

# Planning the unplanned

Framing the institutionalization of the NDSM-werf



## Master's thesis in Sociology

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## **Colophon**

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### **Master's thesis Urban Sociology**

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**Thesis MSc Urban Sociology**  
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# Summary

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Following the bankruptcy of the NDSM-werf, a shipbuilding company in Amsterdam Noord, its buildings stood empty. Gradually, cultural producers started moving in. They found a cheap space at the NDSM, combined with their desired freedom for experimentation. In the course of the years, these bottom-up developments have gradually been institutionalized.

The institutionalization of cultural brownfields has already been researched to some extent, with studies often taking on a critical governance perspective on these developments. However, the perspective of cultural producers has often been taken out of the equation. Next to this, there are not many detailed studies of the institutionalization processes that take place when local governments start interfering with bottom-up developments at such sites.

With the NDSM-werf as a case study, this research has focused on this process from a cultural producer's perspective. First, it describes the relevant urban policy discourses that have influenced concrete policies dealing with cultural brownfields. These discourses are cultural regeneration, creative city, participatory society and an overarching discourse, entrepreneurialism.

The cultural regeneration discourse has been theorized extensively, with Smith and Zukin as two of the best known scholars addressing it. It describes a process in which an area is often neglected or "asleep". Cultural producers then start moving into this area – often one with a certain "authenticity" – because of the looks and feel of the area, the available space and the low prices. They then start establishing their businesses, which revitalize the area. This causes the prices to rise as the area becomes more and more trendy, which often leads to the displacement of the original artists who revitalized the area.

The creative city discourse, of which Landry and Florida are perhaps the best-known authors, takes a more holistic approach on a larger scale. It revolves around the idea that creativity is the new key element that economic growth for cities. Following these theories, cities all over the world started generating policies to win an increasing inter-urban competition to attract the creative class.

The participatory society discourse is characterized by a government that facilitates the initiatives of active citizens. It builds further on a development that has taken place in the last couple of decades, in which citizens get a larger voice in policy. Uitermark and Tonkens have been influential scholars addressing the participatory society in the Netherlands.

Finally, the three policy discourses mentioned earlier can be fitted into a larger paradigm: the entrepreneurial discourse. This discourse describes the growing trend of competition between cities. It is strongly linked to the concept of neoliberalism, in which cities start behaving as companies.

All of these discourses have been incorporated into the breeding place policy, the most relevant and influential policy for the NDSM-werf – the largest breeding place in Europe. Following the industrial decline in the 70s, many former industrial buildings stood empty in Amsterdam. These buildings – often located at the banks of the IJ – were gradually being occupied by squatters and artists in the late 70s, 80s and 90s. However, in these years plans were also devised to transform the IJ-banks into "Manhattan at the IJ", for which many of these squatted sites had to be evicted. The fear of losing those "free spaces" led to a protest of squatters and artists in 1998, in which they asked for a "constructive settlement policy" for these groups. As a result, the breeding place policy was established, to provide cheap spaces for

artists.

The breeding place policy contains some delicate issues, as becomes clear from scrutinizing some important policy documents. On the one hand, offering freedom, fostering diversity and stimulating self-management are often mentioned in these texts; on the other hand, the documents mention working towards increasing assessments of artists and breeding places as a whole, while guidance and control are also frequently addressed. This hints at a bottom-up top-down conflict, expressed in these policy documents. Also, while there are some formal rules to assess whether an artist is eligible to rent at a breeding place, there are no formal strategies or procedures for developing breeding places. This remains the work of people interpreting policy, which might lead to perverse effects.

The NDSM-werf itself was home to the Nederlandsche Dok en Scheepsbouw Maatschappij (NDSM), a shipbuilding company. In 1984 the shipbuilders at the wharf went bankrupt, after which the site was gradually being occupied by squatters and artists. In 1999 the city district Amsterdam Noord (Stadsdeel Noord) decided to launch a competition in a search for a temporary solution for the NDSM-werf. This competition was won by Kinetisch Noord, a collective of squatters and artists who devised a plan in which a framework would be provided within which individual artists could invest to build their own ateliers. The subsidy granted to realize the plan would not be paid directly to Kinetisch Noord however, but to Stadsdeel Noord. After the contracts were signed, due to delays, building only started years later than planned, which among other things contributed to a debt for Kinetisch Noord as they could not collect enough rent. These financial troubles lead to a demand for more control by Stadsdeel Noord after which the board of Kinetisch Noord was replaced by a group of external administrators, mostly chosen by the local government. Financial troubles continued to haunt Kinetisch Noord, and in 2011 Olij was chosen by the local government to straighten the matters. He solved some of the financial issues, but his way of working generated discomfort among the artists at the wharf and increasingly led to conflicts.

From the interviews conducted for this study it became clear that none of the respondents were positive about the changes the NDSM had undergone. However, many of the artists accepted the policy discourses; they did not always like them, in fact, some had harsh critiques, but they often saw them as preconditions within which they had to operate. Notably, they were most negative about the temporary role of artists in many of the discourses. The breeding place policy, while established in cooperation with artists and squatters, was often regarded by respondents as a way to hold some form of control over spaces like the NDSM-werf and to make money out of it. Again, the temporality associated with the policy is often opposed by respondents. Also, the process of institutionalization of the NDSM is severely criticized. The implementation of politicians in Kinetisch Noord has often been classified under the denominator "political games". Following the "bureaucratization" of the organization that formerly protected their interests, respondents indicate that they feel they are ignored and many even mention that they do not fully trust Olij. Meanwhile, rules and regulations at the wharf have also increased, so the respondents say. Significantly, the more concrete and "local" the decisions that are made are to the respondents, the more they actively oppose them. This is exemplified by a strong opposition towards the foundation Kinetisch Noord and its director Olij.

From the interviews it seems that the cultural producers would accept that institutions use them in their cultural regeneration, creative city and participatory society discourses, as long as they have a relatively cheap space that they have in self-management. However, the respondents feel threatened by the appropriation and control of the NDSM by the institutions; in their eyes, the balance between control and freedom has been distorted. The way they fight these developments, it seems, is by locally opposing the decisions that are made, while high-up discourses are often taken for granted.



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# 1. Introduction

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In the last few decades, various authors have addressed the role of culture and creativity as key productive elements in the new economy. Influential theories of Smith (1979) and Zukin (1982) on “cultural gentrification” and of Landry (2000), Florida (2002) on the “creative city” have had a huge impact on urban policy. Next to this, a policy shift has been announced towards a more facilitative government: the “participatory society”. These theories have also been subject to much debate, both in the field of urban studies and beyond academia. Although many of these authors have addressed the role of the bottom-up developments, a critical governance perspective dominates the debate. The perspectives of the creatives, for whom the policies are meant, remain largely out of sight in it.

Abandoned industrial sites – commonly called brownfields – close to city centers provide prime examples of interesting places where many of the policies on creativity and culture have had an impact. In the post-Fordist era, these sites have often been appropriated by creative entrepreneurs – with or without permission of the owners – to establish their practices. Often, local governments have played an important role in these developments.

This study will focus on one of such sites: the NDSM-werf in Amsterdam Noord. The NDSM-werf is a breeding place, providing a working space for over 200 artists, with a total surface of roughly 85.000 m<sup>2</sup>. Over the last decade, the NDSM-werf – a former shipyard at the northern IJ-bank – has emerged as a vibrant and lively space, praised for its bottom-up developments, its creativity and its “authenticity”. It has been praised by some as a flagship project of cooperation between bottom-up developments by cultural producers and the local government. However, another side of the story reveals it has also been a site of conflict between the two parties. This side is characterized by the increased formalization of an informal site; it is characterized by a continuous struggle between the cultural producers present at the NDSM-werf and the institutional world. On the one hand, cultural producers feel that they have made the NDSM-werf the place it is today. On the other, the municipality has subsidized the wharf, for which they have in turn demanded a degree of control. The conflict between both parties has only increased over the years. It is therefore an interesting case to scrutinize the institutionalization practices that have taken place.

## 1.1. Research Question

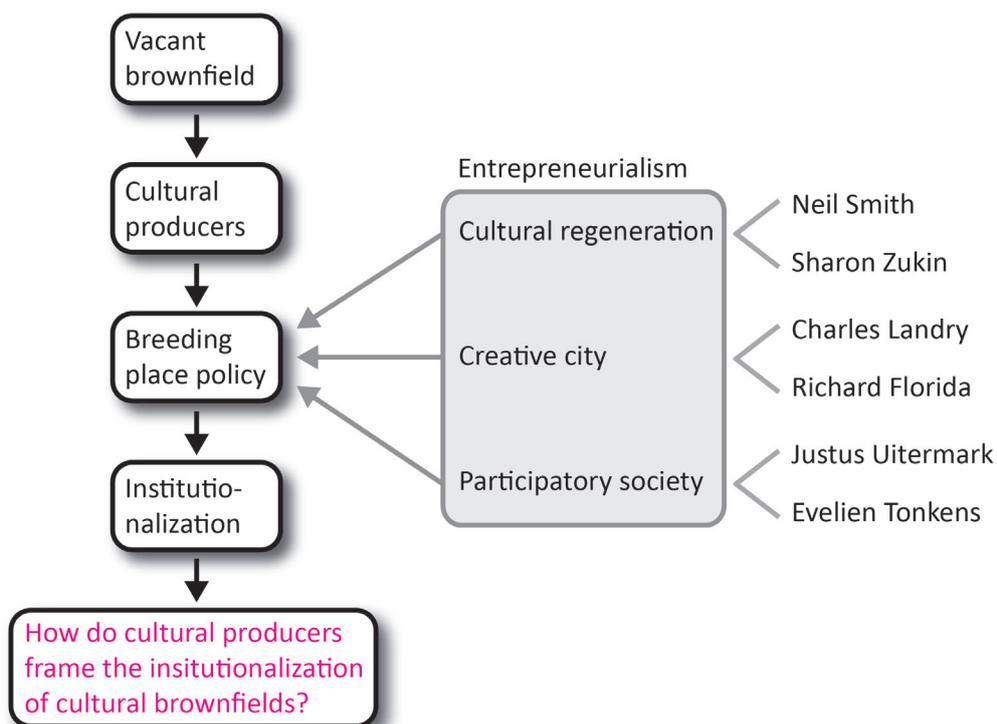
This research will look at the theories and their resulting policies relevant for the NDSM-werf from a cultural producer's point of view. This will add an exploratory case of incorporating the perspectives of cultural producers on these urban policies for culture and creativity to the existing body of literature on cultural and creative policies.

My research is centered on answering the following research questions (see figure 1.1):

*How is the institutionalization of the NDSM-werf framed among cultural producers at the NDSM-werf?*

Subquestions

1. After its bankruptcy, how did the NDSM-werf develop into its current state?
2. What discourses about the institutionalization of the NDSM-werf can be distinguished among cultural producers?



**Fig 1.1:** Schematic overview of the research (author, 2014)

## 1.2. Relevance

To clarify the relevance of this research and the outline of the following chapters, it is useful to first look at the work of Michael Burawoy (2005). Burawoy distinguishes between four categories of sociological labor that are interdependent: policy sociology, public sociology, professional sociology and critical sociology. Policy sociology is concerned with providing solutions to problems that have been formulated by clients. When practicing in public sociology, the sociologist engages in a dialogue with the public, in which “...the agenda of each is brought to the table, in which each adjusts to the other (Burawoy 2005, 9).” Professional sociology is an indispensable part of sociological labor. It “...supplies true and tested methods, accumulated bodies of knowledge, orienting questions, and conceptual frameworks (2005, 10).” It consists of “...multiple intersecting research programs (2005, 10)” that all have their established and generally accepted types of specific knowledge linked to it. Critical sociology on the other hand, has the role “...to examine the foundations— both the explicit and the implicit, both normative and descriptive— of the research programs of professional sociology (2005, 10).” It provides us with two questions that are of key importance, linking all four types of sociological labor: Sociology for whom? This question addresses the public for whom we are writing and theorizing. The other question is: Sociology for what? With this question, the goal of the sociological labor is addressed. While policy sociology and professional sociology are “instrumental”, public sociology and critical sociology are “reflexive”.

In chapter 2, studies and theories will be presented relevant to my object of study. These insights have come mostly from policy sociology, backed by professional sociology, and in some cases they have sparked public debates. Although some critical work has also been done, it has largely taken on a similar perspective as the foundational theories on culture and creativity in urban dynamics have. This perspective has been mostly centered on economic consequences of certain cultural and creative strategies for cities; it has taken the viewpoint of the planners and policy makers. The main question has often been how to use culture and creativity to achieve economic growth. In this light, cultural producers have often been portrayed as “tools” for regenerating urban areas. Critics have often pointed at social inequalities resulting from these strategies, but they too have looked from a planner’s perspective. The theory so far about cultural and creative urban politics can therefore better be qualified as an internal debate in policy sociology.

This research will focus on the experiences and discourses of the cultural producers regarding the institutionalization practices of the local government and various other actors, in an attempt to incorporate this point of view into the debate. In this way, it is critical on the existing theories that have failed to take a bottom-up perspective. This might lead to a clearer view of the ideas of cultural producers at cultural brownfields about the developments of these spaces; it can provide useful insights and considerations for planners and policy makers involved in planning cultural brownfields but it might also help strengthen the position of cultural producers themselves.

Next to this, most of the studies so far about cultural clusters, art districts, creative hotspots or cultural brownfields, as areas similar to the NDSM-werf have been named, have remained relatively abstract. This means that there is a lack of detailed case studies on the institutionalization of specific cultural brownfields. Again, this is especially poignant for the cultural producers present at such sites, as the dynamics of such institutionalization practices have often notably affected

them.

