern collectives, but would also allow for a comparison of to what extent these perceptions differ. A mismatch in preferences on how to govern community-based collectives may have important consequences for the chances of the success of collectives (Edelenbos et al. 2009).

Table 1. Four dominant perspectives on governing self-organization

	<b>Traditional Public Administration</b>	<b>New Public Management</b>	<b>Network Governance</b>	<b>Self-Governance</b>
Focus	Achieving political goals and safeguarding public values (such as equality, democracy)	Improving efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery	Improving inter-organizational coordination and quality of decision-making	Improving self-governance of non-governmental actors
Roles of policy officials	Neutral bureaucrat	Monitoring entrepreneur	Active Network Manager	Distant facilitator
Relation with government	Interaction with collectives takes place along the lines of clear regulations	Interaction with collectives takes place along the lines of clear policy goals and performance indicators	Interactions with collectives is intense. Policy officials as prominent network managers	Interactions between public actors and collectives is limited. Policy officials following rather than leading

Policy instruments	Using rules and regulations to improve service delivery of collectives	Using business instruments (modern management techniques, performance indicators) to improve service delivery of collectives	Using network management: activating actors, organizing research gatherings (joint fact finding), process rules, etc. to improve services by collectives	Using facilitating instruments (removing obstacles, providing access and encouraging with small subsidies that do not damage identities of collectives)
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Source: Nederhand, Klijn, Van der Steen and Van Twist (2019)

### **Contribution 2: usage and effectiveness of strategies**

The second contribution relates to empirically unraveling the strategies that municipal politicians and officials actually use in day-to-day practice to govern community-based collectives. Although the governance relationship is acknowledged as being very important for the development of community-based collectives, more empirical research is needed to unravel the mechanisms behind the relationship (Edelenbos et al 2018). We make use of the meta-governance literature to explore how municipalities continue to use their state power by means of *governance strategies* in a network setting and how this, in turn, affects the conditions of the self-organization of community-based collectives (see Kooiman 2003; Sørensen and Torfing 2009; Torfing et al. 2012). How are governance strategies combined in practice? And how do community-based collectives react to a particular mix of governance strategies? These empirical questions of how and with what effect governments steer processes of self-organization in accordance with particular public values and objectives is of key importance to the current, mostly theoretical, body of meta-governance literature (Sørensen and Torfing 2016). The choice for a particular governance strategy is not always a matter of straightforward planning. It can also be part of a messy and political process of mobilizing resources and people within organizations (see Baker et al. 2009; Termeer et al. 2013; Bartels 2016). Therefore, in order to fully understand the usage and effect of governance strategies, we take a closer look at how the choice between governance strategies is being managed by key individuals within the municipality. We make use of the literature on boundary spanning and institutional logics to unravel which *boundary-spanning strategies* are used by these key individuals to influence the choice between

different modes of governance (see Williams 2002; Meyer and Hammerschmid 2006; Lodge and Wegrich 2014). Although the importance of boundary spanning for managing the governance relationship between government and community-based collectives has been widely acknowledged (Osborne 2010; Van Meerkerk and Edelenbos 2016), the current literature remains unclear about what this management process within public organizations entirely looks like. By providing insight into the strategic toolbox of boundary spanners and the perceived effectiveness of these tools, this study increases our empirical understanding of how the interplay between horizontal and vertical modes of governance and accompanying institutional logics within public organisations takes shape, and, in turn, influences the governance of community-based collectives.

### **Contribution 3: effects of governance in a social network context**

Finally, the third aim of this dissertation is to empirically unravel under what conditions community-based collectives show outstanding performance. Do collectives perform well under the conditions of a hands-on collaborative governance approach, or, conversely, under the conditions of a hands-off governance approach? This dissertation combines three important bodies of literature, each of which has a different (ideal-typical) interpretation of the relationship between governance and performance: collaborative governance literature, nonprofit literature, and social capital literature. Although these theoretical interpretations are not mutually exclusive, they examine the relationship from different perspectives. The first interpretation, which builds on the collaborative governance literature, argues that collaboration with government (hands-on governance) is necessary for performance of community-based collectives. Entering into a collaborative relationship with government enables collectives to attract and acquire more critical resources (Provan & Milward 2001). For small-scale community-based collectives, the financial and regulatory resources that governments possess are especially critical for achieving excellent and durable outcomes as they generally lack these resources (Dale and Newman 2010). This perspective finds that collaboration with government (e.g. co-creating public value) boosts and safeguards performance (see Korosec and Bergman 2006). The second interpretation, which builds on the nonprofit literature perspective, argues that avoiding close collaboration with government (hands-off governance), in essence, is necessary for outstanding performance of collectives (Smith and Lipsky 1994; Brandsen et al. 2017). While the nonprofit literature agrees that collaboration between the public and nonprofit sector has both practical and political benefits, much of the relevant scholarship simultaneously highlight the potential disadvantages of a nonprofit sector that is too reliant on government funding and programs (see Brooks 2000; Guo 2007; O'Regan

and Oster 2002; Smith and Lipsky 1993). This ideal-typical interpretation, conversely, argues that, being the weaker actor in relation to government, the small-scale local community-based collectives easily run the risk of being overruled and consequently lose some of its distinctive nature and qualities (see Anheir et al. 1997; Brooks 2002; Korosec and Berman 2006; Brandsen et al. 2017). The third interpretation builds on the perspective of social capital literature. This interpretation emphasizes the presence of network ties as a strategic opportunity for achieving outstanding performance (Lin 2001; Lewis 2010). The argument here is that the relationship between collaboration and performance depends on the power position of collectives in terms of their community and political network ties. Despite the fundamental theoretical debate on the relationship between government collaboration and the performance of community-based collectives, to date, there has been little empirical research that systematically assesses the key assumptions underlying this debate. Hence, the final purpose of this dissertation is to systematically test these key assumptions.

## 1.4 Research Questions and overview

The goal of this dissertation is to gain a better understanding of how municipalities should govern community-based collectives to safeguard their performance. The main research question addressed in this study is formulated as follows:

How should municipalities govern community-based collectives to safeguard their performance?

To answer the main research question, the following three research questions were examined.

1. How do key stakeholders perceive effective governance of community-based collectives by municipalities?
2. What strategies are used by municipalities to govern community-based collectives and to what effect?
3. Under what conditions do community-based collectives perform well?

The first research question focuses on unravelling the governance *perceptions* of key stakeholders at the national, municipal, and community level. This multi-level approach enables us to not only identify what mix of traditional and more novel governance perspectives and policy instruments is considered appropriate to govern

community-based collectives, but also to compare to what extent the perspectives of municipalities and community-based collectives differ. The second research question considers the *strategies* that are actually used by municipal politicians and officials to govern community-based collectives, and to what effect. Do the strategies that are used in real-life cases match the strategies that are perceived to be effective? In answering this question, we look at how public officials govern community-based collectives (governance strategies), but also at how they govern their colleagues within municipalities (boundary-spanning strategies). With the third and final research question, the conditions under which community-based collectives *perform* well are examined. We study if and how the effects of municipal governance are contingent upon the social network composition of community-based collectives.

## 1.5 Research methods and data collection

To answer the main research question, this dissertation focuses on examining perceptions as well as the day-to-day activities around the governance of self-organization. We use a mixed-methods approach to utilize the unique strengths of specific research methods. To analyze perceptions (RQ1), we make use of the document analysis and Q-Methodology research methods. In Chapter 2, we first analyze the frames that are communicated by national governments in policy documents on the governance role of municipalities. Using a document analysis is well-suited for the goal of analyzing how stakeholders perceive the effective governance of community-based collectives. We study the frames that inform, and are used as argumentation for, the major institutional care reforms between 2012 and 2015. In addition to providing an overview of the wider policy context to which municipalities and community-based collectives should relate, the frames also communicate valuable information about the perception of the national government on the desired governance relationship between municipalities and community-based collectives. Chapter 3 further explores the perceptions on the desired governance strategy at the municipal and community level by using Q-Methodology. Q-Methodology is a powerful methodology to identify shared viewpoints and individual differences towards a particular topic. The method combines the analysis of complexity – identifying and interpreting qualitative viewpoints - with a systematic quantitative cross-view comparison in order to detect consensus and contrasts in these viewpoints (Watts and Stenner 2012; Durose et al. 2016). Using Q-Methodology, therefore, enables us to systematically explore and compare the governance perceptions of 40 municipal public officials and 40 members of community-based collectives. These two groups are presented with 24 statements

that are based on the four dominant governance perspectives in the public administration literature. By conducting two separate Q analyses, the results enable us not only to determine how governance perspectives get combined, but also to what extent the perceptions of public officials and community-based collectives match or differ. This potential mismatch may have far-reaching consequences for the development and performance of community-based collectives.

To analyze the strategies that are used by municipal politicians and officials to govern community-based collectives (RQ2), we make use of qualitative casestudies. Whereas this type of research does not, and cannot, yield generalizable empirical knowledge, it does provide a rich and contextualized understanding of how the governance of community-based collectives takes place (Yin 2003; Flyvbjerg 2006). Chapter 4 describes the first comparative case study that concerns the development of new social care services in Amersfoort and Amsterdam. Selecting two contrasting cases which co-vary on one independent factor should achieve a better analytical understanding of the interplay between relevant factors and mechanisms (Yin 2003; Haverland 2010). Both cases are selected on the difference in experience with community-based collectives and participatory processes between two municipalities. We have conducted 31 in-depth interviews to empirically unravel the *governance strategies* of politicians and public officials who have had experience in governing community-based collectives and, furthermore, to examine the effects of these strategies. The findings of this chapter highlight the crucial importance of boundary-spanners within municipalities to aligning different institutional logics. Therefore, Chapter 5 describes the second case study that specifically focuses on *boundary-spanning strategies* and their perceived effectiveness. In order to unravel the experiences of boundary spanners, we adopted a storytelling case study approach. We have conducted 16 storytelling interviews with boundary spanners in the municipality of Rotterdam to develop a typology of boundary-spanning strategies that they use within the municipality to prevent and overcome structural organizational barriers to working with community-based collectives. Stories present highly textured depictions of practices in which the norms, beliefs, and decision rules that guide actions and choices become clear (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003). This method allows respondents to illustrate what particular situations call for certain routines and how the specifics of a case fit or do not fit standard practices (see Bartels 2013; Raaphorst 2018).

In the final study, we examine under what conditions community-based collectives perform well (RQ3). In this last step of the dissertation we move beyond the richness

of in-depth case studies to more systematic theory testing, by using Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). Unlike statistical analysis or comparative case studies, QCA allow for the use of both in-depth case knowledge and identifying commonalities between cases by systematically comparing them (Rihoux & Ragin 2009; Verweij and Gerrits 2013). This method allows us to explore the analytical middle range between case studies and large-N analysis. The set-theoretic approach of QCA is designed to assess subset relations in terms of necessity and sufficiency. Thus, a condition is necessary if performance cannot be produced without it; a condition is sufficient if it can produce the outcome by itself without the help of other conditions (Ragin 2000; Schneider and Wagemann 2010). Specifically, fuzzy set QCA is used to identify which particular combination(s) of conditions is sufficient and/or necessary for performance. Identifying set-relationships provides critical insight into whether governance works only, or mainly, in combination with certain conditions. We focus on four important performance dimensions: effectiveness, quality, legitimacy and resilience. In this chapter, we determine if and how the effects of municipal governance on the performance of community-based collectives is contingent upon the social network composition of these collectives. We conceptualize and evaluate the relation between governance and performance by combining social capital, nonprofit, and governance literature. We examine three ideal-typical theoretical interpretations of the government-nonprofit relationship by building on these theories: hands-on governance is necessary for collectives' performance; hands-off governance is necessary for collectives' performance; and how governance relates to performance is contingent on the collectives' network. We use set-configurational analysis to conceptualize and to test the relationship within 14 case studies in the Netherlands. To guarantee a balanced sample, we ensured an even distribution of collectives over small, middle-small, middle-large and large municipalities.

## **1.6 Outline of the dissertation**

To answer the main research questions, five studies are included in the dissertation, each described in a separate chapter. All five empirical chapters have been presented at international conferences and are either under review, accepted for publication, or already published in leading SSCI listed and international peer-reviewed journals. Table 2 provides an overview how the research questions (RQ) relate to the chapters in this dissertation. The first RQ is answered in Chapter 2 and 3. These chapters deal with the analysis of governance perceptions by making use of a document analysis and Q Methodology. The second RQ is answered in Chapters 4 and 5. These chapters

examine the strategies that municipalities use in governing community-based collectives by making use of qualitative case studies. The third RQ is answered in Chapter 6. Chapter 6 describes the final study of this dissertation on the performance of community-based collectives by making use of a set-theoretic approach.

The results of this *mixed-methods* approach inform the final conclusions of the dissertation, which are presented in Chapter 7. These conclusions provide the building block to answering the main research question: How should municipalities govern community-based collectives to safeguard their performance?

In answering this question, this dissertation contributes to innovating the study of governance in the field of public administration in two ways. First, by adopting a *mixed-methods approach*. It uses various innovative research techniques, such as Q-Methodology and Set-Theoretic Methods, to study important theoretical and practical problems. These methods have received little or no attention in the governance literature, although their appeal is growing (see for recent examples Durose et al. 2016; Warsen et al. 2019). By employing and integrating various research methods, this dissertation contributes to improving the methodological sophistication and rigor of the field, especially in relation to mixed-methods research (see Gill & Meier 2000; Groeneveld et al. 2015). Second, by adopting a *multilevel-theoretical approach*. Although the methodological rigor of public administration research has increased dramatically over the past several decades, an overreliance on grand theories makes that theory building within public administration has progressed at a slow pace (see Maynard-Moody & Musheno 2012; Abner et al. 2017). By combining and empirically testing macro- and meso- level theories at the micro-level, this dissertation contributes to developing mid range theories that are derived from data rather than from general theorizing. This increases the likelihood that these theories are consistent with the complex reality of public administration. As a result, the gap between abstract theorizing and complex empirical facts is reduced.

Table 2. Overview of Dissertation

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Research question</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Published</b>
<b>1</b>	Introduction	-	-
<b>2</b>	Activating Citizens in Dutch Care Reforms: Framing New Co-Production Roles and Competences for Citizens and Professionals	RQ1	Document analysis Policy & Politics
<b>3</b>	The Governane of Self-Organization: Which Governance Strategy do Public Officials and Citizens Prefer?	RQ1	Q-Methodology Policy Sciences
<b>4</b>	Self-Organization and the Role of Government: How and Why does Self-Organization Evolve in the Shadow of Hierarchy?	RQ2	Comparative case study Public Management Review
<b>5</b>	Boundary-Spanning Strategies for Aligning Institutional Logics: a Typology	RQ2	Storytelling case study Local Government Studies
<b>6</b>	The Politics of Collaboration: Assessing the Determinants of Performance in Community-Based Non-profits	RQ3	Set-theoretic configurational analysis Submitted to international peer-reviewed journal
<b>7</b>	Conclusions	-	-





## Chapter 2

# **Activating Citizens in Dutch Care Reforms: Framing New Co-Production Roles and Competences for Citizens and Professionals**

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## **Abstract**

This study explores the growing interest of governments in co-production and self-organization by examining the framing of roles and responsibilities of citizens and professionals in care reforms. As in many other western countries, the Dutch welfare state is subject to major reforms, shifting responsibilities back towards society. A qualitative content analysis of policy letters of the Dutch national government shows that newer roles (citizen-as-co-producers) do not substitute traditional roles (citizen-as-clients), but constitute a new layer resulting in an expansion and diversification of roles for regular providers. Activating, supporting and partnering with citizens are framed as new competences of professionals.

## 2.1 Introduction

In many western countries, public service provision is subject to major reforms. Activating citizens through shifting responsibilities ‘back to society’ or including citizens in the production of public services has increasingly come onto the agenda of policy makers. It is regarded as a possible solution to the public sector’s decreased legitimacy and dwindling resources (Brandsen and Honingh, 2016; Endo and Lim, 2017; Lodge and Hood, 2012). In parallel with academic debates, the idea of coproducing and self-organising public services seems to have penetrated the discourse of politicians and governors all over the world. It is seen as part of a drive to reinvigorate voluntary participation and strengthen social cohesion in an increasingly fragmented and individualised society. Existing scholarship predominantly focuses on the theoretical conceptualisation of different forms of co-production, either by theoretical argumentation or by examining experiences in co-production and self-organization (Verschuere et al, 2012; Voorberg et al, 2015). Less attention has been paid to how governments actually frame the co-production and self-organization of public services in reform programmes (see, for an exception, Verhoeven and Tonkens, 2013). In this article, we analyse how governments frame the changing relationship between citizens and regular service producers in the delivery of services in the context of budget cuts and changing societal demands. The reforms that have taken place in the Dutch care regime during the past four years provide a scenario to empirically examine the framing of the citizen–regular provider relationship. This sector, in which citizens have traditionally been targeted as clients, has been subject to major reforms in which emphasis is being put on shifting responsibilities ‘back’ towards society in order to keep care provision ‘affordable, accessible and in line with societal demands’ (Appendix, P10). We formulated the following research question: How does the Dutch national government frame the relationship between citizens and regular providers in the production of care services in the period 2012–2015 and how does this contribute to wider understanding of changing care provision? Next to contributing to our understanding on how governments justify change measures and trying to reshape citizen roles and responsibilities, this research contributes to the literature in two ways. First, as existing scholarship on coproduction and self-organization is predominantly based on case-studies (Verschuere et al, 2012; Voorberg et al, 2015), this research responds to recent calls to make the research methodologically more diverse (Brandsen and Honingh, 2016). By conducting a content analysis, this article examines how governments actually frame the co-production and self-organization of public services in reform programmes. Second, in the literature on co-production much attention is paid to the role of citizens, whereas the corresponding role of regular

producers in the process remains an understudied topic (Brandsen and Honingh, 2016). In the analysis, we therefore explicitly focused on the role of regular service providers vis-à-vis citizens, thereby starting to fill this gap in the literature. The following sections of this article discuss the literature on co-production and activation of citizens in current welfare state reforms. Next, we discuss our methods followed by the results. The article concludes with some reflections on the new public service ethos of professionals.

## **2.2 Activating citizens: transforming public welfare states?**

Over the last two to three decades, promoting ‘active citizenship’ has become a key and recurring topic of policy-making and governmental reforms in many western welfare states (Newman, 2007; Rose, 2006; Verhoeven and Tonkens, 2013). Many of the literature on activation is focused on social services in relation to unemployment (see Borghi and Van Berkel, 2007). The general nature of the discourse in this context is that ‘citizens are increasingly considered to be responsible for their own lives, are expected to invest in their employability, and, when dependent on the welfare state, are granted rights and entitlements only on the condition that they fulfil the obligations society imposes on them’ (Borghi and Van Berkel, 2007, 413–14). Discourses of activation have also penetrated other areas such as healthcare services, liveability and community services. In these areas the state has fewer capabilities to force citizens to become active: to dedicate their spare time to support others in the community. Through volunteering, citizens are expected to shoulder tasks formerly performed by the state, such as providing support to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, either by partnering and co-production with the state or by self-organization (Verhoeven and Tonkens, 2013). This implies an explicit departure from the traditional providercentric model of the welfare state. In fact, the care system is gradually shifting from an orientation on collective solidarity towards one that is predominantly based on individual responsibility (Van Oorschot, 2006; Künzel, 2012). While research on activation has examined activation policies in relation to new forms of governance (Newman, 2007) and to the individualisation trend in the provision of services (Borghi and Van Berkel, 2007), less attention has been paid to the framing of roles and responsibilities in the relationship between citizens and regular service providers. To enhance our understanding of this relationship we draw on two growing bodies of literature in the field of public administration: coproduction and self-organization.

## 2.3 Co-producing and self-organising public service delivery

The idea of activating citizens in the production of public services is made explicit in the co-production literature. We can distinguish two waves of academic interest in the concept (Bryson et al, 2014; Bovaird et al, 2015). The first wave of interest in co-production started in the 1970s. Early definitions of co-production focused upon the pooling of resources of users and providers to raise the quantity and/or quality of the service (Brudney, 1983; Bovaird et al, 2015). Hence, users and providers thus actively collaborate in the service provision. Recently, a second wave of interest in co-production has been triggered (Verschuere et al, 2012; Bovaird et al, 2015). This attention perfectly fits within the rising scholarly recognition that public outcomes need multiple stakeholders for their realisation. Apart from the recognition that coproduction could be a means to effectively address social challenges (Boivard et al, 2015; Voorberg et al, 2015), there are also more practical reasons for this renewed interest in the potential of co-production. These reasons connect to the fiscal pressures many governments have faced since 2008. Some scholars suggest that governments eye co-production as a potential vehicle for doing more with less by involving societal resources in service production and delivery (Thomas, 2013; Brandsen et al, 2014). As a result, co-production has been embraced as a new reform strategy for the public sector thereby fundamentally changing the structure of service provision (Osborne and Stokosch, 2013). Whereas 40 years on co-production literature offers a variety of definitions of the concept, the foundational ideas remain the same: citizens are not only required for the consumption of public services but also for the production of these services. Thus, both regular providers and (groups of) citizens contribute to the provision of public services (Pestoff, 2006). Although, there are several definitions and forms of co-production discussed in the literature (see Voorberg et al, 2015), we focus on co-production between professionals and citizens, defined as the development of long-term relationships between professionalised service providers and service users, or other members of the community, where all parties make substantial resource contributions and both take an active role in the direct delivery and design of a public service (see Bovaird, 2007, 847; Brandsen and Honingh, 2015). Note that in this definition citizens can be a direct recipient of a service, but need not necessarily be so. For instance, family members or other relatives could also participate in the co-production process for the direct beneficiary (Pestoff, 2012). Another relevant literature stream to study fundamental changes in the provision of care services focuses on citizen self-organization. This stream of literature examines citizen initiatives in the production of public services (Edelenbos and Van Meerkerk, 2016; Endo and Lim, 2017; Healey, 2015). These initiatives are sometimes organised as an addition to, but can

also be in competition with service delivery by market or government organisations. These bottom-up civic initiatives can arise from dissatisfaction or complaints with governmental policy and actions or emerge in spaces that governments withdraw from due to budget cuts (for example, Van Meerkerk et al, 2013; Wagenaar and Van der Heijden, 2015). The phenomenon of citizen self-organization is, historically speaking, not new, but the current ‘wave’ is getting shape in a different institutional context in which the role of government in society is stronger than ever and we face the curious situation of the state urging a reluctant citizenry to engage in civil society (Brandsen et al, 2014). The self-organising paradigm has an explicit focus on an active civil society in which citizens have a leading role in the design and implementation of particular public services. This does not mean public sector professionals are not involved. According to Bovaird (2007) professionals often have at least an indirect role (for example, advice, quality checks). Moreover, governments can take up a facilitating and/or monitoring role, safeguarding public values (Edelenbos et al, 2017). Citizen self-organization is different from traditional forms of government-centred citizen consultation as citizens determine the content – the subject matter, priorities and plans – and the processes under which their engagement takes place. Self-organization relates to the initiation, ownership and exploitation of service or product based initiatives by groups of citizens who deal with improving the social and/or physical environment. These civic initiatives take different forms and are emerging in different fields (Edelenbos and Van Meerkerk, 2016). In the field of healthcare, we see for example a rise in care cooperatives, providing community-led care services for older people as a response to severe budget cuts in long-term medical care, social care and care for the elderly. In this manifestation, citizens thus become providers of services themselves, in addition to, or instead of, regular providers. How do governments frame new relationships between regular providers and citizens in specific care reforms? In the following sections, we go deeper into the empirical study we conducted to enhance our understanding of changing relationships and new roles of citizens and regular providers as suggested by the various literature on co-production and self-organization.

## **2.4 Content analysis of policy documents**

Dutch care reforms provide a key case, referring to the capacity of a case to exemplify the analytical object of study (Thomas, 2011), to examine the reconceptualisation of the roles of citizens and regular providers in current care reforms. We deliberately picked this policy sector, as it is a key sector undergoing

intense reforms because of rising expenditures and an ageing population. Moreover, since the rise of the welfare state in the Netherlands, this sector has been characterised by strong governmental and professional dominance concerning the design and delivery of public services, and government is now trying to reshape roles and responsibilities in this respect (for example, Yerkes et al, 2011). Pushed by pressures on the financial sustainability of the current system, the Dutch care system is undergoing substantial reforms, characterised by a so-called ‘turnaround’ of the system (Movisie, 2015; VNG, 2015). This turnaround implies a more prominent role for informal care in the care system in order to safeguard quality and long-term durability. In this reform, national government is calling upon the personal resources of people and their environments. This study proceeds from a content analysis of the narratives used in all national governmental policy letters on care and social support in the Netherlands published between January 2012 and December 2015. This was a (run-up) period in which the Dutch care system was reformed consequent to the significant revision of existing regulatory systems (VNG, 2015). In our analysis, we focus upon policy letters, as these documents are the pre-eminent site in which national governments motivate and legitimise their policy choices and concrete plans for addressing public care service provision at local, regional and national level. Thereby, national governments communicate visions about the future of government actions and the key topics of interest at the time. Within these documents we focus upon the discursive legitimation that governments use in the presentation of their policies. The usage of particular frames and narratives help sustain the societal support for particular policy programmes and measures (Hajer, 2003). We selected relevant policy letters through the national government’s document database in which more than 158,500 national governmental documents are stored. We used different keywords, based on commonly used care jargon to ensure the sensitivity and specificity of the queries, to search for and extract policy documents on care and social support (see Table 1). This search resulted in 1,331 results of which 559 documents were identified as policy letters. These documents were screened for their applicability on the basis of the content of the letters: title, abstract and/or full text. This resulted in 205 search results. For example, policy letters with titles such as ‘education for asylum seekers’ or ‘reaction on questions about priorities in the policy on culture’ were excluded. We also excluded policy letters that concerned care services in the Caribbean Netherlands because of the different institutional context. The selected documents were read through to make sure that care policies were at the core of the document and not, for instance, mentioned only once in a sub-paragraph. Excluding duplicates, this process resulted in the selection of 37 policy letters: four in 2012, six in 2013, 16 in 2014 and 11 in 2015. The large number of duplicates can be explained by the fact that many documents were covered by

multiple search terms. In line with our expectations, most documents emanated from the Ministry of Public Health (VWS) (see Appendix for list P1 to P37). In this study, we conducted a qualitative content analysis. To make valid and replicable inferences, we made use of the step-by-step approach of the constant comparative method (Boeije, 2002). We first segmented our data into relevant categories, by making use of an open coding process. Open coding is the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The fragments were then compared among each other, grouped into categories dealing with the same subject, and labelled with a code. The list of codes was then grouped in categories by means of axial coding and reassembled into the findings that are presented in this article. In this process, we made use of ATLAS.ti software for qualitative data analysis. To ensure the validity of our research, we tested for inter-coder reliability. To conduct this test we selected one policy document per year, for the period 2012–15, using a randomiser tool (P3, P10, P15 and P36, see Appendix). These four letters, representing over 10 per cent of the total number of analysed letters, were coded by a second coder. Krippendorff's alpha test (Hayes and Krippendorff, 2007) resulted in an average inter-coder reliability coefficient of 0.83 (range 0.77 to 0.89), which indicates good inter-coder reliability. In the coding process, we assigned codes only to sections of the policy letters that fall within our direct research scope of care and social support for people who are not self-sufficient. This excludes, for example, text sections on child abuse, youth care, ICT, personal budgets, forced marriages, energy savings, administrative burdens, security, healthcare packages and real estate.

Table 1. Overview selection process policy documents

<b>Search terms</b>	<b>Results first search – including all sorts of documents</b>	<b>Results first selection – including policy letters</b>	<b>Results second selection – based on content</b>
Social Support Act + family care	101	45	30
Social Support Act + informal care	100	50	16
Social Support Act + respite care	26	13	9
Social Support Act + voluntary care	107	64	22
Long-term Care Act + family care	41	19	17
Long-term Care Act + informal care	51	24	7
Long-term Care Act + respite care	19	9	6
Long-term Care Act + voluntary care	39	17	8
Informal care	358	100	18
Family care	191	82	36
Respite care	31	16	10
Voluntary care	267	120	26
Total (including duplicates)	1331	559	205
Total (excluding duplicates)			37

## 2.5 Framing new roles for citizens and regular providers in public care reform

Political discourse stresses the involvement of citizens in public service delivery, but how is this translated in governmental policy letters which enlist concrete policy goals and actions? We will now empirically examine the main themes that are present in the policy documents on care and social support. We start with an analysis of the themes that are used for legitimising the role changes of citizens and regular providers in the production of care services.

