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The Art of Creating Consistency: Planning Strategies in the Age of Active Citizenship

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Abstract

This paper addresses the emerging practice of civic initiatives in urban development, and the struggles professional planners and governments face in finding adequate strategies in dealing with this form of 'active citizenship' – strategies that reach beyond the inclusionary and disciplinary confines of participatory planning approaches. Based on empirical studies of 14 civic initiatives in Denmark, the Netherlands and England, and a theoretical hybrid of complexity theory (self-organization), actor-network theory (translation) assemblage theory (individuation), and recently developed post-structuralist planning theories, this paper argues towards a planning strategy that *does* fit the age of active citizenship. The paper argues that planners should no longer focus on organizing involvement in formal planning processes or setting up frameworks to counter fragmentation. Instead, planners should focus on *creating consistency* between a redundancy of spatial interventions and planning strategies that evolve from active citizenship. Creating consistency is based on three lines of thought: the need for conditions that do not constrain, but rather *open up* possibility spaces, the need for a facilitating planner who does not mediate but rather *navigates* between planning initiatives, and most importantly, a *flat ontology* of planning strategy. This flat ontology states that there is no a priori or ontological difference between the intentions and performed behavior of planning actors (including civic initiatives). By opening the spectrum for many others, navigating between these emerging others, and being able to empathize with the behaviors and strategies of these many others, potentials for consistency can be recognized and acted upon.

1. The Challenge of Civic Initiatives in Spatial Planning

Civic initiatives in spatial development are on the rise. Whereas for a long time civic initiatives were seen as just a fringe movement, perhaps enlivening space but mostly in the way of planned urban development, they now emerge as valuable strategies for urban development in their own right. The spatial planning community brooding over a new planning practice, the *Vogue* identified "initiatives based on the strength of community" as a major upcoming trend (Vogue NL, 2012: 192), and governments speak eagerly of "active citizenship" and "participatory society." These terms made their first entry in Dutch governmental policy during the late 1990s, addressing citizens who were involved in civic initiatives in their neighborhoods and in public policymaking (Hurenkamp & Tonkens, 2011; Hurenkamp et al., 2011; ROB, 2012), and from that moment, political and policy attention for civil society and civic initiatives only increased (Dekker et al., 2007; Van de Wijdeven et al., 2013; Veldheer et al., 2012; VROM Raad, 2004; WRR, 2005; 2010). Nowadays, Dutch national government and advisory boards speak of "a Do-Democracy," "active citizenship," "a vital society," "participatory society," "civic strength," "self-strength," "the energetic society," "self-reliance" and "shared-reliance," "self-guidance," "self-organizing capacities," "do-it-yourself" and "do-it-together society," "civic initiatives," "participatory governments," and so on (BZK 2013, ROB 2012, WRR 2012). All these terms, in one way or another, address civil society: the sum of voluntary organizations and associations, initiatives, movements, and networks in a social space, with a primary focus on specific partnership interests and social struggle for hegemony, characterized by non-violence, discourse, self-organization, and a recognition of plurality ((Gosewinkel & Kocka, 2006; Swyngedouw, 2005).

The Dutch government and Dutch policymakers are not alone in paying attention to civil society. Under the influence of the depreciated dichotomy between state and market, "Third Way" thinking and the European breakup of welfare states (Giddens, 1998; Hirst & Bader, 2001), interest in civil society has increased in recent years in a number of western European countries, for example, Ireland, Sweden (Powell, 2013), Germany (Keane, 2006), Denmark (Lund & Meyer, 2011), and of course the United Kingdom with their "Big Society." (Cameron & Clegg, 2010; Blond, 2010) Even the European Union is showing an increased interest in civil society (Curtin, 2003), using the term "social innovation" to address civic initiatives that try to solve societal challenges that state and market actors are unable to address (European Commission, 2013; Moulaert et al., 2013). The concern for active citizenship exists in a number of domains, domains in which national governments traditionally held strong positions, including spatial development (Veldheer et al., 2012; Ossenwaarde, 2006; Van de Wijdeven et al., 2013; Van der Heijden et al., 2011). It is hoped that, by decentralizing state powers to a more local and individual level (Van de Wijdeven & Hendriks, 2010; Van de Wijdeven, 2012), and creating a society in which government is supportive toward personal responsibility, self-reliance, self-motivation, and voluntary work (MinAZ, 2007; Dekker et al., 2007; RMO, 2013), citizens will be stimulated to take not only personal responsibility, but also responsibility in these domains and for the common good in general (Van de Wijdeven et al., 2013; Veldheer et al., 2012; Ossenwaarde, 2006; Van der Heijden et al., 2011). Active citizenship implies that individual citizens participate in public policy processes through "citizen involvement" and that they promote and participate in "civic initiatives." Civic initiatives are issue-oriented projects that have an assignable social and geographical origin, often in loose and informal structures, serving a

specific community interest that can change while the project expands socially and geographically (Gosewinkel & Kocka, 2006; Van Meerkerk, 2014). Civil initiatives differ from initiatives in the private sphere (individuals), public sphere (governmental initiatives with a primary focus on representational vote-winning), and business sphere (with a primary focus on profit-making) (Gosewinkel & Kocka, 2006; Swyngedouw, 2005; Boelens, 2009). Civic initiatives are, however, not limited to residents, but can also be undertaken by entrepreneurs, artists, etc., as long at the initiative pursues a community purpose and not a direct business purpose.

However, until now, planners have been mainly focused on strategies for citizen involvement through participatory planning, a planning strategy that has developed profoundly over recent decades. However, participatory planning addresses only one side of "active citizenship," and moreover, constrains citizens with an inclusionary and disciplinary tendency. In citizen involvement through participatory planning, citizens can exert influence on goals set by governmental agencies, through procedures and frameworks that are set by the same governments and planners, resulting in disciplinary processes of thematic, procedural, and geographical inclusion. A strange situation thus arises: Although the legitimacy of unilateral government actions in planning has decreased and governments seek citizen involvement and shared responsibility, governments hold on to instruments that keep them in central and disciplinary positions (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011). As such, participatory planning has a hard time dealing with and benefiting from initiatives that emerge from civil society spontaneously, as these are often too complex, unpredictable, dynamic, and multiplicit to fit within the constraints of participatory planning. Even though planning strategies that propose to move as close as possible to citizens' life world (Hillier & Van Wezemael, 2012), to provide frameworks delineating the freedom in which civic initiatives can create their projects (Hajer, 2011; Urhahn Urban Design, 2010; Uitermark, 2012; Rauws et al., 2014), or enable civic initiatives through governmental budgets (Tonkens & Kroese, 2009; Tonkens & Verhoeven, 2011; Lerner & Secondo, 2012; Allegretti & Herzberg, 2004), all seem to be in line with the ideas of active citizenship, also stay within the premise a disciplinary role of government and planners. Civic initiatives are thus challenging spatial planning to its core, and planning strategies that answer to the dynamics of civic initiatives, and are able to meet the complexity of the age of active citizenship, have so far been seriously underdeveloped.