I have consciously chosen a case study as the main element of my thesis, as I consider this to be an exploratory research. It is exploratory, as not a lot of research has been done on this topic to this date. Although the NDSM-werf as a case is unique, there are a lot of similar “planned informal” areas for which this research might provide interesting lessons.

Finally, it is important to note that the aim of this research is not as much to outline the exact, factual developments of the NDSM-werf. It rejects positivist notions of getting to something like the “ultimate truth” behind what happened, and I subscribe to the postmodern notion that there is no such thing as an “absolute truth”. As the stories, documents and other narratives have all been socially constructed, a “truth” is always “someone’s truth”, a subjective truth. What really happened depends on the perspective one looks from. Not only do I reject the notion of finding an absolute truth; having a limited amount of time to research a vastly complex project like the NDSM-werf makes it impossible to get all the facts on the table. One of the artists at the NDSM said: “Someone should write a book about the NDSM-werf, instead of only a thesis,” only to add later on that even then one would not be able to figure everything out.

Neither am I interested in “unmasking” or “demystifying” certain practices of certain actors; rather, following the ideas of Schinkel (2010), I will try to defamiliarize what has happened at the NDSM-werf and thereby try to show that the current equilibrium at the NDSM is highly contingent and subject to transformation. In other words, I will show how the current reality at the NDSM has come about through deliberate actions of the various actors involved.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

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In this chapter, the existing literature on the object of the research is addressed. In this way, I will put my research proposal into the larger framework of existing debates surrounding the subject. First, I will shortly address a paper on the labelling of areas similar to the NDSM Werf, to fit the area itself into a certain category. This is relevant, as there is a lot of confusion and discussion on the terminology used when describing such sites. Then, I will look at how literature has described similar developments over the years; the focus hereby will be on the ideas behind the strategies employed by local governments. For this, I have distinguished three discourses from which policy for areas similar to the NDSM might arise: cultural regeneration, creative city and the participatory society. I will show from literature that these three frames can be fit into a larger, neoliberal paradigm: entrepreneurialism. Furthermore, I will look at how these ideas have been used in the local context, discussing some case studies of areas that have faced developments similar to the NDSM.

### 2.1. Cultural brownfields and progressive incorporation into mainstream policy

The site of my case study has a few characteristics it shares with a lot of other areas. It has been a former industrial area, where since the de-industrialization bottom-up developments have been taking place spearheaded by cultural producers. These developments often revitalize areas and can boost economic activity for cities, as acknowledged perhaps most famously by Florida (2002). These sites have often gradually been incorporated into and subjected to mainstream policy. In other words, they have, often during this period of revitalization, been planned by institutions other than only the cultural producers present at the site. However, as Chapple, Jackson et al. point out: "... little is understood about how such districts emerge and what roles different planning processes play (2011, 225)." This is also reflected in the plurality of terms used to describe such sites. To use a terminology that positions the NDSM in larger debates about similar areas, I will use the term "cultural brownfield" for the NDSM-werf, following Andres and Grésillon. According to them, cultural brownfields "...refers to organic, bottom-up alternative cultural projects settled on derelict sites which differ from any squatting activities (Andres and Grésillon 2013, 42)." They also mention that these brownfield sites have "... progressively been included into cultural and urban policy across Europe (Andres and Grésillon 2013, 42)." Similar developments have taken place at the NDSM. This observation is complemented by studies of Chapple, Jackson et al., arguing that formal and informal planning strategies often intermingle in the emergence of such sites (2011). Their research shows that public investment and policy can play an essential role in developing art districts. Informal districts, like the NDSM-werf, "... are often bolstered by city-funded marketing or small-scale public improvements (Chapple, Jackson et al. 2011, 225)."

Elaborating on the progressive incorporation of cultural brownfields in mainstream policy, Andres and Grésillon distinguish between three categories, based on their developments overtime:

1. Alternative cultural brownfields are formerly squatted spaces and are characterized by conflicts between cultural producers and local authorities but have progressively been institutionalized.

2. Branding cultural brownfields refer to spaces that have artificially adopted the “trendy” image of organic developments as part of cultural economic policies for urban regeneration.
3. Creative cultural brownfields encompass spaces where a holistic consideration of the benefits of culture has led to creation of a “pseudo” cultural brownfield, fitting in the creative city paradigm (Andres and Grésillon 2013).

These categories contain some similarities and overlaps; hence they will not be used in this research as rudimentary categories. However, the article of Andres and Grésillon does provide an interesting categorization of cultural brownfields from which this research can start.

Being a formerly partly squatted site that over time has been incorporated in policy by the municipality of Amsterdam, the NDSM-werf seems to fit into the first category. However, there are some elements of all categories that seem to describe the NDSM-werf.

## **2.2. Urban policy discourses**

The distinction between the three types of cultural brownfields by Andres and Grésillon can be put into perspective when looking at research of other authors that have addressed similar topics concerning cultural brownfields. First, the cultural regeneration or gentrification of urban areas through culture will be addressed; this discourse links to the branding cultural brownfields. Next, literature about the “creative city” will be discussed, following the ideas of Landry and Florida. The creative city discourse is linked to the creative cultural brownfields. Furthermore, a short overview of the “participatory society” will be highlighted, in which the government also seeks to promote successful bottom-up developments like those at the NDSM-werf as textbook examples of citizen initiatives. This discourse can be best linked to the alternative cultural brownfields. After this, an introduction on overarching “entrepreneurialism” discourse will be provided, in which the incorporation of cultural brownfields will be fitted into the larger frame of neoliberalism. Finally, a short overview of some exemplary case studies of cultural brownfields that have been incorporated into policy will be introduced, in which the views of cultural producers are addressed.

### **Cultural regeneration**

First, it seems useful to shortly elaborate on the gentrification process, which has been theorized extensively. An influential theorist on this subject is Neil Smith. He distinguishes between two types of explanations for gentrification: cultural and economic (Smith 1979). In the explanations falling into the first category, the emphasis is on the shift to a post-industrial city, with changing consumption patterns. Urban rather than suburban places satisfy these new consumption demands. The second category addresses the economic aspect: city centers at the time were considered to be underpriced; a phenomenon Smith calls the “rent gap”. He states: “The rent gap is the disparity between the potential ground rent level and the actual ground rent capitalized under the present land use (Smith 1979, 454).” Investment in these centers, which might lead to gentrification, is thus rational (Smith 1979). At the NDSM-werf, definitely one of the reasons for cultural

producers to start their businesses there was that its buildings were squatted and thus cheap. However, for my research, it seems more relevant to go into detail about the “cultural” explanations of gentrification, focusing on consumption. This also holds more ground as there are hardly any dwellings on the NDSM-werf.

A key author, who addresses cultural gentrification, is Zukin. She describes a process of gentrification that is driven by “authenticity” and consumption practices (Zukin 2008). She distinguishes two waves of gentrification. In the first stage, cultural producers, who often have little money to spend, move into an area that they feel has an aura of authenticity. This authenticity is not only established by the physical aspects and the story of the place, but also by the presence of local residents. Once cultural producers have moved in, they start their own, alternative consumption spaces, selling an idea of “authenticity”. Zukin states: “...in the process of developing alternative consumption practices, they contribute to changes that make these spaces more desirable (Zukin 2008, 725).” Following these development, the neighborhood generates positive (media) attention, and a second wave of gentrifiers comes in, replacing the poorer first wave: the “supergentrifiers” (Zukin 2008). These are characterized by Zukin as “...wealthy cultural consumers and home buyers (Zukin 2008, 732).”

Sometimes, successful cultural producers are able to maintain their business in the area. The process of competition and gentrification is often naturalized; as one of the developers working in an art district put it, in the article of Chapple, Jackson et al.: “Failure’s not a bad thing. It’s natural; it’s part of the organic process (2011, 231).” According to the study, cultural producers sometimes naturalize this process as well.

Zukin sketches a process of gentrification that seems relentless in displacing original residents and first-wave gentrifiers. This idea is supported by Lees et al. in a comparative review of other authors, stating: “...many more authors view gentrification to be a negative process, one that causes direct or indirect displacement (Lees, Slater et al. 2008, 234).” Next to this, they argue that the “...negative impacts have not been considered seriously, or indeed have been ignored, by policy makers.” Furthermore, a lot of the reviewed literature by Lees et al. seems to suggest that gentrification leads to conflicts between classes. Veldboer and Kleinhans make a similar claim about later works of Lees et al. ((Lees, Slater et al. 2010), cited in (Veldboer and Kleinhans 2013)), stating they claim gentrification leads to class conflict. However, other authors have claimed that, specifically in Amsterdam, relatively stable stages of gentrification can be maintained (Van Weesep and Wiegersma 1991, Veldboer and Kleinhans 2013). Although these studies have researched housing stock, they do hint at an important role for local governments in stabilizing gentrification processes.

In another research, Zukin and Braslow study creative districts in New York; they warn the institutional world not to make policies for “unplanned” creative districts. They argue that once an organically developed art district is marked as a creative area, the image of a trendy area is confirmed and rents go up. Even though the government may try to keep prices low for creative businesses, the creatives themselves are often driven out by the gentrification surrounding them. In this example, cultural producers are used by the government as a “tool” to revitalize areas – a procedure Zukin and Braslow warn against.

As shown in the study above, cultural regeneration or gentrification is often accompanied by, or can even be initiated by the marketing of certain organic developments by cultural producers as trendy or hip. It can also pose threats

for the artists present at such sites, as we have seen, as they might eventually be marginalized due to gentrification. These promoting practices of organic developments in a specific area can help to regenerate but also gentrify the area. These developments thus link strongly to the branding cultural brownfields.

### **Creative city**

Another important concept relevant to describe policies regarding cultural brownfields, is the “creative city”, as put forward by Charles Landry and the related notion of the “creative class” by Richard Florida. The post-industrial era – starting at the late ‘70s and early ‘80s – led to many socio-economic and cultural changes. One of them was the growing importance of culture and creativity in the urban economy. In fact, knowledge and creativity came to play a central role in this new economy. This has also been true for Amsterdam, and the Dutch capital proved to be a formidable breeding ground for these new ideas. Following a period of decline in the 1980’s, squatter movements thrived in Amsterdam (Peck 2012); this is also the period that the NDSM-werf bankrupted and its buildings were squatted. Then, in the 1990’s, Amsterdam revived and prices rose quickly. The diversity and flexibility, combined with an international allure, formed the constitutive elements for a policy refreshment that was initiated a few years later. In 2002, Richard Florida introduced the concept of the “creative class”, which would be the new key ingredient for economic growth (Florida 2002). This meant that around the new millennium, cities all over the world started investing to attract the creative class (Peck 2005, Seifert and Stern 2005, Oudenampsen 2007, Chapple, Jackson et al. 2011). As Peck points out, Amsterdam adopted the idea of creative policies since the arrival of Richard Florida in Amsterdam in 2003 (Peck 2012). As most of the ingredients needed to attract the creative class were already there, Amsterdam soon became an exemplary case of a “creative city”, with the NDSM-werf as one of its flagships. Bontje and Musterd confirm this “creative turn” in the planning policies of Amsterdam and its active involvement in stimulating “creative knowledge” (Bontje and Musterd 2009). They point out some examples of policy initiatives, the main one being the “broedplaatsen” policy<sup>1</sup>, providing affordable space for artists and other cultural producers (Oudenampsen 2007, Bontje and Musterd 2009). Interestingly enough, the NDSM-werf claims to be the largest cultural “broedplaats” in Europe (NDSM.nl 2013). Although the creative city discourse revolves around the same concepts as cultural regeneration – culture and creativity – the essence of the ideas differs; cultural regeneration should be regarded as a place specific regeneration scheme, while the creative city discourse addresses mostly the larger scale, the inter-urban competition for economic growth, and the use of culture and creativity in this competition. Thus, creative city links strongly to the creative cultural brownfields, in which a holistic approach is taken to develop cultural brownfields as part of the creative city strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> The policy on “broedplaatsen”, breeding places, was actually established in 1999 already. Following the development plans for the IJ-waterfronts in the late 1990’s, squatters and artists in these “free havens” were threatened with displacement. They consequently asked the municipality to devise a plan for their settlement, which resulted in the plan for “broedplaatsen” (Gemeente Amsterdam 2013). It has been developed further since Amsterdam’s “creative turn” in 2003. This data provides interesting information however, for the practices of the cultural producers when faced with threatening displacement; it will be dealt with further on in this research.

### **Participatory society**

Although not yet as apparent as the cultural regeneration or the creative city frames, as it has only recently been introduced in the Netherlands, the “participatiesamenleving” or participatory society – formally introduced to the Dutch audience in the “Troonrede” (Rijksoverheid 2013) – has started to influence recent political decisions. Self-organization of citizens and facilitation by the government where needed is, according to various authors, an important idea for future interplay between citizen and government (see for instance (Uitermark 2014)).

However, this demand for facilitating active citizens has not come from nowhere; it has increasingly been incorporated into policy over the last couple of decades. It is therefore relevant to shortly discuss the history of this development. After the Second World War, the Dutch government took the responsibility to rebuild the country. At the same time, the welfare state was introduced. In the 1970s, people started realizing the state was not solving all of their problems, and the state in turn recognized that the knowledge of citizens could be useful in creating good policies. The welfare state had to reform under pressure of the demands of citizens for more democracy. This led to more transparency (Duyvendak, Knijn et al. 2006). In this period, the state still played a major role, but citizens could exert influence. In the 1980s and 1990s, the state retreated more and more, and the influence of citizens was increased (Tonkens 2008). Civilians were invited to join and cooperate with the government. It was a period of neoliberalism (see for instance (Peck and Tickell 2002)). However, the retreatment of the government sometimes led to inequality, and they searched for a new equilibrium between the state and its citizens. The passive state of the 1980s and 1990s made way for a more proactive state, facilitating citizen’s initiatives. Bailey, discussing the United Kingdom, concludes that government policies have changed from the “welfare state model” to the recognition of local knowledge as useful, facilitating civil initiatives (Bailey 2012)<sup>2</sup>. In these times, grand, top-down policy and planning seem to be history and people seem to have real influence (see for example (Uitermark 2014)).