### Framing the problem(s) and proposed solutions

Especially in the early period of the reorganisation of the care system, national government emphasises the inescapability of reorganising care provision. For example: ‘Transformation is required to make care future-proof. The place where we organize care, how we provide care and those who provide the care will change the next few years’ (P5, p 2). A strong sense of urgency is created around the necessity of governmental interventions. A typical quote in this respect: ‘If we don’t act now, severe future interventions will become unavoidable’ (P10, p 4). A turnaround of the system is needed to safeguard the long-term durability of care provision. The most

mentioned reasons to change the current system of care provision are the growth of demand (a growing population of elderly people), but also changing demands to care (societal demands): people want more customised care. Both reasons are connected to the financial sustainability of the current system. The frame that high quality levels of care provision can only be maintained if changes are implemented rapidly to make the system future proof, prevails in the policy letters. This ‘change necessity’ frame is accompanied by policy goals such as: to keep care provision affordable, accessible and in line with changing societal demands. The turnaround implies the organisation of care to shift from ‘system-centred’ towards ‘people-centred’. Within this frame, in which national government emphasises the human dimension, the customisation of care is a central theme. Namely, people centred care implies custom-made care provision that matches the needs and abilities of individual citizens and their environments. ‘In a decentralized system, municipalities can connect to the power in society that differs from place to place’ (P14, p 3). In line with societal demands, national government wants individual citizens to live in their own neighbourhood and homes as long as possible. This is also where the activation of citizens as important actors in the production of care services comes in. In order to organise care and social support close to home in a customised way, informal carers should play a substantial role according to government. In this way of working, the national government is calling upon personal resources of people and their environments: a very prominent frame in the policy letters. Hence, a society in which people show concern for others is a necessary condition for the policy to work out. In Table 2 the different themes are depicted. This data clearly indicate that national government assumes the reorganisation of the care system to take place on the system and on the personal level: both professionals and citizens should adapt their roles to make the organisational and delivery of care services future proof.

In the following sections, we probe the framing of roles and responsibilities of citizens and regular providers in the documents relating to this reform of Dutch care provision by distinguishing five differing narratives (see also Table 3). We subsequently discuss which roles as described in the literature are stressed in these narratives.

Table 2. Overview results on framing care reform

Category	Code	Results <sup>a</sup>	Total
<b>Change is necessary</b>	Sustainability of care	43% (16/37)	65% (24/37)
	Changing demands	16% (6/37)	
	Safeguard accessibility of care	22% (8/37)	
	Affordability of care	8% (3/37)	
	Quality and continuity of care	51% (19/37)	
<b>System change</b>	Custom made care	54% (20/37)	70% (26/37)
	Care organized nearby	19% (7/37)	
	People centred care	14% (5/37)	
	Change/turnaround of positions	43% (16/37)	
<b>Personal change</b>	Care in own environment	51% (19/37)	68% (25/37)
	Use of personal resources	49% (18/37)	
	Show concern for each other	35% (13/37)	
	Self-management	32% (12/37)	

Note: The results show the percentage of the documents containing the code

## Narratives used in policy documents

### *Activation narrative*

The activation narrative, which we recognised in 68 per cent of the analysed policy documents (25 of 37), is made up of sentences in which national government explicitly describes the usage of citizen resources in care services as an inextricable, fundamental part of the system of care provision (P1, p 1). Being the dominant frame in only 5 per cent of the documents (two of 37) this narrative is used mainly as a starting point for the other narratives. In the activation narrative, care provision is primarily depicted as being a responsibility of citizens themselves. ‘Government cannot and should not take everything out of its citizens’ hands’ (P1, p 9). Hence, within district nurses’ care assessment, the capacity of citizens and informal carers to produce care is taken into account. ‘Rather than starting by looking at what people are entitled to according to regulations, we will first look at what people can do themselves and how their personal environment can support them’ (P10, p 20). This entails an increase in the role of informal carers and volunteers and regular producers are made responsible for determining the amount of personal resources that is required from people and their environments in particular cases. Citizen action is portrayed as something that could be deployed by governments and/or should be expanded. Dedication and commitment from informal carers is needed and counted upon in the context of the transition of the care system (P6, p 5). Besides being important for enhancing well-being, informal care contributes indirectly to keeping the care provided by regular providers affordable, durable and of high quality. In this

sense, professional carers ‘lean’ on the contribution of informal carers to the care provision. In this respect, professionals, together with local governments, play a pivotal role in activating people and their social network: ‘To provide customized care, professionals start the conversation about the help request and the opportunities for self-management and self-reliance and the deployment of the social network of people’ (P10, p 23). The idea here is that if more people become ‘activated’, the care provided by other (informal) carers becomes more diluted and thus manageable (P33, p 8). In this narrative, national government addresses citizens not as ‘clients’ or ‘service users’ but as ‘citizens’. Here, encouraging active citizenship comes strongly to the fore. Both people in need and their environment are ‘activated’ to become active in the production of their care, while the role of regular care providers is framed to become smaller, though they have a task in mobilising citizens’ resources. As the resources of citizens are framed as being an inextricable part of the care system, of which local governments eventually remain responsible, this narrative clearly emphasises the importance of activating citizens in a process of co-production. For regular care providers, this implies a mobilising and connecting role. The total amount of care is co-produced by regular and citizen providers.

### *Supportive narrative*

Within the support narrative, governments work on creating a favourable and supportive policy climate for facilitating informal care provision. In formulating policy goals, government aims to support informal carers: a very prominent narrative, coming to the fore in 86 per cent of the analysed policy documents. Furthermore, the supportive narrative is dominating the discourse in 38 per cent of the policy documents (14 of 37). As governments increasingly rely upon informal carers’ efforts in care provision, informal-carer overload, which reduces their long-term deployment, should be prevented (P9, p 4). In supporting informal carers, both local governments and regular care providers play crucial roles. The law stipulates that local governments are responsible for arranging customised support infrastructures for informal carers (P33, p 8). ‘A well-designed local support infrastructure should alleviate informal carers’ (P8, p 7). While people can still rely on professional care, this type of care is provided in collaboration with the people themselves and their environments. In this process, regular care providers should keep an eye out for the needs of informal carers and support them (P6, p 2; P8, p 12; P14, p 7). For regular care professionals, ‘this implies a different attitude’ and a ‘professional development’. Identifying needs of and supporting informal carers have become part of the new competences of professionals (P5, p 7). Professionals could, for example, capacitate informal carers in taking specific care measures (for example, P1, p 3). In this narrative, the relationship between citizens and government

is framed as a co-production: citizens are addressed as important care producers (informal care providers), while regular providers should capacitate and facilitate them. This implies that regular care providers are not only responsible for activating citizens, they should also support citizens in their attempts to provide care.

### ***Partnership narrative***

Teamwork between informal and formal carers is key within the partnership narrative. ‘It is all about person-centred care in partnerships’ (P32, p 2). This narrative is present in 81 per cent of policy documents. However, only in 5 per cent of the cases (two of 37) is the partnership narrative dominant. Just like the ‘activation’ narrative, this narrative plays a supporting and complementing role in the overall framing in the document. The specific definition that national governments use to define partnership in this narrative is that professionals act as back-up care providers when informal care provided by family and volunteers is insufficient. ‘When someone is insufficiently helped with the deployment of his/her own power/resources and with the help of other people in his/her family and social network, the municipality will provide individual customized care’ (P18, p 7). Thereby, professionals complement the informal care provision of individuals instead of the other way around. Actual interaction and teamwork, instead of a mere complementing partnership, is stressed in relation to the formal drafting of a care plan. Here, the national government talks about explicitly institutionalising the involvement of informal carers in the examination of individual requests for social support (P6, p 4). By strengthening the formal position of informal carers, government tries to create a level playing field: ‘Professionals should see informal carers and volunteers as equal partners in care provision’ (P8, p 12).

### ***Competitive narrative***

Interestingly, the competitive narrative in which self-organised citizen service provision is presented as the alternative to current governmental care services is present in only 11 per cent of policy documents (4 of 37). In none of these documents does the competitive narrative dominate. Within the competing narrative, citizens are depicted as direct competitors of regular providers as they can compete for the same care budgets (‘parallel production’). In order to ‘self-organize care services’ (P37, p 6), citizens can, for instance, set up care cooperatives (P14, p 5) or avail themselves of the Right to Challenge. Here, ‘community groups and social enterprises can bid to run governmental care services where they believe they can do so differently and better than the currently provided services’ (P14, p 4). The role of governments in the framing is to remove possible obstacles for self-organization and facilitate the further activation of citizens (P14, p 4). In order to foster the connective

capacity of governments to societal initiatives, the national government started an experiment programme to explore how requirements can be made more in line with societal initiatives and how municipal procurement procedures can be made more open to those initiatives (P12, p 7; P29, p 5). How government positions the role of professionals towards these competitors remains unclear though. Being only marginally addressed, this narrative on self-organization gets less attention than the co-production narratives in which the activation of citizens takes place within the control of regular service providers.

### *Client narrative*

The most dominant narrative in the policy documents is the client narrative. This narrative is present in 68 per cent of the policy documents, of which in 51 per cent it is the dominant narrative (19 of 37). Thus, in more than half of the analysed documents the responsibility for care provision is clearly attributed to professionals, healthcare institutions and local governments. In this narrative, citizens are framed as clients or patients. In contrast to the other narratives, future proof and high-quality care is framed to be the responsibility of board members of care institutions and/ or professionals (P32, p 2). For example, when it comes to future proof care in nursing homes: ‘The fundamental change is in the relationship between clients and professionals’ (P30, p 4). There is little consideration of the ways in which either service users themselves might co-produce their own care improvements with professionals (for example, by using tele care facilities or by participating in health improvement or through behaviour change programmes) or the ways in which volunteers might help to improve outcomes of existing public care programmes (for example, through peer support activities). Since these have both become major components of care programmes across OECD countries in the past decade, this finding is interesting. In contrast to the previous narratives citizens are addressed as (passive) clients. Within the client narrative other citizens are addressed beyond the supportive, partnership and competitive narratives. In this narrative, governments focus on citizens who are not self-reliant, while in the other narratives their families and volunteers are addressed.

Table 3. Overview narratives

<b>Narratives</b>	<b>Results: percentage and amount of documents containing the code</b>	<b>Results: percentage and amount of documents where code was dominant<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Description</b>
Activation narrative	68% (25/37)	5% (2/37)	Citizens are activated to become co-producers, providers as coordinators.
Supportive narrative	86% (32/37)	38% (14/37)	Citizens are framed as co-producers, providers as facilitators and supporters.
Partnership narrative	81% (30/37)	5% (2/37)	Citizens are framed as co-producing partners, providers as back-up care providers.
Competing narrative	11% (4/37)	0% (0/37)	Citizens take responsibility and ownership of care process.
Client narrative	68% (25/37)	51% (19/37)	Citizens are framed as clients. Providers are regulating and producing care services.

Note: The narrative that covers the highest number of sentences, is considered to be dominant within a document. Therefore, there can only be one dominant narrative per document

#### Time trend?

When we divide the 37 documents into four piles (of around nine documents per pile) to take the timing of narratives into account, we can observe corresponding supportive and client narratives. Although it should be noted that the time scope of the sample is quite small for discovering any meaningful time trends, we do observe some differences between the four quarters (see Table 4). While in the beginning of the reform the supportive narrative dominated, the client narrative convincingly took over in the middle of the reform (second and third quarter). The last documents showed a converging of the two narratives: both are strongly present and either one

of them being the dominant one. It seems government has found a balance between both narratives in the end of the examined reform period.

Table 4. Time trend

<b>Documents divided in 4 quarters</b>	<b>Activation narrative</b>	<b>Supportive narrative</b>	<b>Partnership narrative</b>	<b>Competitive narrative</b>	<b>Client narrative</b>
First-quarter (2012-2013)	1	5	1		2
Second-quarter (2013-2014)		3	1		5
Third-quarter (2014-2015)		2			7
Fourth-quarter (2015)	1	4			5

## Discussion

Although our analysis shows that although the client narrative is dominant in half of the analysed policy documents, the overall picture shows a strong focus on activating, supporting and partnering with citizens. These narratives on citizens as active service producers are used in more documents than the narrative on citizens as passive client: 95 per cent against 68 per cent. Citizens are framed as active services producers which are and should be part of the general system of care service delivery. We could not find clear patterns in the joint occurrences of narratives; the national government uses multiple narratives frequently and freely throughout the policy documents. This expansion and diversification of accompanying roles for regular providers seems to be, at least in this particular policy area, a significant change from previous providercentric inspired frames. As noticed, the framing of citizens as active service producers in care service provision comes to the fore in different narratives. In the activation narrative, governments cast citizens as (informal) carers and try to incorporate them in the formal system by indicating that they count upon their commitment. By making use of this narrative, the national government calls for the activation of citizens in the care sector. In this process of becoming active co-producers of care, local governments and professionals are there to support citizens. This is key within the supportive narrative, where informal carers are again portrayed as being the main provider of home care. Interestingly, instead of facilitating collective forms of citizen activation, the focus is rather on individual citizens as informal carers and, in this role, as implementers of care services. The authority in the co-production relationship explicitly remains at the governmental

side in the narratives. The form in which citizens organise their own care in a civic collective outside the direct realm of government, is only marginally addressed: in 11 per cent of the documents. Additionally, we did not find, for example, a facilitative frame in which government seeks to stimulate and facilitate citizen groups in organising care for their community, giving them more democratic control and ownership, as suggested by scholars and government scientific advisory boards oriented at democratic innovation (for example, Wagenaar and Van der Heijden, 2015; ROB, 2012). In line with the literature on co-production, it seems that the activation of citizens is predominantly seen as a means to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of public governance, and not so much to enhance citizens' democratic influence (compare Voorberg et al, 2015). In the partnership narrative, professionals and informal carers are portrayed as partners, who should cooperate and adapt their efforts in providing care for individuals. However, how the actual interaction takes shape and how long-term relationships are built remains unclear. Indeed, in this process of cooperation and adaptation, regular providers are framed as being the 'back-up' service providers. Namely, if the production efforts of citizens fail, local governments are obliged to intervene as maintaining a good level of care remains a government responsibility. Therefore, the question is whether this process of 'partnering' implies a process of co-producing public care services and what kind of co-production. As far as it concerns interaction between citizens and professionals in the design and production of public services, this interaction seems to take place in a quite vertical manner rather than a horizontal one. Government explicitly states that it decides where responsibility should shift towards citizens and where not. This finding supports claims of authors suggesting that governments are co-opting citizen action in their policy agendas and thereby trying to reshape those with whom they collaborate (for example, Brandsen et al, 2014; Newman, 2007). As becomes clear, these narratives are strongly connected and complement one another. They are aimed at giving shape to a shared delivery of care services by trying to incorporating the efforts of informal carers in the formal system by activation, supporting and cooperating with citizens. In this way, the national governments place the efforts of citizens under a shadow of hierarchy.

## 2.6 Conclusion

In this article, we empirically examined the framing of the relationship between citizens and regular service providers in recent care reforms in the Netherlands, contributing to wider understanding of changing relationships in care provision. This responds to recent calls to make the research into co-production methodically more

diverse and to pay more attention to studying the role of regular service providers (Brandsen and Honingh, 2016). Based on a content analysis of policy documents on the provision of care services in the period 2012–15, this study shows that the Dutch national government seeks to activate individual citizens (and their families) in the implementation of care services. By making use of activation, supportive, partnership and competing narratives, the government reshapes traditional roles. These findings provide empirical back-up for the claim that co-production and self-organization in the public sector is becoming an increasingly important theme (for example, Voorberg et al, 2015; Edelenbos and Van Meerkerk, 2016), at least when it concerns the governmental discourse about care reforms: a policy sector that is traditionally characterised by strong levels of government responsibility and activity. However, these newer roles (citizen-as-coproductors) do not substitute traditional roles (citizen-as-clients), but constitute a new, additional layer resulting in an expansion and diversification of roles for regular providers. With regards to the wider understanding of changing care provision this study demonstrates that the national government is calling for a new public service ethos of professionals. In recent care reforms, the central role of professionals is portrayed to encompass the mobilisation, support and coordination of the co-production capabilities of the social network of service users. The described diversification of roles in co-producing care services with informal carers implies a versatile role for regular service providers. Next to their more traditional role as service provider (client narrative), professionals now have to activate the social network of people in need (activation narrative), support these informal carers in providing care (supportive narrative) while taking part in a collaborative process with them (partnership narrative). The aim of this reform essentially comes down to cutback expenditures to ensure the affordability and accessibility of the care-system by reducing the overall activities and role of professionals. This indicates a fundamental transformation in the relations of care service provision. In this respect, Endo and Lim (2017, 294) argue that the current transformation of the welfare state seeks to privatise the delivery of services to the third sector while the state maintains public responsibility for citizen's social rights. It is important to put our conclusions into perspective. Although we have been able to elucidate how national governments frame the new co-production roles of citizens and professionals, this knowledge is based upon national policy letters in one country from a relatively small period in time. An interesting aspect for follow-up research concerns comparison of governmental framing across different timeframes (within countries) and/or comparing the framing of governments across different countries. A comparative country study could elucidate whether the same frames are found in countries with similar and with different governance traditions (compare Pollit and Bouckaert, 2011). Furthermore, it is good to keep in mind that the consequences of

the identified narratives for actual service delivery have to be established. Do citizens recognise themselves in the governmental framing of their role as self-organising partners of government? And does this framing affect their perception and their interpretation of their role? Do professionals take up their role as activator, partner and supporter? These are important questions for future research. Focusing on citizen production of care services fundamentally changes the roles not only of citizens, but also of professionals, as government requires care professionals to take up multiple roles simultaneously. Whereas in discursive practices all types of narratives can peacefully coexist, it might well be that, in policy practice, various conflicts and tensions arise as a result of incompatible roles. The practical implications of this hybridisation of roles thus have to be established.

## Appendix A

Table A1. Policy documents

<b>Department</b>	<b>Title of policy document in Dutch [and English]</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>P (ID)</b>
Ministerie van VWS	Policy letter family care	2012	1
Ministerie van VWS	Loneliness	2012	2
Ministerie van VWS	Implementation action plan ‘elderly in safe hands’	2012	3
Ministerie van VWS	Progress report autumn 2012 ‘violence in dependency relationships’	2012	4
Ministerie van VWS	Vision on the care and welfare labour market	2013	5
Ministerie van VWS	Progress ‘Strengthening, facilitating and linking’	2013	6
Ministerie van VWS	Investing in palliative care	2013	7
Ministerie van VWS	Strengthening, facilitating and linking	2013	8
Ministerie van SZW	Results meeting work and care of November 18	2013	9
Ministerie van VWS	Shared agenda VWS ‘From systems to people’	2013	10
Ministerie van VWS	Consideration Social Support Act 2015	2014	11
Ministerie van EZ	Autumn report on regulatory burdens	2014	12
Ministerie van VWS	Intensifying and institutionalizing the approach to loneliness	2014	13
Ministerie van BZK	Reaction to the motion put forward by Mr Slob regarding the participation society	2014	14
Ministerie van BZK	Targeting restrictive rules for volunteers and citizen participation	2014	15
Ministerie van VWS	Short-term primary residence	2014	16
Ministerie van VWS	Short-term residential care in AWBZ, Wmo 2015, Zvw, Youth Act and Wlz	2014	17
Ministerie van BZK	Transition Agenda for living independently for a longer time	2014	18
Ministerie van VWS	Coherence in care and welfare	2014	19
Ministerie van VWS	Transition reforming long-term care	2014	20
Ministerie van VWS	The Wmo in motion; Evaluating the Social Support Act 2010-2012	2014	21
Ministerie van VWS	Outcomes budgetary conciliations long-term care reforms	2014	22
Ministerie van VWS	Waiting lists care and nursing homes	2014	23
Ministerie van VWS	Progress letter on informal care	2014	24
Ministerie van VWS	Progress transition Wmo 2015	2014	25
Ministerie van VWS	Progress report HLZ	2014	26
Ministerie van VWS	Commission letter of the Second Chamber in response to NOS.nl dated 13 April 2015 ‘Older people get too little care at home’	2015	27
Ministerie van VWS	Request from the Regulation of work to respond to the SCP research ‘Competition	2015	28

	between informal care and paid work’ in response to the message ‘Participation society takes its toll in the workplace’ (Volkskrant, 24 March 2015)		
Ministerie van BZK	Transformation in the social domain	2015	29
Ministerie van VWS	Elaboration of the quality letter of elderly care: ‘Dignity and pride. Loving care for our elderly’	2015	30
Ministerie van BZK	Progress report Transition agenda living independently for a longer time	2015	31
Ministerie van VWS	Dignity and pride	2015	32
Ministerie van VWS	Living with dementia	2015	33
Ministerie van VWS	Intention expiration WTZi-requirement for respite care in Wlz	2015	34
Ministerie van VWS	Progress report Informal Care	2015	35
Ministerie van VWS	Progress report transition HLZ	2015	36
Ministerie van VWS	Renewal letter care and welfare close to home	2015	37

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## Chapter 3

# **The Governance of Self-Organization: which governance strategy do policy officials and citizens prefer?**

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## **Abstract**

This article compares views of policy officials and members of community-based collectives on the ideal role of government in processes of community self-organization. By using Q methodology, we presented statements on four different governance perspectives: traditional public administration, New Public Management, network governance, and self-governance. Perceptions differ about how government should respond to the trend of community self-organization and, in particular, about the primacy of the relationship. Whereas some public servants and collectives favor hands-off involvement of policy officials, others show a preference for a more direct and interactive relation between government and community-based collectives. In general, neither of the two groups have much appreciation for policy instruments based on performance indicators, connected to the New Public Management perspective or strong involvement of politicians, connected to the traditional public administration perspective. This article contributes to the discussion of how practitioners see and combine governance perspectives and serve to enable dialogs between practitioners.

### 3.1 Introduction

Civic engagement around public issues is changing, leading to new forms of community organizing, also referred to as ‘self-organization’ in the literature (Eriksson 2012; Edelenbos et al. 2018). As a correction mechanism to the perceived failure of centralized and impersonal service provision by government and private parties, communities develop small-scale community-based services in which people have a say (Gofen 2015; Healey 2015; De Moor 2015). As part of a larger cultural and political development, many diverse collectives, such as community enterprises and cooperatives, have emerged to complement or even substitute professional services (see, for example, Peredo and Chrisman 2006; Kleinhans 2017). These self-organizations are new in the sense that they are an attempt to break away from community organizing as either participating *in* government actions, or *opposed to* government initiatives, but as unrelated to government.<sup>1</sup> In this article, we use the term community-based collectives to refer to groups of citizens that initiate, own, and exploit specific collective community-based services.<sup>2</sup> As community-based collectives establish themselves as independent players in an already crowded and institutionalized public field, entering into some kind of relationship with government is almost a prerequisite (Edelenbos et al. 2009; Bekkers et al. 2014).

#### **This article: assessing governance preferences of citizens and policy officials**

Although we see a growing number of these community-based collectives and, accordingly, see a growing attention given in the literature to how they organize themselves (Nederhand et al. 2016; Edelenbos et al. 2018), there is very little research on what form of governance is actually preferred by policy officials and collectives. As a first step in researching the (causal) question of the effects of such relationship, this study systematically examines the perceptions on relevant governance orientations among both local policy officials and key members of collectives. The central question of this article is: *How do policy officials and key*

<sup>1</sup> Of course, from a historical point of view, these community-based collectives are anything but new since early examples of self-organization historically preceded the development of the state-controlled services of the twentieth century, and have been present ever since (De Moor 2015; Denters 2016). Contrary to the more historical instances of community-based collectives, these ‘new’ collectives establish themselves as independent players in an already crowded and institutionalized public field.

<sup>2</sup> We do not refer to entire communities that are self-organized, but specific organizational entities, ‘collectives’ organized around a specific function – which also implies that these community-based collectives operate within the bounds of regular society, with all the normal rules and regulation.

*members of community-based collectives perceive the (ideal) governance relationship between government and collectives?* Our main contribution is twofold. First, this article contributes to the theoretical debate about what governance modes various actors prefer, but also how various governance perspectives, and accompanying policy mechanisms, are combined (See Levi-Faur 2012; Læg Reid 2016). In this research, we identify four governance modes, which involve different preferences for policy instruments, that are expected to attain the general aim of government (Salamon 1981; Considine 2001; Howlett 2009). Promotion of dichotomous sets of governance strategies like ‘market versus state’ or ‘hierarchical versus collaborative’ led to blunt thinking about instruments and their modalities which is not helpful for furthering understanding of policy design (Howlett 2014). That is to say, administrative practice usually involves the use of multiple tools in policy instrument mixes. However, the nature of these mixes and how behavioral aspects of policymakers lead them to favor one design over another remains understudied (Bressers and O’Toole 2005; Eliadis et al. 2005; Howlett 2018). Our contribution is a modest, but essential first step in developing a more ambitious research agenda on how mixes of normative expectations affect results of community-based collectives. Second, this article provides a firm basis for facilitating dialogs between practitioners about these views by providing a theoretically grounded exploration on diverging views of governance steering between these two groups. A mismatch in normative expectations and attitudes on how the relationship between policy officials and community-based collectives should be organized and governed might have important consequences for the chances of success of collectives (for example Edelenbos et al. 2009; Nederhand et al. 2016). Hence, the issues of steering and intervention are key attributes of effective policy making (Hajer 2003).

To gain insight into the differing perspectives on governance relationships, we use Q methodology (Brown 1980), a methodology especially suitable for identifying and systematically and scientifically mapping underlying inter-subjectivity on a topic. We first distinguish and discuss four theoretical perspectives on governance (“Perspectives on governance” section). We then explain the research method (Q methodology), how we used it, and how we constructed the statements for the sort process, for which we used the literature on governance perspectives (“Research design: Q sort statements and respondents’ selection” section). Next, we analyze the distinction in governance perspectives between the two groups of respondents (“Results” section). In the final section, we address important conclusions and limitations and consider avenues for future research.

## 3.2 Perspectives on governance

There is a massive literature on the relationship between government and society and on governance as the way policy is formed and implemented to influence that relationship and achieve public goals. Within this literature, it is possible to distinguish coherent clusters that share a specific focus on certain elements or values of governance; these elements are not coherent theories, but rather joint perspectives on what is important in governance (e.g., Bourgon 2011). Such perspectives can be useful for studying the exchange relationship of government and community-based collectives. For the purpose of this study, we have discerned four perspectives on governance that reflect clusters in the literature and have proven to be recognizable and relevant in the view of practitioners. We discern the following four perspectives: traditional public administration, New Public Management, network governance, and self-governance.<sup>3</sup> We will discuss each perspective briefly and present the consequences of each perspective for the relation between government and community-based collectives. We do not strive toward a definitive clustering of the governance literature, but for a lens that can be used to study the perceptions of the mutual interaction between policy officials and active citizens. We also acknowledge that the fourth perspective (self-governance) is the least well known and least well developed. The perspectives can help us to generate statements for the empirical analysis of the perceptions of respondents on governance. At the end of this section, we compare the four governance perspectives and highlight similarities and differences.

### **Traditional Public Administration: safeguarding public values**

The first theoretical perspective examined is that of traditional public administration (TPA). This perspective focuses on governance as ensuring legal(istic) values, achieving political goals, and safeguarding public values, especially equal treatment, legality, and democracy (Wilson 1989). Governmental organizations are characterized as impersonal rational systems that prescribe neutral behavior for

<sup>3</sup> We want to emphasize that we present governance perspectives here, so more or less coherent ideas on how to govern state-society relations and to form and implement policy. That is not exactly the same as coordination mechanism as is sometimes presented in more economic literature (see Ostrom, 2010) or organizational literature (Powel, 1990) like market, hierarchies and networks although the two are related. But in governance perspectives much more other aspects are emphasized than in the literature about coordination mechanism (for instance, in the governance network perspective, as we distinguish it, much emphasizes is laid on network management as governance strategy, while this does not receive much attention in the literature on networks as coordination mechanism (see Powel, 1990)).

policy officials (Weber 1978). Political goals of officeholders are favored, and so political decisions guide what policy officials should do. Moreover, this perspective emphasizes the rule of law and legalistic values. The presence of impersonal and stable rules shields citizens from arbitrariness, power abuse, and personal whims (Bartels 2013). With regard to collectives, this implies that the interaction should take place along the lines of clear regulations. The explicit standardization of functions, processes, and rules makes interaction with the bureaucratic organization perfectly predictable (Dror 1968). Hence, public values, such as impartiality and impersonality, which guarantee that values of equality, transparency and democracy are not violated, are key. From a TPA perspective, safeguarding these public values is especially important now that collectives are becoming increasingly prominent in public service provision. Therefore, to compensate for failures within civil society, government should use policy instruments that regularize collectives that provide services to citizens to ensure that they meet those public values of equality and democracy.