This paper addresses the emerging practice of civic initiatives in urban development, and the struggles professional planners and governments face in finding adequate strategies in dealing with this form of 'active citizenship' – strategies that reach beyond the inclusionary and disciplinary confines of participatory planning approaches. Therefore, this paper proposes a perspective in which the actual becoming of civic initiatives in spatial development is leading (cf. Boelens, 2009; Specht, 2012). To operationalize this civic initiative's perspective on planning strategy, the notion of self-organization is used. Coming from complexity theory, self-organization stands for the spontaneous emergence of order out of unordered beginnings. When translated to urban development, self-organization can be understood as the emergence of initiatives for spatial interventions from intrinsically driven, community-based networks of citizens and entrepreneurs. Understanding civic initiatives as a form of self-organization puts the emphasis on internal and local drivers, and the lack of centralized control. Internal drivers, as the incentives for the initiative come from within the network itself, the initiators are the intended end-users and eventual profeteers of the initiative, and are thus driven by self-interest and self-motivation. Local drivers, as civic initiatives are often a

reaction to local events or interactions, or events or conditions that generate local meaning and thus become localized. Lack of centralized control, as decision-making, knowledge, information, and other resources are not located at one central actor summoning others to take action, but are dispersed among many actors. In other words, civic initiatives are complex constitutions: Internally driven but with boundaries open wide, toward their environment, and to other actors and their resources. Self-organization is thus understood as the emergence of actor-networks, and seen as individual, performative, interventionary, and seeking to make a difference in the world operating upon them, creatively transforming their environments. Instead of trying to seize the grand narrative and promises of "active citizenship," the notion of self-organization enables to focus on the diversity of strategies that are developed within the actual practice of civic initiatives.

Empirical insights are gathered by looking at actual civic initiatives in three different contexts, acknowledging that, despite their internal drivers, these initiatives still take place in an institutional environment. 14 civic initiatives in Denmark, the Netherlands and England were followed, traced and analyzes with a theoretical hybrid of the ontologically related Complexity Theory (self-organization) (Luhmann, 1996; Cillier, 1998; Heylighen, 2001), Actor-Network Theory (translation) (Callon, 1986; Thrift, 2000; Latour, 2004), and Assemblage Theory (individuation) (DeLanda, 2002; 2006). Building upon the outcomes of these analyses, and various contemporary post-structuralist planning theories (Boelens, 2009; 2010; Hillier, 2007; Van Wezemael, 2010; 2012; Boelens & De Roo, 2014), this paper moves towards a planning strategy that *does* fit the age of active citizenship. It is argued that planners should no longer focus on organizing involvement in formal planning processes or setting up frameworks to counter fragmentation. Instead, planners should focus on *creating consistency* between a redundancy of spatial interventions and planning strategies that evolve from active citizenship. Creating consistency is based on three lines of thought: the need for conditions that do not constrain, but rather *open up* possibility spaces, the need for a facilitating planner who does not mediate but rather *navigates* between planning initiatives, and most importantly, a *flat ontology* of planning strategy. This flat ontology states that there is no a priori or ontological difference between the intentions and performed behavior of planning actors (including civic initiatives). By opening the spectrum for many others, navigating between these emerging others, and being able to empathize with the behaviors and strategies of these many others, potentials for consistency can be recognized and acted upon.

2. Conditions that "open up"

The first planning strategy in the age of active citizenship this paper presents concerns the creation of conditions that do not constrain, but rather open up possibility spaces for civic initiatives. This planning strategy builds upon the questions governments and planners have on what the "right" conditions would be that allow civic initiatives to emerge (WRR, 2012; BZK, 2013). In order to accomplish ambitions for a "participatory society" and "active citizenship," governments feel the responsibility to create such "right" conditions. Conditions are then seen as a requirement or requisite, as external influences that do not predefine initiatives, but that will increase the likelihood that specific processes will happen spontaneously (Rauws, 2015). Hajer (2011), Urhahn Urban Design

(2012), and Uitermark (2012), claim that conditions for civic initiatives consist of governments that set out frameworks in which freedom is found and ideas can be developed. Also Rauws et al. (2014) state that regulatory structures, such as development plans, are a precondition for self-organization as they set limits and define spaces that allow freedom of action. Framework conditions that consist of physical structures or reservations for specific land uses (Rauws et al., 2014; Urhahn Urban Design, 2012) focus mostly on the actual, the physical environment and other practical things an initiative needs in order to materialize. Such conditions aim to let the initiative in its individuation process "land" within the frames of the actual. However, such frameworks are not so different from the disciplining and inclusionary constraints of participatory planning: they still guide participants along predefined formal-organizational procedures toward all-inclusive plans (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Loepfe, 2014). Civic initiatives that do not fit into these self-referential conditions they remain to be overlooked (Van der Stoep, 2014: 34), or merely streamlined toward this governmental self-referentiality (cf. Swyngedouw, 2005). Whether such conditions are indeed the "right" ones, remains thus to be seen.

First, a distinction needs to be made between conditions that set initiatives in motion, and conditions that allowed initiatives to become and materialize. Conditions that set the initiatives in motion were often the intrinsic drivers of the initiators to take matters in their own hand. In the cases studied, such conditions were for instance specific housing demands that could not be fulfilled by the regular housing stock, concerns for the spatial quality of a neighborhood, a lack of certain amenities, or urban plans causing resistance among local communities and challenging citizens to come with alternatives. More than often, the civic initiatives were triggered by local, situational conditions that motivated them to change a situation and gain influence to do so, sometimes in response to an invitation or event. Such conditions are highly situational, and certainly not intentionally created, let alone with the purpose to stimulate civic initiatives.

Conditions that allowed the initiatives to become and materialize have more to do with the environment of the initiatives, and whether this environment is receptive to the initiatives or not. Such conditions can be non-situational and unintentional, such as elements in the planning system that allow for a certain degree of flexibility and negotiation or the traditional legal frameworks for collective action. These conditions give internal stability to the initiatives, and create a better understanding between initiatives and public authorities. But despite their importance, also such conditions are unintentionally created, and can thus not be regarded as a planning strategy to create conditions for active citizenship.

Intentionally created conditions to stimulate civic initiatives, on the contrary, can be regarded as a planning strategy. When non-situational, these conditions can for instance be legal frameworks for collective action intentionally created to stimulate civic initiatives, or knowledge exchange and capacity building programs. The availability of lessons learned and best practices makes initiators well prepared, experienced, and educated, offered inspiration and made initiators and other stakeholders believe they could be successful. When situational and intentionally created for the sake of active citizenship, such conditions can for instance be invitations from local municipalities to citizens to come with their own ideas or to formalize self-management, and consciously created learning programs around encounters with civic initiatives in order to smoothen the interaction in the future, were all intentionally created. What also appeared to be important, are conditions that

gave actors a reason to form associations around the emerging civic initiatives, and allow civic, public and sometimes even private actors to join around projects that address an interest for them all. Such conditions can be stagnated local planning conditions and undeveloped land, a desire to make actual physical improvements in a neighborhood. These conditions created a willingness to experiment, and a willingness to learn from the encounters with civic initiatives. Most of the time short term projects and temporary partnerships (though the interventions themselves are durable and last).