Yet, when self-organization becomes essential as social security is eroding, people are more and more dependent on their networks (Uitermark 2014). Uitermark recognizes an emphasis on the successful examples of participation and warns for neglecting the failures. Scholars warn for inequality in this context (Tonkens 2014, Uitermark 2014); often, groups of people who already “participate actively” in society and who have a strong network are the ones that succeed. The groups that are already “weaker” often have more trouble to participate. Both Tonkens and Uitermark encourage the government to support this last group.

Another thing Tonkens warns for is the misconception that the participatory society would bring a new form of democracy. According to her, people start their own initiatives “...not because they see a new form of democracy in it, but rather because they have lost faith in participating in democracy. They are angry at neoliberalism, global capitalism, the greediness of banks et cetera, that is why they start their own neighborhood vegetable garden (2014, 4)<sup>3</sup>.”

The developments at the NDSM-werf seem to epitomize the participatory ideal; starting as a bottom-up development initiated by local actors, picked up and facilitated by the local government. This is resonated by the policy of breeding places, of the municipality of Amsterdam, where the cultural producers are expected to take initiative, and the municipality jumps in when facilitating is needed (Gemeente Amsterdam 2013). The organic developments at alternative cultural brownfields

thus seem to be flagship projects of the participatory turn. But, when marketing it as such, it also links to the branding cultural brownfields.

### **Entrepreneurialism; an overarching frame**

Some 25 years ago already, Harvey brought forward a theory about a shift of urban governance from managerialism towards entrepreneurialism (Harvey 1989). This shift is characterized by stronger inter-city competition. Over the years, entrepreneurialism as an urban strategy has become a popular subject of research among scholars. Just as the frames described before, the entrepreneurial frame is applicable to the events that have taken place at the NDSM.

One of the authors that has made a contribution to the understanding of the entrepreneurial strategy of the city of Amsterdam, is Oudenampsen. He argues that the described “creative turn” in Amsterdam’s city policy can be fit into a larger, neoliberal view (Oudenampsen 2007). This claim is resonated by Zimmerman, stating: “The creative city growth strategy, however, did not represent a radical break with previous chapters of the entrepreneurial city. Although the epiphenomenon of urban promotion was altered considerably, the most meaningful consequence was the repackaging and strengthening of the extant downtown-based property-led development paradigm (Zimmerman 2008, 241).” This can be similarly argued for cultural regeneration strategies. As discussed previously, cultural producers are often employed as revitalization strategies for certain areas; from this, gentrification often follows.

Even the participatory turn can be fit into a neo-liberal context, in which the state retreats further. This is similar to the point Pruijt (2003) makes about urban movement groups, like squatters. He argues, citing Mayer (1998) that in a neoliberal or market-oriented regime, governments have increasingly “...included many of these groups, as it became a strategy of many municipalities to employ former social movement organizations in the development at implementation of (alternative) social and cultural services, of housing provision, and local economic ‘development’ (Mayer 1998, 69).” Pruijt, as a conclusion further states that his research “...confirmed the proposition that a market-oriented regime encourages the cooptation of movement groups as service providers, which in turn implies the abandonment of squatting (Prujt 2003, 152).” Even The Times, an influential British newspaper, has argued similarly about the “Big Society” program of Cameron, describing Big Society as “...an impressive attempt to reframe the role of government and unleash entrepreneurial spirit (The Times 2010)”.

Entrepreneurialism can thus be seen as an overarching frame, inspired by neoliberalism, in which the frames mentioned above can be fitted. The entrepreneurial attitude Amsterdam has taken on has yielded policies that aim to attract the creative class. However, not only Oudenampsen but also Harvey (1989), like the others already mentioned, fear a marginalization of the lower classes of society as they are neglected by the government. Policy makers claim the wealth the creative class will bring to the city will trickle down to even the most vulnerable groups (Oudenampsen 2007). This remains to be seen.

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<sup>2</sup> In the United Kingdom, David Cameron introduced the term “Big Society” in 2010 to designate a policy idea similar to the participatory society in the Netherlands.

<sup>3</sup> Fragment translated from Dutch.

### **2.3. Institutionalization and the perception of cultural producers**

There is a body of literature that describes the progressive incorporation of creative hotspots into mainstream policy, some of which have already been addressed (see for instance (Pratt 2009, Chapple, Jackson et al. 2011, Martí-Costa and Miquel 2011, Zukin and Braslow 2011, Andres and Grésillon 2013). To designate this development, I borrow a term used by Pruijt (2003) to describe the incorporation of squatting into policy: institutionalization. Pruijt applies this term to social movements: "Institutionalization means that a movement is channeled into a stable pattern based on formalized rules and laws (Pruijt 2003, 134)." Pruijt in turn has borrowed the concept from Castells (1983). The idea of certain norms and values obtaining social dominance that is also associated with the concept in its use by Castells, does not apply to the institutionalization of creative hotspots however. Using the term, I merely want to indicate the increasing number of rules, regulations and other interferences imposed on cultural producers from actors outside of these hotspots, such as local governments and developers.

There are two sides to the institutionalization of cultural brownfields. As policies were made to facilitate, but also institutionalize the cultural developments in the city, cultural producers felt threatened by the loss of "free" spaces. Bontje and Musterd say the following, mentioning the start of the breeding place policy: "Within the wide-ranging socio-cultural dimension of urban and regional development strategies, the tensions between 'commercial' and 'non-commercial' activities were seen as particularly problematic by many of the experts interviewed. Amsterdam has developed a policy providing relatively cheap working spaces for starting artists and creative entrepreneurs. This developed in response to a lobby of artists and (former) squatters who feared the loss of unplanned and unregulated spaces in Amsterdam as a result of the upgrading of inner city and former harbour and industrial sites (Bontje and Musterd 2009, 851)." This point is further exemplified by Zukin and Braslow, stating: "For their part, artists are distrustful of regulation. At the extreme, in order to perform their "difference" they may want to be in an unrecognized limbo in space and time that enables them to remain "edgy". In the New York case, designating a naturally occurring artists' neighborhood a creative district is the death knell of creativity (and the beginning of higher rents) (Zukin and Braslow 2011, 139)." These quotes not only demonstrate that often economic motives are the driving force behind institutionalization practices, but also shows that artists are often unhappy about increased governmental control or labelling, often resulting in gentrification. And with good reason, as various studies have shown that government interference regarding cultural brownfields often leads to displacement of (many of the) artists (Martí-Costa and Miquel 2011, Zukin and Braslow 2011).

## 2.4. Returning to Burawoy

Most of the authors and theories that have been addressed in this chapter have come from policy sociology and professional sociology, but some of the discussed work was also read by a wider public, beyond academia. The work of Florida for instance, originating from policy sociology, has been tremendously influential beyond sociology. A lot of the theories presented have also been extensively criticized, both from inside and outside of the sociological discipline. I have addressed several authors that have scrutinized and criticized - again for example - the work of Richard Florida, like Jamie Peck (2005); this could be considered critical sociology. However, while formulated sharply, the critique is still located within the frame of creativity in economic terms; therefore, it does not call into question the foundations of research on creative policy and it is therefore debatable whether or not it can be named as critical sociology.

As I share the observation of Boren & Young – that sociology concerning creative policy has reached an impasse – I think it is time to broaden the scope of the debate. I will thus engage in critical sociology. Although many of the authors presented in this chapter have often been critical of the creative urban strategies employed by policymakers and planners, these same policymakers and planners stubbornly seem to continue to implement their strategies. Borén and Young state: “Urban policymakers worldwide continue to adopt narrow conceptualizations of ‘creativity’ while largely ignoring extensive academic criticism of the concept, suggesting that academic concerns with creativity in urban policy need to be reoriented more effectively (2013, 1799).” The criticism on these strategies, as we have seen, has been primarily targeted at the perceived inequality and possible exclusion resulting from them and critics have voiced doubts about the effectiveness of these strategies.

However, the focus of these strategies as well as the criticism has hereby, in my opinion, been too much centered on the governmental perspective on creativity and its influences on cities and city districts. This perspective fails to acknowledge the ambiguity and complexity of institutionalizing creativity. In the following chapters, I will try to show – building on the experiences of cultural producers - why this is ambiguous, and what implications the one-sided, economic perspective on creativity has had for the NDSM-werf.

If I have succeeded in giving cultural producers a voice in a debate dominated by policymakers and planners, one could argue I have engaged in public sociology. In the words of Burawoy: “...professional sociology depends for its vitality upon the continual challenge of public issues through the vehicle of public sociology (2005, 15).”

### 3. Methodology

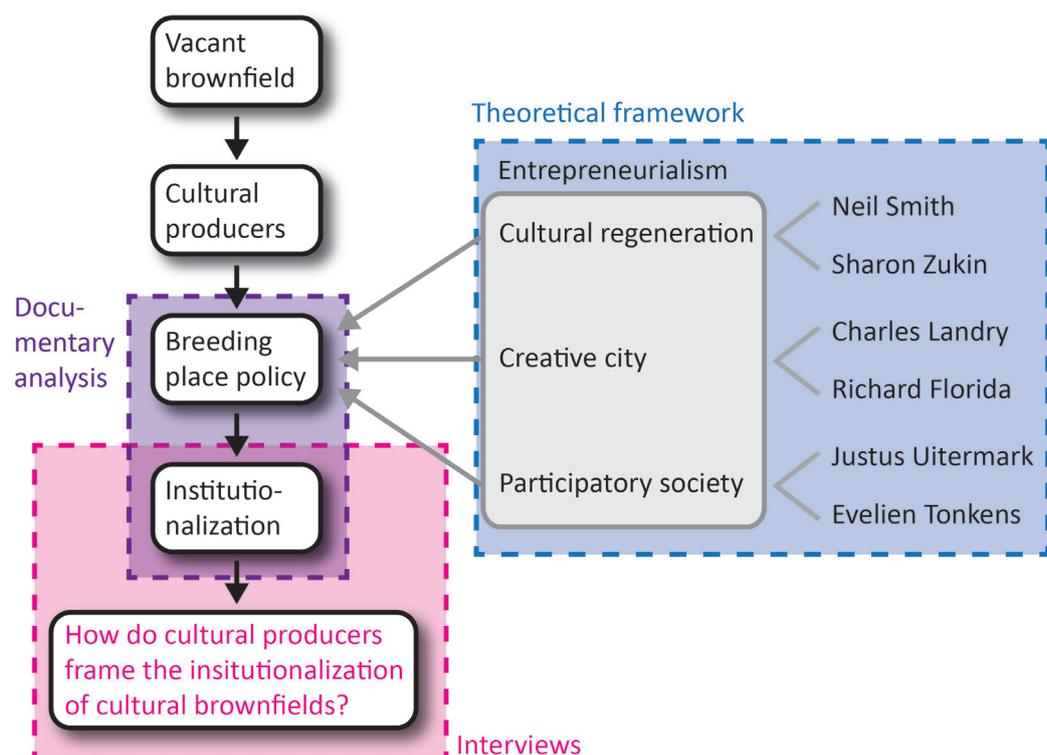
My research consists solely of various qualitative research methods. As the goal of this research is to find out the discourses of cultural producers, a qualitative approach will provide me with the most useful data to answer my research questions.

The main method of conducting research is a discourse analysis. In order to do this, the research starts with a documentary analysis about the NDSM-werf and the relevant policy documents, followed by conducting interviews. Observation is mainly used as an additional method to gather information, but is less prominent. By using these methods, I have tried to employ “triangulation” to some degree, as I use different qualitative methods that might lead to a mutual strengthening of certain findings.

The methods used contain external reliability to some degree; observation and interviews can be conducted by others, although never under the exact same circumstances. However, in the case of the documentary analysis, the external reliability is very high, as others can access the same information. Interviewing also possesses the quality of internal reliability; there is always the interviewer and the respondent to confirm the findings.

As the data gained from the documentary analysis have provided me with both the information needed to describe the developments at the NDSM-werf until now and the interviews with the discourses of the cultural producers about these developments, the methods match the theories that will be developed. In other words, internal validity is assured. External validity might be problematic however, as this research concerns a case study and is thus context specific. This means that the generalizability or transferability of my research might not be very high. As discussed before, this also has to do with this research being an exploratory case. It does not mean however, that the findings will be irrelevant; they might provide a starting point for future studies that can go more in depth on the topic.

**Fig 3.1:** Schematic overview of the methodology (author, 2014)



### **3.1. Discourse analysis**

The aim of this research has been to conduct a discourse analysis on the discourses of cultural producers at the NDSM-werf about the institutionalization at the NDSM. More specifically, it will look for certain clues in distinguishing discourses of the cultural producers. Figure 3.1 on the left page summarizes the general outline of the research. The basis of the scheme is trajectory most cultural brownfields have in common. First of all, in the theoretical framework, the definition of cultural brownfields will be expanded. Also, it will look at four discourses that have informed creative and cultural urban policy. Next, on the basis of the theory, the translation of the discourses into the breeding place policy is made. This is done employing a documentary analysis.