### **New Public Management: governing through performance indicators**

The second perspective is that of New Public Management (NPM). It is difficult to provide a definitive image of NPM (Pollitt et al. 2007; see Hood 1991; Lane 2000). However, the main features of NPM focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery through the use of policy instruments that focus on the management of processes and systems. In the NPM view, governments decide what they want, specify outputs, and then decide which organizations—public but autonomous, nonprofit, or private—can best deliver the service (Osborne and Gaebler 1992). Moreover, the use of business instruments (strategic and performance management techniques and performance indicators) are crucial to any conceptualization of NPM (See Hood 1991). For this idea to work, two very important conditions have to be met: goal specification and monitoring capability. Thus, public actors have to be able to define goals and translate these into performance indicators and actually be able to monitor the implementation of the actors' activities. In this perspective, governments thus occupy a superordinate position in relation to collectives that provide services (e.g., principal-agent relation). Once performance indicators have been set, policy officials can take a more hands-off approach to their monitoring role.

### **Network Governance: managing performance through joint interaction**

The third perspective is that of network governance. Here, government relates to collectives in a more horizontal way, resulting in more intense interactions. Governing takes place through the usage of procedural policy tools (Howlett 2000). Procedural tools, like process design rules, or arranging interactions, can be seen as techniques of network management (Agranoff and McGuire 2001; Klijn and Koppenjan 2016). They are aimed at altering and improving policy interaction, but they do so indirectly by structuring interactions without determining their outcome (Howlett 2018). The governance perspective emphasizes the importance of inter-organizational coordination and quality of decision making (Klijn and Koppenjan 2016). In this perspective, public goals and policies are defined and implemented through a process of interaction and negotiation; policy and service delivery are achieved in networks of mutually dependent actors. Managerial efforts of policy officials focus on activating actors, organizing joint-research meetings (joint fact finding), and composing a set of mutually agreed upon rules of behavior. Whereas the relationship between government and collectives under NPM is more strongly contractual and performance based, in network governance it is a more interdependent horizontal relationship, with emphasis on joint action and facilitating cooperation to deliver societal outcomes.

### **Self-Governance: fostering autonomy of community-based collectives**

Recently, the perspective of self-governance has been re-emerging (Bourgon 2011; Sørensen and Torfing 2007). Naturally, the idea that (small) groups of people can organize collective goods without market mechanism or hierarchy has been emphasized by others, not the least Elinor Ostrom. Sometimes, this is presented as ‘clubs’ (see Ostrom 2010): groups of individuals that create private associations to provide themselves with non-rival but small-scale goods and services, but also exclude non-members.

As a governance perspective, thus how it is used in this article, the idea of self-governance has a long history (for instance, in the nineteenth century, when various collectives were established to solve social problems). The key point of this perspective is that the dynamics that produce public value start within society and, as such, government relates to that (De Moor 2015). For example, government can relate to these initiatives of society by letting go, by blocking, by facilitating, or by attempting to ‘organize’ more self-organization (Nederhand et al. 2016; van der Steen et al. 2016). Thus, governments tend to follow and improve self-organization of citizen and society initiatives rather than initiate and organize them. Self-governance is not equivalent to a *laissez-faire* approach to government (see also

Rhodes 1997), nor does it imply that self-organization is disconnected from government action. Almost all self-organizing activities take place within the bounds of government jurisdiction and in regulated spaces and involve interests of other stakeholders—either in or outside the self-organized community. The essence of this governance perspective is that because societal actors take action themselves, government actors need to relate to these often-uninvited actions (see Sørensen and Torfing 2007). The policy instruments appropriate for the self-governance perspective would thus be more restrained. They would include things like removing barriers for collectives to function, supporting them by providing fast access to public decision making, and maybe encouraging collectives by small subsidies. But essentially governments would stay away from steering strongly on the content (which is been done in the network perspective). Although the self-governance mode of governance contains elements of the network governance perspective in the sense that both emphasize a more horizontal type of relationship between the public and societal sphere, we observe several significant differences which makes it logical to identify them as separate perspectives. In the network governance perspective, the government does have a very active role in linking, collaborating, and co-producing services with the collective by intense network management strategies. In the self-governance perspective, goals of collectives are emphasized more and government is not very active in managing the relation and the output of the service. Thus, in a self-governance perspective, governments are not really co-producing services with collectives but are at larger distance only facilitating and reducing obstacles.

### **The four perspectives compared**

The governance relationship between government and community-based collectives can therefore be perceived in very distinct ways. When the theoretical perspectives are applied to different aspects of this relationship, each mode has a different view (See Table 1). Based on the well-established practice of NPM and network governance, in particular, we would expect policy officials to embrace these two perspectives. For collectives, on the other hand, we expect a preference for the self-governance perspective.

Table 1. Four dominant perspectives on governing self-organization

	<b>Traditional Public Administration</b>	<b>New Public Management</b>	<b>Network Governance</b>	<b>Self-Governance</b>
Focus	Achieving political goals and safeguarding public values (like as equality, democracy)	Improving efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery	Improving inter-organizational coordination and quality of decision making	Improving self-governance of non-governmental actors
Roles of public officials	Neutral bureaucrat	Monitoring entrepreneur	Active Network Manager	Distant facilitator
Relation with government	Interaction with collectives takes place along the lines of clear regulations	Interaction with collectives takes place along the lines of clear policy goals and performance indicators	Interactions with collectives is intense. Public officials as prominent network managers	Interactions between public actors and collectives limited. Public officials following rather than leading
Policy instruments	Using rules and regulations to improve service delivery of collectives	Using business instruments (modern management techniques, performance indicators) to improve service delivery of collectives	Using network management: activating actors, organizing research gatherings (joint fact finding), process rules, etc. to improve services by collectives	Use facilitating instruments (removing obstacles, providing access and encouraging by small subsidies that do not damage identities of collectives)

### 3.3 Research design: Q statements and respondents' selection

Q methodology is increasingly applied by public administration scholars in the systematic study of perceptions (Durose et al. 2015). In brief, Q methodology presents a series of statements representative of the debate on an issue to the respondents, who are asked to sort the statements into a distribution of preference (a Q sort). From this distribution, statistically significant factors are derived and interpreted (Watts and Stenner 2012). By using Q methodology, it is possible to develop a set of statements based on the four perspectives identified in Sect. 2 and administer these statements in random order to policy officials and community-based collectives to explore whether and how these perspectives operate in practice. Hence, respondents are not presented the perspectives, but only the individual statements derived from them. By measuring perceptions rather than actual behavior, the Q sort concerns the studying of subjectivity. The usage of a statistical tool in combination with a well-developed stepwise approach makes the method explicit and replicable (Watts and Stenner 2012; McKeown and Thomas 2013). We will now explain the three- step approach that we followed.

Q methodology *first* requires researchers to comprehensively capture the diversity of the debate. There are several ways to establishing the breath of the debate around a particular issue (see Jeffares and Skelcher 2011; Watts and Stenner 2012), by using interviews, focus groups, policy and/or media discourses, and academic discourses. In this article, we take the academic discourse as a starting point (see Durning and Osuna 1994; Klijn et al. 2016). This allows researchers to relate the profiles that result from the empirical analysis more strongly to existing theoretical debates. We, therefore, started to develop sample statements by extracting a long list of statements from our reading of the literature around the four perspectives outlined in Sect. 3.2. By systematically sorting the statements in a 3×2 grid (see Table 2), we reduced the number of statements while simultaneously safeguarding the diversity of the debate. Our approach follows the statement-sampling method developed by Dryzek and Berejikian (1993). Across the horizontal axis, the grid considers three types of statements that are relevant for examining the relationship between government and collectives: relationships between entities, degrees of agency and governance profession. In addition, across the vertical axis, the grid considers two types of statements: definitions and prescriptions following, for instance, those of Jeffares and Skelcher (2011) and Klijn et al. (2016). To ensure a balanced sample, we

retained four statements in each cell. Each statement is inspired by one of the four perspectives, resulting in a total of 24 statements (See Table 2 below).

To ensure the compatibility of the statements with the practitioners' experiences, we conducted a pilot study. Before activating the study online, the preliminary Q-set was tested 'offline' in a face-to-face setting. We instructed two participants from the side of collectives (one initiator and one expert working for an umbrella organization specializing in community-based collectives) and two policy officials to sort the statements and to list the statements that they failed to understand, found similar in meaning, or considered irrelevant. We also asked whether they had additional remarks about missing crucial dimensions. Their feedback resulted in several adjustments and refinements of the Q-set.

The *second* step is to present the study to participants: in this case, policy officials and collectives. Most Q studies find samples of between 25 and 40 respondents sufficient to establish the number of shared subjective viewpoints operant around a topic (Brown 1980; Watts and Stenner 2012). Our P set is composed of 40 policy officials and 40 collectives. The participants are working in the field of care and welfare in the Netherlands. We find this domain specifically important to study as this policy area is traditionally characterized by a strong government presence. Given the demographic of our P set, we decided to administer our study online using an application called POETQ.<sup>4</sup> We asked the participants in a corresponding email to let us know when they had difficulties with the Q sorting procedure so that we could offer additional instructions.

We emailed a link to the online Q sort to 80 policy officials working in Dutch local governments. The policy officials whom we approached are involved in policymaking functions in departments of medium-to-large-sized municipalities that focus upon designing care and welfare policies. We strived to select policy officials who have direct contact with collectives. Around 35% of the participants consisted of professional contacts from our network in this sector, while the other 65% were selected by top officials, who send out the invitation to the welfare policy department in their organization. A total of 40 people completed the Q sort (50% response rate). Despite our efforts to only select officials who are experienced in working with community-based collectives, a small minority of policy officials indicated that they did not have much contact with collectives. As the differences

<sup>4</sup> <https://stephenjeffares.wordpress.com/poetq/>

with their colleagues who had direct contact were small, we chose to keep these policy officials included in our analysis. Furthermore, we emailed a link to the online Q sort to 95 initiators of care and welfare collectives in the Netherlands. We only selected collectives that are community-based organizational entities initiated, owned, and controlled by citizens and are organized around a specific welfare/care function. They are thus distinct from government (and cannot be attributed as co-productions). With regard to the collectives, we also selected participants in two different ways to counteract a potential bias. We made use of two online databases: MAEX and Vilans. In the case of the MAEX database, collectives need to register themselves. Via the database that is linked to a website (<https://www.maex.nl/initiatieven/>), collectives make their societal value transparent and can get better connected to funds and possible partners or volunteers. This implies a certain amount of digital skills on the side of the collectives. The Vilans database consists of 170 care and welfare collectives. These collectives were actively spotted and included by the organization Vilans itself. For the collectives, this implies that they need to be visible to the professionals of Vilans to be added to the database. In conclusion, a potential bias exists in favor of those collectives with good digital and networking skills. In selecting the collectives, we also took the phase of the initiative into account as this can influence perceptions regarding governance issues. We only approached collectives that were well established and had thus transited the initiating phase. A total of 40 people completed the Q sort (42% response rate).

The *third* step concerns the process of Q sorting. Our participants sorted the 24 statements into seven piles representing the seven degrees of agreement, ranging from ‘most agree’ (+3) to ‘least agree’ (−3) (See “Appendix 1”). Subsequently, the respondents had to choose between statements, as they were restricted in how many statements they could place in each pile. Respondents are not presented with the perspectives but only with the individual statements (in random order). With regard to the reliability of findings, there is a double-check in the POETQ program, namely (1) by showing the pyramid/sort and asking whether the participant confirms the order and (2) by explicitly showing the statements the participant agreed and disagreed with most and asking for clarification and reflection on the reasons why they did so. By these means, the respondents were given the opportunity to reflect on their choice of statements with which they agreed and disagreed with the strongest. Almost all participants used these options for reflection: 40/40 policy officials and 37/40 collectives. This double-check method enhances the reliability of our findings since respondents have to check and confirm their choices. For a more elaborate explanation of the POETQ procedure, see, for instance, Watts and Stenner (2012).

Table 2. Statement sampling grid

Ideal type/basic mechanism	Entity/relationship	Agency	Governance profession
Definition: In the collaboration process between public officials and collectives, it is important to ...	s1... secure public values such as equality, democracy and transparency (P1)	s5... let politicians play a key role in defining the direction (P1)	s9... acknowledge that impartiality and the public interest come first (P1)
	s2... reward collectives when they contribute to achieving policy objectives (P2)	s6... determine clear performance criteria to hold collectives accountable (P2)	s10... characterize the collaboration process by a business-like relationship (P2)
	s3... arrange consultations between public officials, collectives and other relevant stakeholders (P3)	s7... let politicians and public officials determine, together with collectives and their potential partner organizations, how to support collectives (P3)	s11... compose a set of mutually agreed rules of behaviour, so that parties know where they stand (P3)
	s4... remain at a distance to let collectives make their own decisions (P4)	s8... let collectives define their preferred direction themselves and learn from one another (possibly supported by public officials) (P4)	s12... let collectives determine the rules of play, and public officials help where needed (P4)
Prescription: Public officials should predominantly ...	s13... prevent the emergence of collectives from leading to undesirable situations (such as exclusion, arbitrariness, etc) (P1)	s17... keep a good view and control on what happens within collectives (P1)	s21... check that nothing is done that conflicts with municipal frameworks (P1)
	s14... gain insight into the final performance and impact of collectives (P2)	s18... encourage collectives to be transparent about their performance (P2)	s22... stimulate collectives by formulating smart performance agreements (P2)
	s15... connect relevant parties to one another and facilitate the collaboration process where needed (P3)	s19... encourage collectives to open up to collaboration possibilities (P3)	s23... work together with collectives and their partners to realize public goals (P3)
	s16... not hinder or take over collectives, they are self-steering (P4)	s20... remove obstacles and barriers that hinder collectives (P4)	s24... take care that collectives are given the freedom to develop in the direction they desire (P4)

## 3.4 Analysis

We used the software package PQ method to perform two separate factor analysis (Schmolck and Atkinson 2013). Conducting a centroid factor analysis, we extracted four factors: two for policy officials and two for collectives. These four factors all satisfy the standard conditions explicated by Watts and Stenner (2012), namely that their eigenvalues exceed one and that two or more people load significantly on each factor (See Appendix 2). Each profile is informed by the loading of between 9 and 21 Q sorts. The degree to which participants are associated with each factor is indicated by the magnitude of factor loadings. The significance of a loading is calculated on the basis of the number of statements in the Q sample (Brown 1980). With 24 statements, the significant loading on the sort is calculated to be 0.53 at  $p < .01$ . To maximize the number of unique factor loadings, participants with a loading of 0.53 and above were flagged for a varimax rotation (See Appendix 3). Of the 80 participants, 60 had a loading on one of the four factors. This is in line with what can be expected in a Q study (Jeffares and Skelcher 2011).

## 3.5 Results

From our data, we constructed four factor profiles: two for policy officials and two for collectives. As our Q study is theoretically driven, we interpret the factors in relation to the four governance perspectives set out in Sect. 2 (See also Appendix 3).

### **Facilitators (21 policy officials significantly associated)**

The first profile identifies policy officials as Facilitators. For these policy officials, the role of government is in the background: they strongly support the self-governance perspective. They believe that non-interference is key to maintain collectives' feeling of ownership. This profile is reflected by the characterizing statement '*collectives define their preferred direction themselves and learn from one another (possibly supported by policy officials)*' (s8). To facilitate this process of learning, Facilitators stress the connective role of policy officials (s15), thereby embracing some aspects of the network governance perspective. Although Facilitators broadly support the idea of self-governance and not controlling or hindering collectives (s16), they give less priority to the idea of policy officials actively removing obstacles and barriers that hinder collectives (s20) and explicitly taking care that collectives are given the freedom to develop in the direction they desire (s24). The same goes for the network governance statements regarding

actively encouraging collectives to open up to collaboration possibilities (s19) and playing a role in composing a set of behavioral rules to let parties know where they stand (s11). Facilitators stress that policy officials should remain at a distance to allow collectives to make their own decisions and determine the rules of play (s4, s12). Consequently, they strongly disagree with the view, as stressed by the NPM perspective, that governments should relate to community-based collectives in a traditional or a business-like manner. Participant 25 explained: ‘Then you take out the energy.’ Facilitators believe that it is not their job to keep control on what happens within collectives (s17) by, for example, formulating smart performance agreements to hold collectives accountable (s22, s6).

### **Networking Servants (9 policy officials significantly associated)**

The second profile identifies policy officials as Networking Servants. Networking Servants feel that their main task is to secure such public values as equality, democracy, and transparency in the collaboration process with collectives, as stressed by the TPA perspective. Participant 21 explains: ‘*It is important to always keep these three values in mind in order to remain trusted by residents and authorities. People expect this from us. If we let these values go, we become unreliable as a government.*’ On the one hand, Networking Servants agree upon safeguarding public values (s1) and preventing the emergence of collectives from leading to undesirable solutions, such as exclusion and arbitrariness (s13)—statements that resemble the TPA perspective—they strongly disagree with statements from the same perspective that policy officials should act upon this in a top-down manner, with politicians playing a key role in defining the course of events (s17, s5, s21). As such, the Networking Servants’ statement preferences reveal two dimensions within the theoretical perspective of TPA: a public values dimension and a top-down governance dimension.

Networking Servants furthermore support statements that come from the network governance perspective about involving other relevant parties in the network around collectives (s3, s15). Or as participant 15 explains: ‘*As a municipality, you have a reasonably good overview of what is happening in the city and who are active. By encouraging cooperation and bringing the right people into contact with one another, you strengthen initiatives.*’

Overall, the orientation of Networking Servants leans more toward the idea of safeguarding public values (TPA) and networking (network governance) than toward facilitating the direction that collectives have chosen (see Facilitators). They, for instance, give less priority to self-governance statements such as keeping at an appropriate distance (s4) and not taking over collectives (s16), than the other three

profiles. They thus find an active stance more appropriate than their Facilitating colleagues. They share, however, the strong opposition to NPM control and performance criteria (s6). According to Networking Servants, this attitude of government harms (and possibly destroys) collectives' self-organizing capacity.

### **Independents (16 collectives significantly associated)**

We labeled the first profile of the collectives as Independents. Independents emphasize that policy officials predominantly should take care that collectives are given the freedom to develop in the direction they desire (s24). In their perception, this strongly contrasts with top-down and managerial government involvement. As collectives are dependent upon passion and energy, it is crucial to give them the freedom to set their own rules and steps (s8, s12). They strongly identify with the self-governance perspective, and in line with this, Independents show a clear dislike of political interference, as stressed by the TPA perspective (s5). Respondent 35 explains: *'Political interference can lead to demoralization; by involving the alderman, the process gets drawn into the political arena and this often results in a very laborious process.'* Other respondents stress the need for collectives to remain free of political opinions to maintain openness. Independents are further characterized by a strong dislike of most NPM statements, such as their idea of a business-like relationship between collectives and local governments (s22, s6, s10). They feel that the achievement-oriented society is preposterous. Instead, respondents indicate that collectives are often characterized by a focus on outcomes that are difficult to measure. Respondent 26 explains: *'Taking the work that we do into account, the words business and performance are two extremes that don't match. Performance and results are too often crucial in society, unfortunately. What we try to do is to break free and provide people with a sense of self-esteem, utility and welfare. These values are difficult to measure.'*

In combining statements from the network governance and the self-governance perspectives, the Independents correspond highly with the policy officials' group, the Facilitators. Like the Facilitators, Independents take the view that the role of government should be to connect relevant parties and facilitate the process if needed (s15). Both groups also particularly dislike statements from the TPA and NPM perspectives. All in all, Independents want to be left alone as much as possible.

### **Entrepreneurs (13 collectives significantly associated)**

We labeled the second profile of the collectives as Entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs acknowledge the potential of an active and diverse involvement of policy officials, as long as collectives can define their preferred direction themselves (s8). This profile is characterized by the statement (from the NPM perspective) that it is

important to reward collectives when they contribute to achieving policy objectives (s2). Distinguishing between initiatives that are performing well and badly can help to further improve the quality of services. As exemplar, key participant 3 explains: *‘It happens too often that initiatives that are already performing well are “taken for granted”, whereas huge amounts of time and money are spent on new initiatives or badly performing ones.’* This also has advantages for governments themselves. Key participants indicate that collectives that are performing well save the government money by eliminating and preventing certain problems. This second statement is the only statement from this perspective that is highly supported. For the rest, the NPM statements, in general, are rejected or prioritized less by both policy officials and collectives. Indeed, Entrepreneurs emphasize that they are not an executive agency of government policies.

Entrepreneurs endorse the statement from the self-governance perspective that policy officials should remove obstacles and barriers that hinder collectives (s20), as well as the TPA statement on securing values such as equality, democracy and transparency (s1). They believe that policy officials should be unbiased in collaborating with collectives. It should be about more than who you know and who has a good marketing campaign; rather, it should be about genuine impact and content. This profile highlights again the two dimensions within the traditional perspective (the top-down dimension and the securing values and equity dimension). Entrepreneurs do not like traditional top-down TPA statements, such as checking municipal frameworks (s21), political involvement (s5), and keeping control of collectives (s17). Respondent 24 explains: *‘A collective often arises from a sense of dissatisfaction with the current situation. Therefore, it is not desirable that the “current power” acts as judge or jury’* (R24). Moreover, Entrepreneurs disagree with the NPM statement on smart performance agreements for collectives (s22). They think that it is not only impossible to measure performance such as social cohesion, well-being, and prevention, but also that it is inappropriate.

Entrepreneurs combine statements from the Traditional, NPM (but only one!) and self-governance perspective. In contrast to other profiles, Entrepreneurs find network governance less important in their relationship with policy officials. Being rather confident and active, they do not need government assistance for building and maintaining networks. Namely, maintaining and exploring contacts and networks is one of the defining characteristics of Entrepreneurs.

Table 3 provides an overview of the main characteristics of the four profiles and their connection to the theoretical perspectives.

Table 3. Four profiles of the governance relationship between government and collectives

	<b>Theoretical perspective</b>	<b>View of relationship</b>	<b>Prescription for public officials</b>
<b>Public officials</b>			
<i>Facilitators</i>	Self-Governance, but also Network Governance	<i>Governance as facilitation</i> Collectives define their own direction and rules-of-play. Role of government is about connecting relevant parties	<i>Don't hinder or take over, only provide support</i> Let collectives govern themselves. Be externally oriented in connecting collectives to relevant parties and facilitate the collaboration process
<i>Networking Servants</i>	TPA and Network Governance	<i>Governance as securing public values</i> Values such as equality, democracy and transparency are key in the governance approach	<i>Prevent undesirable situations and take an inclusive approach</i> Make sure the emergence of collectives does not lead to exclusion and/or arbitrariness. Stimulate collectives at the same time in their efforts to consult and connect to other parties
<b>Collectives</b>			
<i>Independents</i>	Self-Governance, but also Network Governance	<i>Governance as enabling</i> Collectives define their own direction and rules-of-play. Government's role is more in the background and about connecting relevant parties	<i>Pave the way to freedom and connectivity</i> Take care that collectives are given the freedom to develop in the direction they desire and simultaneously provide opportunities to connect relevant parties
<i>Entrepreneurs</i>	Self-Governance, NPM and TPA	<i>Governance as active and mixed practice</i> The direction of development is outlined by collectives themselves. Government secures public values, on the one hand, and stimulates collectives with its reward system and by eliminating barriers, on the other hand	<i>Remove obstacles and reward good collectives</i> Remove obstacles and barriers and reward collectives when they achieve policy objectives

### 3.6 Conclusion

Our purpose was to explore the views of policy officials and community-based collectives on governance and examine the ways in which they differ. This exploration is very relevant in the light of the widespread political discourses advocating that communities care of their own local problems and public services, as well as the growth in the number of community-based collectives (see Nederhand and Van Meerkerk 2017; Edelenbos and Van Meerkerk 2016). The question then is how we should respond to this trend; that is, which form of governance is appropriate for—and desired by—the actors involved? To explore this question, we used Q methodology in which we presented respondents with constructed statements on governance based on four governance perspectives: traditional public administration, New Public Management, network governance, and self-governance.

Our study shows that there are roughly two types of governance profiles. The first type perceives the ‘ideal’ governance relationship as one of ‘pure’ and somewhat radical self-governance. According to this profile, policy officials should not have direct involvement in collectives and keep their distance; the role of government should be to create favorable conditions for collectives. This type of governance is advocated by *Facilitators* and *Independents*, and we have found this to be a prevalent profile among both policy officials and citizens.

The second type aims for the co-creation of public value and pursues a more direct and interactive relationship between government and community-based collectives. This type sees an important role for community-based collectives *within* the broader bounds of government policy. It is the role of government to ensure that the self-organizations remain aligned to a broader public interest; therefore, a more hands-on collaboration is preferred here. Government is seen as a partner or platform to help realize the societal ambitions of collectives. Although *Entrepreneurs* and *Networking Servants* advocate this type of governance, their precise focus differs. Entrepreneurs believe that their impact on the creation of public values may and, in fact, should be rewarded, whereas Networking Servants see their involvement more in connecting and taking a collaborative approach. Table 3 shows the main characteristics of these profiles.

#### Limitations of the study

The study does have several limitations. We derived the q sort statements from literature on governance. This has clear advantages and strengths (like the possibility

to connect the resulting factors to the source of the statements, the governance perspectives), but it also has limitations. By using theoretical perspectives as our starting point, we run the risk of missing additional dimensions of the perceptions of our respondents on the issue. To partly obviate this effect and to ensure the compatibility of the statements with practitioners' experience, we conducted a pilot study. Another limitation has to do with the study of perceptions. Although the advantage of applying Q methodology is that it gains insight into practitioners' perceptions, it does not necessarily provide knowledge about how governance actually takes place in practice. It would, therefore, be good to follow up with comparative case studies, in which the different governance perspectives and their applications can be studied more in-depth and also in relation to different settings. Another limitation has to do with the context. This study was conducted among practitioners working on welfare policies and in collectives with a focus on welfare. Follow-up research could compare the governance perceptions in this 'soft' sector to a 'harder' sector, such as the energy sector, where talking about performance measurement may be more natural.

### **Reflections**

Despite these limitations, we think we have highlighted an interesting and understudied topic in the governance and policy design literature. What becomes clear is that perceptions of both policy officials and community-based collectives differ about how government should respond to this new trend of self-organization, and in particular, about the primacy of the relationship. Whereas Facilitators and Independents favor the relatively light governance perspective of self-governance, with community-based collectives finding their own way, Networking Servants and Entrepreneurs show a preference for a closer relationship in which ideas and policy instruments of all governance modes are mixed. While this research highlights interesting differences in the governance approach that policy officials and collectives prefer the most, this research simultaneously shows that when it comes to the governance approach that is preferred the least, the profiles show some striking similarities. That is all profiles strongly reject the applicability of performance measurement and strong political involvement. It is clear that despite the more or less 'distant' way of governing the managerial idea of performance criteria does not resonate at all with both initiators of community-based collectives and with the policy officials. This should probably encourage thinking about policy instrument mixes to arrange the relation between governments and community-based collectives. Mixes that combine the management of objectives with mutual learning processes rather than the more 'associations of punishment' that are connected to the NPM toolkit (see Noordergraaf and Abma 2003; Stoker 2006). When we are rethinking

policy instrument mixes we then should also pay attention to perceptions of most respondents in relation to the traditional public administration perspective. Although participants seem to strongly support the underlying (public) values and principles such as preventing exclusion of groups, they are much more critical about the form in which these are sometimes pursued: statements regarding the dominant role of politicians and top-down steering were rejected. Collectives, for instance, feared the laborious process when something ‘becomes political.’ This resonates with the observation of some authors that strong political interference regarding content seems to be difficult to combine with new governance forms (see, for instance, Klijn and Skelcher 2007). The rejection of political interference could point toward another role for politicians that matches the emphasis placed by respondents on the more traditional guarantee of fundamental democratic values (equal access, equal treatment, and so forth) rather than managerial interference. Thus, politicians would be more concerned with achieving a level playing field, ensuring that self-organizations do not lead to undesired side-effects and exclusion.