Figure 1 Overview of conditions found in the cases.

	Unintentional	***Intentional***
Non-situational	Frameworks for collective action Features of planning legislation	Policy for active citizenship
Situational	Decoding of the initiators	The ability to recognize potentials for opening up, and to move along with the initiatives and its possibilities (co-evolution).

What all of the above mentioned conditions have in common, is that they created agency and provoked a creative "opening up" of possibilities (cf. Van Wezemael, 2008). This is in line with Jean Hillier's plea for a planning ethos oriented toward experimentation, the emergence of the new, and of opening up potentialities and connections (Hillier, 2007). The challenge for planning practice in the age of active citizenship is therefore to create conditions that "open up," that provoke agency, that go beyond an instrumental thinking, and reach beyond the logic of control (Loepfe, 2014: 211).

When non-situational, such conditions are virtual: They exist, but in a formless way (Van Wezemael, 2008: 173). They merely create a potential, are not obligatory to be exercised (Van Wezemael, 2012), and they only become actual when used and deployed by a civic initiative, on behalf and when desired by the initiative itself. This in contrast to the more actual framework conditions mentioned above.

When situational, it concerns the awareness of actors of the potentials of opening up (cf. Loepfe, 2014). This last form of conditions is always situational and intentional. All cases show how important it is to find like-minded people and planning authorities who are willing to form associations around the changes envisioned by the initiative, to find others who are willing to turn away from the usual ways of doing. Finding those associations proves to be even more important and effective than to spend time convincing those that regard the initiative as threatening anyway. With regard to existing planning legislations and legal frameworks, the challenge is, time and again, to use, deploy, and refold them according to the interest of those involved. The ability to do so, however, depends largely on the resourcefulness of the initiators, their know-how and capacities,

and on the ability of the municipal officials. Municipal officials should know the extensibility of their own frameworks, the room for maneuver to interpret them creatively, and the possibility of changing or deviating from these frameworks, when considered opportune.

The planning strategy of creating conditions that "open up" and recognizing the possibilities to open up, answers to two aspects of assemblage thinking in planning: Provoking spaces of possibility and experiment in existing assemblages, and changing assemblages from an inactive, non-directional state to a space of agencement (Hillier & Van Wezemael, 2012: 316-318). Talking of "conditions" however, seems to create a distance between the condition maker and the condition user, between public authorities and self-organized initiatives. One very important condition that has been only touch on in this paragraph, is a condition that overcomes this distance. This specific condition answers to the third aspect of assemblage thinking in planning: The active creation of assemblages. This can be done through an intercession, a "going in between," the production of creative interference, as a way of generating agencement (Hillier & Van Wezemael, 2012: 327). This is explained by the following, second planning strategies in the age of active citizenship.

3. The need for navigators

The second planning strategy presented in this paper, addresses the period after a civic initiative has been set in motion, when the civic initiatives is gaining robustness and resilience over time. The trajectory of an initiative over time can be seen as the establishment of a new assemblage, and as a transition from the virtual to the actual. That this establishment of new assemblages is a core activity for planners, is affirmed in Post-structuralist planning. Assemblages are maintained by planners (Hillier & Van Wezemael, 2012: 313), but planners also play a pro-active role in creating them (Van Wezemael, 2012: 93). The actor-relational approach of Boelens can be seen as an operationalization of this pro-active creation of assemblages. Boelens uses the notion of translation for this pro-active engagement of planners in the forming actor-networks around spatial interventions (Boelens, 2009: 192; Webb, 2011: 274). Especially human actors have a role in forming these actor-networks, as within planning, according to Boelens, objects cannot be seen as self-acting, but are rather "mediated factors of importance," which only act through human representatives who put value to these objects due to their own self-interest (Boelens, 2009: 193; Balducci et al., 2011: 492). The forming of actor-networks then takes place through several steps, that imply the gathering around a certain matter of concern, the collection of resources, and the institutional anchoring of a certain solution (Boelens, 2009). This second planning strategy focusses on the specific role various actors take on in this gaining of robustness and resilience, and claims that "navigators" have a central position in this process.

As civic initiatives usually do not have all the resources available they need to materialize their initiative, they need to spend a considerable effort in collecting them, such as land, property, knowledge, procedural and legal competences, funding, investment capital, authority, and key positions within networks. These resources are spread among various actors, and in order to collect them, institutional barriers often need to be taken. In the cases, more than one actor was involved in

collecting the resources necessary to establish the initiative and actualize it toward a materialization in space, and more than one actor was engaged in setting up new projects and partnerships as part of the initiative. And although the actors who played a role in the move from expansion, contraction toward coding, were different in each and every case, in general it can be said that there were three main actor-groups: The case initiators or the spokespersons of the civic initiatives with their civic background, the governmental officials those who work in close distance to civic initiatives, or are the first entry points for municipal organizations with their public background, and connecting agencies who have a commercial or not-for-profit interest to support civic initiatives.

From the cases it becomes evident that the actors who contribute greatly to the collection of resources, the institutional embedding of the initiative, and its increased robustness and resilience, are most of the time people who are able to establish connections. They know their self-interest and perspective very well (as initiator, municipal official or third party), but are also very well capable of relating that self-interest to other actors and organizations. A vast amount of literature within management studies, policy sciences, public administration etc. has over the years given attention to this connecting role (Van der Stoep, 2013, Specht, 2012). These persons have been given many names, including knowledge and innovation brokers (Winch & Courtney, 2007; Klerkx & Leeuwis 2009), bricoleurs (Levi-Strauss, 1966; Cleaver, 2002; Padt, 2007), boundary spanners (Noble & Jones, 2006; Williams, 2002; Van Meerkerk, 2014), policy entrepreneurs (Kingdon, 2003; Zahariadis, 2007), street level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 2010), reflexive practitioner (Schon, 1983), deliberative practioner (Forester, 1999), everyday maker (Bang & Sorensen, 1999), everyday fixer (Hendriks & Tops, 2005), civic entrepeneur (Durose, 2009) or frontline workers (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003; Hartman & Tops, 2005).

In the context of civic initiatives, boundary spanners are individuals who are able to make connections between the spheres of public, private, and civic actors (e.g. Alter & Hage, 1993; Williams, 2002; Van Meerkerk, 2014). According to Van Meerkerk (2014), boundary spanners are able to think beyond the boundaries of the organization they work for and represent, they are able to empathize with actors on the other side of organizational boundaries, build, and maintain sustainable relationships, organize a mutual exchange of information, and search for shared meanings. This enables them to understand the coding schemes and needs of existing institutional structures in relation to the emerging structure of a civic initiative, and negotiate a fit between an initiative and its environment (Van Meerkerk, 2014). Their role as active listeners and translators of needs enables them to establish durable relationships (Specht, 2012). As such, these boundary spanners bring in connections and legitimacy for the initiative. Additionally, both Specht (2012) and Van Meerkerk (2012) emphasizes the knowledge, capacities, and acquaintances (often from their own professional background) these boundary spanners bring in both to the civic initiatives that often lack specific knowledge, as the capacity for institutional actors to be flexible and move along with the dynamics of a civic initiative.