The research then looks at the narratives of cultural producers about the four discourses deduced from the literature (entrepreneurialism, cultural regeneration, creative city and participatory society), as presented in the next chapter. Then, the narratives of the respondents regarding the breeding place policy and the institutionalization of the NDSM resulting from it will be addressed. Finally, out of these data that will constitute this discourse analysis, conclusions will be drawn.

Due to time constraints, I have chosen to solely investigate the discourses of the cultural producers at the wharf. Obtaining and involving the discourses of planners and policy makers in this research would take more time; this would have been almost impossible in the timeframe given. Because in the literature about cultural brownfields the discourses of cultural producers seemed to be underrepresented while the narratives and strategies of planners and policy makers have been extensively researched, those of the cultural producers seemed more relevant to investigate. Further research might be useful to see what the narratives of the other relevant actors are about the developments of the NDSM-werf.

I have not necessarily engaged in a critical discourse analysis (Van Dijk 1993) however, as at the start of the research I did not necessarily have the assumption that some groups are dominant over other groups; although obviously some power-relations come into play in the struggles on the NDSM, I could not say what the dominant and subversive discourses are at that point.

### **3.2. Documentary analysis**

The documentary analysis will be mostly used in two ways: to scrutinize the breeding place policy by analyzing the relevant policy documents, and to analyze the institutionalization practices that have been going on at the NDSM-werf. This includes taking a look into the planning archives of the municipality of Amsterdam, publications and websites of cultural producers, project developers, planning firms and other actors that have cooperated and are cooperating in the developments. It will show to what extent the developments at the wharf have been “planned”, thereby explaining the role of the institutions like the local government in institutionalizing the NDSM-werf. By closely looking at these policy texts, the discourses on the NDSM-werf by governmental institutions have been inferred. In this sense, the developments can be fitted into certain framings or paradigms by the institutional world.

Furthermore, the documentary analysis will also be used to look at the discourses of cultural producers. While interviewing has been the main method to obtain these narratives, the documentary analysis has been used as a second source

of information. For instance, the minutes of meetings of the tenants of the NDSM-werf proved to be a strong addition to the findings from the interviews. The sources used for the documentary analysis include academic articles, policy documents, documents by private parties, websites, and newspapers found using lexisnexis.

### **3.3. Observation**

Although observation has not been the main method of gathering data, it has been used for various purposes. Firstly, it has been employed to get a general idea of the area. For this, I have been passively participating, observing from a distance (Hennink, Hutter et al. 2010). I have also conducted some moderate participation, as I have tried to learn more about the activities happening at the NDSM and the actors involved in these activities (Hennink, Hutter et al. 2010).

### **3.4. Interviewing**

Interviewing is the most important methods for this research. After having done a documentary analysis and some general observation on the site, I established an interview guide that has loosely been followed during the interviews. To find out the discourses of the artists about the institutionalization (and the theory and policy behind the institutionalization, see the scheme on the previous page), semi-structured interviews have been conducted. For the research, I have conducted seven interviews, with eight people in total. The following list shows the respondents that have been interviewed:

- 1st interview at 02/04/2014: Belinda Kuitert and Romé Botman; two interns who have been working at the NDSM for 5 months, studying all-round styling.
- 2nd interview, 07/04/2014: Rombout Oomen; artist who has been working at the NDSM-werf since 2006. He has sat on the board of the tenants' association De Toekomst.
- 3rd interview 09/04/2014: Jorke Schaling; goldsmith who has been working at the NDSM since 2006. Currently sits on the board of the tenants' association De Toekomst as treasurer.
- 4th interview at 30/04/2014: Eva Schippers; artist who did a project at the NDSM for two months. Has her own atelier in Amsterdam-Oost.
- 5th interview, at 19/05/2014: Bart Stuart; artist and urban scholar who has been working at the NDSM since 2000.
- 6th interview at 27/05/2014: Anonymous; artist, has been present since 2006.
- 7th interview at 28/05/2014: Eva de Klerk; one of the initiators of Kinetisch Noord, winning the competition to redevelop the wharf. First present at the wharf in 1996.

The number of respondents is fairly low. I have spoken to eight out of a total of over 200 artists who work at the NDSM; this means the sample might not have a high degree of representation among the artists at the NDSM. It is therefore very hard to come to hard, definite conclusions. However, as will become clear further on in this research, many respondents seemed to share similar opinions on certain issues. This might indicate that to some extent, saturation of data has been reached. Thus,

although many of the findings presented in this study will not be conclusive, they might give certain indications that can be of relevance for future research. Again, being an exploratory case of research on the discourses of cultural producers at cultural brownfields, providing a starting point for future studies on a similar topic is one of the main goals of this research.

### **Getting access**

Gaining access to enough respondents has been a struggle. Time was one of the main impediments to get a large amount of respondents. However, this was not the only problem.

After I had vaguely outlined what I wanted to know and how to research it, I started thinking about ways to recruit respondents that could provide me with useful information. The first step in recruiting artists as respondents, who were essential to my research, was attending a conference called “Facing North”, in Pakhuis de Zwijger on the 22nd of January 2014<sup>4</sup>. At the conference, in itself very useful, some people stayed to talk to each other. One of them, Rombout Oomen, had asked a question during the discussion, introducing himself as an artist at the NDSM. I walked up to him and after a casual chat with him and his collocutor – also an artist at the NDSM – I asked him for his telephone number to get in contact with him when I was ready for the interviews. He would later act as a sort of gatekeeper, introducing me to various other artists at the NDSM-werf.

While Oomen was excited to share his thoughts in an interview, many were much more reluctant to talk to me. The main reason cited to decline interviews was the lack of time<sup>5</sup>; people at the NDSM work hard and they seemed to have enough on their minds already being occupied with their work. However, as I found out, that was not the only reason. Although many of the cultural producers would not directly say it, the conflictual relationship between various actors involved in the developments at the NDSM seemed to be an issue as well; some people did not seem to feel comfortable talking about that. One of the artists noted: “People do not want to talk. Their statements might have consequences.”

Next to the rejections to be interviewed, there were also a lot of cultural producers that just did not reply to emails. Furthermore, some people at the wharf seemed to get a little tired of all the students researching the NDSM, asking for interviews<sup>6</sup>. This was also a major reason for artists to reject interviews.

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<sup>4</sup> Facing North was an event hosted to discuss the developments in Amsterdam Noord, where the NDSM-werf is also located. The intention of the meeting was to create a dialogue about the challenges Amsterdam Noord faces.

<sup>5</sup> I contacted a large number of cultural producers via email, I called some of them if I was able to trace their phone numbers, I directly approached them when looking around at the NDSM, but most people just did not seem to want to make time, or just had no time at all.

<sup>6</sup> During the time of my research, some of the artists told me other students were also looking for interviews. It turned out that about 5 students were studying the NDSM-werf at the same time.

## 4. Translating discourses to policy; the breeding place policy

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In the theoretical framework, discourses and theories have been presented relating to cultural urban policies. These discourses have been incorporated into policy<sup>7</sup>, of which the breeding place policy is the most relevant. This chapter will first look at how the breeding place policy came about; its relevant history will be described. Furthermore, this chapter will show precisely how these discourses have been translated into policy, relevant to the case of the NDSM-werf. This will be done by scrutinizing two important policy documents: Amsterdam Topstad (Amsterdam top city) – a general policy vision for Amsterdam to remain competitive, established by the city council in 2006, and “Policy framework Studio & Art Factories; Programme Amsterdam Metropolitan Area 2012-2016<sup>8</sup>” – a plan for art factories<sup>9</sup> in Amsterdam established by Bureau Broedplaatsen in February 2012. In these documents, specific passages will be picked out to highlight the described theories that have been incorporated.

### 4.1. The establishment of the breeding place policy

In the 80s and 90s, the municipality of Amsterdam made plans to turn the banks at the IJ into what was called “Manhattan aan het IJ”, consisting of ambitious schemes to erect various tall buildings at the waterfronts (Topalovic, Neelen et al. 2003, Oudenampsen 2009). This plan – mainly providing high-end housing and offices – was backed by developers and investors, who together with the municipality formed the public-private partnership called the Amsterdam Waterfront Finance Group (AWF). Rem Koolhaas, a famous Dutch architect, made the masterplan for the area in 1992. However, the plan endured large amounts of criticism, not only from planners and architects but also from squatters, artists and other activists. They feared that the adoption of the plan would lead to their eviction from the squatted buildings along the IJ banks. This led to the establishment of “Het Gilde van Werkgebouwen aan het IJ”, the guild of industrial buildings along the IJ in 1993, a direct reaction of protest against the plans of the AWF (De Klerk 2010). The founders of this movement were former residents and artists of twelve different squats located along the IJ<sup>10</sup>. Their aim was to fight the plans of the AWF, but also to show a different possibility of development, centered on an idea of organic developments of the existing urban fabric. Another reason behind the establishment of the organization could be a more quantitative one of self-interest; as Pruijt (2003) describes, in the mid-1990s the availability of empty buildings declined as a result of gentrification processes in Amsterdam. Squatters wanted to save the squats still left, fearing they would not have another place to go. However, in 1993, the ING bank, one of the investors in the AWF plan, pulled out of the partnership, and the plan collapsed (Wit 1993, Topalovic, Neelen et al. 2003).

Although the plan of the AWF was cancelled, threats of eviction of their “free havens”, caused by still existing building plans, still troubled the squatting community. This led to a protest of squatters in 1998, in which they asked for a “constructive settlement policy” for squatters and artists (Gemeente Amsterdam 2013). Following this, project “Broedplaats Amsterdam” was established in 1999, now called “Bureau Broedplaatsen”, or Bureau breeding places. While Amsterdam had been a city known for its counterculture and squatting and their conflicts with the local government, with the breeding place policy the municipality Amsterdam tried to cultivate this counterculture. The fact that it provided both the squatters with a solution to their shortage of free spaces<sup>11</sup> and local government with a way to make their city an attractive cultural hotspot once again<sup>12</sup>, meant that the

breeding place frame was becoming dominant (Uitermark 2004). The establishment of a governing body for breeding places has been a highly significant step towards the institutionalization of cultural brownfields. However, although many cultural producers could live with the model, the policy also evoked criticism from other squatters and artists, with a more idealistic, “harder” stance. They oppose the idea of a top-down implementation of bottom-up initiatives. Or, as Jolink says in the NRC Handelsblad: “Creating a breeding place, that’s a contradictio in terminis (Vloet 2000)<sup>13</sup>.” They criticized the municipality for operating like a company, implementing a large amount of rules. Moreover, the title of the article – which takes on the perspective of the hard squatters – says it all: “Broedplaats is een scheldwoord geworden”, which can be translated as “Breeding place has become a dirty word”.

## 4.2. From policy discourses to policy

This next section will look at influential policy documents regarding the breeding place policy, first discussing Amsterdam Topstad (Cohen, Asscher et al. 2006). Firstly, as the following passage makes clear, the city council of Amsterdam subscribes to the entrepreneurial view on creativity: “The world is developing into an international network economy, in which the production factor “knowledge” is central. Knowledge and creativity decide the competitiveness of companies and people. In this economic setting, world cities play a key role. They compete with each other to bring in precisely those business functions in which knowledge development and creativity are central (2006, 3).” They are thus addressing the inter-urban competition for attracting people who might fall under the label “creative class”. Furthermore, it is stated that creativity is the crucial element of the Amsterdam Topstad. This indicates that Amsterdam also employs the creative city discourse; it wants to be a creative city.

There is another discourse represented in the document: cultural regeneration. The city council states: “To increase this strength, Amsterdam wants to “awaken” certain city districts that deserve a boost or that have extra potential to be used. “District casting” and the branding of certain districts with potential can help to attract groups of entrepreneurs, residents and visitors (2006, 9).” Significantly, one of the districts mentioned that lends itself for this, is the northern IJ-bank. Clearly, cultural regeneration is one of the goals.

Finally, breeding places are mentioned as one of the important tools to plan for creativity: “To offer a place to the companies that bring added value in the framework of Amsterdam Topstad as well, flexible possibilities are desired to respond quickly to (temporary) demands for space. Like the demand for temporary breeding places for creative entrepreneurs (2006, 8).”

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<sup>7</sup> Of course, there is the chicken and the egg story; these theories have been based on the effects of policy, just as much as policy has been based on theory. This way they both develop.

<sup>8</sup> This document is written in Dutch. The passages cited have been translated by the author.

<sup>9</sup> Art factory is used in this document as the translation of “broedplaats” or breeding place.

<sup>10</sup> The number of squats involved differs among various sources, ranging from 6 to 24; 12 seems to be the most heard.

<sup>11</sup> Although again, “free” might not be the best term to use here, as breeding places can to a certain extent be considered as “institutionalized squats”.

<sup>12</sup> Since Amsterdam started gentrifying relatively rapidly during the 1990’s, the sub- and counterculture that Amsterdam had been famous for gradually disappeared; this led to a lot of protests and critique, not only in Amsterdam itself but also on the national and international level.

<sup>13</sup> Fragment translated from Dutch.

The breeding place policy is the most relevant for the NDM-werf, being the largest breeding place in Europe. The more specific and more recent publication by Bureau Broedplaatsen elaborates further on this policy, regarding the goals and the means to achieve them. The essence of the breeding place policy is perhaps most sharply described in the following passage: “The presence of creative talent is characteristic of Amsterdam, and is crucially important for the city and its international reputation. The city has high-level educational programmes, museums and galleries that attract the best creative individuals. In order to keep these creative in the city, affordable living and working space is needed. This is something that the city is continuing to work on (Bureau Broedplaatsen 2012, 2).” In other words, the main aim of the breeding place policy is to provide appropriate residential and work spaces for artists in and around Amsterdam (Gemeente Amsterdam 2014).