By unraveling governance preferences, this research provides a first step to inform and improve the process of policy design in contemporary states (Howlett 2009, 2018). This research suggests that the governance of community-based collectives calls for a design perspective that mixes the instruments and values of the more facilitating self-governance perspective with elements of the more traditional, managerial, and network perspectives.

## Appendix A

Table A1. Shape of the response grid

<b>-3</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	—	—	—	—	—	
	—	—	—	—	—	
		—	—	—		
		—	—	—		
		—	—	—		
			—			

## Appendix B

Table B1. Factor loadings for Q sorts (40 public officials and 40 collectives)

	Public officials		Collectives	
	Facilitators	Networking Servants	Independents	Entrepreneurs
1	-0.0300	0.4772	0.6148	0.6518
2	0.7244X	0.1059	0.1394	0.5459X
3	0.8930X	0.0513	0.0367	0.8848X
4	0.5036	0.2795	0.1684	0.5650X
5	0.7195X	0.3525	0.3121	0.5991X
6	0.3742	0.5321X	0.7499X	0.3258
7	0.4031	0.5871X	0.1958	0.6416X
8	0.2258	0.4359	0.0310	0.7892X
9	0.6946X	0.3451	0.3485	0.1913
10	0.7625X	0.1799	0.3917	0.7485X
11	0.5642X	0.5161	0.2630	0.6046X
12	0.7371X	0.1947	0.4999	0.5773X
13	0.6646X	0.2258	0.4789	-0.0361
14	0.3273	0.4699	0.4976	0.2913
15	0.7362X	0.2314	0.5409X	0.5058
16	0.5738	0.5388	0.1717	0.6731X
17	0.3135	0.8259X	0.5349X	0.5118
18	0.4666	0.6510X	0.1755	0.2545
19	0.6785X	0.1164	0.7498X	0.1984
20	0.5971X	0.5041	0.6066X	0.4961
21	0.2932	0.7034X	0.5641X	0.1933
22	0.5375X	0.2318	0.7463X	0.2187
23	-0.2831	0.4095	0.6236X	0.4487
24	0.3016	0.1680	0.3167	0.7373X
25	0.8166X	0.1117	0.6384X	0.4832
26	0.7144X	-0.2896	0.5587X	0.1078
27	0.4068	0.4961	0.0793	0.4975
28	0.2342	0.6546X	0.5048	0.2828

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29	0.6883X	0.1398	0.3781	0.5982X
30	0.4096	0.5585X	0.3197	0.6249X
31	-0.0246	0.5081	0.7619X	0.4604
32	0.6152X	0.4565	0.5511X	-0.1542
33	0.0204	0.5261X	0.5311X	0.5060
34	0.6814X	0.1745	0.5136X	0.2811
35	0.6656X	0.4720	0.6924X	0.2492
36	0.6822X	0.2499	0.5000	0.3162
37	0.5649X	0.0158	0.3289	0.3131
38	0.8853X	0.1933	0.0431	0.5235
39	0.0117	0.5463X	0.2649	0.0277
40	0.5066	0.4459	0.7421X	0.2842
Explained variance %	32	18	23	23
Eigenvalue	16.15	3.63	15.70	2.91

## Appendix C

Table C1. Factor arrays for Q sample of statements

Statement	Factor score			
	Public officials		Collectives	
	Facilitators	Networking Servants	Independents	Entrepreneurs
<b>In the collaboration process between public officials and collectives, it is important to ...</b>				
1 ... secure public values such as equality, democracy and transparency (P1)	0	3	1	2
2 ... reward collectives when they contribute to achieving policy objectives (P2)	0	-1	0	3
3 ... arrange consultations between public officials, collectives and other relevant stakeholders (P3)	1	2	0	1
4 ... remain at a distance to let collectives make their own decisions (P4)	1	-1	1	0
5 ... let politicians play a key role in defining the direction (P1)	-2	-2	-3	-2
6 ... determine clear performance criteria to hold collectives accountable (P2)	-2	-2	-2	-1
7 ... let politicians and public officials determine, together with collectives and their potential partner organizations, how to support collectives (P3)	0	1	0	1
8 ... let collectives define their preferred direction themselves and learn from one another (possibly supported by public officials) (P4)	3	1	2	2

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9 ... acknowledge that impartiality and the public interest come first (P1)	1	1	0	1
10 ... characterize the collaboration process by a business-like relationship (P2)	-1	-1	-2	-1
11 ... compose a set of mutually agreed rules of behaviour, so that parties know where they stand (P3)	0	0	0	-1
12 ... let collectives determine the rules of play, and public officials help where needed (P4)	2	0	2	0
<hr/>				
<b>Public officials should predominantly ...</b>				
13 ... prevent the emergence of collectives from leading to undesirable situations (such as exclusion, arbitrariness, etc.) (P1)	-1	2	0	0
14 ... gain insight into the final performance and impact of collectives (P2)	-1	-1	-1	1
15 ... connect relevant parties to one another and facilitate the collaboration process where needed (P3)	2	2	2	0
16 ... not hinder or take over collectives, they are self-steering (P4)	2	0	1	1
17 ... keep a good view and control on what happens within collectives (P1)	-3	-3	-1	-3
18 ... encourage collectives to be transparent about their performance (P2)	-1	0	-1	0
19 ... encourage collectives to open up to collaboration possibilities (P3)	0	1	1	-1

20 ... remove obstacles and barriers that hinder collectives (P4)	1	0	1	2
21 ... check that nothing is done that conflicts with municipal frameworks (P1)	-1	-2	-1	-2
22 ... stimulate collectives by formulating smart performance agreements (P2)	-2	-1	-2	-2
23 ... work together with collectives and their partners to realize public goals (P3)	0	1	-1	-1
24 ... take care that collectives are given the freedom to develop in the direction they desire (P4)	1	0	3	0

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## Chapter 4

# **Self-Organization and the Role of Government: How and Why does Self-Organization Evolve in the Shadow of Hierarchy?**

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## Abstract

Self-organization is a concept that is often used to legitimize a government's retreat from sectors in which it has traditionally played a vital role. In this article, we analyse how the emergence of new welfare services is mutually shaped by factors that stimulate self-organization among citizens and by meta-governing interventions by local governments. Self-organization seems to take place in the shadow of a government hierarchy: either a fear-based one or a benevolent one. Boundary spanners play an important role in establishing these new arrangements, thereby making use of, and developing, trustworthy relationships between citizen groups and government.

## 4.1 Introduction

Communities are increasingly being considered as an alternative location for governments to deliver welfare services. In the concept of a so-called ‘Big Society’, these new services are realized by making use of the self-organizing capacities of citizens. In doing so, government is further retreating, although this process did not start with ‘Big Society’. It has a longer history that started in the 1980s (Rhodes 1997). However, empirical understanding of self-organization in the public sector is scarce (Boonstra and Boelens 2011). Self-organization can be defined as a process of shared understanding that results in the emergence of ordered structures (Bušev 1994; Comfort 1994). Some authors argue that self-organization implies the absence of government control (Cilliers 1998; Goldstein 1999; Heylighen 2001). However, how realistic is this in policy sectors where government, although retreating, has traditionally played a substantial role (Taylor 2007)? Although they might be retreating, governments are still able to control vital resources, and this enables them to use more complex and subtle governance strategies. These go beyond coercive control, creating what has been labelled as ‘a shadow of hierarchy’ (Scharpf 1994; Milward and Provan 2000; Taylor 2007). This raises questions about the relationship between self-organization and the role of government.

The changes that have taken place in the Dutch local welfare regime during the past five years potentially provide a scenario that could help clarify what happens. On the one hand, autonomous, non-profit, local welfare organizations have been free to develop neighbourhood services, but, on the other hand, they depend on funds provided by local government. In order to gain funding, these services have to align with the goals of all kinds of local welfare policies formulated by the municipality council. However, increasing budget austerity and questions about the quality of the services provided have led to a retreat by both local welfare organizations and governments. These trends have offered neighbourhood communities the opportunity to take over neighbourhood centres and to set up their own, self-supporting, services. As a result, apparently self-organizing community enterprises have emerged – but does the government still play a role behind, or even in front of, the scenes?

To understand self-organization processes in the public sector, it is important to empirically unravel them. Our goal is to understand how and why the interplay between self-organizing communities of citizens and governments shapes the emergence of new public services, and in particular welfare services. In so doing, we

want to gain a better empirical and theoretical understanding of the complex nature of self-organization processes in the public sector. To achieve this, we link three bodies of literature (in [Sections 2](#) and [3](#)). Here, we link the concept of self-governance, and the factors that account for it, with theories concerning meta-governance and networking in the shadow of hierarchies. [Section 4](#) describes our comparative case study research strategy. Our case analysis, outlined in [Section 5](#), involves two Dutch community enterprises: one in Amersfoort and one in Amsterdam. Finally, conclusions are then presented in [Section 6](#).

## **4.2 Self-Organization**

Self-organization as a concept was used in physics to explain the emergence of order in seemingly chaotic physical processes such as the formation of galaxies (Prigogine and Stengers 1984; Kauffmann 1993; de Wolf and Holvoet 2005). In public administration, the term refers to non-governmental actors adapting their behaviour and to the emergence of collective action without governmental interference (Pierre and Peters 2000). Boonstra and Boelens (2011, 12) define self-organization in the context of spatial planning as ‘initiatives that originate in civil society from autonomous community-based networks of citizens, who are part of the urban system but independent of government procedures. Self-organization can also be defined as a process of shared understanding – in terms of collective interaction and communication – that results in the emergence of a structure based on a goal shared by members of a given system (Comfort 1994; Bušev 1994). In essence, out of a rather complex system of different (non-linear, somewhat spontaneous, co-evolutionary and local) interactions among various actors – with different interests, resources and interdependencies – a governance structure somehow emerges to deal with a collective challenge: one that is not imposed by a single actor and that is able to maintain itself (Jantsch 1980; Cilliers 1998; Goldstein 1999; Heylighen 2001; van Meerkerk, Boonstra, and Edelenbos 2012). The self-organization literature suggests that several factors seem to shape the content, course and outcomes of these self-organization processes.

First, self-organization requires a trigger to generate interaction. van Meerkerk, Boonstra, and Edelenbos (2012) show how events may have disruptive effects on people. For instance, the demolition of buildings may change the meaning of an urban area in terms of in-place attachment and/or sense of community (Manzo and Perkins 2006). These events stimulate the exploration of new ideas and seeking support for them (Bootsma and Lechner 2002).

Second, successful self-organization presupposes the presence of trustworthy relationships among actors and these refer to the social capital in a neighbourhood (van Meerkerk, Boonstra, and Edelenbos 2012; Ostrom 1999). Communities are able to overcome barriers to collective action when they have a large stockpile of existing networks, groups and contacts as well as a shared history of past collaboration (Putnam 2000; Stone, 2011). As a result, people know and trust each other; they share a sense of belonging that encourages them to participate in a collective effort (Pierre and Peters 2000; Nicholls 2009; Huygen, van Marissing, and Boutellier 2012). In places where social capital is strong and people attach a strong meaning to a specific place, societal problems can catalyse community action because residents can focus on those assets they share as neighbours (Manzo and Perkins 2006).

The third factor refers to the necessary interplay of ideas, information and experiences, and the focus that is needed to exchange them. The development of a shared and clear goal that structures the evolving interactions seems to stimulate self-organization (Bootsma and Lechner 2002; Comfort 1994; Ostrom 1999; Huygen, van Marissing, and Boutellier 2012). Comfort (1994), Kauffmann (1993) and Uzzi and Spiro (2005) showed that a limited number of actors with recurrent opportunities for interaction makes it easier to mutually adjust their behaviour in order to develop a shared goal.

The fourth factor refers to the physical and virtual locus of the self-organization process. If the information that is available in the community is located at various sites and organizations, there is a danger that it will not be shared (Comfort 1994). Comfort (1994) argues that, in order to take better informed and more comprehensive decisions, it is important that a shared and evolving knowledge base, open communication channels and clear feedback mechanisms all emerge, possibly facilitated by information and communication technologies (Bekkers 2004).

Boundary-spanning activities by key individuals who connect the internal realm of an organization with its external environment constitute the fifth factor. These activities refer to the mutual exchange of information between the focal organization and other actors in this environment. It also involves the provision of a communication channel, commitment, support and protection, and the assurance of legitimacy (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978; van Buuren and Loorbach 2009). This requires linking forms of leadership that facilitate the free flow of ideas, people and resources (van Meerkerk, Boonstra, and Edelenbos 2012; Bekkers, Edelenbos, and Steijn 2011).

The sixth factor concerns the mutual adaptation of existing practices such as roles, procedures, systems and routines as well as legal norms (Kauffmann 1993; Comfort 1994; Johnson 2001; van Meerkerk, Boonstra, and Edelenbos 2012). The actors involved need sufficient autonomy and flexibility to adjust their behaviours (Comfort 1994; Ostrom 1999).

Our basic assumption is that retreating governments can still play a role and that self-organization does not take place in a vacuum. What theories might help us understand this role?

### 4.3 Self-Organization in the Context of Meta-Governance

Meta-governance is concerned with how political authorities promote and guide the self-organization of governance systems through rules, organizational knowledge, institutional tactics and other political strategies (Jessop 1997). The idea is that forms of power beyond the state can often sustain a government more effectively than its own institutions, and that coercive forms of control are replaced by a complex arrangement of subtle strategies, techniques and forms of knowledge (Taylor 2007). The literature on meta-governance discerns six strategies (Kooiman 1994; Sørensen 2006).

The first is to develop strategic frameworks that operate as administrative checks to which self-organizing communities have to comply. This can be considered as ‘self-regulation in the context of regulation’ (Whitehead 2003). The second strategy is to develop procedures to monitor the self-organization process and to assess its outputs and outcomes using performance and benchmark systems (Whitehead 2003). The third option is for governments to use (persuasive) framing and storytelling to create a shared discursive context that helps align the sensemaking of individual actors so that a shared belief and discourse emerges (Sørensen 2006; Hajer and Laws 2006; Taylor 2007). The fourth is to offer support and assistance by providing relevant information, legal assistance, a meeting place and/or financial support (Sørensen 2006). In so doing, access to vital resources is being given (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). The fifth strategy is that governments try to participate in a more direct way by designing the institutional setting in which self-organization takes place (Goodin 1998; Sørensen 2006). Here, government intervention focuses on the allocation of positions to relevant actors, the relationships between them (stipulating interdependency) and formulating relevant rules-of-play (Taylor 2007). The final,

sixth option is to discipline the self-organizing process by playing with ‘fear’ (often linked to storytelling). In so doing, governments try to ‘scare’ the involved actors so that they move in a certain direction, for instance by threatening to use financial claw-back procedures or project appraisals, to stop funding or to impose binding rules (Whitehead 2003; Boons 2008; Scharpf 1994; Börzel and Risse 2010). This idea of playing with fear (which can be subtle and implicit or very explicit) has been given the theoretical label ‘networked governance in the shadow of hierarchy’ (Scharpf 1994). The idea is that governments continue to use their state power albeit differently. Even in networked, non-hierarchical structures in which government is but one of the many actors, it can still use specific resources (authority, money, information, knowledge) to intervene in a hierarchical way because of the resource dependency of other actors. This possibility creates a ‘shadow of hierarchy’ that influences the content and the outcomes of self-organizing processes. This shadow can become more threatening if, for example, governments control the external funding to non-state actors (Milward and Provan 2003). The greater the government’s capacity to control access to or distribution of vital resources, the stronger this shadow will be, increasing the inclination of non-state actors to cooperate (Börzel and Risse 2010; Bang 2004; Durant and Warber 2001).

#### 4.4 Research strategy

In the previous sections, we explored the theoretical concepts underpinning this research. We expect successful processes of self-organization (i.e. the emergence of sustainable order) to depend on the interplay between the factors introduced in Sections 2 and 3. In Figure 1, we visualize the relationships we expect based on deductions from relevant literature. Although Figure 1 somewhat simplifies reality, we believe it can still function as a heuristic tool with which to understand the complex interplay between some of the factors that are relevant in a specific context in which specific government and community actors are engaged in self-organization (Mahoney 2012).

Given the limited empirical knowledge about self-organization in the public sector, a case study seems the best way to analyse and understand this complex issue since this approach can improve empirical exploratory understanding, in this instance of self-organization processes. Selecting two contrasting cases should achieve a better analytical understanding of the interplay between relevant factors and mechanisms (Yin 2003). Both cases are selected on the difference in experience with self-organization and participatory processes between two municipalities. In one

municipality (Amsterdam) such a tradition existed, which created a rather trustworthy relationship between the involved parties. In the other cases (Amersfoort) such a tradition did not exist.

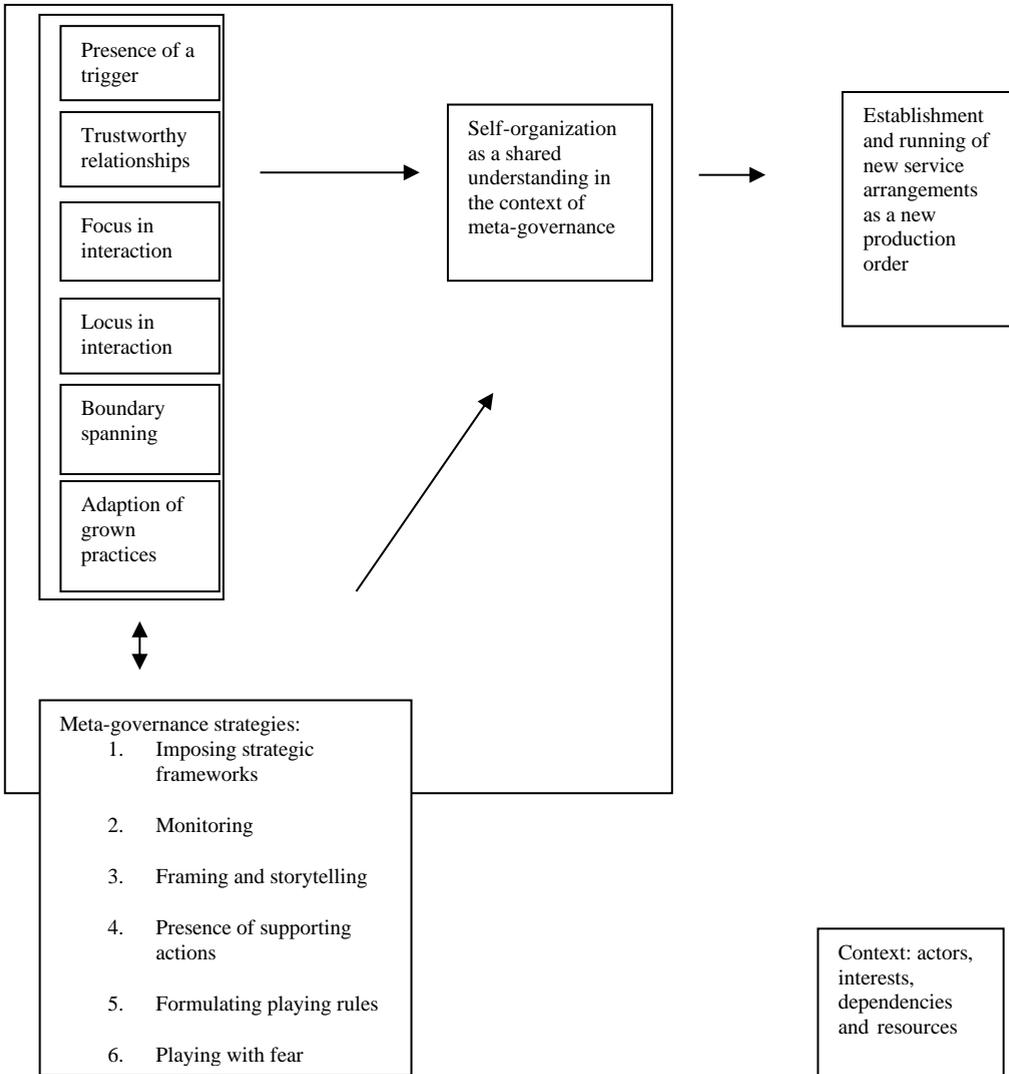


Figure 1. Heuristic theoretical framework to understand process and results of self-organization

By selecting two contrasting cases, which co-vary on one independent factor (Haverland 2010), we aim to improve our analytical understanding of the interplay between the factors that stimulate self-organization on the one hand and the meta-

governing role of government on the other. The external validity of our findings is limited, because we only considered one sector in one country. At the same time we believe that our study can help understand self-organization processes in a more analytical way, in terms of understanding the complex interplay between different actors, mechanisms and factors. Hence, we aim to provide an analytical instead of a statistical generalization of our findings. Our generalization is based on the provision of an exploratory, but plausible and coherent, line of reasoning, based on theory-driven comparative empirical case study research (Yin 2003). The development of this line of reason may be used to develop further research.

Therefore, based on an in-depth analysis of the relevant actors, their motives and interests, their resources and their actions, as well as relevant outputs, we aim to identify striking similarities and differences that can lead to conclusions in the form of plausible generalizations that can help in understanding self-organization processes.

The unit of analysis is the emergence of a Dutch community enterprise. Therefore, we analysed and compared two cases in different contexts with different triggers. In Amsterdam, the local government has for some time actively promoted self-organization, and could therefore build upon a tradition of community participation. In Amersfoort, such a tradition was absent, and the local government's attitude towards self-organization was sceptical. In each municipality, one community enterprise was selected that was already firmly established and carrying out concrete activities: 'De Meevaart' in Amsterdam and 'Het Klokhuis' in Amersfoort.

We have translated the concepts in this model into questions that can function as indicators in order to steer our empirical work in a consistent way, thereby ensuring internal validity (see Table A1 in Appendix 1). In the final months of 2013 and in 2014 we conducted thirty-one semi-structured interviews in the Dutch municipalities of Amsterdam (eighteen) and Amersfoort (thirteen) with different types of stakeholders involved in the development and exploitation of two community centres. We conducted fifteen interviews with citizens (initiators and volunteers), twelve interviews with civil servants and politicians (policymakers and managers) and four with professional workers. Subsequently, we again used the framework to conduct a content analysis of relevant policy documents (both internal and external) as well as relevant media coverage. These techniques formed part of our comparative case study strategy.

## 4.5 Results

This section follows the structure of the analytical model as presented in Figure 1 and Appendix 1.

### **New service arrangements**

In Amersfoort, ‘Het Klokhuis’ is generally seen as a success story (Volkskrant 2013). Since its start in April 2012, when it was legally established, about 300–400 inhabitants visit the centre each day and they are served by 40–50 volunteers (Municipality of Amersfoort 2012b, 2; Dichtbij 2013). The building is rented from a third party (SRO) to which the municipality has outsourced the exploitation of their buildings (Het Klokhuis 2012, 14). Commercial activities such as renting spaces to other parties (such as for childcare) financially compensate for the social activities that are carried out to foster social cohesion. Furthermore, ‘Het Klokhuis’ provides internships in cooperation with the UWV (the Dutch unemployment agency), Wi-Fi hotspots, a small library, sports and hobby lessons, buddy projects for migrants and/or unemployed people and a low-threshold location to facilitate meetings, for instance with the police (Het Klokhuis 2012, 4).

In Amsterdam, in August 2010, inhabitants from ‘De Indische Buurt’ developed a plan to take over the ‘De Meevaart’ community centre. With more than twenty volunteers, it can be open seven days a week (de Meevaart 2013). A foundation, known as the ‘Meevaart Development Board’, owns the community enterprise. The intention is that De Meevaart offers a place for all kinds of local groups and initiatives so that they can meet and develop activities both in and beyond De Meevaart. By creating this overarching meeting place, the instigators aim to improve the social cohesion in the neighbourhood (such as by encouraging cooking and gardening activities). De Meevaart is considered a success due to the energy and dynamics that the process has unleashed among inhabitants (Municipality of Amsterdam 2012b, 12; de Meevaart 2012b). A national newspaper reported: ‘What happens in [De Meevaart] is so innovative that visitors from Amstelveen and as far away as France and China are visiting the neighbourhood’ (Het Parool 2012).

Both cases show that the efforts of the citizens involved have led to the creation of legal and financially sustainable organizations that deliver a broad range of services.

### Trigger

The top-down closure of the former community centre by the Amersfoort municipality and the consideration being given to establishing an addiction clinic mobilized a small group of active inhabitants who were willing to take over the centre. This was an important trigger: ‘We took a lot of actions and attended all the public hearing sessions in order to prevent an addiction care centre being located in the previous centre’ (interviewed initiators). The initiators organized a lobby to convince local politicians to consider alternatives. ‘We forced the alderman to talk to us about us taking over the centre. If necessary, we would even have occupied the building’ (interviewed initiators). The increased political pressure convinced the town council to adopt a resolution that forced the alderman responsible to organize a public tendering procedure for the centre.

No single disruptive triggering event was found in Amsterdam. The self-organization process had started back in 2004, involving two inhabitants (supported by some politicians) who were unhappy with the poor state of their neighbourhood. They organized, in collaboration with the municipality, activities to improve neighbourhood cohesion. After renovating the centre in 2010, the municipality wanted to put the building on the property market. This plan triggered the inhabitants to approach the municipality’s eastern district branch with a plan to take over the building as they were looking for a location for their activities (de Meevaart 2012a, 10–14; Groot Oost TV 2012). Furthermore, the establishment of an experimentation zone that allowed communities to experiment with new activities beyond existing legal and financial practices made possible by the Ministry of the Interior also boosted its development (Municipality of Amsterdam 2012a, 2; Municipality of Amersfoort 2012b, 4).

The triggers differ in the two cases. In Amersfoort, there was a single disruptive triggering event that fuelled the self-organization process, which can be viewed as a NIMBY-like response (not in my back yard) that changed the meaning that the inhabitants gave to the location. It emphasized their community belonging. In Amsterdam, the neighbourhood enterprise idea was embedded in a tradition of citizen participation that was refuelled when the municipality threatened to sell the building.

### **Trustworthy relationships**

In Amersfoort, the initiators and the community manager<sup>1</sup> shared a history of community activities. The initiators knew each other (establishing social capital), and had experience with how local politics worked in terms of political/institutional capital, which helped set the wheels in motion. However, scepticism continued: ‘We really had to build the level of trust with the municipality itself’ (interviewed initiators). The recurring interactions between initiators and key municipal people – civil servants and the responsible alderman – gradually helped the initiators feel positive about their plans and helped create a shared vision. The openness and frequency of these meetings led to the involved citizens feeling recognized. The alderman involved stated: ‘Contacts were frequent and also cordial. When the initiators asked me for time and attention, they always got it’. Eventually, the Board of Aldermen approved the citizens taking over the centre (Municipality of Amersfoort 2012a, 2). Furthermore, the initial scepticism stimulated the initiators to stick together and feel motivated: ‘Our confidence has grown rather than declined as the result of the critical attitude of the municipality’ (interviewed initiators).

In Amsterdam, the establishment of the enterprise was embedded in an environment in which citizen participation, and thus collaboration with the municipality, had flourished for many years (Municipality of Amsterdam 2012b,3 –4). The initiators and civil servants had known each other for years and they valued each other’s work. As one of the participation brokers involved put it: ‘The positive attitudes of the municipality certainly had a positive effect on the initiators’ (interviewed civil servant). However, the municipality was internally divided and, as one initiator indicated, not all civil servants were constructive: ‘Some traditionally minded civil servants think that they know better and lock out citizens: they act like they are from the “participation police” and tell us whether we are doing it correctly’ (interviewed initiators).

Hence, in both cases, the initiators knew each other because they shared a background in citizen engagement. A shared common history between civil servants (community managers, participation brokers) and citizens results in close and longlasting relationships that generate social capital within the municipality that

<sup>1</sup> The community manager is a civil servant who acts as an interface between the local community and the municipality when dealing with issues that touch upon the quality of the neighbourhood.

helps support the citizens' initiatives. Nevertheless, in Amersfoort, some scepticism initially prevailed, which stimulated the initiators to push on.