So far however, boundary spanners are described rather non-directional: they have to listen, empathize, and translate, but without necessarily taking or choosing direction. However, according to Van der Stoep (2014), civic initiatives also need mobilizing action, in order to overcome institutional resistance to change. They need clear and stable ambitions, that are relevant to other as well. The people who create this direction, have the same characteristics as the boundary

spanners: the ability to empathize and listen, and attentiveness to events, circumstances, and context. But what is more, according to Van der Stoep, these people are able to "sell" ideas, getting attention, and navigate targeted supporters' self-referentiality (tweak their conceptions in favour of the initiative). With this, Van der Stoep adds a certain notion of "direction" to the work of boundary spanners (Van der Stoep, 2014). This notion of direction is very much in line with what Hillier (2010, 2011) calls "strategic navigation." Navigation implies an embarkation point, a journey and a goal "to reach land," but without knowing the specific destination: "Trajectories are followed rather than specific end points." (Hillier, 2011: 90) In the context of civic initiatives (a practice which Hillier hardly addresses), strategic navigation can be seen as an ongoing experimentation toward possible futures, led by the "people on the raft," those people that are part of a civic initiative. They wonder whether anyone on board can tweak conditions so that outcomes (reaching land) become more favorable, they establish conditions for a safe journey while being underway, sometimes just looking for the path of the least resistance, constructing stories in fluid forms that retain the ability to change (Hillier, 2011: 87). At the same time, the people on the raft look for other rafts or ships heading in the same direction to become connected or coded to, ask people to join the raft, all in order to create the necessary stability for a save journey and reach land in the end. Just like boundary spanning, Hillier emphasizes that this practice is not possible without a constant transgression of boundaries. Moreover, strategic navigation is a performance of risk-taking, of not being in total control, of transcending the technicalities of planning practice, and to allow possibilities for something new to emerge (Hillier, 2011: 14).

As said, the notion of "navigation" adds a direction to "boundary spanning," but still with a flexibility to change and without a fixed and known endpoint. Whereas "boundary spanning" itself seems to relate mostly to the behavior of expansion and contraction, and sometimes coding, "navigation" relates back to the decoding of the initiators and other actors as their embarkation points and possible (though of) futures. Navigators are certainly not intermediaries that do not transform anything in transporting the course of action, but they are also not mere mediators (cf. Latour, 2005) like boundary spanners are, as there is a clear self-interest and thus direction involved in their actions as well. Therefore, this activity of connecting, seen in all the cases discussed in this thesis, as further discussed as "navigation," the main performers of this activity "navigators," and the second planning strategy that fits the age of active citizenship as "be a navigator."

However, navigators did not receive so much attention for nothing, as their role time and again proves to be as challenging as it is crucial. Navigators are like the outposts of organizations, and they neither belong to the environment nor to the official organization they represent. They will always be *in the middle*. This means that their performance often implies a critical reflection on the functioning and the ideas of their own organizations, that they more than often show inappropriate than appropriate behavior, that they can encounter forces of resistance or of institutional rigidity, easily become isolated, and most of all feel a tension between what their "home organization" expects from them and what emerges within the group of the civic initiative (cf. Peeters et al., 2010 in Van Meerkerk, 2014). Governmental navigators can be confronted with the institutional logic of their organizations, the accountability mechanisms of representative democracy, the pressure to follow internal guidelines and routines, a culture of project management in which projects have tight boundaries, and a sector structure of the governmental organization. These internal structures and mechanisms often do not match with the complexity and dynamics of contemporary governance

issues, nor with the dynamics of dealing with civic initiatives and can thus withhold the navigators from performing their activities (Van Meerkerk, 2014).

The empirical findings in the cases of this thesis however show, that the activity of navigation does not have to cause any problems. The role of the "governmental" navigator could be legitimized by the organizational structure (as a specific function), by regular planning legislation, or by acting in targeted and temporary partnerships around specific projects, in which they unambiguously serve the aim of their own organization. The role of the navigator can become problematic and challenging though, when no match can be found around specific projects or partnerships, or when the individual navigator empathizes with the initiative but is not able to find any anchor points within the organization. Then, navigators can become stuck between the interests of initiative and those of the municipality. For "civic" navigators, challenges are comparable, as they too function as outposts of the initiatives they represent, getting and keeping a group together during a very dynamic process of finding locations, setting up a legal plan, choosing financial schemes etc. They have to justifying their actions to be in the interest of the individual members of the initiative as well. When the group around the civic initiatives is more volatile, less effort is made in keeping a group together and legitimizing actions. However, sometimes questions are asked (by the municipality or by fellow residents) who these leading initiators actually represent. For the "commercial" or "not-for-profit" navigators, not many challenges are found, as the activity of navigation belongs to the core of their professional work, and they are only involved in the cases temporarily. The only risk they face is a financial one, when sometimes the facilitation of an initiative group demands so much more time and effort than foreseen.

Navigators need to be internally and externally connected, and need legitimacy within their own organization to do their job. When laying connections is their main professional and institutionally embedded task, the cases show that the challenges navigators face are mainly limited to practical issues around specific projects or issues. However, questionsmarks can be placed at whether any specific organizational structure will be the "right" one to led navigators do their work. Perhaps of more importance is whether an organization offers room for maneouvre and discretion, for improvisation and experiment (Specht, 2012), and whether recurring bottlenecks can be addressed and discussed, and whether a navigator is equipped by his organization with sufficient knowledge, skills, and information. This relates strongly to the conditions for opening up and being able to recognize the potentials for opening up. For governments this means they have to perform a double role. On one hand they need to fulfill their traditional role of representatives of the public, providing security, equity, and regulation by law, and living up to representation, entitlement, and status, accountability, legitimacy, scale, and order of governance (Swyngedouw 2005). And on the other hand they must facilitate the role of navigator within their organization. This challenge lies not so much in the preparation of plans, guidelines or procedures that make navigation possible, but rather in creating methods which with the navigators can legitimately move along with the dynamics of citizens' initiatives. But as navigation is rather an activity practiced by individuals than a specific institutional role, and therefore very performative, attention should also be given to the connective and relational capabilities, competencies, capacities and experience these navigators have (Van Meerkerk, 2014).

4. The flat ontology of planning strategy

(Re-)Understanding planning

Whereas the first planning strategy on creating conditions also still had a role for professional planners in mind, the second planning strategy that elaborated on the importance for navigators within professional organizations and within civic initiatives already suggested a certain symmetry between the professional world and the world of civic initiatives. The third conclusion goes even one step further, and reflects on processes of becoming, and self-organization as emerging assemblages as an *equivalent of planning*.