Like the city council document, references to three of the policy discourses, cultural regeneration, creative city and the overarching entrepreneurial attitude, are easy to find. The following text comprises all three: “In recent years, the significance of Amsterdam’s art factories has been widely acknowledged. Commercial developers, housing corporations, investors and larger creative businesses see the added value of new and, for a large part, young creatives as a factor in Amsterdam’s success as a creative city. This can involve commercial interests in the business world in the perpetual hunt for talent. It can involve housing corporations who see that in neighbourhoods with a mediocre image, the arrival of creatives can bring about a change in the type of residents and kind of activities. And it can involve building owners who are looking for a solution to prevent their buildings from standing vacant for a short or longer period, and to generate a modest rental income. On the basis of such insights, these parties are increasingly proving prepared to participate and contribute to the realisation of new art factories (Bureau Broedplaatsen 2012, 3).” The whole document is filled with references to cultural regeneration and creative city throughout. However, it is important to note that culture and creativity are not addressed as goals per se; rather, the goals that are hinted at (sometimes more explicit) in the documents usually encompass winning the inter-urban competition to attract the creative class, revitalizing certain areas and above all, eventual economic profit. The use of culture and creativity is often addressed, in order to achieve further-reaching goals.

Furthermore, the document speaks about something that could be seen as participatory a stance towards creative entrepreneurs; they emphasize the need to facilitate initiatives of these actors: “BBp fulfils a facilitating role. Art factory initiatives, as entrepreneurs, are themselves responsible for realising art factories. Preferably, they search for a site that inspires them. Subsequently, what they need to achieve their dream is specified in consultation with BBp. This can remain limited to advice. It can also be more intensive, with the BBp playing a guiding role using Locket Broedplaatsen (2012, 6).” Later, they add: “Art factories are set up by creative and sometimes slightly anarchistic initiators, who are seldom real estate professionals. (...) Guidance and municipal patience are essential here (2012, 8).” The breeding places policy is thus almost a synthesis of all four of the discourses discussed in the theoretical framework.

### **4.3. The balance between top-down and bottom-up**

A paradox hides in the last two passages cited from the document, especially in the last sentence. On the one hand, patience is of the essence to leave some room for

the initiators to flourish, on the other hand it is stated that guidance is essential. The question is: when does guidance become taking over control? Another part of the text acknowledges this thin line between facilitating and taking over: “With the realisation of art factories, there are more recurring bottlenecks. One of these is the low level of organization of the target group. There are affordable buildings and there are many creatives who want to occupy such buildings. This requires organisation. Who is going to rent the building? Who will renovate it, and which house rules will apply? This demands a structured approach on the part of the target group itself. For this reason, the city authorities are investing to improve the target group’s knowledge and skills, so that art factories can be realised as independently as possible (2012, 3).”

Not only advice or guidance might threaten the independence of breeding places, the same goes for the control. In both publications, there is an emphasis on freedom and diversity that would help lead to creativity. Interestingly however, Bureau Broedplaatsen states: “By means of biennial consultations to check progress to date, a delegation from CAWA/BBp visits existing art factories. These consultations have the objective of monitoring compliance with the grant conditions, exchanging knowledge and experience, and assessing the expertise present in view of its possible use in new art factories. These consultations to assess current progress are organised and administered by DWZS, together with BBp (2012, 12).” By assessing the breeding places, Bureau Broedplaatsen wants to make sure that everything is going according to plan. However, they are not only assessing a breeding place as a whole, the initiating artists are assessed as well: “In assessing artistic credentials and the type of space available, CAWA will give more emphasis to an artist’s degree of professionalism and the nature of the discipline. The Arts and Culture Framework 2013-2016 will provide the guiding principles, and CAWA’s regulations will be adapted in line with this. Based on the guiding vision document, CAWA will continue to assess plans for art factories in accordance with the plan’s significance for the city in a cultural (specifically presentation opportunities), economic (chains), social (neighbourhoods) and spatial (improvement of image, combating vacant office space) sense (2012, 11).” In fact, the Commissie Ateliers en (Woon)werkpanden Amsterdam (CAWA), translated freely as the Committee ateliers and (residential) and work spaces Amsterdam – the committee responsible for assessing if artists are eligible to rent an atelier in a breeding place – stated in their annual report of 2012 that they wanted to sharpen the criteria for artists to be able to get an atelier at a breeding place (CAWA 2013). This is something that was resonated in the annual report a year later (CAWA 2014).

The danger that looms is that a too strict assessment of breeding places and individual artists will precisely do the opposite to what has been stated earlier: it threatens diversity and freedom instead of fostering it. For assessment of the artists, there are formal procedures as described by the CAWA (CAWA 2012). However, these procedures are largely based on interpretations of people working for institutions like CAWA and Bureau Broedplaatsen and might thus be subject to perverse effects. Also, there are no formal strategies on guidance or control of breeding places, no formal procedures of how to deal with them; this can thus be different for every breeding place, it is up for interpretation. One breeding place can thus be strictly managed by the institutions, while another might be freer in its development. This is a delicate matter, to which I will return later.

## 5. The institutionalization of the NDSM-werf

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In this chapter, the historical developments relevant for the NDSM-werf will be described. It will start with a short account of the developments that lead to the establishment of the breeding place policy. Next, the development of the NDSM-werf itself will be described. For this description, various documents have been used. Next to this, some information gathered from the interviews has also been used to fill in some “blank spots” that have been more or less undocumented. In this context, it is important to keep in mind that the NDSM was largely unplanned and hardly used at a certain point; descriptions of what happened during these times are scarce.

The developments of the wharf will be mostly discussed regarding the formalization of the area. Starting as a bottom-up initiative, it is interesting to look at specific points in the history of the NDSM-werf where the institutional world gained more control over the developments that were taking place.

### **1894 – 1984; Nederlandsche Dok en Scheepsbouw Maatschappij**

The NDSM-werf is located in the North of Amsterdam, at the IJ waterfront. It started off as the Nederlandsche Scheepsbouw Maatschappij (NSM) in 1894, a company dedicated to fabricating ships. When the company started, it was located in the East of Amsterdam. However, in 1916 due to lack of opportunities to expand, the NSM moved to Amsterdam North (Slot 2013, Gemeente Amsterdam 2014). Later, in 1920, the Nederlandsche Dok Maatschappij (NDM) – a ship repair company – started, also settling at the northern side of the IJ. In the same year, the large shipbuilding silo, the scheepsbouwloods where today most artists at the NDSM have their ateliers, was built (Gemeente Amsterdam 2014). In 1946, the shareholders of the companies decided to merge the companies, resulting in the establishment of the Nederlandsche Dok en Scheepsbouw Maatschappij (NDSM). The NDSM continued building new ships and repairing them. They had a wide range of buyers, building cargo ships and oil tankers, but also the marine was a regular customer.

In 1968, the NDSM was forced to merge with the Verolme Verenigde Scheepswerven in Rotterdam, and that company in 1971 merged with the Rijn-Schelde Machinefabrieken en Scheepswerven, also in Rotterdam. All of this meant that the NDSM in Amsterdam was managed out of Rotterdam.

Then, in 1978, the unprofitable components of the NDSM had to be closed down in order to receive credit from the government. This meant that the NDSM had to stop building new ships. However, in 1979 a new shipbuilding company was established, called the Nederlandse Scheepsbouw Maatschappij where 400 ex-employees of the NDSM could continue to work. The repairs were transferred to the Amsterdamse Droogdok Maatschappij. Despite some profitable years, the shipyard suffered from heavy international competition as well as the oil crises in the 70's (Iamsterdam 2014). The NSM was declared bankrupt in 1984 (Slot 2013, Gemeente Amsterdam 2014).

### **1984 – 1999; No-man's land, squatters, counterculture and free haven**

After the bankruptcy, the buildings stood empty. Hundreds of workers were suddenly left without a job, for whom working at the wharf meant more than just work. The fact that nothing was to replace the shipbuilding activities for which many workers had learned specific skills, meant that a lot of these workers struggled to find other jobs (Slot 2013). Some parts of the NDSM site were used by other smaller companies in the years to follow, but for a large part the site was left abandoned. For years, the area was sort of a “no man's land”.

However, gradually near the end of the 80s and the start of the 90s, some of its buildings were squatted, others were used with permission of the owners<sup>14</sup>. Although small groups of squatters and artists started using some of the spaces at the NDSM, it was still considered a no-go area. Often the NDSM would be a site where crimes – often related to drug trade – were committed, exemplified by an article of *Het Parool* in 1994 for instance, mentioning that a gang of criminals used one of the barns at the wharf as their headquarters (*Het Parool* 1994). After the demise of the shipbuilding industry, it became clear that the city district of Amsterdam Noord was totally dependent on that industry. At that time, Noord was one of the poorest harbor districts in Europe (Kok 2014). It was only in the middle of the 90s that things really started happening again at the NDSM-werf. More and more artists started appropriating the space, which led to a still relatively small but more vibrant community than what had been the case in the previous years.

While these developments were taking place, around the same time, in 1993, the large building on the NDSM-werf formerly used to construct ships was rented to Vervako Shipyard Amsterdam BV (VSA) (Topalovic, Neelen et al. 2003). This did not hold ground however, and the municipality decided to stop the contract with VCA in 1996. This meant that the municipality was left with a large piece of land with large, monumental buildings on it, but it did not really know what to do with it.



**Fig 5.1:** One of the slopes at the NDSM-werf. The spaces under the slope were squatted (author, 2014)

<sup>14</sup> Some of the spaces under slopes of the NDSM-werf were squatted, while the large shipyard building was used with permission of the owner.

### **1999 – 2003; Competition, Kinetisch Noord and initial conflict**

Searching for a solution for the area, the city district Amsterdam Noord decided to launch a competition for NDSM-werf in 1999 (Kinetisch Noord 2000). The goal was to find a creative entrepreneur who could temporarily turn the wharf into a cultural gathering place for at least 5 years (Kinetisch Noord 2000, Topalovic, Neelen et al. 2003). This gave the municipality time to make long-term plans for the redevelopment of the area that would transform the NDSM-werf into a mixed living, working and recreational area (jannievinke 2012).

A group of artists and (former) squatters, originating from the Gilde van Werkgebouwen aan het IJ, then joined forces to form the collective “Kinetisch Noord”, of which Eva De Klerk and Hessel Dokkum were the main initiators. The plan comprised various elements, of which the preservation of the existing buildings at the NDSM-werf and the realization of a gathering place for artists in the former shipbuilding silo, from then on called the “Cultuurloods” – or the culture silo, was the most important one (jannievinke 2012). In the Cultuurloods, 120 ateliers would be realized, constructed by the future tenants themselves, called the “Kunststad”, or Art City, as well as renting a few free plots. Furthermore, “...a skate park, a restaurant and a hip-hip school (Bellissima.net 2006)”, were to be realized within the main shipyard building. Next to this, Kinetisch Noord also proposed a plan for the Docklandshal, another large building at the wharf, as well as ideas for the outdoor area (Werkgroep Kinetisch Noord 1999).

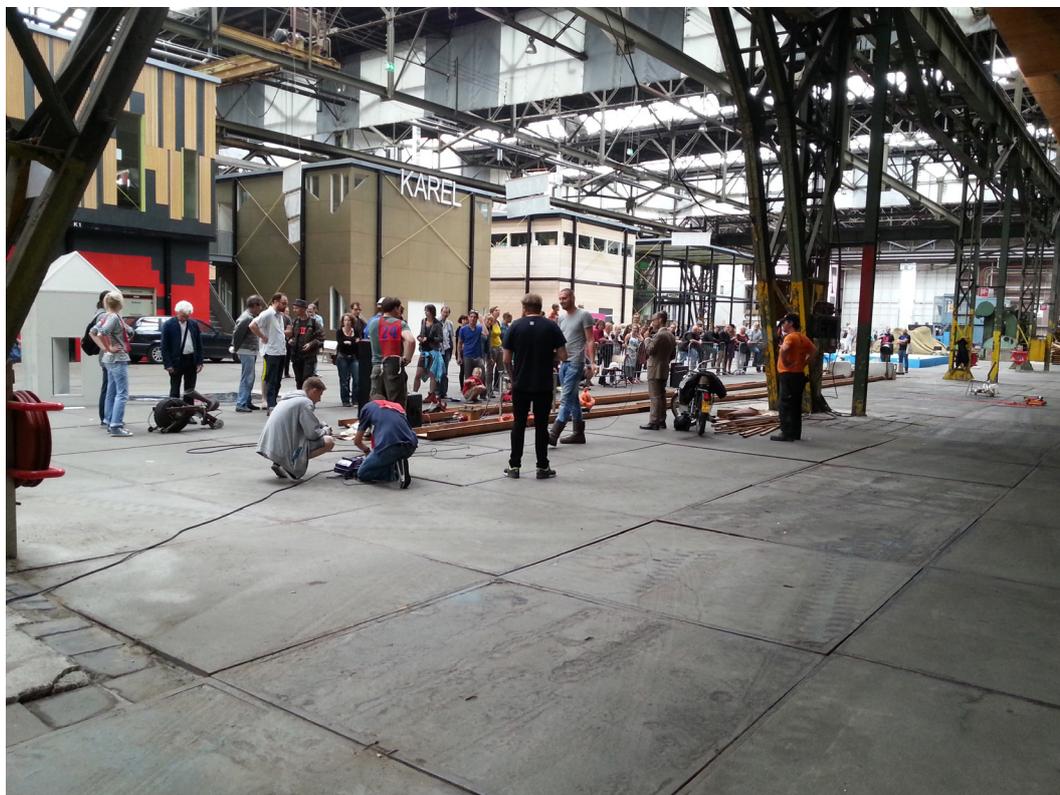
This plan thus also provided space for the (former) squatters and artists to experiment, space that was hard to come by at the time (Kinetisch Noord 2000). Together with a group of four architecture firms and consultant “V.O.F. de Verandering”, they made a plan for the Kunststad consisting of the construction of a grid of columns within which the artists were free to fill in the space. The plan was based on the ideas of the manifesto “De Stad als Casco” (Staal and Bongers 1996), originating from Het Gilde van Werkgebouwen aan het IJ; the users of a space are active producers of that space, and with that also carry responsibility for that space. It promotes bottom-up initiatives and cooperation between different actors participating in a planning process, and turns away from a government that seeks to implement top-down, ready-made plans.