### **Focus and locus in the interaction**

In Amersfoort, we observed that the interactions between initiators and the municipality were strongly structured with a clear set of time, legal and financial guidelines that were formulated by the municipality and then 'forced upon' the initiators (Municipality of Amersfoort 2013). Although the initiators were not always happy with the imposed rules: 'Initially, our hands and feet were tied' (interviewed initiators), this focus still enabled them to set priorities. As an interviewed civil servant observed, the focus was not completely fixed: 'We [the municipality] were willing to adjust the guidelines when they proved not to be useful'.

In Amsterdam, the initiators wrestled to find a focus, although this was not considered problematic (de Meevaart 2012a, 18). The energetic and free flow of ideas, knowledge and experiences led to numerous ideas and partnerships on how to develop the enterprise, which was also a goal of the municipality: 'We want to make things possible and build on partnerships: we try to connect many parties in order to facilitate mutual learning' (interviewed civil servant). As a result, the initiators and neighbourhood inhabitants were still working on establishing a shared vision in order to elaborate the centre's mission. This was proving hard to define since there were so many interests to be met: 'Our targets are not set. Along the way, we are exploring what is the right way to go. Tensions are bringing people closer together' (Municipality of Amsterdam 2012a, 2).

The cases show an interesting difference in focus. In Amersfoort, the focus was forced upon the initiators by the municipality, and this helped the initiators develop their plan. In Amsterdam, such a focus was absent and this slowed down the creation of a mission. However, this lack of focus was not seen as problematic by the Amsterdam municipality since, in their opinion, multiple goals enabled them to connect various parties. Although the role of a focus differs, both cases show that the role the focus plays is determined by the interplay between the initiators and the government.

In terms of a physical locus, we saw that, in Amersfoort, the community centre was where the inhabitants used to gather to discuss and support the initiator's plans. In Amsterdam, the in-house debating centre 'Pakhuis de Zwijger' served as an important platform where debates between many actors – the (district) municipality,

the Ministry of the Interior and sometimes over 300 inhabitants – took place. In neither case did the internet or social media play a significant role as a virtual meeting place. In the Amersfoort situation, social media were used to mobilize inhabitants, whereas, in the Amsterdam case, the most important function was providing information.

### **Boundary-spanning activities**

In the Amersfoort case, the community manager and the alderman responsible conducted significant boundary-spanning activities, thereby fostering trust. The alderman ensured political support and protected the initiative, making it easier for the community manager to overcome resistance within the municipality. One initiator observed: ‘The role of the community manager was a tough one since she experienced a lot of resistance’. The alderman commented: ‘I think my close involvement was one of the key factors for success’. This was important because ‘the municipality is a seven-headed monster, and some heads trust the initiators but other heads do not’ (interviewed civil servant). The ability and willingness to change the guidelines (in terms of exchanging knowledge and learning) can be explained by the fact that the community manager was able to link people and ideas resulting in improved trust between the initiators and the municipality parties, protected by the aldermen.

In Amsterdam, district-level participation brokers<sup>2</sup> were able to bring people together in the enterprise. The programme manager and one of her policy officers on the central municipality level were actively linking people, ideas and resources. This helped overcome and avoid deadlocks. A civil servant said: ‘When I know that a district is struggling with a topic, I make sure that they contact a district that is very developed in that area so that they can help each other’. Furthermore, the municipality organized meetings and facilitated contacts with relevant parties to find alternative funding (Municipality of Amsterdam 2012b, 13). In addition, the responsible aldermen frequently met with the initiators. By showing their support, they made the involved people feel recognized.

<sup>2</sup> A participation broker is a civil servant who connects the administration, neighbourhood-citizens and all sorts of citizen initiatives.

What we see here is that boundary spanners had an important leadership role in mobilizing social capital by being part of both worlds: the neighbourhood and the municipality. Both cases show that frontline civil servants (those working at the interface of the community and the municipality) are especially important in granting access to vital resources (people), in sharing information and knowledge as well as in acting as ambassadors for the initiators. This is important for two reasons. First, they helped the initiators deal with the multi-headed nature of the involved municipalities and, second, they helped link the initiatives to the political realm of the aldermen responsible. In both cases, aldermen were important in backing the initiatives in terms of rendering protection, mobilizing political support and opening up all kinds of new knowledge and expertise channels. In both cases, boundary-spanning activities contributed to the creation of trust in the initiators and in their plans. In so doing, they helped facilitate the creation of a shared understanding that also helped adjust existing roles, positions and regulations.

### **Adaption of existing roles and practices**

In Amersfoort, the initiators originally encountered resistance because they were forced to develop a (financial) plan, and this constrained their space to manoeuvre. Again, the involvement of an alderman and the community manager helped the civil servants become more willing to change their roles and to adapt existing rules. ‘The conditions that restricted us were loosened by the municipality so that we could act in a more business-like manner’ (interviewed initiators).

The existing roles and rules also changed in Amsterdam. The location of De Meevaart in an experimentation zone enabled the municipality to be more flexible than would otherwise have been possible. A civil servant said: ‘You try to make things possible, after that you look at the rules. That is one of our commitments in this experiment – to facilitate them [the community enterprises] in their work’. As a result, the municipality and the Ministry of the Interior actively explored the redrafting of rules and regulations that hindered change, such as allowing volunteers to receive compensation: ‘The upcoming period will be used to transform and apply rules that ease the start of community enterprises’ (Municipality of Amsterdam 2012b, 13). However, the municipality’s planning and control cycles, and the apparently sluggish way of working, sometimes frustrated the development process. One initiator commented ‘If we wanted to do something in spring, we had to wait nine months before the money was available’, adding that, ‘If the municipality had been more flexible that would have been helpful’. This sentiment was also put forward in the Amersfoort case.

Looking at the importance of adapting existing roles and rules, both cases showed that the willingness of municipal actors to change their roles and some of their regulations in order to prevent deadlocks was vital, and that this could be helped by the involved aldermen.

### **Meta-governance**

Our next step is to analyse how and why different meta-governing strategies played a role. Given that different combinations of the possible strategies were used in each case, we first provide separate descriptions for each case before discussing them in combination. In advance, benchmarking did not play a role in both cases as relevant strategy.

#### **Meta-governance: Strategic frameworks**

The first meta-governance strategy is to develop strategic frameworks and various forms of guidance that function as administrative checks to which self-organizing communities have to comply. In the Amersfoort case, we see a strong hierarchical involvement of the municipality through the definition and enforcement of key parameters, rules-of-play and all kinds of requirements to be fulfilled. ‘When we were finished with one list of demands, another was already waiting for us’ (interviewed initiator). These requirements sometimes made it difficult for the initiators to be taken seriously: ‘Given the financial requirements, we were dependent on certain parties that rented rooms in our building, and that gave them a lot of freedom and power to enforce certain things’ (interviewed initiators). Conversely, in Amsterdam, the district and central branches of the municipality tried to support and facilitate the process by providing all kinds of resources rather than influencing directly by imposing norms and guidelines.

#### **Meta-governance: Framing and storytelling**

The municipality of Amersfoort explicitly decided not to stimulate citizens to establish community enterprises. The community manager indicated: ‘When there are citizens who want to take over the buildings that is fine, but we are not going to stimulate this’. The neighbourhood manager underlined this by saying: ‘There was no plan in the beginning. I think it is good that such a plan did not exist’. This explains why the municipality did not embrace self-organization as a relevant frame with which to justify the possible takeover of roles by citizens. In Amsterdam, self-organization was embraced as an inspirational story to trigger societal entrepreneurs and citizens into becoming active: ‘It all started with incentives: you try to make things attractive by inspiring stories and offering subsidies’ (interviewed civil servant). Furthermore, platforms were organized to share the experiences of similar

initiatives. A civil servant indicated: ‘If the communications lead to bottlenecks, or if I know that one district has very good ideas and another is still searching, I ensure that they learn from each other’.

### **Meta-governance: Supportive actions**

In Amersfoort, the municipality used supportive actions through providing initiators with contacts, expert knowledge, useful information and the building lease. When it became clear that the initiators wanted to take over the centre, the municipality appointed independent experts to help them draft exploitation plans. The community manager also dedicated much of her time to discussing the pros and cons and to sharing information and contacts. The creation of an experimentation zone in Amsterdam provided the new community enterprises with financial opportunities: ‘We got a further subsidy for furnishing the building and, after that, a second amount to ensure the main floor looked good at the opening of the building’ (de Meevaart 2013). The municipality also helped groups of inhabitants to acquire additional funding by helping them with applications and by providing necessary contacts and knowledge. Supportive actions also included setting up the earlier mentioned platforms because it was considered important ‘to organize meetings to strengthen and broaden the network of community enterprises in order to exchange knowledge and experiences’ (Municipality of Amsterdam 2012b, 13). This was also necessary because the development of a community enterprise requires the involvement of multiple administrative layers within the municipality that have specific knowledge.

### **Meta-governance: Formulation of rules-of-play**

Both municipalities redefined the rules of the game. They made it possible for citizens to take over buildings that were public property, rather than immediately placing them on the real estate market. In both cases, the initiators had to pay rents that were below commercial levels. This assistance was recognized: ‘without the help and goodwill of the municipality we would probably not have acquired a building’ (interviewed initiator, Amersfoort). Furthermore, the Amersfoort municipality also formulated a number of rules-of-play that structured the interactions, an example being: ‘Make sure there is a strict separation of functions between the community and the board of the association. Review the business case with an independent third party (...)’ (Municipality of Amersfoort 2012a, 1). In Amsterdam, the experimentation zone changed the rules of the game, providing greater freedom to the initiators to act: ‘...it will be used to bend and apply rules to ease the starting up process of neighbourhood enterprises’ (Municipality of Amsterdam 2012b, 13). Furthermore, the new enterprise was in a strong position relative to the existing professional welfare organizations in the district because ‘usage of

professional welfare has shifted towards civil society' (Municipality of Amsterdam – District East 2011, 5).

### **Meta-governance: Playing with fear**

In the Amersfoort case, the municipality relied heavily upon administrative checks and regulations: 'When we were finished with one list of demands, another was already waiting for us' (interviewed initiators). There was a constant threat that the municipality, framed by the initiators and citizens as 'the opposition party', would intervene in a top-down way and sell the building on the open market if the citizen group's plan was not sufficiently strong or if they did not meet the requirements. This threat kept the initiators on their toes by creating a sense of urgency and also increased support from other inhabitants that convinced the initiators to keep going: 'It was going to happen either way, good or bad' (interviewed initiators). In Amsterdam, the regulation-free experimentation zone created a benevolent atmosphere rather than a threatening shadow over the initiative. In contrast to Amersfoort, fear-based incentives were absent in Amsterdam. From the beginning, the government attitude was supportive.

### **Meta-governance: Summary**

This analysis shows the following. First, we can see that the combinations of strategies employed really influenced the outcomes of the self-organization process. In Amersfoort, the combination of working with all kinds of frameworks and regulations with playing with fear led to a well-defined organization. In Amsterdam, both these elements were largely absent, which could explain why a more loosely coupled enterprise evolved. In Amsterdam, a 'softer' approach was visible, one that made use of supportive actions (providing resources), storytelling and helpful changes to the rules of the game (setting up the experimentation zone). Second, in both cases we can observe that local governments still played a role. In Amersfoort, we see a somewhat fear-inducing, hierarchical and administration-oriented shadow of hierarchy, whereas, in Amsterdam, a more bottom-up, supportive shadow could be seen. A third observation is that, in Amersfoort, a change could be seen during the process towards a more benevolent shadow, one that also involved supportive actions (providing resources) and changing the rules of the game (giving citizens a privileged position). Fourth, our case analysis shows that self-organization and meta-governance are co-evolving and interacting mechanisms, and that the contents of this co-evolutionary process can differ.

## 4.6 Conclusions

Self-organization is used to legitimize a retreat by government from policy sectors (such as welfare) in which they previously held a strong position. Empirical understanding of self-organization in the public sector is scarce, especially with regard to the role of government. One reason is that the absence of governmental control is seen as an inherent characteristic of self-organization. We, however, argue that if we really want to understand self-organization processes in the public sector, we have to address the way in which governments continue to influence these processes. Hence, the goal of this research has been to understand how and why the interplay between self-organizing communities and meta-governing local governments shape the emergence of new public service arrangements, thereby unravelling the mechanisms behind this interplay by taking into account the actions, interests and motives of the involved stakeholders. Our comparative case study of two community enterprises analyses how this interplay substantially shapes the course and outcomes of the self-organizing processes behind the establishment of two robust community enterprises. Their success can be explained by the fact that the actions taken by the initiators were closely interwoven with the actions of civil servants – policymakers and frontline workers – and politicians. Governments, even though they were formally retreating, played a substantial role. They used a complex set of meta-governing techniques, which go beyond coercive control, to influence the shaping and the outcome of self-organization processes. In doing so, they created shadows of hierarchy that, in both cases, partly explain the emergence of new local service-arrangements. Our research identifies two versions of this shadow. In the Amersfoort situation, a fear-based shadow of hierarchy structured the self-organization process, which in turn influenced its shaping. The ‘shadow’ provided focus and structured the interactions between the initiators and the municipality through the imposition of various guidelines and requirements. One could argue that the citizens were invited to take the initiative to produce these services, but within a framework created by government. The second type, seen in the Amsterdam case, was a more benevolent shadow of hierarchy, involving the creation of a level playing field and the provision of access to relevant resources. As in the Amersfoort example, this again partially explains the shaping of the self-organization process. In this type of shadow, the group of citizens was perceived by government as a co-creator that together with local government would initiate new service arrangements. A more benevolent shadow also became visible in the Amersfoort situation once the initial distrust and scepticism were replaced by a more positive attitude. This suggests that a benevolent shadow is related to trust. In Amsterdam, in contrast to Amersfoort, selforganization could be linked to a tradition of civil engagement which had already

generated trust and social capital. We therefore conclude that the type of shadow cast by governments seems to correlate with the trust present: distrust leads to a fear-based shadow, whereas trust leads to a more benevolent form. Furthermore, the role of boundary spanners, as connectors of people, ideas, interests and resources as well as protectors of the initiative (and also in terms of leadership), is evident when it comes to shaping the self-organization process since they can help create trust. In particular, boundary-spanning frontline workers are important since they are often part of two social infrastructures: the local community and the municipality. The aldermen responsible for the relevant area of services can also be important boundary spanners by providing political support and allowing access to vital resources. This role was also visible in the way these municipalities intervened: by creating new playing rules and developing supportive actions and positive framing.

Another conclusion relates to triggers for self-organization and the role that disruptive events play. In Amersfoort, we saw that the closing of the community centre and the NIMBY reaction to a threatened addiction clinic acted as a disruptive event that mobilized citizens to take over the community centre. This changed the meaning of the location and created a sense of belonging. In Amsterdam, in comparison, we saw that the takeover of the community centre was the outcome of a gradual process that built upon a tradition of civic participation as an inspirational idea. Here, setting up a selforganizing neighbourhood centre can be seen as an evolutionary next step. This adds a contextual factor to the significance of disruptive events. The fact that the takeover of the community centre in Amsterdam was embedded in this tradition and built on existing practices of collaboration also explains why, in Amsterdam, the shadow of hierarchy was a benevolent one. In Amersfoort, the plan that was developed by the local community can be regarded as a process of mobilization against the municipality that had provoked them. This emerging tension can explain why the Amersfoort municipality chose to create a fear-based shadow of hierarchy. While accepting this alternative solution, the municipality wanted to control the centre's development. Again over time, these tensions were eased by boundary-spanning activities that generated trust.

These conclusions have some theoretical consequences. We had expected successful self-organization to depend on the way governments would support the initiatives of self-organizing neighbourhood communities. In the two studied cases, government involvement differed, but in both successful community enterprises emerged. Although there is always a risk of case study selection bias, this conclusion fits with the ideas of those scholars who advocate a more ecological approach to studying selforganization (Goldstein 1999). Here, self-organization is viewed as a

predominantly local and, therefore, contingent process of co-evolutionary interactions. Hence, as we found in our two cases, context should matter. Notwithstanding this agreement, further comparative case study research is needed to back up our initial conclusion. As others have suggested, self-organization in the public sector does seem to take place within a shadow of hierarchy. What we have shown is that there are different sorts of shadows, shaped by tradition, existing powers and resource-dependency relationships. This also implies that there are different forms of self-organization and, besides pure forms, there also seem to be somewhat hybrid forms of self-organization. The nature of this hybridity seems to be influenced by the role governments want to play. Moreover, the various forms of self-organization seem to have different triggers. It appears that self-organization can be an emerging process based on tradition or that it can be caused by a disruptive NIMBY-type situation that creates a policy window in which self-organization is advanced as a possible approach to an appropriate solution. A logical next step in studying self-organizing practices in public administration would be to attempt to develop a contingency-based framework of relevant factors that can then be elaborated and tested.

It is important to put our conclusions into perspective. While we have been able to gain a better understanding of how self-organization processes are shaped, this knowledge is based on only two case studies that are located in one sector and in one country. Hence, we should be reluctant to generalize our findings. Given the importance that is nowadays attached to self-organization in public service delivery and the limited empirical findings that are provided by our own study, further empirical research is vital. A question that needs to be addressed is how the local context matters. In order to examine this, one could set up a field experiment in different settings, thereby varying the type of shadow. What, for example, would happen when a fear-based shadow is cast over a context in which there is a tradition of civic engagement? Another aspect is that the Netherlands has a long tradition of community participation, in which each societal pillar (Catholics, Protestants, Socialists and Liberals) organized specific services for their own group. It would be interesting to see whether the relationship between the type of self-organization and the role of government that we found also occurs in other countries with different governance traditions, for instance by examining the link in countries with a strong centralistic state tradition (such as France). Another research possibility would be to explore, within a single country, the link between self-organization and the weak and/or strong governance tradition in different policy sectors. We see this study as an early step in addressing this challenge.

## Appendix A

Table A1. Analytical model

<b>Relevant factors regarding the process of self-organization</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
Output of self-organization: new service arrangements	Has an order been established in terms of the creation of an organization that has a legal status, a budget and staff to carry out activities?
Presence of a trigger	Did a disruptive event stimulate self-organization? Has this led to the generation of specific ideas? Why?
Trustworthy relationships	Did a sense of belonging and reciprocity stimulate or frustrate self-organization? Why?
Ability to focus on the exchange of and interplay between ideas, information, knowledge and experience	Did a clear and shared focus that structured the interactions either stimulate or frustrate self-organization? Why?
Presence of a physical and/or virtual locus of interaction	Did the use of a physical or virtual location with recurrent interactions stimulate or frustrate self-organization? Why?
Presence of boundary-spanning activities	Did the presence of key individuals that were able to link people, ideas and resources and that were able to protect the interaction between the involved actors stimulate or frustrate self-organization? Why?
Flexibility of the involved actors to adapt existing roles and other practices, including relevant legal frameworks	Did the willingness and ability to change existing roles, positions and regulations stimulate or frustrate selforganization? Why?

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**Factors related to meta-governance**


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Application of meta-governance strategies	Government acted as a meta-governor, thereby deploying the following strategies:
A. Presence of strategic frameworks	Did the use of all kinds of administrative checks, based on strategic frameworks and guidance notes, stimulate or frustrate self-organization? Why?
B. Presence of monitoring activities	Did the use of benchmarking to monitor self-organization frustrate or stimulate self-organization and why?
C. Presence of framing and storytelling activities	Did storytelling by the meta-governor stimulate or frustrate self-organization? Why?
D. Presence of supportive actions	Did provision of and access to vital resources, such as information, knowledge, finance, buildings and contacts by the meta-governor, stimulate or frustrate selforganization? Why?
E. Formulating playing rules	Did the structuring of positions and relationships between the involved actors as well as the formulation of rules-of-play by the meta-governor stimulate or frustrate selforganization? Why?
F. Playing with fear	Did threats by the meta-governor to impose top- down regulations/interventions stimulate or frustrate selforganization? Why?

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## Appendix B

Table B1. Documents and websites

Source	Document
Dichtbij. 2013	“Het geheim van het klokhuis.” <a href="http://www.dichtbij.nl/eemland/ondernemersnieuws/artikel/2837754/het-geheim-van-t-klokhuis.aspx">http://www.dichtbij.nl/eemland/ondernemersnieuws/artikel/2837754/het-geheim-van-t-klokhuis.aspx</a>
Groot Oost TV. 2012	“De Meevaart is open!” <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWY4Dgno8go">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWY4Dgno8go</a>
Het Klokhuis. 2012	Wijkvereniging Het Klokhuis. Bedrijfsplan 2012. Amersfoort: Het Klokhuis.
Meevaart. 2012a	“Meevaart of tegenstroom.” <a href="http://meevaart.nl/">http://meevaart.nl/</a>
Meevaart. 2012b	“De Meevaart: op weg naar een wijkonderneming.” <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zDPapxaXqE">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zDPapxaXqE</a>
Meevaart. 2012	“Meevaart Ontwikkel Groep, wat is dat?” <a href="http://meevaart.nl/">http://meevaart.nl/</a>
Municipality of Amersfoort. 2013	“Maatschappelijke overname wijkcentra.” <a href="http://www.amersfoort.nl/4/ontmoetingindewijk/Maatschappelijke-overname-wijkcentra.html">http://www.amersfoort.nl/4/ontmoetingindewijk/Maatschappelijke-overname-wijkcentra.html</a>
Municipality of Amersfoort. 2012a	Brief van College van Burgemeester en Wethouders. Maatschappelijke overname wijkcentrum het Klokhuis. MO/VW/4140528. June 26, 2012.
Municipality of Amersfoort. 2012b	Collegebesluit. MO/VW/4141616. June 27, 2012.
Municipality of Amsterdam. 2012a	Bewonersinitiatief. De Meevaart in handen van bewoners: een wijkonderneming in ontwikkeling.
Municipality of Amsterdam. 2012b	Actieplan: Vertrouwen in de stad. Doorontwikkeling bewonersgestuurde wijkontwikkelingen en wijkondernemingen.
Municipality of Amsterdam – District East. 2011	Kadernota versterking sociaal domein.
Parool. 2012	In de Meevaart spelt niemand de baas. June 22, 2012.
Volkskrant. 2013	Buurt moet het voortaan zelf doen. February 21, 2013.





## Chapter 5

# **Boundary-spanning strategies for aligning institutional logics: a typology**

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## **Abstract**

This article critically examines strategies used by boundary spanners to align the institutional logics of bureaucracy, management and networks in citizenstate interactions. In-depth interviews conducted within the Dutch municipality of Rotterdam reveal that boundary spanners use entrepreneurial, mediation, and hierarchical strategies to align institutional logics. By providing insight into the strategic toolbox of boundary spanners and the perceived effectiveness of these tools, this article enhances empirical understanding of how the interplay between older and newer institutional logics within public organisations takes shape and how boundary spanners make strategic use of hierarchy to overcome institutional barriers.

## 5.1 Introduction

The complex nature of today's problems has led governments to rethink their approach to the design and implementation of policies and services. An impressive growth of scholarly attention for post-NPM literature, such as network management and collaborative governance, support the idea that governance networks and collaborative governance have become the next 'big thing' in public sector management (Agranoff 2006; Ansell and Gash 2008; Klijn and Koppenjan 2015). The New Public Governance (NPG) paradigm is put forward as a viable alternative—a new and dominant logic—to the dominant Traditional Public Administration (TPA) and New Public Management (NPM) paradigms (Osborne 2007; Pestoff 2012; Torfing et al. 2012). Rooted in the literature on networks and co-production, the NPG paradigm's central assumption is that citizens are no longer to be treated as passive voters or consumers, but as active co-producers that participate in policy-making networks and contribute to the delivery of public services (Osborne 2007; Fledderus, Brandsen, and Honingh 2014). Although we see a sharp increase of scholarly and political attention on networks and co-production, empirical research falls short in exploring how the interplay between the logic of hierarchy (TPA), market (NPM) and networks (NPG) within public organisations takes shape (see Olsen 2010; Laegreid 2016). While many politicians and policy officials certainly 'talk the walk' along the lines of the popular scholarly refrain about the importance of collaboration and the rise of the network society (Buser 2013; Nederhand and Van Meerkerk 2018), the question is whether policy officials also 'walk the talk' in day-to-day encounters with citizens (see Van Dorp 2018).

### **This article: the art of boundary spanning in aligning institutional logics**

To see how the addition of the newer NPG logic combines and aligns with the older institutional logics of TPA and NPM, it is important to take the work of boundary spanners into account. Due to their strategic positioning in-between policy officials and local communities (Van Meerkerk 2014), boundary spanners are able to play a key role in enabling a productive interplay between 'incompatible prescriptions' of different institutional logics (Williams 2002; Meyer and Hammerschmid 2006). By linking organisations with their environments, boundary spanners are engaged in building and maintaining sustainable networks (Tushman and Scanlan 1981). As building networks of sustainable relations is very important to the collaborative nature of the NPG paradigm (Osborne 2007, 2010), boundary spanning is the key focus of managerial action within the NPG paradigm (Van Meerkerk and Edelenbos 2018; Osborne 2010). By using their agency, boundary spanners actively foster and

shape citizen-government encounters. Although the need to mobilise and activate one's own organisation to make these encounters work has been discussed frequently (see Streeck and Thelen 2005; Klijn and Koppenjan 2015; Nederhand, Bekkers, and Voorberg 2016), the current literature on boundary spanning lacks a clear typology of boundary-spanning strategies that are used to align clashing institutional logics within public organisations. This article therefore answers the following research question: what strategies do boundary spanners deploy to organisationally align the different institutional logics (hierarchy, market, networks) in citizen-state interactions and do they succeed in their efforts? By providing insight into the strategic toolbox of boundary spanners and the perceived effectiveness of these tools, this article contributes not only to increasing our empirical understanding of how the interplay between older and newer institutional logics within public organisations takes shape (do they peacefully coexist or clash), but also to the effectiveness of boundary spanners in aligning clashing logics by preventing or overcoming barriers.

To achieve this, we build on different bodies of the literature. Section 2 describes the literature on institutional logics and boundary spanners. Section 3 and 4 describe our case study approach that focuses on the exemplary case of the municipality of Rotterdam. The results of our analysis are presented in Sections 5 and 6. In the final section, we address important conclusions and limitations and consider avenues for future research.

## **5.2 Institutional logics: TPA, NPM and NPG**

The notion of institutional logics is used to provide a bridge between the macro-structural paradigms within organisations and the study of individual behaviour of boundary spanners and policy officials on the micro level (Thornton and Ocasio 2008). Institutional logics are a set of intra-organisational rules, routines and sanctions that individuals in particular contexts create and recreate in such a way that their behaviour is to some extent regularised and predictable (Jackall 1988). This implies the behaviour of policy officials to be structured along the lines of historically grown and accepted rule-based practices. These practices, which are based on dominant organisational paradigms or institutional logics, function as a common meaning system that adds to the durability and predictability of individual interactions (Scott 1995). Institutional logics are thus the sources of legitimacy that provide policy officials with a sense of order (Seo and Creed 2002). This sense of order in modern public organisations has traditionally been provided by the bureaucratic and the managerial logic (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007; Pollitt, 2003).

The behavioural repertoire of the more recently introduced NPG is not necessarily congruent with the repertoires represented by the bureaucratic (TPA) and/or the managerial (NPM) logic. We can identify four characteristics of the bureaucratic and managerial logics that can act as institutional barriers that boundary spanners face in their collaborative efforts. These tensions with the NPG network logic will be specified after a short account of what the bureaucratic and managerial logics entails.

### **Bureaucratic logic and potential barriers to network logic**

The bureaucratic logic is grounded in classical public administration theories in which government organisations are characterised as impersonal rational systems that prescribe neutral behaviour for policy officials (Weber 1978). From this logic, the function of policy officials should be standardised and executed along the lines of predictable processes and rules. The explicit standardisation of functions makes interaction with the bureaucratic organisation perfectly predictable. This predictability is also safeguarded by the presence of impersonal and stable rules (Dror 1968; Wilson 1989). These rules shield citizens from arbitrariness, power abuse and personal whims of policy officials (Bartels 2013). In this respect, it is also important that the allocation of resources should take place along the lines of clear regulations. Policy officials rely on rigid administrative guidelines, which perfectly fit public values, such as impartiality and equality. As a consequence, policy officials are intentionally internally oriented. Political goals of officeholders are favoured, and so political decisions guide what policy officials should do.