Renowned planning theorists stress as the core of spatial planning, the (collaborative) development of strategies (Hillier, 2011), creation of collective awareness around spatial issues (Forester, 1989), designation of collective concerns and ideas about physical environments (Healey, 2007), and an operationalization these ideas with vision, coherent actions and means for implementation (Albrecht, 2006: 1491, also in Loepfe, 2014; Van der Stoep, 2014). Additionally, some Dutch practitioners have explained planning as the interaction between a given situation and a new program (Frieling, 2007), or as the shaping of the best reciprocal interaction between space and society, such for the sake of society (Cie Van Veen, Den Haag 1972 in Boelens, 2005; Vermeersch 1994 in Leinfelder, 2007). Without explicitly stating so, these theorists and practitioners clearly have a professional planner in mind, more than often working on behalf of public government. A post-structuralist understanding of spatial planning opens up to the idea that "*all* actants are engaged with some form of spatial planning and that decision-making is the emergent outcome of the interplay between this multiplicity of activities" (Hillier, 2007: 271), and that governments and their agencies are not the only nor the most prominent actors in space, but that various actors in business and civic society are as important (Kreukels, 1985; Boelens et al., 2006). However, planning strategies that follow from this post-structuralist understanding still seem to have a hard time to think beyond the idea of a professional spatial planner.

Therefore, a short look is taken at how "planning" is defined outside the field of *spatial* planning, within psychology and organizational studies. By doing so, the intriguing view of Portugali is followed, who sees planning more as a basic cognitive capability of humans than as a pure professional activity (Portugali, 2011). In psychology, planning is defined as thinking of a way to achieve a certain goal or desired action (Morris & Ward, 2005), and the ability to bring these thoughts about a desired goal to actualization through organizing activities and taking actions (Ajzen, 1991). This understanding of planning is also found with the organizational studies of Mintzberg (1994), who sees planning as a thinking about the future, and a consideration how such a future might be brought about through actions, that are embedded in collective decisionmaking and a societal context (Dror, 1971; Mintzberg, 1994). This view corresponds with the idealism that De Roo et al. (2012) sees as an instrinsic mind-set within planning practice. According to De Roo et al. (2012: 7), planners compose and suggest desired outcomes to tackle difficulties faced at a particular time and place. These ideas about what would be better are mental pictures about "reals-to-come," ideas on how to improve things. Plans, in this perspective, are expressions of such intentions (Mintzberg, 1994) and are made everywhere, at all times, in various spatial and time scales, comprehensive, specific, initiated by public, business, and civic actors. But despite their diversity, all plans head in the

same direction: Toward the future, and an envisioned and desired spatial change. It is the ability to express such intentions and put them to action is what turns people into spatial planners.

However, the distinction between intended and unintended behavior or action is often difficult to make (Ajzen, 1991; Wildavsky, 1973). Again, then, Mintzberg provides perspective by introducing the term "strategy," as a certain consistency, or pattern in behavior over time (Mintzberg, 1994). This pattern in behavior can then either be intended and deliberate with an overall goal in mind, but also be emergent out of a chain of little ideas or initiatives (Mintzberg, 1994). This view on planning as a mix between intentionalities and behavior (cf. Ajzen, 1991) brings into perspective the equivalence of planning and self-organization, as the process of organizing (activities, behavior) the actualization of a self (intentions, intentionalities). It also softens the relation between the term planning and the formalized procedures, rationality, integrated system of decisions and formalized documents it is often associated with (Mintzberg, 1994). By seeing planning as behavior, planning becomes performative, a consistency of behavior and intentions as part of the virtual, and individual actions, organization of, and interventions in space as part of the actual world (Hillier, 2007). In this line, the term "planning strategy" (not to be confused with strategic planning), addresses deliberate or emergent patterns of behaviors to achieve a certain goal within a world full of other intentionalities and behaviors and (with a wink to Mintzberg) formalized procedures.

"Translation" as derived from actor-network theory concerns the process of making connections between things that gain consistency along the way. This process of ordering can be seen as an equivalent of self-organization as the emergence of networks. In the literature concerning translation, it is described how translations can be collateral and unintentional, but also how translations can be the result of purposeful and deliberate action. Collateral translations happen incidentally, along the way, unintentionally, and they often remain quiet and uncontested. They happen for instance when actors accidently encounter in space, or when a person without intention provides orderings of situations at hand by telling others how to see things (Law, 2009a). Purposeful and deliberate translations happen pro-active and intentional, aim at establishing something envisioned, and are a performative process of network building, of creating links between actors and factors that were not linked before (Law, 2009b; Latour, 2004; Mol, 2002a). Both views on translation are possible. Full collateral translation is hard to make, as actions by individuals will always to a certain extend be intentional. Intentional translation, on the other hand, is often partial, incomplete, more or less local and implicit. Even the most intentional practices are still surrounded by a world which is "messy, multiple, heterogeneous, constantly escaping the precarious orderings of even the most determined." (Law, 2009b: 11) In the case of civic initiatives, this mix between collateral and purposeful translations, can be described as quasi-intentionality. For civic initiatives, the eventual physical intervention might not have been entirely envisioned beforehand along a prefixed plan, and people in the initiative might not know exactly where and how they will end up, and what the spin-off of their initiative might be, as many collaterals happen during its process of becoming. But still, civic initiatives always contain a certain degree of intentionality. Regardless whether they have an idealistic motive or a personal, individual interest, there is always a reason why they start organizing something new, by themselves.

Twelve archetypical planning strategies

So what behaviors and intentionalities can be found in civic initiatives, in order to improve things and actualize the desired "reals-to-come"? Firstly, three intentionalities are distinguished in translation, that are not sequential, but rather relate to their intensity, degree of activity, and interaction with their environment. All three intentionalities have collateral features as well.

1) The first intentionality is *interfering for change.* This intentionality is based on the understanding of translation by Mol (2002a, b), that focusses on how things have been made better, according to the actors involved. What is better, is of course no pre-given truth or fixed optimum, but rather something that is normative, situated, contextual, and thus constructed as entity within the network (Mol, 2002a). Interferences for change that come from that normative, situated, and contextual perspective, aim at shifting the object of treatment, in order to counter deviances that are felt or considered as incommodious to the translation of the network. There is no question on what the best interference might be, but only the question of whether it effectively solves a certain problem or addresses a certain need within particular circumstances, according to those involved (Mol, 2002b; Law, 2009b). With this emphasize on interference, the urban environment is no longer a "single passive object in the middle" (Mol, 2002a: 5), but it is talked upon, and the delineation of problems in the environment is followed quickly by foregrounding practicalities, materialities, the pro-active creation of events that not only aim at changing the understanding of the physicality, but also aim at changing the physicality itself (Mol, 2002a: 12). Space is being re-done (cf. Metzger, 2011) according to the potentialities the initiators see. Interferences for change are thus very situated actions in time and space, with a high intensity directed not so much toward the self of the initiative but rather at changing its environment. In civic initiatives, interference for change, the initiative may be short term, very issue based and materialize in a temporary event, a small scale intervention, for instance an art project or a temporary redecoration of a street. The intervention then for instance focused on creating awareness, or a new understanding of a certain place.