Kinetisch Noord was announced the winner of the competition in February 2000, and was chosen to further work out their proposal. V.O.F de Verandering was appointed by Kinetisch Noord to lead the study phase. The Project Management Bureau (PMB) – that acted on behalf of the Stedelijke Woningdienst (SWD)<sup>15</sup>, the housing department of the city of Amsterdam, within the context of Project Broedplaatsen – originally intended to give a subsidy of 4.000.000 guilders to perform a feasibility study of the plan and to set up an organization to exploit the area from the summer of 2000 onwards (Kinetisch Noord 2000). However, in March 2000, the PMB decided to not directly subsidize Kinetisch Noord, and neither did they agree to let V.O.F. de Verandering act as the commissioning party. Instead, Stadsdeel Amsterdam Noord was appointed as the commissioning party. The Stadsdeel, being the commissioning party, then received the subsidy of the SWD, which meant that Kinetisch Noord only indirectly received funding for their project. This also meant that the guidelines and the conditions that had to be met by the plans of Kinetisch Noord, were established by Stadsdeel Amsterdam Noord. Here, the first signs of struggle and conflict become apparent. In a document produced by Kinetisch Noord to describe the status quo of the project and to outline the vision, the proposal and the feasibility, they show their displeasure with the course

of affairs: “It is obvious that with the involvement of a third official body, the whole project has been significantly delayed. It means in effect, that every intermediate step has to be reviewed and assessed again and again by multiple, relatively autonomous bodies. This delays the process (2000, 8)<sup>16</sup>.”

Despite the conflict, the conceptual plan sketched by Kinetisch Noord was approved by Stadsdeel Amsterdam Noord in late 2000, after which the city district also decided to extend the term use from 5 to 10 years (Stichting Kinetisch Noord 2006). Next to this, the municipality of Amsterdam promised a subsidy of 6,8 million euro for the project. In 2001, the initiators of the project, about 40 cultural producers, moved to the NDSM-werf to continue working on the plans. Combined with the cultural producers already present at the wharf, the number of potential tenants for the future ateliers was around 60.

In 2002, Kinetisch Noord developed a plan of action. Being the owner of the shipyard building, Stadsdeel Amsterdam Noord would be responsible for the maintenance of it. Also, they were responsible for building up the framework of columns (in Dutch “casco”) and for basic services like electricity, sewerage, water and data (Kinetisch Noord 2002). The cultural producers that wanted to become part of the Kunststad had to invest in building their own atelier, filling in the space that had been structured by the grid of columns (see figure 5.2). The hiring cultural producers were to pay a rent of 30 euro per square meter per year.



**Fig 5.2:** In the background the columns are visible within which the artists have constructed their ateliers (author, 2014)

<sup>15</sup> The SWD was abolished in 2002; the various departments of the SWD were split up and were placed under other municipal organizations, see: Stadsarchief Amsterdam (2014). “Archief van de Stedelijke Woningdienst.” Retrieved 02/06/2014, from <https://stadsarchief.amsterdam.nl/archieven/archiefbank/overzicht/30705.nl.html>.

<sup>16</sup> Fragment translated from Dutch.

Next to the concrete plan of action for the next few years, long term plans still existed to turn the NDSM-werf into a mixed-use area, comprising housing, working and recreation. To realize this ideal, Stadsdeel Amsterdam Noord aspires a collaboration between Kinetisch Noord, developers, housing corporations and the municipality. Following this aspiration, BV Durf is set up in 2002, with the aim of outlining a joint strategy while respecting each other's goals. However, BV Durf was aborted by Stadsdeel Amsterdam Noord in 2003 (Stichting Kinetisch Noord 2006).

Meanwhile, the shorter term projects at the wharf are advancing. In January 2003, Stadsdeel Amsterdam Noord and Kinetisch Noord, signed the contracts for a 10 year rent of the area. Significantly, in 2005, the lease contract was extended until 2027 (Bellissima.net 2006, Stichting Kinetisch Noord 2006). Later in 2003, the promised 6,8 million euro by the municipality was officially granted to the project. This meant that the actual construction phase could begin. The total amount of money promised for the project via various subsidies was almost 10 million euros<sup>17</sup> (see figure 5.3).

### **2003 - current; Building delays, financial problems and increased conflicts**

In the following years, from 2003 on, everything was prepared for construction, and various parts of the wharf were renovated. However, as the area was (sometimes heavily) polluted and the buildings were in bad shape, the preparations to start the actual construction took quite some time (Stichting Kinetisch Noord 2006). The artists who had been selected to realize an atelier inside the Cultuurloods, could finally begin construction in early 2006.

The delays before starting construction caused a large loss of income; income that had been counted on. In January 2006, Stichting Kinetisch Noord briefed Stadsdeel Amsterdam Noord about their tough financial situation, and asked the Stadsdeel to help come to a solution. Stadsdeel Noord did not trust the financial situation of Kinetisch Noord anymore. Kinetisch Noord had a liquidity deficit of 2.360.000 euro in total (BRON: raadsvergadering document) . The total debt was about 1.370.000 euro. However, the original spatial plan for the wharf was not filled in yet; in a public meeting, the city district announced that it, with help of the municipality of Amsterdam, would help repay the debt, but with a few conditions. The main condition was that the Stadsdeel wanted to elect a new chairman for the board of Kinetisch Noord, who would then reform the board. At the same time, Stichting Kinetisch Noord had to be reorganized and shrunken as an organization. Significantly, these modifications to the board Kinetisch Noord meant that the foundation would be under much stricter control of the municipality and the city district.

In 2007, the NDSM-werf was officially registered as a "Rijksmonument"<sup>18</sup>, after being filed to become one by Stadsdeel Amsterdam Noord (Stichting Kinetisch Noord 2006, Gemeente Amsterdam 2014). This meant that most of the large buildings, as well as the slopes and the crane received a protected status; in effect this entails that for any modification of the existing structures, a permit is needed. The Rijksmonument status for the NDSM was welcomed by many of the cultural producers, as it meant that it would be harder for the institutional world to transform the wharf. However, it also meant that the artists themselves could no longer make any modifications they would like<sup>19</sup>.

Meanwhile, next to the developments in the Cultuurloods, large companies became interested in the raw, edgy atmosphere at the NDSM-werf. With MTV Networks locating their headquarters at the wharf in 2007, the NDSM gained a lot

project	broedplaatsfonds	IPSV	DMO	SDAN	totaal
01. Infrastructuur	3.259.660	727.236		186.134	4.173.030
02. Oostvleugel	655.202	283.857			939.059
03. Kunststad	2.137.020	225.358		100.000	2.462.378
04. Noordstrook fase 1	135.480				135.480
05. Sectie 4 Skatepark			1.162.135		1.162.135
06. Dazzleville	124.146	13.549			137.695
07. Helling X					0
08. Helling Y					0
09. Houten Kop	69.495			50.000	119.495
10. Docklandshal					0
<b>totaal</b>	<b>6.381.003</b>	<b>1.250.000</b>	<b>1.162.135</b>	<b>336.134</b>	<b>9.129.272</b>

**Fig 5.3:** Total amount of subsidies (Stichting Kinetisch Noord, 2006)



**Fig 5.4:** A critic of Bouwe Olij has expressed his frustration painting the floor. "Bouwe = fraud", it says (author, 2014)

<sup>17</sup> There does not seem to be a consensus about the total investment; various sources name contradicting numbers. However, around 10 million euro seems to be the most heard and plausible number.

<sup>18</sup> The year seems to be a point of discussion among various sources. Other sources mention 2008 as the year in which the NDSM-werf became a Rijksmonument. See Gemeente Amsterdam (2012). Investeringsbesluit NDSM-werf. Dienst Ruimtelijke Ordening. NDSM.nl (2014). "Over NDSM." Retrieved 06/06/2014, from <http://www.ndsm.nl/over-ndsm/>.

<sup>19</sup> Actually, the procedure of becoming a Rijksmonument takes some time. This meant that already in 2005, when architects presented their plans for the NDSM, those plans were also evaluated by "Monumentenzorg" (preservation) and the "Welstandscommissie" (aesthetics committee). See Stichting Kinetisch Noord (2006). "Kunststad NDSM-werf Projectverslag."

of media attention. Soon, other large companies followed, like HEMA, VNU media and Red Bull. As these companies were located at other parts of the wharf that were owned by developers, the possible profits did not go to Kinetisch Noord or the artists.

In the years to follow, the direction of Kinetisch Noord continues to spend too much money, and continues to have conflicts with the artists at the wharf. This meant that the direction's composition often changed during these years. Another problem was the delay in filling the Cultuurloods with ateliers caused a lower income than had been expected. In 2010, the city districts wants to get rid of the wharf (Zonneveld and Boersma 2014). The debt of Kinetisch Noord had again risen to more than 1 million euros.

This leads to the appointment of Bouwe Olij, a seasoned politician in Amsterdam; Stadsdeel Noord gives Kinetisch Noord a final chance. Olij is welcomed at first by the artists<sup>20</sup> as he is more approachable than the directors before him. He manages to convince the city district to forgive the debt, and makes a deal in which the ownership of the former shipbuilding silo is transferred from the Stadsdeel to Kinetisch Noord; Kinetisch Noord from then on pays leasehold to the municipality of Amsterdam. This makes Kinetisch Noord responsible for collecting the rent and for the maintenance of the building. Meanwhile, the NDSM is being rented more often by Olij for festivals and markets. Also, Olij plans to rent more spaces in the Cultuurloods commercially, to generate more income. However, the artists claim that they have not been consulted about these plans. This causes growing frustration among the artists at the NDSM. At this point in time, the conflict between the artists and Kinetisch Noord has reached a boiling point, with unknown opponents of Olij visually showing their displeasure with his approach (see figure 5.4).

Despite the conflict, the Dienst Ruimtelijke Ordening (DRO), the physical planning department of the municipality of Amsterdam, recently described the NDSM-werf as follows: "NDSM is the historical remnants of the largest shipyard of Amsterdam, breeding ground for an experimental urban milieu, from which a creative city is developing. NDSM has a feeling of a wharf that is characterized by an experimental and entrepreneurial spirit, where the guidelines fade between living and working, between culture and commerce, between old and new. A community that does not exclude, but invites and inspires, for Noord and for the whole of Amsterdam (Gemeente Amsterdam 2012, 11)<sup>21</sup>."



**Fig 5.5:** The NDSM-werf, with the Cultuurloods in the background (author, 2014)

<sup>20</sup> See the minutes of the general meeting of de Toekomst at 01/12/2011, accessible via: <http://www.toekomst-ndsm.nl/nieuws/downloads>.

<sup>21</sup> Fragment translated from Dutch.

## 6. Research findings

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In this chapter, the data gathered from the interviews will be presented and interpreted, to a certain extent. First, the statements of the respondents about the four discourses (entrepreneurialism, cultural regeneration, creative city and participatory society) will be discussed. Next, the respondents' views on the breeding place policy will be assessed. Finally, the statements the transformation that the NDSM-werf has undergone in the last years will be presented; this part will deal with the actual process of institutionalization.

### 6.1. Artists' perceptions of urban policy discourses

#### Entrepreneurialism

As the entrepreneurial discourse provides an overarching frame for the three other discourses, it is relevant to see what the respondents' views are on it. After all, the neoliberal attitude and the emphasis on inter-urban competition provide, in very general terms, the context from which the breeding place policy arises.

All of the respondents, when speaking in general terms about neoliberalism and economic competition did not necessarily like it, but they accepted it. All of them saw it as preconditions to which the developments at the NDSM-werf are subjected, although some of them nuanced it a bit more. Instead of "naturalizing" the entrepreneurial attitude of institutional actors, taking it for granted, they pointed at a "capitalistic model" that has been chosen by society. In many of the quotes presented later in this chapter, the opinions of the respondents about the entrepreneurial discourse will be further clarified.

#### Cultural regeneration

All of the respondents had a good understanding of how processes of gentrification worked. This ensured more in-depth answers to the questions regarding the subject. The opinions about cultural regeneration were, like entrepreneurialism, two-sided: on the one hand, all respondents understood that this was the way it worked. On the other hand, none of the respondents seemed too happy about the rising prices, and especially did not like the idea of a temporary stay at the NDSM-werf. The duality of this stance is perhaps most concisely articulated by Oomen, when speaking about the process of revitalization and the following marginalization of cultural producers and thus the temporality of their stay: "I am against it, but I am also not against it. I am against it because it is a shame for this place, but on the other hand it is not a shame either, because perhaps that is the function of breeding places or of creative policy. It is our capital, that we add value to things. That we do not profit from that, you might consider as our own problem."