The primary characteristic of this logic that can act as a barrier to the NPG logic of networks is *standardisation*. Whereas NPG entails the development and negotiation of goals and policies during interaction with citizens and other stakeholders (Osborne 2010; Klijn and Koppenjan 2012), the bureaucratic logic would like policy officials to reason from existing regulations and politically authorised policy programmes. This benefits the predictability and equality of public service provisions; however, tailor-made solutions that are more appropriate to the context at hand become more difficult. The second major characteristic that potentially impedes network-working is the *internal orientation* of policy officials. The emphasis on both administrative procedures and serving the political officeholders makes policy officials internally oriented. Hence, political decisions guide the actions of policy officials. This internal orientation on policy programmes and rules also enables policy officials to treat each citizen alike. In contrast, the logic of networks requires an openness and external focus from policy officials (Torfing et al. 2012; Klijn and Koppenjan 2015).

### **Managerial logic and potential barriers to network logic**

The managerial logic is grounded in the neoliberal approach of NPM. While it is difficult to provide a definitive image of NPM (Pollitt, van Thiel, and Homburg 2007; see Hood 1991; Lane 2000), most scholars agree on the main features. These main features are the focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery through management of processes and systems. The use of business instruments (strategic and performance management techniques, performance indicators) is crucial to the conceptualisation of NPM (Hood 1991). After politicians have defined and set the main policy goals for the bureaucratic organisation, public managers are expected to manage the delivery of these policy goals within this budget (Du Gay 2008). Consequently, problems are translated into managerial targets that reflect the internal organisation. Financial resources are subsequently disaggregated into specific organisational units that should realise these targets and results. Results measured in terms of outputs and outcomes are important for purposes of accountability and efficiency (Hood 1991; Haque 2007). Therefore, setting specific performance indicators for each department enables managers and politicians to critically monitor and evaluate their performance.

The primary characteristic of this logic that potentially serves as a barrier to the network logic is *functional specialisation*. Due to the focus on performance information and monitoring, policy ambitions are broken down into a large set of measurable smaller tasks that are allocated among departments and responsible policy officials. As a result, decision-making power and financial resources are distributed within the organisation. This potentially impedes NPG as local needs of citizens usually cut across the responsibilities of individual policy officials and departments (Bartels 2016). The second major characteristic and barrier is the *result-orientation* of policy officials. Achieving managerial targets within budget is key for policy officials as that is what they are held accountable for. This potentially leaves little room and time for policy officials to take-up extra tasks that come up during interactions with citizens, and therefore fall outside their performance indicators (see Bartels 2016; Michels and De Graaf 2010).

### **Aligning institutional logics: the art of boundary spanning**

As institutional logics—with contradictory rules and routines—are confirmed or changed during interactions (Edelenbos 2005), we will take a closer look at the role and agency of boundary spanners in aligning the institutional logics. The boundary-

spanning literature depicts boundary spanners as *connectors* of people and processes: they facilitate contacts between internal and external parties. Different ideas exist in the literature about when a person qualifies as being a boundary spanner. Some scholars focus on holding a structural *position* within the organisational structure (Fernandez and Gould 1994; Tushman and Scanlan 1981), while others define boundary spanning as an activity that is not bound to a particular organisational position (Levina and Vaast 2005; Quick and Feldman 2014). In this article, we focus on boundary spanners that hold strategic brokerage positions. As a result of the central positioning of the boundary spanners inbetween their organisation and its environment, boundary spanners are able to shape perceptions by controlling information and access to various parts of the network (Williams 2002; Levina and Vaast 2005). Hence, boundary spanning is commonly thought of as the management of the interface between organisations and their environments (Sullivan and Skelcher 2002; Williams 2002). To accomplish a better fit between organisation and environment, boundary spanners (1) connect different people and processes across organisational boundaries, (2) select relevant information on both sides of the boundary and (3) translate this information to the other side of the boundary (Van Meerkerk 2014). They are thus involved in a two-step informational flow, collecting and transferring information from one side of the boundary to the other. However, boundary spanning is more than a simple matter of translation between different ‘worlds’ (e.g., internal and external, professional and amateur). Key to managing and coordinating the interface is not only the ability to connect, but also the ability to align organisations and actors of different backgrounds (Lodge and Wegrich 2014). The central positioning of boundary spanners enables them to strategically shape perceptions through controlling information and to access various parts of the network. The rapidly expanding scholarship on boundary spanning has recently put more emphasis on the innovative component of boundary spanning: to transform particular institutional arrangements (Van Meerkerk and Edelenbos 2018; Baker, 2008). Boundary spanners are considered to be entrepreneurs and innovators in the sense that they try to link different policy issues and policy streams across boundaries. They highlight contradictions in institutional rule-sets to make a case for changing existing routines, or they attempt to recognise and exploit policy windows to create turns in the ‘paths’ of internal routines (Kingdon 1984). These kinds of strategies have received far less attention within the public administration literature on boundary spanning. Consequently, insight into the strategies that boundary spanners employ to prevent or overcome institutional barriers within public organisations is limited. Therefore, in this article, we will identify and construct a typology of boundary-spanning strategies that play a role within public organisations.

### 5.3 Research site

This research is conducted within the Dutch municipality of Rotterdam. This municipality is internationally known for its experience with partnership working due to its involvement with the Rotterdam Harbour. Moreover, Rotterdam was following a political programme highlighting the importance of NPG by stressing citizen activation and participation (Municipality of Rotterdam 2014). In order to diminish the legitimacy gap between local government and citizens, the municipality of Rotterdam introduced the so-called GGW-approach in 2006 (Gebiedsgericht Werken). The GGW approach gives primacy to local experiences as opposed to the institutionalised understandings and routines of policy officials (see Bartels 2016). In 2010, a large reorganisation completed the shift of the administrative organisation to fit this new governance philosophy of putting the local needs of districts and citizens first. Hence, the municipality has moved from a ‘policy-centred’ organisation towards a ‘citizen-centred’ organisation (Rekenkamer Rotterdam 2011). Policy officials of the municipality or Rotterdam thus build on years of experience with collaborative working (Van Steenberghe et al. 2017). This is not only mirrored in the current political programme of the municipality, but also in the institutional structure built around the GGW-approach. Therefore, the municipality of Rotterdam is exemplary in studying how different institutional logics (hierarchy, market, networks) in citizen-state interactions take shape.

This study focuses on public officials working in the municipality of Rotterdam as district managers. District managers are explicitly employed to function as the link between the perspectives and interests of a specific district (environment) and the perspectives and interests of the policy departments of the city (organisation). They are responsible for collecting information on the local needs of citizens and transferring this information to policy officials and vice versa. The work of district managers is thus characterised not only by representing the local needs of citizens to policy officials, but also by representing the policies of these officials to citizens living in the relevant districts. As such, they connect two different worlds. District managers thus not only hold a structural brokerage position within the organisational structure (Fleming, Mingo, and Chen 2007), their job description also implies a process of constantly interacting back and forth in-between various actors: the very activity of boundary spanning (Quick and Feldman 2014). District managers play a key role in the GGW approach. This approach divides the urban area of Rotterdam into 14 districts. Each of the 14 districts is represented within the municipal

organisation by a separate district-department in which district managers are employed. Besides spanning boundaries between policy officials and communities, district managers collaborate with a district-committee that consists of elected citizens living in the specific district and who communicate the local needs that they want the policy officials to take up. These needs are in turn taken up by district managers who are responsible to find a solution for these local problems in their district through informing and calling into action policy officials and, if necessary, the political head of the municipality. The district managers have no formal power and budget; thus, they rely solely on the commitment of policy officials of the policy departments. Consequently, for the GGW-approach to work, the district managers have to align the interests of policy officials and districts.

## 5.4 Methods

In this study, we interviewed 16 district managers. Respondents were selected on theoretical grounds: respondents are all working as boundary spanners who have encounters with both citizens from their district and with policy officials working in the policy-departments. This selection made it possible to study the barriers that boundary spanners experience in their encounters with policy officials and to examine how they strategised upon these barriers. Within this selection frame, this study aimed for a sample consisting of district managers who are spread over the different city districts to be able to grasp a variety of experiences. We succeeded in interviewing district managers from 12 of the 14 district-departments in the municipality of Rotterdam. Although Hoek van Holland and Charlois were not included, they were indirectly represented by the 12 district managers, who were also familiar with these districts. In four interviews the district manager brought along a colleague (district IJsselmonde, Prins Alexander, Feijenoord and Overschie). The respondents were introduced to the study by either the director of their own district or the director of another district and were then requested to participate as part of a broader evaluation of the GGW-approach within the municipality.

This study focused on the experience of boundary spanners. Thus, to study these experiences, we focused on detailed examples and stories about encounters with policy officials. Stories present highly textured depictions of practices in which the norms, beliefs, and decision rules that guide actions and choices become clear (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003). This method allows respondents to illustrate what particular situations call for certain routines and how the specifics of a case fit or do not fit standard practices (see Bartels2013; Raaphorst2018). Within an

interview setting, respondents were asked to tell stories about struggles they had experienced. Additionally, we asked respondents to come up with examples and stories on how they strategised facing these struggles. To make valid and replicable inferences, we analysed the transcribed interviews by making use of the step-by-step approach of the constant comparative method to identify boundary-spanning strategies (Boeije 2002). We first segmented our data into relevant categories by making use of an open coding process. Open coding is the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data (Strauss and Corbin 1990). The fragments were then compared among each other, grouped into categories dealing with the same subject, and labelled with a code. The list of codes was then grouped in categories by means of axial coding and reassembled into the findings that are presented in this article. We used ATLAS.ti software for qualitative data analysis. The full coding scheme is presented in Appendix A. We now turn to the discussion of the main patterns and most exemplary stories. See Appendix B for additional supporting quotes.

## 5.5 Clashing institutional logics

The public management practice is characterised by the coexistence of multiple institutional logics. How does the logic of the more recently introduced NPG paradigm combine with the older institutional logics of the TPA and NPM paradigm? This section explores the four barriers that we theoretically expect boundary spanners to encounter as the result of clashing logics. We first turn to the standardisation barrier.

### **Standardisation barrier (experienced by 12 respondents)**

It often happens that boundary spanners clash with policy officials who are ‘guarding’ current standards in terms of rules and policies. In the experience of boundary spanners, policy officials do not reason from the perspective of the problem but from the perspective of existing rules and policies. Consequently, many solutions do not quite fit the needs of citizens from the districts. This is a two-fold problem: a strict interpretation of standards, and also a controlling approach of policy officials ‘guarding’ these standards. According to boundary spanners, guarding these standards seems more important for policy officials than deviating from them because of an external need or initiative. As long as requests and ideas of citizens can be arranged within existing rules and standards, they are realised easily. However, when a request or initiative falls outside this framework, “it gets very tough”. The following story is exemplary for this case.



*‘‘When citizen initiatives deviate from existing standards and rules, it gets very tough. For example, a group of citizens had the idea of installing new bicycle parking facilities in their neighborhood. This is of course really nice. They say to me: we will hire an artist to design these parking facilities. However, this is incredible difficult for policy officials, as they want to adhere to the standard way of designing bicycle facilities in Rotterdam. [...] The same goes for the design of paving stones. Policy officials don’t want these to include wood for a whole range of reasons... It doesn’t fit the pre-defined standard. Well, and so on.’’* (Respondent 14)

The respondents who experienced this barrier indicated, like the above story aptly shows, that it often seems easier for policy officials to point at reasons why something is not possible, than to adapt the standard solution. Hence, citizens are often urged to adapt their idea or initiative so that it fits policy standards.

### **Internal-orientation barrier (experienced by 11 respondents)**

The following story shows that nearly three quarters of the boundary spanners also feel hindered because the primary point of reference for public servants from the policy departments is the inner bureaucracy and political process. Boundary spanners argue that policy officials are so busy with making sure the internal machinery runs well that they often lose sight of the more personal story of initiatives and requests from citizens.

*‘‘The alderman promised the district committee that he would send them a letter. Well, that letter was important, also for other citizens from the district. The letter would enable the district committee to show what they had arranged with the alderman. It took a very long time for the letter to arrive. Each time, there was someone who felt that something else had to be included in the letter. While I was thinking like, this letter has to get through otherwise there will be a quarrel in the district, and with ... So that is... This is where you really notice that the logic of the community and the municipality are very different. Policy officials say, ‘‘yes, yes, but if this is not part of the letter, then the alderman... [gets in trouble]. That political party will definitely ask questions.’’ All the time I am waiting and saying like: hurry up, this letter needs to become public. We have to get started. So that... And eventually the alderman would profit. But OK, this is my experience, and I also get that the ‘other world’ looks different.’’* (Respondent 9)

Boundary spanners describe policy officials as being mainly oriented towards their organisation and the proper answering of internal questions. It comes more natural for policy officials to take a formal perspective on matters than to take a more personal approach and look at initiatives proposed by citizens as actions taken by

‘real people’. However, this barrier is hardly experienced as an issue of principle regarding equal treatment of citizens, but more as a pragmatic working-attitude.

### **Functional specification barrier (experienced by 9 respondents)**

Functional specification is experienced as being a barrier for more than half of the boundary spanners. Because functions and tasks of policy officials are clearly demarcated, power and resources are spread over different units. Hence, a lot of interdependencies exist within the organisation. The following story shows that it is hard to reconnect the resources and responsibilities in line with priorities of citizens within the districts. Such issues can linger very long simply because it is difficult to combine the various resources from different units, and, moreover, there is no real mechanism for doing that.

*‘It is difficult to get a hold on the cash flow that enables you to say: Ok, I can promise on this table that this issue will be handled next week. You can only promise that to citizens if you possess the money. These days, there are a lot of dependencies and a major distance between the policy officials ‘on the tables’ and policy officials guarding the cash flow. (...) [These] policy officials work in one of the big towers, you know, somewhere in the new building. Their systems show that somewhere in another district a street is in a much worse condition, so they won’t provide a budget for our street. (...) Often my contact person within the policy department doesn’t even know who this asset manager is. How are we supposed to contact this person? How can we arrange that not the street in district A, but the street in district B... [is fixed]? Well, that is all at a distance.’* (Respondent 1)

Interestingly, more than one third of the boundary spanners didn’t perceive the functional specification barrier to be problematic at all. They perceived the spread of functions and resources as a structural feature of organisations that not inherently impedes collaborative working. In fact, this feature could be made productive by public officials—if it wasn’t for their, for-instance, result-oriented or inward-oriented behaviour or attitude. These boundary spanners thus perceived other more behavioural barriers to cause problems for collaborative working.

### **Result-orientation barrier (experienced by 12 respondents)**

Policy officials and managers are judged on realising their programme; however, seeking cooperation with citizens and entrepreneurs is something ‘extra’ and, therefore, not always part of their performance agreements. Because it is not ‘in the programme’, three quarters of the boundary spanners feel that when a collaborative activity does not add to a performance target of policy officials, few internal managers feel responsible for it; for them, it literally does not count. The following

story shows that processes of co-production could easily go wrong when they are not anchored in the performance agreements of policy officials.

*“Take for example the redesign of a street. We did that in co-production with citizens. (...) Let’s say you work for the policy department Urban Development, and you have drafted this plan together with citizens while also taking into account safety and social development arguments. This could imply that, for instance, the parking spots are not entirely optimal placed, and the spots are 10 cm shorter than the norm. Then a senior [policy officials who works as] urban planner sees the plan and dismisses it immediately, with all its citizen ideas, regardless of whether the citizens thought it was the best plan possible, given all their other interests. This person is not held accountable for integral working [in co-production with citizens], this was not specified in his performance indicators. You should not give this one person the power to destroy the integral plan just with one point-of-view.”* (Respondent 12)

Furthermore, part of the orientation on results is the allocation of budgets to specific managerial targets. This makes the municipal budget quite inflexible; there is little space for re-allocating money to purposes outside a pre-defined programme. Boundary spanners indicate that because of the labelling of money, there is not always space for new issues that pop-up. This is also part of the result-orientation barrier that they experience.

#### **Four institutional barriers to NPG**

Our findings show that traditional logics produce significant barriers to the work of boundary spanners. We found little evidence of major objections to the requests of boundary spanners. Most initiatives were not far-fetched and fitted within existing policy goals. That shows how traditional institutional logics provide an ever-present but also implicit barrier for aligning actions of policy officials with demands of local citizens. Of course, not all encounters with policy officials are cumbersome. Some boundary spanners explicitly stress the good-intentions of many of the policy officials. Nevertheless, that does not take away from the tensions experienced almost on a daily basis. We will now examine the strategies that boundary spanners use to align the clashing institutional logics by preventing and/or overcoming the barriers that they experience.

## **5.6 Boundary-spanning strategies**

Within our case, we can identify three types of strategies that boundary spanners use to avoid or overcome the barriers they experience: an entrepreneurial strategy, a

mediating strategy, and a hierarchical strategy. In the next section, these strategies are described, including their effectiveness as perceived by the boundary spanners.<sup>1</sup>

### **Entrepreneurial strategy (used by 7 respondents)**

This strategy involves taking a creative approach to rules and routines, but also to contacts. Boundary spanners who employ this strategy strategically think about the best starting point for the request or initiative from citizens. They think carefully about whom to go to and what battles they would pick. When a policy official fails to properly react to the request, boundary spanners try another way into the system by approaching officials at different positions. The following story shows an example of this entrepreneurial approach:

*“Take for example the MOE-landers, that formed a problem in our district. (...) It takes a lot of time before the policy officials working to get their policies moving. Rules and all sorts of frameworks should be followed. That is quite difficult sometimes. Simultaneously, like I said before, I try to work at the boundaries of what is appropriate, I am inventive and creative. You are going to look at... take the consultation hour that we set-up for the MOE-landers. They [policy officials] then say like, the aldermen don't want to facilitate special target groups. I think, OK, so be it. Policy makers will not deviate. I think OK, but it has also something to do with integration and there may be room within the policy framework of integration for something like this. So you have to be very creative and open-minded, but also show courage.”* (Respondent 16)

This story shows that this particular boundary spanner detected a policy window and acted upon that opportunity. Boundary spanners thus attempt to recognise and exploit policy windows to act upon resource opportunities and couple solutions to existing problems. This strategy is used before actual barriers are experienced (e.g., approaching the right policy officials) as well as after barriers have occurred (e.g., approaching other policy officials). Hence, experience about previous barriers is used to inform future behaviour, for example, not to approach certain policy officials again. By seeking another way in (as the above story shows), boundary spanners try to avoid all four types of existing barriers. While all boundary spanners who use this strategy agree with its effectiveness to avoid and get around barriers, two boundary spanners were more pessimistic than the others by stressing that it takes considerable time to get in contact with the right person. The other—more positive—respondents indicated that if this strategy is to work, the formulation of the request is very important. Issues should be framed and split up into smaller parts to match the interests of the receiver.

### **Mediating strategy (used by 14 respondents)**

The mediation strategy is used by boundary spanners to find common ground for the development of a solution. The mediating strategy can be applied in two ways. The first way involves the usage of an argumentative approach to persuade officials. Boundary spanners use terms like engaging in the battle or starting the fight to describe these encounters. They try to make the policy officials see the importance of bending existing rules and policies. The second way involves trust-building and facilitating compromises by listening and showing respect to the interests of policy officials. The following story shows the importance of keeping in mind the interests of their colleagues. On the basis of this knowledge, boundary spanners try to facilitate a shared understanding on which they themselves and the policy officials can build. Facilitating a shared understanding becomes easier if the relationship between the policy officials and boundary spanners is good. Therefore, investing in relationships beforehand is part of the strategy boundary spanners use to avoid future barriers (see Appendix for supporting quotes). Boundary spanners then have a better basis to start the negotiation and mediation process. This strategy is also used to overcome barriers by exploring common ground and entering in a negotiation process as the following story shows.

*“The art is to get as many things done as possible. In all fairness, aye. Knowing each other’s world on the basis of arguments is very important. Contacts and relations are key. They [policy officials] have to get that there is a problem in the neighbourhood, and simultaneously I have to get that there are certain policy assignments at stake. In the organization, there should also be scored. (...) You have to get that policy officials take a lot of [internal] interests into consideration. If you get that, you have created room for a good conversation. In this case, you don’t work against the currents, but you can adjust the main current a little.”* (Respondent 3)

This strategy is used in combination with all barriers, but mostly with the standardisation, and result-orientation barrier. However, the boundary spanners disagree on whether this strategy is effective or not. Of the 14 boundary spanners that use the strategy, 3 boundary spanners find mediating effective (although some of them do complain about the effort it costs and the delay accompanying it), and 2 boundary spanners find the mediating strategy effective only when they combine it with the entrepreneurial strategy of picking the right colleagues. Seven boundary spanners stress that the effectiveness of the mediating strategy depends, for instance, on the competences and willingness of colleagues to see (and act upon) the added value. Lastly, 2 boundary spanners are entirely negative about the potentials of the mediating strategy and indicate that the traditional logics are too dominant to be aligned with the logic of networks. They thus plea for institutional reform.

### **Hierarchical strategy (used by 9 respondents)**

Sometimes policy officials need a little help in breaking through red tape and engaging in processes of collaboration and co-production. Boundary spanners indicate that when requests and communication get stuck (often for a long time), it may be necessary to involve managers. This more confrontational approach to overcome barriers is sometimes unavoidable to getting the collaboration moving. In order for this strategy to be successful, it is important for boundary spanners to clearly formulate what they expect from these managers and why it is of crucial importance to change existing rules or policies and/or mobilise extra manpower within the policy-departments. The preparation needs to be excellent and to-the-point. This strategy is usually applied after experiencing some kind of barrier ('as a last resort') rather than preventing barriers from happening in the first place, as is the case with the other two strategies. The following fragment underlines this strategy.

*'Yes, but something goes wrong here. Then we need to escalate, like ok, you consign the choice or dilemma, what you see as unfair, to [the managers on] the table who possesses the power to solve the issue. They then might say: "Yes you are right, this is indeed undesirable." Subsequently, you hope, of course, that the manager [of the policy department] who seems most appropriate to take the lead, then says: You are right, I will instruct several policy officials to help you.'* (Respondent 1)

This strategy is used in combination with all barriers, but mostly with the standardisation and internal orientation barrier. All the boundary spanners, but one, agree on the effectiveness of this strategy. It is important though to be very specific to the management what exactly is needed so that they know what to do. While threatening with the hierarchical strategy may sometimes be enough to get policy officials moving, at other times, the strategy is developed together with policy officials as managerial or political involvement may help the policy officials to resolve the issue by getting more resources or leeway. Although effective, the boundary spanners indicate that they use this strategy not very often, and almost only when the other two strategies have failed. One respondent is negative about the effectiveness. He indicates: *'If my managers talk to their manager and arrange that someone gets assigned to this task, you and I both know that that this person lacks the intrinsic motivation to give his or her best.'*

### **Typology of boundary-spanning strategies**

Boundary work thus involves continuously avoiding and overcoming various institutional barriers; it can be seen as the core feature of NPG. About half of the boundary spanners use multiple strategies, while the other half has a strong preference for only one strategy (mostly the mediating strategy). Table 1 depicts the three strategies that boundary spanners use to avoid and overcome institutional barriers that are based on traditional institutional logics.

## **5.7 Conclusion and discussion**

This study aims to empirically examine the interplay between traditional hierarchical and more horizontal institutional logics within the Dutch municipality of Rotterdam by connecting the literature of institutional logics (structure) to the literature of boundary spanning (agency). The central aim of this article was to examine what strategies boundary spanners deploy to organisationally align the different institutional logics (hierarchy, market, networks) in citizen-state interactions and examine if boundary spanners succeed in their efforts.

To align clashing institutional logics, boundary spanners make use of *three strategies*: entrepreneurial, mediating, and hierarchical. The entrepreneurial strategy is used to recognize and exploit policy windows, to act upon resource opportunities, and to couple solutions to existing problems. Boundary spanners not only act entrepreneurial when it comes to policy-opportunities, but also when it comes to approaching ‘the right’ people. Past encounters inform the strategic behaviour, for example, not to approach certain inflexible policy officials again. To make this strategy work, boundary spanners have to do their homework to find the perfect policy-person fit for the specific collaborative issue and frame the issue accordingly. This strategy is, if applied well, effective in aligning logics by avoiding problematic clashes. The mediating strategy is used to facilitate a shared understanding and to negotiate the conditions of a potential solution. While mediating is the most-applied boundary-spanning strategy in this study, boundary spanners have mixed feelings when it comes to assessing its effectiveness. While some boundary spanners find this strategy very helpful in aligning logics (e.g., aligning logics requires good communication), other boundary spanners find this strategy a waste of time (e.g., aligning logics requires institutional change). Most boundary spanners however find this strategy to be occasionally effective, depending on the flexibility and goodwill of the policy officials concerned. The hierarchical strategy is employed mostly as a reaction to barriers that stem from the traditional

hierarchical bureaucratic logic, such as standardisation and internal orientation. While hierarchy poses problems for boundary spanners, using hierarchy simultaneously also provides the solution to align clashing institutional processes and make collaboration work. Although this strategy is very effective, boundary spanners are careful in applying it.

Table 1. Boundary-spanning strategies

	<b>Entrepreneurial strategy</b>	<b>Mediating strategy</b>	<b>Hierarchical strategy</b>
Goal	Avoid barriers	Avoid and overcome barriers	Overcome barriers
Focus	Working around rules and contacts	Search for shared meanings to facilitate compromises	Using the power of managers to pave the way
Activities	Framing issues to match interests of receiver, splitting up issues in smaller parts, using political knowledge to pick right policy agendas, seeking opportunities, avoiding inflexible colleagues	Talking with colleagues to find common ground and a solution, using charms and/or arguments to change viewpoints	Taking the issue to a higher managerial level by involving public managers and/or politicians.
Competences and skills	Creativity, courage, political sensitivity, proactivity	Listening, openness, negotiation, persuading	Prioritizing, perseverance, delegating, result-orientedness
Mechanism	Policy windows	Communication and personal relations	Formal hierarchy
Applied	All barriers	All barriers, but mostly standardization and result-orientation	All barriers, but mostly standardization and internal-orientation
Effectiveness	Yes, if applied well	Mixed results	Yes, but 1 respondent

This study makes two major contributions to the literature on NPG and boundary spanning. First, this study underlines that the real challenge of working collaboratively does not lie across the borders of the public administration, but lies deeply rooted within it. Although the need to mobilise or activate one's own organisation has been discussed frequently in the governance literature (see Klijn

and Koppenjan 2015; Bartels 2016), this article connects this discussion to the literature on institutional logics. Consequently, this article responds to an important theoretical challenge to the study of hybrid governance structures by identifying important structural institutional incompatibilities in the assumptions and principles that underlie traditional paradigms and the NPG paradigm (Klijn and Koppenjan 2012). Second, this study shows that boundary spanning not only uses strategies based on trust-building, communication and entrepreneurship (see Williams 2002), but also uses strategies that requires the mobilisation of the power of politicians and managers (e.g., hierarchy) to align institutional logics and handle conflicts. This point is an important addition to the current boundary-spanning literature. As boundary spanners extensively handle non-routine tasks, political and managerial support to safeguard their maneuver room enables them to better handle conflicts inherent to their position (Chebat and Kollias 2000; Stamper and Johlke 2003). While boundary spanners often get portrayed as the ultimate ‘network champion’ and ‘postmodern non-hierarchical leader’ (Williams 2002; Guarneros-Meza and Martin 2016), aligning clashing institutional logics require not only ‘bending’ and ‘renegotiating’ dominant traditional routines, but also strategically using these hierarchy-based routines to break through critical institutional barriers.

Inevitably this study has limitations that we hope will inspire future research. This study was performed in a specific context—boundary spanning in a large-sized municipality in the Netherlands. While we believe our findings to hold in comparable contexts, more empirical research is needed to test the generalisability and to further develop the theory on intraorganisational boundary-spanning strategies. To this end, future research could compare strategies of boundary spanners within different-sized municipalities both within one country and across countries to theoretically advance this field of study. The findings indicate that more attention should be given to the role of hierarchy in boundary spanning.