2) The second intentionality is *networking for a fit*. In this intentionality, a network is gradually strengthened, expanded, and made thicker. Events and networks are knit together around new and emerging meanings, and creating a context around an idea (Latour, 1996: 119, 133). Grouping around meaning concerns how unity, a common world, and a common good are established among the components of the emerging network through the reassembling of facts and values, a movement toward potential unification (Latour, 2004). In spatial planning, this intentionality refers to the collection of resources needed for the realization of a spatial intervention (Boelens, 2009). Spatial planning itself can be seen as a process of network-building, in which entities of various kinds are assembled in ways that allow the network to undertake certain functions. It is a process in which actors with a certain interest and willingness to invest in their local environment out of more or less self-interest, engage in organizing and networking meaningful spatial connections, and the means, such as land, finances, buildings, permits etc., to achieve their goals (Boelens, 2009; 2010). Compared to *interfering for change*, the intentionality of *networking for a fit* happens in a more continuous way, and with a slightly lower intensity. Its relation with its environment is one of mutual influence, compliance, and fluidity, and its goal is to achieve an optimal fit

between the idea and the physical environment, so that this idea can materialize into an actual physical project. The main focus is on trying to find a fit between the internal world of the initiative and the external environment, in a process of mutual reconstitution, and its aim is a gradual strengthening of a network by collecting resources and knitting together events and interests. The civic initiative aims at materializing a project that is meant to be there to stay. What the initiative is looking for, is the right environment to realize their idea in, that fits best to their ideas.

3) The third intentionality is assemble to maintain, an intentionality that is found in more or less stable networks focused on maintenance, homogeneity, and coherence (Thrift, 1996; Hillier, 2007). It concerns strong and tight networks that, despite their heterogeneity, work in unison. These networks provide resources for their components but restrain them as well. They work as sorting machines in favor of their own emergence and maintenance (Van Wezemael, 2010: 290). In this intentionality, "translation" concerns the continuous effort to maintain coherence, homogeneity and effectivity, a consolidation of goals, and providing a base for security and stability (Hillier, 2009; Latour, 2004; Thrift, 1999). Assembling to maintain is continuous in time and space, its intensity is much lower, and its relation with the environment concerns not so much the environment itself but rather the maintenance of the self within that environment. The assemblage is more internally oriented compared to the other intentionalities, and can sometimes even be a little constraining. When this intentionality is dominant in a civic initiative, the initiative aims for creating a stable community and improving parts within that community.

Secondly, the theoretical hybrid of complexity and self-organization (Luhmann, 1996; Cillier, 1998; Heylighen, 2001), actor-network theory and translation (Callon, 1986; Thrift, 2000; Latour, 2004), and assemblage theory and individuation (DeLanda, 2002; 2006), allows to distinguish four forms of behavior in emerging civic initiatives.

1) The first behavior is decoding, which refers to a disassociation from the usual, the desire to try something new, the will to change certain conditions, to step out of usual ways of working, to disassociate from existing schemes, and the articulation of a new direction to be taken. This behavior builds upon the notions of de-coding from Assemblage Theory, bifurcations from Complexity Theory, and problematization and perplexity from Actor-Network Theory. In a civic initiative, decoding reveals the conditions the initiative aims to change or leave behind, and why other actors are willing to leave behind their routines and associate to the initiative as well.

2) The second behavior is expansion, which refers to a widening orientation, open boundaries, exposure, exploration of new content, possible resources, and new actors in new constellations. It is about creating diversity, connectivity and redundancy of plans, ideas, content and actors – trying to be as broad, informed and open for new and different options and actors as possible (Van Meerkerk et al., 2013). This behavior builds upon the notions of dissipation from Complexity Theory, interessement from Actor-Network Theory and de-territorialization from Assemblage Theory. In a civic initiatives, expansion explains how the

initiative becomes embedded in a wider context, increases in scale and acquires relevance. It tells about who is consulted, what new actors are included, what different options for the initiative are assessed along the way, how the focus of the initiative broadens, what exposure is made or given to the initiative – all in order to make the trajectory of the initiative evolve further over time.

3) The third behavior is contraction, which refers to a closing off or narrowing down through selection, explication, a consolidation of content and resources, a stabilization of actor constellations. The behavior concerns self-reproduction, a strengthening and articulation of boundaries, exclusion of otherness, and the setting of internal hierarchy and order. A variety and redundancy of plans, content and actors is countered in a selection and sorting process (Van Meerkerk et al., 2013). This behavior builds upon the notions of autopoiesis from Complexity Theory, enrollment from Actor-Network Theory and Territorialization from Assemblage Theory. In a civic initiative, contraction explains how the 'self' is internally stabilized, what choices were made, how the identity, binding principle, and boundaries are maintained, and what organizational form was chosen.

4) The fourth behavior is coding, which refers to the elements that turn the initiative into a black box, but also into something familiar, something obvious, something common that fits existing schemes in the outside world. With coding, the initiative grows heavy with externally recognized norms, that make it stable, fixed and strong. This behavior is build upon the notions of coding from Assemblage Theory, mobilization of Actor-Network Theory and equilibrium from Complexity Theory. In civic initiatives, coding reveals how the trajectory of the initiative is smoothened by following already existing codes, by developing new codes of its own, what was learned from the case and turned into something 'normal' and 'repeatable' and how the initiative eventually materializes in space.

The four forms of behavior are of course interrelated. Decoding individualizes, whereas coding de-individualizes into something common. Expansion creates external robustness as it enlarges the network of the initiative, contraction creates internal robustness as is strengthens the internal cohesion. An emerging civic initiative should thus not put too much emphasize on either one: too much coding might alienate the initiative from its self, too much decoding might alienate the initiative from its environment, too much expansion could disintegrate the initiative internally and too much contraction could disintegrate the initiative externally. As none of them forms an independent self-organization process, the initiative should thus cautiously showcase all four behaviors, not sequential but simultaneously. Also the three intentionalities presuppose each other. An interference for change presupposes a network that is able to interfere. And this network has to "become", before it can be, find a fit with its environment, and is actually able to maintain itself. So even though interference for change, networking for a fit, and assembling to maintain are different forms of intentionalities, they cannot exist without each other. When drawing up a schedule with decoding, expansion, contraction, and coding on the horizontal axis, and these three intentionalities on the vertical axis, twelve ontological archetypical planning strategies show up.