Many of the respondents also accept cultural regeneration as a discourse; they take a realistic perspective, in which the discourse is scrutinized as a "model" that has been chosen by society. Sometimes, they reflect on this reality, arguing that the wharf might have looked totally different if another mode of development would have been chosen. Oomen, speaking about a permanent place for artists at the NDSM: "But yeah, I am an advocate of that. I mean, I will not leave here for fun. I noted that<sup>22</sup> because that is what it has happened a lot of times. Not because I like it, but because it is realistic. But it does not have to be this way." He notes further on in the interview: "You could apply a totally different economic policy to it, you could protect them, for instance by subsidizing them or offering them cheap space. Partly this happens, with the breeding place policy. But you're dealing with a capitalistic model, and that means when the ground price rises, the rent rises."

However, like the entrepreneurial attitude, the process of cultural regeneration is sometimes naturalized by the respondents, as if it were something that cannot be changed. It is sometimes regarded as a precondition. One of the respondents states: "...I understand that things move and that certain groups of people move again, you know, in the urban fringe zone. That is only normal. But it is also such a shame, because this is such a good project for artists in Amsterdam, and also as a visiting card for Amsterdam." The acceptance clearly goes hand in hand with certain feelings of opposition to the process. Significantly, these feelings of opposition are mainly expressed when addressing specifically the NDSM-werf as a unique project. Many of the artists do not seem to like the cultural regeneration discourse, but they accept it; only when it concretely threatens their stay at the NDSM-werf, they really start opposing the idea of temporality.

As we have already seen in many of the quotes, the institutional actors are often portrayed as purely interested in profit; this is one of the main reasons for the reluctance towards the cultural regeneration discourse. One of the respondents argues: "Actually, it is very ambiguous what happens here. Because if you want to buy a house in Noord, you get a huge amount of advertising: the NDSM-werf is very close, artists, so great! And then you live next to them, you can associate with them, but at the same time they are busy pushing the artists out. Because all they want is money." Another example of this is the introduction of paid parking near the NDSM-werf, something that three of the respondents specifically pointed out to be an annoyance of the increased prices and regulations.

### **Creative city**

The respondents were generally neutral towards the creative city discourse. Many of them do realize that their presence might help Amsterdam profile itself as a creative city, but they do not have an outspoken opinion on it. They mainly indicate that a cultural brownfield, like the NDSM can generate money for the city because of the positive image it brings across. When speaking of the indirect profits of the NDSM for the municipality, Oomen says: "Amsterdam itself has profits significantly, because it capitalizes itself as a cultural capital. So in that sense, they might have made even more money!" He adds later: "The whole world comes here to take a look how we have done this. Hardly anyone of these visitors knows that the half of the project has failed."

Often, people have had trouble seeing the value of culture and creativity. This is largely due to the difficulty to put a price on it; the results are hardly quantifiable in monetary terms. The creative city discourse in this sense provides cultural producers with an argument to strengthen their case, when it comes to economic profit. In this way, respondents often employ the discourse to legitimize the subsidies, combined almost reaching 10 million euros. "One way or another, there has to be a return on investments. Whether that happens via rents, or via the purchase of land, or via a huge detour that we positively promote the municipality of Amsterdam around the world as a creative hotspot... That we capitalize Amsterdam as a brand. (...) But it there has to be a return on investment. You can demand that, because you paid 10 million, as a taxpayer." Another artist also makes a telling statement, when talking about temporality: "On the one hand I understand, because: everything costs something, and in a lot of situations that's totally okay. But I think you have to look very closely at the location and the situation. Because I also think – that is

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<sup>22</sup> Referring to the temporary stay of artists at cultural brownfields.

the other side of it – because of which I think: no, it is not favorable, and especially not in this case. It is also a brand; it is a visiting card of Amsterdam. You understand, it is such a unique place.” Here the creative city discourse is employed to justify a permanent stay at the NDSM. Interestingly, again we can see the respondent is not opposing the abstract, macro discourse; she is employing the creative city discourse to oppose the temporality specifically at the *unique* NDSM-werf.

While often used to strengthen their own case by emphasizing the gains that a city might receive when catering to creatives, De Klerk – who publishes on this topic – also criticizes creative city as a strategy of development: “It also increases that socio-economic inequality between groups. And it has of course become a hype, a tool. (...) It’s just “Anyville”, who does not want to be hip, hot and happening! It would also be applicable to even the smallest villages!” Next to pointing at the inequality possibly resulting from the creative city model – as has been addressed in the theoretical framework as well – she emphasizes the generic nature of the discourse.

### **Participatory society**

The participatory society discourse is generally regarded by the respondents as a positive one. In fact, as one of the artists points out, it can induce a development that is quite necessary; when speaking about the position of the cultural producers at the NDSM-werf, she states: “They want to be heard, they want to have a voice, they want to participate. They want to participate in the decision making process.” She adds however, that this has not been the case until now.

However designated as promising by many of the artists, the idea of the participatory society has not yet been translated into concrete policies or changes in government attitude according to their experiences. All of the respondents mention that they notice no change at all. In fact, many of them say the relevant governing bodies have become less facilitative, if anything. For instance, when asked if the government has become more facilitative, Schippers states: “But I don’t have the feeling that it is getting better. I only see a process of degradation, it is getting worse. It doesn’t matter though; I think good art will always prevail. So it will be fine, we will find our way in it. But I do not think that it helps what the government is trying to do.” This quote is exemplary for all of the respondents’ reactions.

One of the main frustrations among respondents is that they feel ignored. Despite the words of politicians that emphasize the larger role for citizens and a facilitative role of the government, the respondents feel participation is only a formality while the government keeps doing what they were already doing. One of the artists indicates: “...that you are in the middle of certain developments and meanwhile everything has been more or less decided, but for the form or for the law you have to give the people a say. And then participation is just a formality, because no one is really listening.” This is a problem that causes a lot of distrust from the cultural producers towards the institutions.

Another problem is more delicate and more rudimentary: it has to do with the top-down bottom-up conflict. Participatory society clearly suffers from this internal paradox; the government wants its citizens to start participating. Eva de Klerk formulates her take on it: “Everywhere I see the same tendency; there is a top-down wish to realize things bottom-up, in certain designated areas. So you cannot choose yourself.” This point is further expanded by Stuart, when describing the situation at the NDSM-werf: “So we are becoming less and less the author of our own story, and every year it is deteriorating. And actually, here is one of the

biggest examples of a conflict that does not decrease. And I myself would then say: well, it is 2014, the welfare state is over and the participatory society should start now, also at these sorts of places. So I don't expect them to take care of me anymore, please give me some space, then I as an entrepreneur and as an artist and as an active citizen can participate in shaping my own surroundings and the history. But it just does not work. That is very interesting, because it is very hard for them." He thus criticizes the attitude of the government, being too controlling and little facilitative.

Finally, there is one other thing that is often pointed out by the respondents: the entrepreneurial context of the participatory society discourse. Many of the artists mention that the participatory society has been introduced in order for the government to on the one hand save money by retrenching, but on the other hand keep pulling the strings. Schippers: "It is a bit of a bubble, eh. The idea is simply that there is no money anymore. So people are asked to do it themselves, while the government keeps control." De Klerk further scrutinizes the discourse: "We are also being used by project developers and corporations. We work together with citizens, participatory; they can have a say in order to raise money and projects. It should not work that way!" Participation is, according to her, often used in this light to generate money for certain projects. This resembles the critique of Tonkens; people start their own initiatives exactly to "get away" from the neoliberal attitude of the government, not because they want to be part of it.

## 6.2. Artists' perceptions of policy and institutionalization

### The breeding place policy

As we have seen, the breeding place policy has been established to meet the demands of squatters and artists. Initially, many artists embraced the policy. However – as described in the development of the breeding place policy in chapter 4 – some of the "harder" artists and squatters opposed government interference. Stuart, an artist who arrived at the NDSM in the very early stages around 2000, notes: "No one here liked the word "breeding place", because it focusses too much on policy. So we held on to the word "vrijplaats"<sup>23</sup>." He has ever since become interested in this issue: "And I actually started to look into it because of what happened here at the breeding place NDSM. Because it started off as a sort of cheerful, free, spontaneous place – that's what it looked like anyway – and it has slowly been regulated."

Significantly, almost all of the respondents are now negative about the policy. This indicates that some changes have taken place. Jorke Schaling – when speaking about one of the founders of Kinetisch Noord, Hessel Dokkum – explains Dokkum, together with De Klerk have: ...among other things founded Bureau Broedplaatsen as it functions now. Unfortunately it does not function like it should anymore, but that is another story. You see it often; it has become to "managerial", it has become too formal, if you know what I mean. It has been bureaucratized. It has lost contact with reality." This claim is resonated by almost all of the respondents; many specifically mention the bureaucratization of the policy. Kuitert and Botman agree: "There have been more examples of breeding places like this, and everywhere they follow more or less the same path. Everything is controlled more and more, municipalities are right on top of it." They add later: "Everything becomes stricter, and more commercial. It has to earn money."

<sup>23</sup> An English translation of this word that covers the exact charge of it, is hard. It is perhaps best translated literally as "free space" or "free haven".

They bring in a second frustration often addressed by respondents that we have already seen in their opinions about the discourses: the focus on earning money. But while accepting the discourses, the concrete policies are easier to adjust; artists know this, which is why they more actively take a stance against the breeding place policy. However, many of the respondents do not see alternative strategies either. Schippers: “Look, of course I am against it, you know. That a place becomes interesting, that there is space to do things, and that it then changes, or it is used as a breeding place, or... I don’t like that, but I don’t see how it can be different. I cannot think of a solution in which the freedom can be maintained. After all, the world is all about money. One way or another, profit has to be made.” In this quote, the hunger for profit is again naturalized, taken for granted.

A third point of critique that we have already seen in the cultural regeneration discourse is the focus on temporality. However, when speaking about the breeding places policy – being more concrete than the discourse – opponents often become more fanatic. Bart Stuart, perhaps one of the more idealistic artists states: “...that is my critique towards the whole breeding place policy: if the policy only stimulates temporarily at certain places, that functions are only somewhere temporally, then you are actually promoting the artist as a sort of temporary tool in the area developments. And I don’t think that is a sustainable view on what you can do with public money.”

Finally, the discussion comes back to a fundamental conflict we have seen several times throughout this research: the top-down – bottom up clash. In chapter 4, this internal conflict of the breeding place policy has been scrutinized; we have seen that one of the aims of the policy is to let cultural producers realize art factories as independently as possible. To test this, it is useful to take a look at the perspective of the artists. Firstly, from the minutes of the general meetings of Stichting de Toekomst, the tenants’ association, it becomes clear that the aim of self-management of the NDSM-werf by the artists is still one of the hottest topics at these meetings<sup>24</sup>. However, as many of the respondents state in the interviews, they feel this has never been the aim of Bureau Broedplaatsen or the local government. In fact, they feel opposed by these institutions in their aim. Stuart argues that this is largely due to the institutional wish for profit: “And the focus has never been on organization or self-organization, but always on square meters. So it is a real estate story. That is what I think. That breeding place policy... It is incorporated under Economic Affairs, and not at all under culture or social objectives... The alderman of Physical Planning has taken up the breeding place policy the last couple of years, but it used to fall under Economic Affairs. So it was all about money. And I think that is one of the huge shortcomings, that that has not been changed in the past 10 years, because I think we have seen... Well, a lot of cultural hotspots that have been realized under the breeding place policy are already gone. So what do you invest in, and is it really that great?” Further on, he adds a specific example on how the government has worked against the artists at the NDSM. He compares one of the – according to himself – few examples where self-management of a breeding place has been achieved, a premise at the Overtoom, to the NDSM: “There it is going relatively well. They have not been harassed by institutions concerned with noise nuisance or fire safety.

In short, the ambiguity of the breeding place policy leads to the fact that certain aims expressed in the policy texts cannot always be achieved. This causes frustration among the artists, who suffer from this ambiguity. In the words of Schaling: “Policy documents are not policy itself.” In the next part of this chapter,

we will see that these words might also be applied at the perversity of local policy implementation.

### **Institutionalization**

First of all, it is important to mention that none of the respondents was positive about the developments that have taken place during the last 6 to 7 years. This is one of the most significant findings of this research, as it clearly indicates something has gone or is going wrong, from the view of cultural producers. The general tenor among respondents is that the institutions just cannot or do not want to work with them. This is perhaps best described by this quote from Schaling, who has held affinity with the squatting community since the 60's: "And it really bites each other, it really does. That is to say, if the bureaucracy starts intervening in art, both sides call it "raking". And one side likes it, because raking brings him manageability, and manageability makes it easier for him to do his job. (...) The other side, the artist, sees this as a direct threat to his work. (...) And in my 40 years of experience, I found out that those two sides just do not work together."

The institutionalization of the NDSM-werf has been a slow process characterized as "political games", as many of the respondents noted in interviews. Policy always leaves room for interpretation, the same goes for the breeding place policy; there is no standard procedure of dealing with cultural brownfields such as the NDSM. This can lead to perversity by the people who are appointed to implement the policy as they see fit. As we have seen in chapter 5, the increasing influence of the local government in regulating bodies like Kinetisch Noord is exemplary for this. While Kinetisch Noord started off as a collective of artists that won the competition, gradually it was taken over by "politicians", and started behaving like a controlling, institutional party. In the minutes of one of the general meetings of de Toekomst the following is stated about this<sup>24</sup>: "Finally, Kinetisch Noord in our minds has increasingly become an external landlord/administrator and developer, on which the tenants have almost no control anymore. There is for example a general feeling of distrust towards the question if Kinetisch Noord is really trying to keep the costs as low as possible for the breeding place and if it is trying to foster the cultural climate as much as possible. The gradual transfer of investments to Kinetisch Noord is therefore experienced as unfair. It stimulates the "every man for himself" attitude and is bad for the feeling of joint responsibility for the breeding place." Another quote of the document – speaking about the initial investments artists have made in order to realize their ateliers – leaves no more doubt about the new role of Kinetisch Noord, according to the artists: "According to the contracts, the investments in the ateliers are written off with 10% a year and thereby gradually handed over to Kinetisch Noord. However, this construction has been devised when Kinetisch Noord still represented the tenants of the breeding place, and was not yet seen as an external party." Schaling concisely formulates the general feelings of all of the respondents about this issue as follows, emphasizing the harshness of the matter: "The artists have invested everything they had, and are then prematurely confronted with the fact that someone else wants it to be something different, or thinks of something else, or they are confronted with a developer who interferes.