## Appendix A

Table A1. Coding Scheme

<b>Open coding</b>	<b>Axial coding</b>	<b>Final code</b>
Frame issues to match interest receiver	Issue formulation	Entrepreneurial strategy
Splitting up issues in small parts		
Using political knowledge to pick right policy agendas	Seeking collaborative and resource opportunities	
Avoid inflexible colleagues		
Collaborate with colleagues with decision-power		Mediating strategy
Taking advantage of circumstances	Opportunism	
Learning about each other's culture	Empathy	
Listening		
Togetherness and trust		Collaboration
Exploring common ground		
Bringing people together		
Organizing commitment		
Influencing choices	Persuasion	Hierarchical strategy
Debating choices		
Arguing		
Change or force decision	Decision power	
Seeking power		Higher managerial level
Power over resources		
Involve supervisors		
Supervisors will deliberate		
Managers use hierarchy		Higher political level
Involve executive politicians		
Threatening with politics		
Collaborating with politicians		

## Appendix B

Table B1. Supporting quotes

Category	Quotes
Standardization	<p>“All kinds of objections are raised. Whilst as you explain it the way I do, everyone is like: this is beneficial for all parties. The municipality reduces maintenance costs and citizens have more fun. But the rules say that the area has to adjacent your own property, and that is not the case here. So it is not possible.” (Respondent 6)</p> <p>“It is a hard and sluggish process. General solutions are employed, while you have specifically asked for custom solutions. They then come up with a policy measure that is not quite what we need in our district. This happens often.” (Respondent 8)</p>
Internal-orientation	<p>“This is, for example, making sure the organization is run smoothly and all questions are answered properly.” (Respondent 8)</p> <p>“[Policy officials say] We do not handle complaints in this way. You should tell [the citizens] that they should report it again. For us [district managers], this is a very sluggish, administrative, annoying way of working.” (Respondent 11)</p>
Functional specification	<p>“Somewhere in the organization an asset manager sees in his/her system that other streets should be handled first. So I hear that there is no money.” (Respondent 1)</p> <p>“I spent 1.5 years (!) negotiating with two governmental clusters, boys, we suffer from it and get reports of angry citizens, and rightly so, you have to renovate this field. Well, cluster 1 said the space was the responsibility of cluster 2, while cluster 2 said: no it’s theirs...” (Respondent 5)</p>
Result-orientation	<p>“For the civil servant working on urban development it makes no difference that we have a district plan, because he is judged on realizing his own program. So if he has to build 30 houses, and he built 30 houses, he did a good job. However, it could well be that the 30 houses were quite unnecessary for the area.” (respondent 5)</p> <p>“Yes, that [achieving the policy program] is of course not something [that they are judged upon], you know, that is not part of the result-oriented way of working, which is required here.” (Respondent 7)</p>
Entrepreneurial strategy	<p>“At a certain point you know which colleagues to approach for a fruitful dialogue, and which ones to avoid.” (Respondent 3)</p> <p>“You can try different persons.” (Respondent 4)</p>
Mediating strategy	<p>“They have to get that there is a problem in the neighborhood, and simultaneously I have to get that there are certain policy assignments at stake. In the organization there should also be scored.” (Respondent 3)</p> <p>“I invest in relationships. Whether it is a colleague or inhabitant, I invest in them. I notice that these people... Well, of course I am not always nice, but in general these people are willing to do things for you.” (Respondent 11)</p>
Hierarchical strategy	<p>“Present it to the managers, like, listen, it doesn’t work. Your employees repeatedly say: these are the rules. I want to have these rules adjusted.” (Respondent 6)</p> <p>“Cooperation is hardly possible. This [co-creation process] is so beyond all conventions. In this process I have direct contact with the mayor. Which of course is very weird if you take into account all the managers and advisors. They are non-existent here.” (Respondent 7)</p>



## Chapter 6

# **The Politics of Collaboration: Assessing the Determinants of Performance in Community-Based Nonprofits**

This chapter is submitted as:

Nederhand, M.J. (2019). The Politics of Collaboration: Assessing the Determinants of Performance in Community-Based Nonprofits.





















































## Chapter 7

# **Conclusions and Discussion**

## 7.1 Introducing the conclusions

This study aimed to gain a better understanding of the governance of community self-organization. This is an important goal as the role of community self-organization is increasingly becoming pivotal for upholding modern welfare states. At the same time, governments are struggling with defining and implementing a governance strategy to react to and stimulate this trend of community self-organization. With this study, we want to gain systematic insight into what governance strategies are actually preferred by involved stakeholders and how these strategies affect community-based collectives (as key examples of self-organization). The main conclusions of the research are presented in this final chapter. This concluding chapter comprises four sections. In Section 7.2, we aim to answer the main research questions of this study. Next, in Section 7.3 we present the main conclusions that can be drawn from this study and its contributions to the literature. In Section 7.4, we address the limitations of this study. Finally, in Sections 7.5 and 7.6, recommendations for future research and practice are made.

## 7.2 Answering the research questions

The overall goal of this dissertation was to gain a better understanding of how municipalities should govern community-based collectives to safeguard their performance. In line with this aim, the main research question was formulated as follows:

*How should municipalities govern community-based collectives to safeguard their performance?*

The main research question was divided into three research sub-questions:

1. How do key stakeholders perceive effective governance of community-based collectives by municipalities?
2. What strategies are used by municipalities to govern community-based collectives and to what effect?
3. Under what conditions do community-based collectives perform well?

The five empirical chapters of this dissertation all contributed to answering one or more of these questions. The next section presents the conclusions of each empirical chapter individually. Together, they will provide the answer to the main research question.

### 7.2.1 Talking the walk: perceptions on effective governance (RQ1)

The first research question concerned how key stakeholders perceive effective governance of community-based collectives by municipalities. In Chapter 2, we used a qualitative content analysis of policy letters of the Dutch national government to determine how the governance role of municipalities regarding community-based collectives is perceived (*national level*). Based on the analysis of 37 policy documents published between January 2012 and December 2015, our findings showed that the Dutch national government call for a new public service ethos of municipalities. Next to their more traditional role as service provider, national government wants municipalities to pick up a more activating, supporting and partnering role in order to mobilize and incorporate community resources as an inextricable part of the care system. Regular providers decide where responsibility should shift towards the community, and where not. As maintaining a good level of care remains a government responsibility, municipalities are obliged to intervene when the production efforts of the social network of citizens fail. This study thus shows that although the role of municipalities is changing (e.g. horizontal governance), their firm grip on care provision continues to exist (e.g. vertical governance). The question is whether this dominant political discourse is also present in the perception and interpretation of stakeholders at the municipal and community level. How do policy officials and community-based collectives perceive the ideal governance role of municipalities?

In Chapter 3, we used Q-Methodology to determine how public officials (*municipal level*) and community-based collectives (*community level*) perceive the ideal role of government in processes of self-organization. The Q study shows that there are roughly two types of perceptions on effective governance. The *first type* perceived the ‘ideal’ governance relationship as one of ‘pure’ and somewhat radical self-governance. According to this perception, policy officials should have no direct involvement in collectives and keep their distance. As collectives are dependent upon passion and energy, it is crucial to give them the freedom to set their own rules and steps to follow. Non-interference is key to maintain the collectives’ feeling of ownership. The role of policy officials is to create favorable conditions for community-based collectives by, for instance, connecting relevant parties. This type embraces elements from the relatively light governance modes of Self-Governance and Network Governance. Both public officials and community-based collectives adhere to this type. The *second type* aims for a more direct and interactive relationship between municipalities and community-based collectives. This type acknowledges the potential of an active involvement of policy officials for both

municipalities and community-based collectives. A close partnership can, on the one hand, help collectives in realizing their societal ambitions, while, on the other hand, help municipalities in realizing important policy objectives. Public officials and community-based collectives that adhere to this perception show a preference for a close and hands-on relationship in which public officials have an important role of safeguarding traditional public values, such as reliability, equality and transparency. However, how this more hands-on collaboration exactly takes shape differs among public officials and community-based collectives. Whereas public officials see their involvement in a more connective way, community-based collectives believe that municipalities may and, indeed, should reward their impact. They believe that in this process of rewarding, it should be about more than whom you know and who has a good marketing campaign; rather, it should be about genuine impact and content. This type sees effective governance as an active and hands-on practice in which it is important for governments to stay true to their traditional values.

While the study highlights interesting differences in prevalent perceptions on effective governance, the findings simultaneously show striking similarities in perceptions on ineffective governance. That is, policy officials and community-based collectives strongly disagree with the view that governments should relate to community-based collectives in a traditional, controlling or business-like manner. Collectives, for instance, indicate that they find it not only impossible to measure performance such as social cohesion, self-esteem and well-being, but find it also inappropriate. They conclude that although today's society puts heavy emphasis on business, performance and results, this is not necessarily desirable. It is therefore questionable whether representatives of the 'current power', such as governments, should control collectives. Both groups of stakeholders find that a controlling and result-oriented attitude of government, harms (and possibly destroys) collectives' self-organizing capacity. Additionally, both policy officials and community-based collectives feel that politicians should not play a key role in defining the course of events with regards to community-based collectives. They fear the laborious process when something 'becomes political' and the resulting demoralization on the side of collectives.

To summarize, in this section, we answered the first research question on how effective governance is perceived by key stakeholders at the national, municipal, and community levels. Although stakeholders seem to agree on what ineffective governance consists of (e.g. controlling, performance-related steering), stakeholders seem to disagree to a certain extent on how effective governance should look like. Would community-based collectives profit more from a hands-on or from a hands-

off governance approach, and what case-specific circumstances account for this? These findings highlight the need for more empirical research into how the interplay between municipalities and community-based collectives is organized in practice.

### **7.2.2 Walking the talk: usage of governance strategies (RQ2)**

The second research question dives deeper into the strategies that are used by municipalities to govern community-based collectives. We explored these strategies and their effects in Chapters 4 and 5. In Chapter 4, we conducted a comparative case study of two community-based collectives in Amersfoort and Amsterdam to determine the governance strategies of politicians and public officials that are used to govern community-based collectives and their effects. Based on the analysis of 31 in-depth interviews, our findings showed that public officials and politicians use a complex set of governance strategies that create different shadows of hierarchy. The study identified two versions of this shadow: a fear-based one and a benevolent one, depending on tradition, existing powers, and resource-dependency relationships. The type of shadow cast influences the development of community-based collectives. In the Amersfoort case, we see a strong hierarchical involvement of the municipality through the definition and enforcement of key parameters, rules-of-play and all kinds of requirements. There was a constant threat that the municipality, framed by the initiators and citizens as ‘the opposition party’, would intervene in a top-down way and sell the building that the community-based collective wanted to acquire on the open market if the collective’s plan was not sufficiently strong or if they did not meet the requirements. The imposition of various guidelines and requirements led to a very focused organization. In the Amsterdam case, the community-based collective was included as part of a policy experimentation project, which enabled the municipality to adopt a more flexible attitude. In this case, public officials and politicians tried to create a level playing field in which they made use of supporting and connecting strategies, leading to a more loosely coupled community-based organization. The findings of this study show that although the usage of government strategies differed, in both cases successful community-based collectives emerged. Hence, multiple strategy-paths are associated with the establishment of successful collectives. In both cases, the findings show that boundary-spanning public officials and politicians are of crucial importance to align the different departments of the internal municipal organization with regards to working with community-based collectives.

The study described in Chapter 5 examined boundary spanning strategies that public officials use within the municipal organization to align the heads of the seven-headed

administrative monster. The traditional vertical way of working produces significant barriers to the collaborative horizontal way of working that is required when working with outside stakeholders, such as community-based collectives. As removing barriers is an important element of governing community-based collectives according to the findings in Chapter 4, this study delves deeper into this topic. Based on 16 in-depth interviews with district managers in the municipality of Rotterdam, we found that boundary spanners use three strategies to enable a productive interplay between horizontal and vertical institutional logics (and to prevent and overcome barriers): entrepreneurial, mediation, and hierarchical strategies. The *entrepreneurial strategy* is used to recognize and exploit policy windows for approaching ‘the right’ people. To make this strategy work, boundary spanners have to find the perfect policy-person fit for the specific collaborative issue and frame the issue accordingly. This strategy is, if applied well, perceived to be effective in avoiding problematic clashes. The *mediating strategy* is used to facilitate a shared understanding and to negotiate the conditions of a potential solution. Most boundary spanners however find this strategy to be occasionally effective in avoiding and overcoming clashes, depending on the flexibility and goodwill of the policy officials concerned. The *hierarchical strategy* requires the mobilization of the power of politicians and managers. This more confrontational approach to overcoming barriers is sometimes unavoidable. While threatening with the hierarchical strategy may sometimes be enough to get policy officials moving, at other times, the strategy is developed together with policy officials as managerial or political involvement may help the policy officials to resolve the issue by getting more resources or leeway. Although effective, the boundary spanners indicate that they use this strategy not very often, and almost only when other strategies have failed. This study shows that municipal boundary spanners thus not only use strategies based on trust-building, communication and entrepreneurship (see Williams 2002), but also use strategies that requires the mobilization of the power of politicians and managers (e.g. hierarchy). Working with community-based collectives thus not only requires ‘bending’ and ‘renegotiating’ dominant traditional routines, as is commonly argued, but also requires strategically using these hierarchy-based routines to break through critical vertical barriers.

Considering the findings from Chapters 4 and 5, we can conclude that despite the subjective (Chapter 3) consensus that vertical strategies are not a good fit when it comes to governing community-based collectives, these findings show that involving politicians and using controlling and business-inspired governance strategies need not necessarily be ineffective governance strategies. While these strategies can certainly lead to the demoralization of community-based collectives,

as was suggested in Chapter 3, the strategies can simultaneously motivate initiators of community-based collectives by creating a sense of urgency and stimulating the mobilization against the municipality as their ‘common enemy’ (Chapter 4). Internally, the top-down involvement of politicians is very important for safeguarding the necessary resources and capacity that is needed to deal with community-based collectives. Boundary spanners play into this by using hierarchical strategies when their usual more horizontal strategies have failed (Chapter 4 and 5).

### 7.2.3 Governance and performance: the pivotal role of politics (RQ3)

The third research question considers under which conditions community-based collectives show outstanding and resilient performance. In Chapter 6, we used set-theoretic configurational analysis to develop and test a contingency-based framework of relevant factors to determine the effect of governance on community-based collectives under different contextual conditions. Based on 14 case studies in which we combined qualitative and quantitative data of 54 respondents, our findings showed that the effect of governance is contingent on the political and community network ties of community-based collectives. When community-based collectives have a hands-off collaborative relationship<sup>1</sup> with government in combination with strong political network ties, their *performance is outstanding*. When community-based collectives have a hands-off collaborative relationship with government in combination with strong political network ties and weak community network ties, their *performance is resilient*. Additionally, political network ties are necessary for community-based collectives to perform resilient. It is important to keep in mind, however, that collectives with strong political network ties not automatically achieve performance resilience.

In sum, this study provides evidence that political network ties are a crucial component in explaining the performance of community-based collectives.

<sup>1</sup> Hands-on governance defined as the presence of collaborative activities between public officials and collectives such as frequent contact, shared policy making and a (financial) resource exchange relationship. Hands-off governance defined as the absence of hands-on governance.

## 7.3 Main conclusions

The previous section summarized the answers to our three research sub-questions. Based on these, we will now reflect on our overall findings. The main research question of this study was as follows: How should municipalities govern community-based collectives to safeguard their performance? The answer to how municipalities should govern community-based collectives is not that clear-cut. The empirical findings on some points almost seem somewhat like a paradox. We discern two central tensions or dilemmas that follow from our empirical studies and relate them to the literature.

### 7.3.1 Tensions between perceptions and practice

The potential of involving communities and other societal stakeholders in the production of services is a topic that increasingly attracts scholarly attention (see Sørensen & Triantafillou 2009; Alford 2009; Nederhand & Klijn 2016). Although the ability of communities to govern themselves is a longstanding concern of academic inquiry, Sørensen & Triantafillou (2009) argue that the framing of this concern as being directly related to the ability of government to draw upon and facilitate the potentials of self-organization is more recent. This dissertation (Chapter 2) shows that involving communities is not only framed as inevitable for budgetary and continuity reasons, but also as being a response to a wider process of cultural change. This change implies a diversification of roles for municipalities, namely, not only their traditional role as service providers, but also that of partners, supporters, and activators of local communities. We see a new form of public governance where the state not only gives room, but also actively facilitates the self-governing capacities of communities (see Sørensen and Triantafillou 2009). What governance strategy fits this new context? The empirical findings in this dissertation show an interesting tension between the perceptions on and the practice of governing self-organization.

The dominant *perception* on governing self-organization is that soft governance strategies that focus on connecting, facilitating, and supporting community-based collectives are most effective and appropriate (Chapter 3). These ‘soft’ and ‘processual’ strategies allow governments to stimulate the self-organizing capacity of collectives, while simultaneously keeping an appropriate distance. This distance allows collectives to maintain (their feeling of) managerial autonomy and ownership (Smith and Lipsky 1994). The viewpoint of practitioners resonates perfectly with post-NPM bodies of literature that focus on governing actors in the context of

networks (see Sørensen and Torfing 2007; Klijn and Koppenjan 2016). The argument is that, in this context, traditional and managerial governance strategies have lost their relevance (see Kickert et al. 1997; Osborne 2010), and are even able to destruct the self-organizing capacity of collectives (Korosec and Berman 2006; Brandsen et al. 2017). Similarly, our findings show that both public officials and community-based collectives are strongly convinced that traditional governance techniques based on political involvement, control, and performance measurement should be abandoned (Chapter 3). Practitioners are convinced that governments should interfere as little as possible in the internal business of community-based collectives in order to maintain the collectives' motivation, passion, and energy.

The dominant *practice* of governing self-organization is that hard governance strategies that focus on the rule of law, performance, and accountability are used by municipalities to govern community-based collectives (Chapter 4). Although public officials talk the talk of horizontal governance and networks, in practice they get entangled in all kind of barriers and revert to more familiar traditional strategies (Klijn and Teisman 2003; Termeer 2009). As a move towards self-organization presents a challenge to the norms of elections, transparency and bureaucratic procedure, one of the standard governmental responses is to monitor collectives on certain criteria in order for them to receive governmental support (Baker et al. 2009). Criteria, as for instance, the rule of law and safeguarding values such as equality, legality and fairness (Wilson 1989). To compensate for failures within civil society, municipalities should use policy instruments that regularize collectives that provide services to citizens. The more citizens rely on the service provision of community-based collectives (for instance, when the collective is the sole service provider in a village) the more important it is to protect citizens against the arbitrary exercise of power, exclusion, and personal whims (Bartels 2013; Den Ouden et al. 2018). The same goes for criteria about performance and accountability. Supporting collectives with public resources, such as buildings or subsidies, calls for some sort of institutional accountability mechanisms (see Klijn and Skelcher 2007; Baker et al. 2009). As such, the municipality can provide motivation to the city council on how the spending of public resources, or the bending of municipal rules and regulations could contribute to their policy targets (see Termeer 2009).

In sum, despite the widespread rejection of controlling and performance-related governance strategies by public administration scholars and practitioners, these strategies are still 'alive and kicking' when it comes to the daily practice of governing community-based collectives.

### 7.3.2 Tensions between depoliticization and politicization

The presence of conflicts, resource dependencies and strategic power-games are inherent features of the governance literature (see Klijn and Koppenjan 2016). At the same time, these features seem to be underrepresented in the literature in comparison to such concepts as dialogue, trust, and cooperation (O’Toole and Meier 2004; Huxham and Vangen 2005; Lewis 2010). These horizontal governance concepts are put forward as effective strategies to managing conflicts and differences. Sørensen and Torfing (2016) even go so far as to claim that the dominant scholarly literature on governance treats governance as a post-political managerial process by virtually ignoring the political power dimension to governance. The sharp division between the dominant perception of governance as management and the dominant practice of governance as politics shows the presence of an interesting tension in this area.

The dominant perception of ‘*governance as management*’ is that politicians should play no key role in defining the course of events with regard to community-based collectives. Public officials and collectives find that political interference could harm the autonomy of community-based collectives (Chapter 3). As politicians are involved in a political competitive powerplay for votes, it is difficult to get them involved in a constructive way (see Edelenbos et al. 2017). By acting too much upon the daily worries of their electors, public officials find that political interventions and micro-management can be counterproductive. Moreover, as politicians act within a limited time of office, the continuity of their actions and policies is unpredictable (see Koppenjan et al. 2011; Termeer et al. 2013). The governance of self-organization would therefore benefit from a more rational managerial approach that is characterized by the predictable and regulated allocation of public resources. With this approach, personal connections are subordinate to these more rational considerations.

The dominant practice of ‘*governance as politics*’ is that politicians play pivotal roles in the governance of community-based collectives. Since self-governance challenges existing policies and institutions, it is crucial to have political leaders who do not only support self-governance themselves, but who also manage their networks (including public officials and other governmental levels) to fully share the new approach (Baker et al. 2009; Termeer et al. 2013). As demands of community-based collectives rarely touch upon the competency of only one policy area, public officials crucially need political support and backup to mobilize and redeploy public resources and administrative capacity within the municipal organization (Chapters 4 and 5). Playing by the rules of politicized decision-making within public organizations is useful for public officials to get things done (Perry and Rainey 1988;

Nielsen and Baekgaard 2015). The same goes for community-based collectives. For them, political connections are necessary to perform in a resilient manner (Chapter 6). A strong political network allows collectives to go ‘over the heads’ of public officials to overcome or reverse decisions. In this way, the political network ties could increase the resistance of collectives against severe controlling and performance-related pressures of government. This in turn fosters a more equalized power balance between collectives and public officials, and, hence, a more careful and deliberate approach by public officials.

In sum, although this dissertation empirically shows that involving politicians – the power dimension to governance – is important to safeguard the performance of community-based collectives, their involvement does not lack controversy among public officials and collectives.

## **7.4 Limitations and directions for future research**

This section discusses three limitations that resulted from methodological choices and choices in the research design. Based on these reflections, we point out promising avenues for future research.

### **7.4.1 Case selection and generalizability**

As this study is conducted in the social care domain in the Netherlands, we should be careful in generalizing these findings. While we have been able to gain a better understanding about the governance of self-organization, this knowledge is based on studies conducted in one sector and in one country. We purposefully selected the social care sector because the importance of community-based collectives in this sector is rapidly increasing. Although collectives are often established as a counter reaction to municipal care facilities, they simultaneously rely heavily on municipal help to survive the dense institutional field of social care provision. This relationship, seemingly incongruent but, nevertheless complementary provides an interesting case for studying the effects of municipal governance. It could, however, well be that specific characteristics of our research context influenced the findings. As the social care sector is a relatively soft sector, it may, for instance, be that the strong rejection of monitoring performance and results is context specific. Follow-up research could compare the governance perceptions in this ‘soft’ sector to a ‘harder’ sector, such as the energy sector, where talking about performance measurement may be more natural. Furthermore, the Netherlands is characterized by a governance tradition that tends to proceed according to the tradition of consensus and deliberation. It would

be interesting to see whether the findings also hold in countries with both similar and different governance traditions (compare Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Skelcher et al. 2011). A comparative case study could examine the links in countries with, for instance, a strong centralistic state tradition, such as France, or a strong decentralized state tradition, such as Denmark. Future research should thus study whether the findings also hold for community-based collectives in other policy domains and countries. Furthermore, the results from the casestudies, as reported in Chapter 4 and 5, are based upon research that is conducted in relatively large-sized municipalities. Hence, we should be careful to directly translate these findings to smaller municipalities, as large-sized municipalities typically have a more complex organizational structure than small-sized municipalities. We believe that it would be interesting for future research to examine if and how our findings hold in different sized municipalities.

#### **7.4.2 Measuring performance**

A second limitation concerns the measurement of performance. In this dissertation, we made use of subjective measures to determine the level of performance as we believe that measuring performance is a normative task (see Simon 1976; Kenis and Provan 2009). We combined two different kinds of subjective measures: self-evaluations by collectives and external-evaluations by public officials. Combining these measures may help to overcome the limitations that are associated with each of these measures (see Meier and O'Toole 2013; Wang 2016). On average, collectives and public officials ranked the performance of collectives very much alike. However, with regards to the durability of the performance, collectives were slightly more confident than the public officials were. Although combining these measures is a promising step in improving the sophistication of performance measurement (Torfing et al. 2012), this strategy lacks the evaluation of the most important category of stakeholders: the end-users and target community of the care services. By including the evaluation of community members, an even more accurate picture could be drafted, especially when it comes to rating the question of how important the services are considered by the wider community. We would therefore recommend that future research includes the perception of end-users.

#### **7.4.3 Causal inference**

The third limitation concerns the lack of causal inference. In the design of this dissertation, we explicitly chose qualitative and mixed methods that reflect the complex and contextualized reality of governance, such as Content Analysis, Q-Methodology, and Qualitative Comparative Analysis. For instance, the results stemming from set-theoretic methods, such as QCA, emphasize the existence of

causal complexity. This entails considering that different constellations can produce similar outcomes, and that the same condition can produce different outcomes in different contexts (see Rihoux and Ragin 2009). As a consequence, however, statistically generalizable statements on the effect of governance on performance were not obtained. Instead, this dissertation shows the importance of multiple perspectives on and empirical paths to the effective governance of self-organization. Although exploring classical causal relations as is achieved with using experimental approaches was not an aim of this dissertation, there are other methods to infer causal relations more suited for a context-informed approach that studying governance requires. We believe that a promising avenue for future research is to include a longitudinal approach to studying the governance of self-organization, such as by using process-tracing case studies or time-series QCA studies (George and Bennett 2005; Schneider and Wagemann 2012). These studies would enhance our understanding to the effect of specific configurations of conditions during the collective's lifecycle.

## **7.5 Practical recommendations**

The findings from this dissertation provide several useful insights to inspire public managers, policy-makers, and other practitioners in better understanding of and acting upon the challenges that come with the governance of self-organization (see Table 1). We present our recommendations for practice below. The first two recommendations focus on 'soft' processual aspects to governing self-organization, while the last two recommendations focus on the 'hard' and more institutional aspects.

### **7.5.1 Create awareness of differing governance preferences**

The first set of recommendations relate to the different perceptions that were found between involved practitioners. This dissertation showed that there are roughly two types of governance perceptions. Whereas the first type perceives the 'ideal' governance relationship as one of 'pure' and somewhat radical self-governance, the second type aims for the co-creation of public value and pursues a more direct and interactive relationship between government and community-based collectives. For practitioners, our findings imply that they will be confronted with public officials or collectives who hold different expectations about governance. A mismatch in normative expectations and attitudes on how the relationship between public officials and community-based collectives should be organized and governed might have important consequences for the chances of success of collectives. It is therefore

important that practitioners become aware of their own dominant governance perceptions – and the reasoning behind their preference – and that of others. This awareness contributes to prevent the ‘locking up’ of existing government frames, e.g. groups of practitioners with shared convictions that seal themselves off from those with opposing viewpoints (see Termeer 2009). Organizing meetings on existing governance stereotypes, such as that new ways of governing would be better than ‘old-fashioned’ ways or vice-versa, would help practitioners in reflecting on their own thinking and acting. Getting to know each other’s world is a first, but crucial, step in exploring and finding common ground to designing appropriate governance interventions. This tailor-made approach is especially important since this dissertation shows that, in line with the notion of equifinality, multiple ‘governance paths’ lead to Rome (see Schneider and Wagemann 2012; Thomann et al. 2018). There is no clear, simple clear-cut road to safeguarding the performance of community-based collectives. The dynamics within specific collectives require different configurations of governance strategies, and these strategies might change during the collective’s lifecycle (see Gofen et al. 2014; Edelenbos et al. 2018). This implies that public officials and politicians need to be reflective in determining which path municipalities should choose and at what point in time. The Q-method could be an appropriate tool to facilitate this kind of personal and group reflexivity by mapping out differences and similarities between perceptions.

### **7.5.2 Carefully embrace the political aspect of working collaboratively**

The second set of recommendations relates to the political aspect of governing community-based collectives. As discussed in the empirical chapters of this dissertation, we found that direct or indirect involvement of politicians seems crucial to safeguarding the performance of community-based collectives. Simultaneously, the involvement of politicians is perceived to be somewhat contentious by public officials and collectives. Specifically, public officials and collectives find the importance of personal connections and electoral consideration not always desirable for the governance of self-organization. With these legitimate concerns in mind, we think it is important to carefully embrace the political aspect of working with community-based collectives (see Koppenjan et al. 2009). This implies that we would recommend public officials and community-based collectives to generate political support for the collective by actively informing and involving politicians. If collectives are to be playing a pivotal role in local service provision, it is important to involve politicians in seeking custom-made solutions in which conflicts between values, such as between equality and responsiveness, are resolved. Politicians can – together with public officials and collectives – play pivotal roles in determining the appropriate conditions under which public resources such as buildings, financial

support, and administrative capacity are exchanged for some sort of administrative checks. By keeping politicians close, public officials and collectives reduce the chance of being confronted by disturbing interventions by politicians later on in the process claiming that they were not informed and/or did not have a say in the conditions under which public support was granted.