< Figure 3 Twelve archetypical planning strategies. >

	Decoding	**Expansion**	**Contraction**	**Coding**
Interfering for change	*Showing what should be changed in order to point out the need for a new direction.*	*Exploring different options and opinions in order to point out possible futures.*	*Emphasizing the like-mindedness and common grounds in order to create support for a new direction.*	*Setting up rules and regulations in order to make a change happen.*
Networking for a fit	*Changing things and leaving behind old practices in order to move along and find a fit with the environment.*	*Exploring different options and opinions in order to move along and find a fit between the initiative and an environment.*	*Creating like-mindedness and common grounds between the initiative and its environment.*	*Using exitsing and new rules and regulations (and sometimes tweaking them) in order to find a fit between the initiative and its environment.*
Assembling to maintain	*Defining what should be changed in order to maintain the quality and stability of the assemblage.*	*Disseminating and exploring different possibilities of and for the assemblage, in order to strengthen its stability and legitimacy.*	*Defining like-mindedness and common grounds in order to maintain the stability and strengthen the durability of the assemblage.*	*Upholding rules and regulations in order to maintain the security and stability of the assemblage.*

This overview of twelve ontological archetypical planning strategies, all enacted within civic initiatives, show how diverse planning strategies deployed by, and in response to civic initiatives, can be. Some civic initiatives perhaps focus a bit more on “assembling to maintain”, when a community already exists but want to become more pro-active. Some civic initiatives focus a bit more on “networking for a fit”, when it is a specific project thy want to realize. And some civic initiatives focus more on “interfering for change”, when their main aim is address a certain need or envisioned change. With the overall aim of materializing a civic initiative, the four forms of behavior more or less explain how the initiators deal with the interaction between their selves and the environment. The three intentionalities more or less explain the intrinsic drivers of the initiative and how the initiative aims at making a difference in its environment. However, various planning strategies can be present in one case simultaneously, through the involvement of various actors, and because actors can also apply multiple strategies simultaneously, and even switch between strategies. These twelve archetypical planning strategies thus never stand alone, and there is a certain need for diversity in planning strategies to materialize civic initiatives and their projects. This overview of planning strategies is therefore not an attempt to provide an overall structure to categorize initiatives and their planners, but is rather a method that can help in creating understanding of difference and diversity of planning strategies, and moreover, the need for that diversity and difference. The resulting strategies are not strategies that head for a specific and well delineated end point, but are rather ways of navigating in a certain direction while retaining the flexibility for change and without a fixed and known endpoint.

Planning strategy as a flat ontology

What is remarkable though, is that when various cases of civic initiatives and the behavior and intentionalities of all actors involved are plotted on this scheme of planning strategy, it becomes evident that there is no significant difference between the planning strategies performed professional, public or formal planners on one hand, and civic, lay or informal planners on the other hand (apart from a little more presence of public actors in the fields of coding). Of course, resource interdependence is a bit more pressing among civic actors, as civic actors often do not possess a significant set of means like public or business actors often already do. In line with "assemblage planning", everyone who plays a pro-active role in the creation of assemblages can be regarded as a planner - even though their "assemblage of concern" can differ among civic, business, and public actors (an individual interest, an community initiative, a commercial project, a neighborhood or city, society as a whole)..

This symmetry between professional and lay (Specht, 2012), public and civic (Boelens, 2009), formal and informal planners (Portugali, 2011) is reminiscent of what Latour (2005) and DeLanda (2002) call a "flat ontology". In a flat ontology, no transcendent principles or essences exist, but only unique, singular individuals who can differ in spatio-temporal scale but not in ontological status (DeLanda, 2002). This flat ontology is for instance found in the symmetry human and non-human actors in Actor-Network Theory. Even though within planning, non-humans cannot act as proactive normative agents the way in which planners act, and can thus only act in decision making processes when represented by humans (Boelens, 2009), the ontological status does not differ between human and non-human actors. A flat ontology for planning strategy, implies a rejection of all a priori existing scales or hierarchies, and sees organization – and thus scale and hierarchy – as the outcome of interactions between particular, historically locatable entities (DeLanda, 2002). The difference between planning actors lies within the training on certain skills and employment to serve the common good of professional, public and formal planners, and the specific self-interest, and presupposed inability to think beyond that self- interest of lay, civic and informal planners. The hierarchy that evolves from this difference (professional is better than lay, public is better than civic, formal is better than informal) does not exists a priori, but has evolved from the interactions between planning actors and processes of urban development *over time*. Civic and public, lay and professional, informal and formal planners differ in scale and hierarchy, but as the above overview of ontological archetypical planning strategies shows, they do not differ in ontological status. The way in which civic initiatives emerge, define their goals, and materialize their intentions toward actual physical interventions in space, does not differ that much from the way in which public authorities plan, or the way in which planning agencies work.

Introducing a flat ontology of planning strategy serves a specific goal: "Action is possible only in a territory that has been opened up, flattened down, and cut down in size in a place where formats, structures, globalization, and totalities circulate inside tiny conduits, and where for each of their applications they need to rely on masses of hidden potentialities." (Latour, 2005: 252). When one primarily looks at the ontological status (intentionality met with behavior) of planning strategy, the flat ontology can help overcome any dichotomies and paradoxes that exist in planning and civic initiatives in spatial development. Now it shows, how civic initiatives neither follow from the planning system a priori nor are obstructed by the planning system per se, but rather how the planning system becomes alive, and is performed *through* these civic initiatives.

In a flat ontology of planning strategy, planning is seen as a performance that does not differentiate between professional or lay, public or civic, formal or informal actors. The flat ontology should enable all planners, including professional ones, to empathize and understand different kinds of behavior, intentionalities, and planning strategies performed by other planning actors encountered, including civic ones. By taking the various archetypical planning strategies in consideration, the professional planner should be able to not solely react on the behavior shown in the cases, but is able to discern the intentionalities of the initiatives.

5. The art of creating consistency

The flat ontology of planning strategy does not mean however, that professional planners have become obsolete in the age of active citizenship. So far, all the planning strategies mentioned in this paper, took individual civic initiatives as starting point, and focused planning strategies developed and applied within and in close interaction with these individual cases. Now, at the end of this paper, time has come to transcend this individual level and to consider the consequences of the emergence of a multitude of planning actors and initiatives within a certain territorial environment. Not in the sense of cities as self-organizing systems upon which the planner acts as an external force by introducing new planning policies (Portugali, 2011), as this view would not enable the planner to move beyond the safe confines of a governmental-led, disciplining, and inclusionary planning practice with frameworks and procedures. Instead, this paper argues that even professional planners who work with a multitude of civic initiatives, should not only focus on their spatial outcomes, but should continue to reason from every individual emerging civic initiatives itself. After all, "each urban agent is a planner – be it a single individual, a firm or the city's planning team – and the city comes into being out of the interaction between the many agents *and their plans*." (Portugali, 2011: 288, original emphasize). This approach to self-organization refers to the idea that various actors plan and take initiatives at the same time, in a distributed fashion, and in networked, open, and dynamic ways. Complexity exists because no single actor can oversee all the dynamics of these self-organizations simultaneously taking place, can neither predict the starting points for such new ideas, nore control the dynamics that occur after initiation, or allocate these outcomes to an individual initiating actor, making spatial developments in principle unpredictable and uncertain (Rauws & De Roo, 2011:272).

Researchers and planning professionals are very much struggling with this complexity, as it is difficult for *any* actor to fulfil the seemingly endless and conflicting needs and demands of society, to deal with the multitude of self-organizing actors in processes of governance and spatial becoming, interferences of external events, unforeseen coincidences, and unexpected changes in what actors do and say (Boons et al. 2009: 249). Such complexity cannot be managed solely by traditional comprehensive approaches with a focus on command and control, by strategies that build on collaborative and communicative planning approaches (Rauws & De Roo, 2011:272). But still, professional planners *do* have a meaningful and active role in the management of change. Not for the sake of change itself, as for instance transition management argues (Rotmans et al., 2012), but change for a better reciprocal relationship between space and society, such for the sake of society and the promotion of a sustainable development of places (Boelens, 2009; 2013).

What self-organized trajectories have in common, is that they move toward self-desired futures, mutually affecting each other *without losing their selves*. This is important, as within all the opening up, navigation, and empathizing in the age of active citizenship, one can easily become footloose and empty when loosing sight of one's own self. Therefore, a strong awareness of the self of a civic initiative, even if this self is normative, situated, contextual, and constructed along the way, is crucial in its process of becoming. A clear direction, but with the flexibility for change and without a fixed endpoint, is of utmost importance for civic initiatives in order to connect, align, and respond at all. This is not only important for civic initiatives, but for everyone who is entangled in heterogeneous processes of spatial becoming. Also professional spatial planning "takes part in an ongoing struggle against those whose 'reading in space' could take priority, and could better be attached to new meaningful interrelations and therefore possible manage identities." (Boelens, 2009: 31) Within a multitude of emerging networks, each individual planner has a self, a frame, a vision on how to improve things and goals to achieve. Awareness of such selves is especially needed in moments of uncertainty, as they can provide a feeling of consistency. Without that feeling, "quick closures" become very probable (Loepfe, 2014: 209-210).

And quick closure are not what the age of active citizenship asks for. Instead of closing down the opportunities civic initiatives offer for the viability of spaces, and the social, economic, political, and spatial benefits they bring, their diversity and creativity should not be frustrated and superseded by the inclusionary and disciplining practices that so often prevail in planning. Instead, the age of active citizenship asks for dynamism, diversity, openness, experiment, flexibility, navigations etc. Moreover, the age of active citizenship asks for a baroque harmony, in which different and independent voices are brought together through a web of reciprocal reference, interacting with each other and harmonically interdependent, but never loosing ones individuality and independency in rhythm and contour (cf. Kwa 2002). The age of active citizenship asks for co-evolution, in which various trajectories and their environment are seen as interdependent (Gerrits, 2012), and adapt to each other in a non-linear ways (Teisman et al., 2009). Spatial co-evolution as spatial developments resulting from interactions between multiple scales, at various localities, or from various perspectives (Rauws & De Roo, 2011). Institutional co-evolution as a transformation of existing institutionalized practices, organizational changes, and mutual adaptation of roles (Morçöl, 2005; Van Meerkerk, 2014). Such co-evolution, in which multiple trajectories move forward to their self-desired futures, affecting each other without losing their selves, with reflective insight in their own and other's selves, can very well happen collateral and unintentionally. But co-evolution can also be deliberately enhanced, which brings in to the final planning strategy in the age of active citizenship: The art of creating consistency.

The art of creating consistency

Baroque harmony, in which different and independent voices are brought together in reciprocal reference without losing their independency in rhythm and contour, corresponds to the heterogeneous processes of spatial becoming post-structuralist planning approaches speak of. In these processes, or in this baroque harmony of planning, professional planners are certainly "not the director, nor store manager, let alone an orchestra leader." (cf. Boelens, 2009: 31) Professional planners are just one of the many voices, one of the many performers. The harmony they can create does not follow from disciplinary frameworks or inclusionary procedures, but much more from their

ability to relate, to empathize, to build upon the performances of others (the twelve archetypical planning strategies can be instrumental in this), and to "create consistency." Consistency not in the actual sense of coherence and sameness in the appearance of spatial performances planners engage in, nor in the sense of genuine discussion and undistorted consensus. Consistency rather in the Deleuzian, virtual sense, in the sense of moving in the same direction, not because of frameworks telling to do so, but by actively empathizing with the emerging selves, by knowing and supporting their and one's own intentionality, and by making strategies as open and known as possible. The flat ontology of planning strategy was about recognizing consistency in intentional behavior within an individual initiative. Now the challenge is to recognize consistency, but also the inconsistencies and potentials for improved consistency in actual urban developments, and to pay attention to the non-intended non-individual forms of emergent spatial strategies (Loepfe, 2014: 128).

The art of creating consistency comprises that planners are able to recognize the potentials of specific and detailed projects of civic initiatives for longer-term futures, and that planners are able to strengthened these initiatives by new and additional specific and detailed plans that move in that same direction. Such planning allows immediate actions and adaptations, and simultaneously allows for the building robust associations and visions along the way (Balducci et al., 2011). To achieve such a planning, the proposition would be to scan the various becoming selves and explore what potentials there are for consistency between them. This consistency can be created by affecting the internal dynamics of self-organization without controlling the behavior of individual citizens or by imposing blueprints (Rauws, 2015). Creating consistency should then be a task for professional planners, a task that concerns: Relating civic initiatives and other spatial interventions to each other, considering measures to increase the robustness, resilience, and sustainability of the outcomes of civic initiatives; think on how civic, public, and private interventions in space can add up to each other, and what areas could benefit from additional impulses for and by civic initiatives.

The first move for the professional planner is then to be aware of any emerging consistencies and inconsistencies. The ultimate goal of creating consistency for professional planners is of course the development of qualitative and sustainable places, resilient and robust cities. Professional planners can for instance be concerned about the influence initiatives have on socially and environmentally "just" form, and be leading in the potential consequences of certain interventions for different actants (Hillier, 2011). Professional planners can also be concerned about inconsistencies that emerge out of a fragmented development within a certain territorial environment, due to the various autonomous drivers affecting areas (Rauws & De Roo, 2011: 280-1, see also Rauws & Van Dijk, 2013). The second move is to actually act upon the potentials for consistency. Connect fragmented developments and turn them into clustered patterns in order to make the area benefit these drivers (Rauws & De Roo, 2011: 280-1, see also Rauws & Van Dijk, 2013). Suggest alternative ways or trying to activate other actors that can add to the consistency in which a certain area is moving (cf. Van Wezemael, 2012; Boelens, 2009). The notion of strategic navigation introduced in conclusion two, can be instrumental in this. But now navigation not just between an individual initiative and its environment, but between many initiatives emerging at the same time. Navigation as the art of finding viable paths into the future, negotiating unknown terrain and unprecedented complexity, creating links between places that do not belong to the same world.

When this “art of creating consistency” is mastered by planners, a planning practice can grow in which heterogeneous processes of spatial becomings can evolve in synergy and consistency with each other. Planning “from and with, instead of against, differences, fragmentations, uncertainties, complexity […],constitutionally interrelated, plural, heterogeneous and always ‘becoming’, instead of pre-determined, structured and/or locked into itself.” (Boelens, 2009: 555). A planning practice in which civic initiatives can thrive, and that enables society to take the full benefits of the age of active citizenship.

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