### **7.5.3 Redesign traditional and performance related policy instruments**

The third recommendation relates to our finding that we could distinguish multiple dimensions within more traditional governance perspectives<sup>2</sup>: a value dimension and a policy instrument dimension. Although practitioners seem to strongly support the underlying (public) values and principles such as preventing exclusion of groups, they are much more critical about the form in which these are sometimes pursued: top-down and performance-based. In this regard, we would recommend developing a tailor-made governance approach that mixes values of the more traditional perspectives with instruments from the more novel and horizontal perspectives (see also Schulz 2017). This could be done, for instance, by jointly determining the form and content of performance indicators with collectives. In this way, the management of objectives is combined with mutual learning processes rather than with the more ‘associations of punishment’ that are traditionally connected to performance measurement. Creating proper evaluative criteria for collectives to evaluate their performance can help to convince policy makers to provide room in existing policies (see Termeer 2009; Sørensen and Triantafillou 2009). Dichotomous notions of governance, such as ‘market versus state’ or ‘hierarchical versus collaborative’, should thus be replaced by a more flexible approach (see Howelett 2014). Furthermore, organizing room for self-organization within existing institutions also requires practitioners to use existing rules and routines to foster change. Therefore, in order to follow-up on this recommendation, it is important to not only redesign governance interventions and instruments towards collectives, but to also, at the more fundamental level, adjust internal instruments such as the internal incentive and appraisal system for public officials. For instance, by allowing flexibility in the content and process of the performance targets of public officials, or by explicitly including targets on contact with citizens.

<sup>2</sup> TPA and NPM (see Chapter 3)

### 7.5.4 Appoint public officials as boundary spanners

A final set of recommendations relates to the crucial role of municipal boundary spanners in managing the interaction process between community-based collectives and municipalities. More specifically, the findings from this dissertation highlight the importance of boundary spanners in preventing and overcoming deadlocks in the contact between public officials and collectives, and in building trustful relationships. This is extremely important as the municipality is a ‘seven-headed monster’ in which the various departments have different, sometimes conflicting, interests with regards to collectives. The fragmented structure of governments (each resource has its own organizations and regulations) makes it difficult for collectives, that typically address various resources, to dig through the layers of existing systems (Ostrom 2005; Termeer et al. 2013). Based on our findings, we would recommend that municipalities invest in appointing boundary spanners who act as fixed contact persons within the administrative organization for collectives. These contact persons could make sure that collectives will not get lost within the administrative bureaucracy and could play a significant role in smoothening and monitoring the progress of the contact between collectives and public officials (see also Williams 2002; Van Meerkerk and Edelenbos 2018).

Table 1. Recommendations for practice

Finding	Significance for public organizations	Practical examples on how to address this issue
Different perceptions on how municipalities should govern community-based collectives: hands-off versus hands-on (Chapters 2, 3)	Awareness about governance preferences of public officials and collectives serve to enable the dialogue about expectations and necessities between practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect individually on dominant governance preference and the reasons behind it</li> <li>• Organize meetings to discuss governance statements and preferences with involved practitioners as a management exercise</li> </ul>
The direct or indirect involvement of politicians is crucial to safeguarding the performance of community-based collectives (Chapters 4, 6)	Politicians play a role in the authoritative resolution of conflicts between different values (and therefore the allocation of public resources). Increase their knowledge and involvement with collectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve politicians in the governance of self-organization</li> <li>• Formulate clear agreements on how to safeguard the autonomy of collectives in this process</li> </ul>

<p>Rejection of controlling and performance-oriented governance strategies while, generally, they are still needed and used in practice (Chapters 3, 5)</p>	<p>There is a need to develop tailor-made governance strategies in which traditional and horizontal elements and values are recombined</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a tailor-made governance approach in co-creation with collectives that mixes elements from traditional and novel governance approaches</li> <li>• Adjust the internal incentive and appraisal systems for public officials to allow for flexibility in collaborative working</li> </ul>
<p>Public officials who act as boundary spanners are crucial to fostering trustful and collaborative relationships between collectives and municipalities (Chapters 4, 5)</p>	<p>Prevent and overcome deadlocks in the contact between collectives and municipalities by using entrepreneurial, mediating and hierarchical boundary spanning strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint fixed contact persons within the municipality</li> <li>• These contact persons streamline and monitor the progress of the contact between collective and municipality</li> </ul>

## 7.6 Closing remarks

This dissertation has focused on the governance of self-organization: a topic that has increasingly received political and societal attention for its important role in safeguarding the development and performance of community-based collectives in today’s highly institutionalized and regularized society. Our research has provided several new insights into governance strategies and the corresponding challenges and tensions to which practitioners should relate. We hope that our findings and recommendations will provide useful assistance to practitioners in dealing with community-based collectives in their daily practice.



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## **Samenvatting (summary in Dutch)**

## **Het sturen van zelforganisatie**

Een analyse van de sturingsrelatie tussen gemeenten en burgercollectieven

### **Introductie en onderzoeksvragen**

In Nederland heeft de groei van de verzorgingsstaat haar grenzen bereikt. Doordat het aantal oude mensen in rap tempo toeneemt ten opzichte van het aantal jonge mensen, staat het aanbieden van betaalbare en effectieve zorg en ondersteuning onder druk. Het benutten van de eigen kracht van mensen en hun netwerken wordt daarom steeds belangrijker. We zien dan ook een forse toename van burgercollectieven als wijkondernemingen en zorg coöperaties die lokale welzijnsdiensten aanbieden. Het aanbod loopt uiteen van het organiseren van sociale activiteiten tot het aanbieden van zorgwoningen. Alhoewel overheden doordrongen zijn van het belang van dit soort collectieven, laat onderzoek zien dat politici en ambtenaren worstelen met hoe ze met deze ontwikkeling om moeten gaan. Wat is precies hun rol, en wat voor soort sturingsstrategie is passend bij deze rol? De vraag hoe gemeenten zich zouden moeten verhouden tot dit soort burgercollectieven staat in dit proefschrift centraal.

Een centraal concept binnen dit proefschrift is sturing. Sturing kunnen we omschrijven als de strategische en reflexieve poging van politici en ambtenaren om maatschappelijke ontwikkelingen en uitkomsten te beïnvloeden, teneinde bepaalde publieke doelen te bereiken. In dit proefschrift staan vier theoretische sturingsmodellen centraal: (1) traditionele sturing, waarin gebruik wordt gemaakt van regels en procedures; (2) prestatie sturing, waarin gebruik wordt gemaakt van performancemeting en bedrijfstechnieken, (3) netwerk sturing, waarin gebruik wordt gemaakt van netwerkmanagement en procesregels, (4) responsieve sturing, waarin gebruik wordt gemaakt van faciliterende instrumenten als kleine subsidies en het weghalen van barrières.

De doelstelling van dit proefschrift is drieledig. Ten eerste in kaart brengen hoe de ideale sturingsstrategie van gemeenten gepercipieerd wordt door de nationale overheid, gemeenteambtenaren en burgercollectieven zelf. Ten tweede in kaart brengen welke sturing strategieën gemeenten daadwerkelijk gebruiken, en met welk gevolg. Ten derde, in kaart brengen onder welke condities burgercollectieven goed presteren (als in het aanbieden van effectieve, kwalitatieve, legitieme en veerkrachtige diensten). We bestuderen hier of en hoe de effecten van sturing afhangen van het sociale netwerk van burgercollectieven.

De studie bestaat uit vijf empirische hoofdstukken die gezamenlijk antwoord geven op de hoofdvraag: hoe moeten gemeenten burgercollectieven aansturen om hun prestatie te waarborgen? Deze vraag is opgedeeld in drie deelvragen:

1. Hoe percipiëren belanghebbenden effectieve gemeentelijke sturing van burgercollectieven?
2. Welke sturing strategieën gebruikt de gemeente om burgercollectieven te sturen, en met welk effect?
3. Onder welke condities presteren burgercollectieven goed?

## **Resultaten**

### *Studie 1: Inhoudsanalyse van beleidsdocumenten Rijksoverheid*

Het eerste empirische hoofdstuk van dit proefschrift (hoofdstuk 2) richt zich op hoe de Rijksoverheid effectieve gemeentelijke sturing van burgercollectieven percipieert. Welke rol zien zij voor gemeenten? Hiervoor is gebruik gemaakt van een inhoudsanalyse van 37 beleidsdocumenten over zorg en welzijn die gepubliceerd zijn tussen januari 2012 en december 2015. Uit deze studie blijkt dat de rol van gemeenten drastisch verandert. Naast de meer traditionele rol als aanbieder van diensten, moet de gemeente een activerende, ondersteunende en partner rol gaan vervullen om het netwerk van zorgbehoevenden te mobiliseren en te betrekken in het zorgproces. Aangezien de gemeente verantwoordelijk blijft voor de kwantiteit en kwaliteit van de zorg, ziet de Rijksoverheid een blijvende rol voor gemeenten om te bepalen waar de verantwoordelijkheid moet worden verschoven naar burgers en waar niet. Ondanks de nieuwe rol, blijft de gemeente dus sterk in de lead. Deze bevinding toont dus aan dat ondanks, of juist door, flinke bezuinigingen, er een belangrijke sturende rol voor de gemeente weggelegd blijft volgens de Rijksoverheid.

### *Studie 2: Q-Methodology studie naar percepties van ambtenaren en collectieven*

In het tweede empirische hoofdstuk (hoofdstuk 3) hebben we onderzocht hoe gemeenteambtenaren en burgercollectieven de ideale sturingsrol van gemeenten percipiëren. De onderzoeksmethode Q-Methodologie stelt ons in staat om de percepties van 40 beleidsambtenaren en 40 burgercollectieven op het gebied van zorg en welzijn op een systematische wijze in kaart te brengen en onderling te vergelijken. Deze studie laat zien dat er grofweg twee typen opvattingen te onderscheiden zijn. Het *eerste type* ziet geen directe rol weggelegd voor ambtenaren. Het is beter als ze afstand houden tot burgercollectieven om hen de vrijheid te geven hun eigen koers uit te stippelen. Op deze manier komt het eigenaarschap en de bijbehorende passie en energie van initiatiefnemers en vrijwilligers het beste tot zijn

recht. Ambtenaren zouden gebruik moeten maken van responsieve sturing met elementen van netwerk sturing. Zowel ambtenaren als burgercollectieven maken onderdeel uit van dit type. Het *tweede type* ziet een meer directe en interactieve rol weggelegd voor ambtenaren. Dit type ziet de potentie van een partnerschap tussen collectieven en ambtenaren. Enerzijds kan het contact collectieven helpen om hun ambities op te schalen en verwezenlijken, anderzijds kan het ambtenaren helpen om belangrijke beleidsdoelen te behalen. In het contact is het belangrijk dat traditionele waarden als betrouwbaarheid, gelijkheid en transparantie centraal staan (traditionele sturing). Alhoewel zowel ambtenaren als burgercollectieven onderdeel uitmaken van dit type, verschilt hun precieze focus. Waar ambtenaren hun betrokkenheid meer zien in het verbinden van partijen (netwerk sturing), zien collectieven de betrokkenheid van ambtenaren meer zakelijk als in het belonen van de impact van hun inspanningen (prestatie sturing).

Waar deze studie interessante verschillen laat zien in de gewenste sturingsvorm van gemeenten, laat het ook tegelijkertijd opvallende overeenkomsten zien als het gaat om het identificeren van ongewenste sturingsvormen. Volgens ambtenaren en burgercollectieven is het sturen van burgercollectieven op een controlerende en resultaatgerichte manier ongewenst omdat dit soort traditionele en prestatiegerichte sturing het zelforganiserende vermogen van collectieven aantast, of zelfs vernietigt. Ook voor politici moet geen bepalende rol weggelegd zijn.

Na de verkenning van de sturings*percepties*, richten de hoofdstukken 4, 5 en 6 zich op het in kaart brengen van de daadwerkelijke sturings*praktijk* door middel van casestudies.

### *Studie 3: Vergelijkende casestudy naar gemeentelijke sturing strategieën*

In hoofdstuk 4 hebben we onderzocht welke sturing strategieën wethouders en gemeenteambtenaren van de gemeente Amsterdam en Amersfoort gebruiken in hun contact met de burgercollectieven ‘De Meevaart’ en ‘Het Klokhuis’, en welk effect deze strategieën hebben. Deze studie toont op basis van 31 interviews aan dat sturing strategieën verschillende schaduwen van hiërarchie kunnen werpen over burgercollectieven: een bedreigende en een welwillende schaduw. Deze schaduwen, die ingegeven zijn door traditie, macht- en afhankelijkheidsrelaties, beïnvloeden de ontwikkeling van de collectieven. Waar een sterk hiërarchische betrokkenheid van de gemeente Amersfoort door middel van afvinklijsten en regels leidde tot een sterk gefocust burgercollectief, leidde een meer verbindende en responsieve betrokkenheid van de gemeente Amsterdam tot een los georganiseerd burgercollectief. Een belangrijke conclusie op basis van deze studie is dat ondanks

het verschil in gebruikte sturing strategieën, in beide gevallen succesvolle burgercollectieven ontstonden. Dit betekent dat er niet één maar meerdere ‘sturingswegen’ naar Rome leiden. Wat de twee casussen gemeen hadden was de betrokkenheid van wethouders en ambtenaren als bruggenbouwers om de verschillende interne gemeentelijke belangen te overbruggen en verbinden.

*Studie 4: Casestudy naar ervaringen van gemeentelijke bruggenbouwers*

In hoofdstuk 5 zijn we dieper ingegaan op de rol van deze bruggenbouwers. Van welke strategieën maken ze gebruik om de gezichten binnen de gemeentelijke organisatie dezelfde kant op te krijgen ten aanzien van verzoeken van bijvoorbeeld burgercollectieven? Deze studie laat op basis van interviews met 16 wijkmanagers binnen de gemeente Rotterdam zien dat er drie zogenaamde boundary-spanning strategieën gebruikt worden: een ondernemende, mediërende en hiërarchische strategie. De *ondernemende strategie* wordt gebruikt om binnen de gemeente de juiste aansluiting te vinden qua beleidsdossier en qua persoon die burgercollectieven verder kan brengen. Deze strategie wordt gezien als effectief in het vermijden van potentiële barrières. De *mediërende strategie* wordt gebruikt om door middel van praten en onderhandelen het voorliggende issue verder te brengen. Deze strategie wordt niet alleen gezien als effectief om barrières te voorkomen, maar ook om barrières te beslechten. Mits de gesprekspartners dan een constructieve houding aannemen. De *hiërarchische strategie* wordt gebruikt om de machtsbronnen van wethouders en managers te mobiliseren. Hoewel het soms volstaat om met deze strategie te dreigen bij ambtenaren om ze in beweging te krijgen, wordt deze strategie soms ook juist samen met ambtenaren ontwikkelt om meer bronnen of ruimte vrij te kunnen spelen. Deze strategie is effectief, maar wordt vaak enkel als laatste redmiddel ingezet. Een belangrijke conclusie van deze studie is dus dat bruggenbouwen niet enkel een kwestie is van verbinden, communiceren en vertrouwen, maar ook draait om het mobiliseren van macht (e.g. hiërarchie).

*Studie 5: QCA-studie naar excellente en duurzame prestatie van burgercollectieven*

In hoofdstuk 6 wordt onderzocht onder welke condities burgercollectieven excellent en duurzaam presteren. Om dit te onderzoeken hebben we 14 casestudies uitgevoerd naar burgercollectieven in verschillende gemeenten: kleine, middelkleine, middelgrote en grote gemeenten. De kwantitatieve survey- en kwalitatieve interviewdata van 54 respondenten, verspreid over de 14 cases, hebben we vervolgens gecombineerd en systematisch met elkaar vergeleken door gebruik te maken van de QCA-methode. Deze studie zien dat het effect van sturing afhangt van het politieke en maatschappelijke netwerk van burgercollectieven. Als burgercollectieven geen intensieve samenwerkingsrelatie met de gemeente hebben,

maar wel een sterk politiek netwerk – presteren ze excellent. Als burgercollectieven geen intensieve samenwerkingsrelatie met de gemeente hebben, maar wel een sterk politiek netwerk en een zwak maatschappelijk netwerk – presteren ze duurzaam. Bovendien laten de resultaten zien dat het hebben van een sterk politiek netwerk zelfs noodzakelijk is om duurzaam te presteren. Dit betekent echter niet dat elk collectief met een politiek netwerk automatisch duurzaam presteert. De resultaten van deze studie laten kortom zien dat het hebben van een politiek netwerk zeer belangrijk lijkt voor het verklaren van de prestatie van burgercollectieven.

## **Conclusies**

Het antwoord op de hoofdvraag ‘*Hoe moeten gemeenten burgercollectieven aansturen om hun prestatie te waarborgen?*’ is niet eenduidig te beantwoorden. De empirische bevindingen uit de verschillende hoofdstukken uit dit proefschrift laten twee centrale spanningen zien omtrent de sturing van burgercollectieven.

### 1. Spanningen omtrent effectieve sturing

De eerste spanning die wordt geconstateerd in dit proefschrift is de spanning tussen de gewenste sturing en de sturing zoals deze in de praktijk voorkomt. Dit proefschrift laat zien dat de voorkeur over het algemeen wordt gegeven door ambtenaren en collectieven aan ‘zachte’ en ‘procesmatige’ strategieën. Deze strategieën stellen gemeenten in staat om van een gepaste afstand het zelforganiserend vermogen van collectieven te bevorderen. Het is zaak dat de gemeente zich zo min mogelijk bemoeit met de collectieven om zo de motivatie, passie en energie van initiatiefnemers en vrijwilligers veilig te stellen. Ondanks dat ‘harde’ controlerende en prestatie gerelateerde strategieën door zowel wetenschappers als practitioners worden gezien als niet passend in de context van zelforganisatie, zijn ze nog steeds *alive and kicking* in de dagelijkse praktijk. Traditionele instrumenten worden door gemeenten bijvoorbeeld gebruikt om te monitoren hoe het uitgeven van publieke middelen bijdraagt aan het behalen van beleidsdoelen of om burgers die afhankelijk zijn van de diensten van collectieven te beschermen tegen uitsluiting, het arbitrair uitoefenen van macht en persoonlijke grillen.

### 2. Spanningen omtrent de rol van politici

De tweede belangrijke spanning die dit proefschrift constateert is de spanning tussen het wel of niet betrekken van politici bij het sturen van burgercollectieven. De onderzoeksresultaten laten zien dat politici een belangrijke rol spelen in het sturen van burgercollectieven. Zo is politieke steun vaak nodig om publieke middelen en capaciteit vrij te maken om de collectieven op weg te helpen. Verder lijken politieke connecties cruciaal voor collectieven om de duurzaamheid van hun prestatie te

garanderen. Collectieven met een sterk politiek netwerk kunnen beter weerstand bieden tegen controle- en prestatiedruk vanuit de gemeente. Door de korte politieke lijnen behandelen ambtenaren de collectieven voorzichtig: de machtsverhoudingen liggen in dit geval gelijk. Ondanks de cruciale rol die politici kunnen spelen, vinden betrokken ambtenaren en collectieven een sterke politieke betrokkenheid bij de koers van collectieven ongewenst. Volgens hen zou sturing minder moeten draaien om persoonlijke connecties en de ‘politieke waan van de dag’ maar meer om stabiele en rationele afwegingen.

### **Aanbevelingen voor toekomstig onderzoek en de praktijk**

Deze studie is een van de eerste waarin gemeentelijke sturing verbonden wordt aan de prestatie van burgercollectieven. We hebben deze relatie specifiek getest in de sector zorg en welzijn. Een eerste aanbeveling voor vervolgonderzoek is dan ook om dit onderzoek te herhalen in andere sectoren, zoals de energiesector waar het praten over prestatiemeting wellicht meer standaard bevonden wordt. Een andere aanbeveling gaat om het meten van prestatie. In dit proefschrift hebben we de prestatie gemeten door gebruik te maken van zelfevaluatiescores van collectieven en ambtenaren. Vervolgonderzoek zou er goed aan doen ook de evaluatie van burgers als gebruikers van de diensten mee te nemen. Ten slotte wordt onderzoekers aangeraden om gebruik te maken van een longitudinaal onderzoeksdesign. Dit maakt het mogelijk om de gewenste en effectieve sturing te koppelen aan de levensfase waarin collectieven zich bevinden. Op deze manier kunnen de aanbevelingen gaan gemeenten een nog gericht karakter krijgen.

Op basis van dit proefschrift kunnen een viertal aanbevelingen voor de praktijk geformuleerd worden. De eerste twee aanbevelingen focussen op ‘zachte’ procesmatige aspecten van het sturen van zelforgansatie, terwijl de laatste twee aanbevelingen voornamelijk focussen op de wat meer ‘harde’ institutionele aspecten. Een eerste aanbeveling is om bewustzijn te creëren op het gebied van de persoonlijke en gezamenlijk sturingsvoorkeuren. Door deze voorkeuren met elkaar te delen en daarop te reflecteren wordt een gezamenlijk leerproces opgestart. Door elkaars werelden en motivaties te leren kennen wordt het gemakkelijker om gezamenlijke acties te benoemen en ontwikkelen. De tweede aanbeveling omhelst de rol van politici in de sturing van burgercollectieven. Het ondersteunen van collectieven is een politieke aangelegenheid waarin conflicten tussen verschillende waarden en rolopvattingen beslecht dienen te worden, e.g. op het gebied van de rechtmatige overheid, de prestatiegerichte overheid, de samenwerkende overheid en de responsieve overheid (zie Van der Steen et al. 2016). Door de betrokkenheid van politici gedurende het proces vast te leggen is de kans op onverwachte interventies

doordat sommige waarden ondergesneeuwd zijn in het proces kleiner. Belangrijk is hierbij wel om heldere afspraken te maken over tot hoever de betrokkenheid van politici binnen collectieven reikt om de autonomie van collectieven te beschermen. Een derde aanbeveling richt zich op het herontwerpen van het traditionele sturingsinstrumentarium van de gemeente. Zo kan sturing op belangrijke waarden als effectiviteit en gelijkheid die vaak plaatsvindt met behulp van een eenzijdige top-down instrumentarium, juist op een meer collaboratieve en horizontale manier worden ontwikkeld en ingezet. De laatste aanbeveling is om gemeentelijke bruggenbouwers aan te wijzen die als vast contactpunt fungeren voor collectieven. Deze bruggenbouwers helpen ambtenaren en collectieven met het stroomlijnen en monitoren van het onderlinge contact. Ze spelen een belangrijke rol in het verbinden van en het maken van een vertaalslag tussen de leefwereld en de systeemwereld. Een overzicht van deze aanbevelingen is te vinden in Tabel 1.

Tabel 1. Aanbevelingen voor de praktijk

Hoofdbevinding	Significantie	Praktische voorbeelden hoe de bevinding te gebruiken
Twee dominante percepties op hoe gemeenten burgerinitiatieven zouden moeten sturen, meer op afstand versus meer betrokken (Hoofdstuk 2, 3)	Bewustwording over sturingsvoorkeuren van ambtenaren en collectieven vergemakkelijkt de dialoog over onderlinge verwachtingen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflecteer individueel op de dominante sturingsvoorkeur</li> <li>• Organiseer bijeenkomsten om sturingsvoorkeuren te bespreken als managementoefening</li> </ul>
De directe of indirecte betrokkenheid van politici lijkt cruciaal om de prestatie van burgercollectieven veilig te stellen (Hoofdstuk 4, 6)	Bij het gezaghebbend beslechten van conflicten tussen verschillende waarden (en dus de toekenning van publieke middelen) spelen politici een rol. Vergroot hun kennis en betrokkenheid bij collectieven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Betrek politici bij de sturing van zelforganisatie</li> <li>• Maak heldere afspraken over de betrokkenheid en tot hoever deze reikt om de autonomie van collectieven te beschermen</li> </ul>
Traditionele sturing strategieën als controlerende en prestatiegerichte sturing worden afgewezen, terwijl ze in de praktijk nog gebruikt worden en relevant zijn (Hoofdstuk 3, 5)	Herontwerp het traditionele sturingsinstrumentarium. Zo kan sturing op belangrijke waarden als effectiviteit en gelijkheid die vaak plaatsvindt met eenzijdige top-down instrumenten, juist op een meer collaboratieve en horizontale manier worden ontwikkeld en ingezet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ontwikkel een op maat gemaakte sturingsstrategie in co-creatie met collectieven in welke elementen van traditionele en horizontale modes gecombineerd worden</li> <li>• Pas het interne beoordelingssysteem van ambtenaren aan zodat ze flexibeler zijn in het samenwerken</li> </ul>
Gemeentelijke bruggenbouwers zijn cruciaal om het contact tussen gemeente en collectieven vlot te laten verlopen (Hoofdstuk 4, 5)	Voorkom en overwin barrières in het contact tussen collectieven en gemeente door gebruik te maken van ondernemende, mediërende en hiërarchische boundary-spanning strategieën	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stel bruggenbouwers aan binnen de gemeente</li> <li>• Deze bruggenbouwers helpen collectieven en ambtenaren met het stroomlijnen en monitoren van het onderlinge contact</li> </ul>



## **About the author**

## Curriculum Vitae

José Nederhand studied Public Administration at Erasmus University Rotterdam (Masters level, *cum laude*). Following this, she was awarded the EUR Excellence Scholarship enabling her to follow the Research Master's program in Sociology of Culture, Media and the Arts (Research Master, MSc). After graduating, José worked in the EU FP7 LIPSE project on Public Sector Innovation in which she contributed to the development of the Social Innovation Game. In 2015, she started working as a PhD-researcher at Erasmus University and the Netherlands School of Public Administration (*Nederlandse School voor Openbaar Bestuur*) as part of the NWO Smart Governance Project.

During her PhD, José presented her work at various international and national conferences, acted as a reviewer of academic journals and taught and developed several courses for students. She obtained her BKO-teaching certificate and completed the Training Program of the Netherlands Institute of Government, including a methodological winter school in Bamberg. She was awarded the prestigious Prof. H.W. Lambersprize from Erasmus University Rotterdam and the Osborne Best Paper Award from the International Research Society for Public Management in Hong Kong. She has been invited as a speaker at academic and public events, chaired several practitioner-oriented workshops and co-edited the magazine for practitioners 'Initiatief' of the RePolis Research Program. Next to her academic work, José represented the interests of PhD's within the PhD Council and Program Board of the Erasmus Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities and contributed to the development of the Erasmus University's 2024 Strategy as a member of the Strategic Design Lab for Excellent Research.

Currently, José is working as an Assistant Professor in Public Administration at the Erasmus University and as a Program Coordinator for the interdisciplinary Erasmus Research Initiative 'Vital Cities and Citizens'. Her work has been published in international refereed journals, such as *Public Management Review*, *Policy Sciences and Administration & Society*. She has also published several book chapters with renowned publishers such as Routledge and Palgrave Macmillan.

## Publications

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This dissertation focuses on the governance of self-organization - a topic that has increasingly received political and societal attention for its important role in upholding affordable and effective community services. Although the importance of community-based collectives, as a form of self-organization, has been widely acknowledged by governments, research has shown that many collectives in reality function with difficulty.

To date, there has been a lack of systematic insight into preferred and effective governance strategies of municipalities to support community-based collectives. This lack of knowledge is problematic as governance efforts are essential to safeguard the development and performance of community-based collectives in today's highly institutionalized and regularized society. In response to this gap, this dissertation uses a mixed-methods design to investigate the dynamics surrounding the governance of self-organization in the Dutch welfare sector by combining governance and institutional theory with detailed empirical analysis.

The conclusions of this dissertation point to a new form of public governance where the government not only gives space, but also actively facilitates the self-governing capacities of community-based collectives. This dissertation demonstrates that despite dominant academic and practitioner's preferences, the governance of self-organization not only involves 'soft' processual strategies, but also requires 'hard' institutional governance strategies to safeguard the performance of community-based collectives. As such, this dissertation opens the way for a better understanding of the governance of self-organization, by demonstrating the importance of hierarchy, power, and politics.