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<sup>24</sup> See the minutes of the general meetings of de Toekomst, accessible via: <http://www.toekomst-ndsm.nl/nieuws/downloads>

<sup>25</sup> See the minutes of the general meetings of de Toekomst, accessible via: <http://www.toekomst-ndsm.nl/nieuws/downloads>. The date of this specific document is 25/05/2012.

Or, even worse: that the government implants people here, from the government, which is what happened.” Another telling example of demand for control by institutional actors is that the grants meant to realize the competition winning plan did not directly go to the artists, as we have seen in chapter 5. De Klerk is still frustrated about that: “That money went to the city district, in order for them to be able to refurbish their building. It never went to us.”

On top of that, and likely as a result of the growing control by the institutions over the NDSM, the distrust towards institutional actors keeps popping up in the interviews when discussing the institutionalization. This, again, is mostly targeted at Kinetisch Noord, although other parties have been mentioned as well. Hessel Dokkum, chairman of tenants association de Toekomst, writes in a letter to alderman Van der Poelgeest<sup>26</sup>: “Among us the question has risen to what extent administrative rulings, commitments and instructions retain their value after they are filed with the performers in it. In its last newsletter, Stichting Kinetisch Noord makes statements about what is going to be arranged in for the upcoming long-term lease contract. However, that which is arranged according to them is going to be in contradiction with the grant issued. The tenants suspect that there will be more things listed that conflict with earlier agreements.” Next to all of the respondents mentioning distrust towards Bouwe Olij, the director and only member left of Kinetisch Noord to a greater or lesser extent, this distrust has also been made visual, as figure 5.4 shows.

Furthermore, the stricter rules for breeding places are heavily criticized by almost all respondents. De Klerk states, reflecting on the CAWA-norms and the developments of the NDSM: “It all goes through the same selection mechanism, the CAWA-norm. And we then get all very much of the same thing. So I have always resisted the norm and our own selection procedures. We do not have a final vision, we are demand-driven; if shipbuilders want to come here, fine. Skate park, also fine. But it all falls outside the breeding place norm.”

Concluding, the most basic explanation for the conflicts that have arisen in the context of the gradual institutionalization of the NDSM-werf, according to the respondents, might be that the government has not worked together with the artists. They have made their own plans for the wharf, ignoring the tenants, thereby only trying to achieve their own goals. Various institutions involved have backed each other in a process that might be called the “appropriation” of the wharf by these institutions. Stuart summarizes: “The focus of Bureau Broedplaatsen has always been to cooperate with the city district, and not with the artists. They have always started from what the government wanted to do here, and not with what we needed to grow strong ourselves. There have always been conflicts, and because of that it looked like we were making a mess out of it, while they had to pull the strings even harder. While the mixing of top-down and bottom-up... Somewhere in the middle it is likely to be interesting, but that has never been actively sought after here. And that is just a huge missed opportunity.”

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<sup>26</sup> This letter, sent on 21/04/2014, is accessible via: <http://www.toekomst-ndsm.nl/nieuws/downloads>.

## 7. Conclusion

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This research has been focused on answering the following research question: How is the institutionalization of the NDSM-werf framed among cultural producers at the NDSM-werf? The subquestions are: After its bankruptcy, how did the NDSM-werf develop into its current state? And: What discourses about the institutionalization of the NDSM-werf can be distinguished among cultural producers?

To answer these questions, different theoretical discourses on the institutionalization of cultural brownfields have been described. Next, I have shown how these discourses have been translated into the breeding place policy, scrutinizing policy documents. After this, the process of institutionalization of the NDSM-werf has been described, using a documentary analysis. Finally, I have conducted interviews to find out the opinions of cultural producers on the discourses, the breeding place policy and the process of institutionalization.

As we have seen, all of the respondents accept or at least do not actively oppose the neoliberal, entrepreneurial economic system they are subjected to. Although some of the respondents did not like the entrepreneurial attitude of the municipality, or even capitalism as a system, they realized that these were the preconditions they had to deal with; often, respondents would “naturalize” these systems, like we have seen in the research of Chapple, Jackson et al. (2011). Others would argue that it is a model that has been chosen by the majority of society, and would therefore accept it. The three discourses (cultural regeneration, creative city and the participatory society), also from the respondents’ point of view, result from the entrepreneurial attitude of the local government.

When speaking about cultural regeneration, they often had doubts; on the one hand a lot of the cultural producers mentioned that in the capitalist society we live in, cultural regeneration and thus eventual gentrification is only “logical”. Many of them mentioned however, that the temporality of their stay in this frame was something they worried about and sometimes even opposed. In other words, many did not necessarily criticize the idea of cultural producers as “tools” for revitalization and gentrification, but they would like to allocate themselves a more permanent role in this process.

Most of the cultural producers were also familiar with the ideas of Richard Florida and agreed that the NDSM-werf could boost the image of Amsterdam as a creative city, fitting in the creative cultural brownfield category. Again, the profits for the municipality and other institutional actors would often be classified as “logical”, as this was the way the system worked.

All of the interviewed cultural producers welcomed the ideas associated with the participatory society at least to some extent. While the respondents were positive about the idea, they did not notice any positive changes in the behavior of governmental institutions towards them in the past years.

This study has shown that the discourses mentioned in the theoretical framework have been incorporated in the breeding place policy. Interestingly, when these discourses are translated into actual policies, many of the respondents oppose them. Although the breeding place policy has initially been established in cooperation with squatters and artists, most of the respondents point out that they do not endorse the policy anymore.

One of the reasons is the increased rent; some of the tenants have trouble affording the rent, and it is addressed as a one of the reasons the artists eventually have to leave. However, the condemnation of the breeding place policy by the cultural producers seems to result mostly from the demanded control over the

NDSM-werf by the institutional actors. Over the years the rules for the wharf have been sharpened, which is one of the reasons the cooperation between the cultural producers and institutional actors has deteriorated. This also led to distrust between artists and the institutions, which has grown over the years. While in the initial phases of the project – the first few years after winning the competition – the cultural producers still had influence, they feel like due to alleged hidden agendas of some institutional actors they have been swept aside, losing the power to decide on important matters concerning the NDSM.

Aside from the accepting of the discourses that have informed the breeding place policy – not necessarily welcoming them – it is very important to note that none of the respondents has been positive about the transformation of the NDSM-werf over the last 6 to 7 years, after most of the building stopped.

One of the things that stand out, is the acceptance of the discourses that have informed policy, as though they are natural things; as if they cannot be changed. As the discourses and, to a lesser extent, the breeding place policy originate from high up, it is hard to fight them. It is therefore purely rational thought by the cultural producers to accept these as a given. However, when locally implemented at cultural brownfields like the NDSM-werf, the policy documents are always interpreted by specific actors. These local interpretations of policy are easier to oppose. It is therefore only logical that the respondents state that they accept certain decisions high up in society, but fight the local implementation. In this light, the opposition against the director of Kinetisch Noord, Bouwe Olij, is a telling example; fighting battles on the local scale is easier than on a larger scale.

Yet, as we have often seen earlier, there might be a more basic problem the NDSM is facing: the tension between facilitating and controlling. When discussing the relevant policy documents for a breeding place like the NDSM-werf, this conflictual relationship already became apparent. Many of the respondents complained about the stricter control, while the NDSM-werf used to be a place of freedom and diversity; everyone was welcome. Instead of heterogeneity as a starting point, now with the strict assessments it seems like – as many respondents have said – the local government is trying to accommodate a homogeneous group of artists. The reason for internal conflict in the breeding place policy (that I would argue is inherent to planning “unplanned” spaces), might have to do with the failure to incorporate the perspective of cultural producers. All of the respondents have indicated they feel like they are not being listened to by institutional actors. When asked about the reasons why the artists who had an atelier at the NDSM-werf chose the wharf, they all mentioned the freedom; the feeling that anything was possible there. While established in 1998 to meet the wishes of the squatters and artists to have “free spaces”, the breeding place policy seems to have evolved into a tool precisely to control these same squatters and artists.

To conclude, it seems from the interviews that the cultural producers would accept that institutions use them in their cultural regeneration, creative city and participatory society discourses, as long as they have a relatively cheap space that they have in self-management. However, the respondents feel threatened by the appropriation and control of the NDSM by the institutions; in their eyes, the balance between control and freedom has been distorted. Especially the transformation of Kinetisch Noord from a party that protected their own interests to an external party with strong ties to the local government has strengthened these feelings. The way they fight these developments, it seems, is by locally opposing the decisions that

are made, while high-up discourses are often taken for granted.

Some critical remarks can be made regarding these findings. Unlike many other cities worldwide, Amsterdam has a very specific policy on breeding places. While this does institutionalize and control places like the NDSM-werf, one might question if the NDSM would have existed in its current form if this policy would not have been established. After all, the breeding place policy does indeed facilitate in some ways – the NDSM did receive a large amount of subsidies. And, while the prices do rise, the breeding place rents are still below commercial levels. In this light, we might look back at the theories of Van Weesep and Wiegersma (1991) and Veldboer and Kleinhans (2013) to interpret; while prices do go up at the NDSM, the local government does stabilize the effect of gentrification to a certain degree. Although the NDSM has been subject to institutionalization and gentrification – many of the respondents mentioned that it has now come to a point where they consider leaving – cultural producers as of right now have not been totally displaced. If we compare this to the studies of Zukin and Braslow (2011) in New York and Martí-Costa and Miquel (2011) in Barcelona where many of the artists have actually been displaced from specific sites, we can conclude that the ones at the NDSM-werf might still be better off.



## 8. Reflection

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First of all, I think I have succeeded in answering my research question. This means, to a certain degree, the methods that have been employed in this research have been successful. However, there are many points that could have been better.

One of the main problems with this study is the low amount of external validity; I have conducted one case study on a topic on which not much work has been done yet. This makes it hard to compare the results with other studies. In this light, a second case could have been useful to compare and contrast the findings, although the amount of time would be too limited. Another issue regarding the external validity is the low amount of respondents. This decreases the strength of the conclusions that can be drawn. However, as it is an exploratory research, the aim has been from the start to find certain indications of explanations for problems that have been encountered in this research. Later research can further develop the theory, and improve the base of empirical study on comparable topics.

Also, the research questions are relatively broad, not very specific. On the one hand it has been an exploratory study, for which some flexibility is useful; beforehand, I did not know exactly what way the research would go. Next to that, there was not much specific research available on the topic to help make the research questions more specific. On the other hand, due to the lack of a clear delineation of the research it proved to be hard to clearly structure the research; it has been hard to select what is relevant and what is not.

It might have been interesting to speak to actors representing the “institutional actors” as well – the local government or the director of Kinetisch Noord for instance. However, due to the limited time, I have consciously chosen to specifically study the discourses of the cultural producers; the main reason for this has been the small amount of studies contributing to the understanding of their perceptions in the process of institutionalization of cultural brownfields.

The hardest and most time consuming part of the research has been to set up and conduct interviews with relevant actors. Due to this, I have not had the time to reach a saturation point, a point at which an interview will not provide me with much new information (Small 2009, Hennink, Hutter et al. 2010). Also, when starting this research, the goal was to purposively select respondents; this has changed due to time and accessibility constraints. Under time pressure I have used “snowballing” to conveniently get to new respondents (Hennink, Hutter et al. 2010).

Sometimes during the interviews, some of the respondents only wanted to say things off the record. One of the respondents also wanted to remain anonymous. The sensitivity of the issues at stake at the NDSM-werf might have influenced the willingness of respondents to give certain answers.

During the interviews, when introducing myself and my research, I sometimes did not tell “the whole truth” to the respondent. After all, if the respondent knows what I am looking for, he might give me answers that have been steered by my introduction. This is something I wanted to avoid.

While this research might provide useful insights for both scholars and artists, it might also offer planners and policy makers new conceptual tools to strengthen their institutionalization practices. This could be an unintended outcome of the research, as in the hands of powerful institutions the ideas provided might be used against the ones that have enlightened me with their views. Although this is a relatively modest study and the outcomes might not be fully definite and conclusive, I am aware that there is always a chance that the insights might end up being used

against the people that helped me construct this thesis.

## 9. Discussion

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Interestingly, many of the respondents did not disagree with a lot of the policy frames. Moreover, all of them welcomed the participatory society discourse, and a lot of them seemed to embrace the idea of being fitted in the creative city discourse. And while not being positive about the cultural regeneration and the entrepreneurial frame in general, with its temporary role for cultural producers, most of the respondents seemed to be able to reconcile with that idea. Although many of the artists disagree with the way the breeding place policy works, all of the respondents oppose certain local implementations of policies interpreted by local actors. As we have seen, this is best exemplified in the opposition against Bouwe Olij and his plans.

One of the possible reasons for this has already been addressed in the conclusion: the artists at the NDSM-werf are way more likely to have success fighting the implementation of certain policies at a local level, then fighting the policy as a whole – let alone fighting the policy discourses. However, there might be two other explanations that might help us understand the issue.

### **Street-level bureaucracy**

The first one is based on the theory of street-level bureaucracy. To introduce this issue, I will briefly explain the concept. Research on this topic, founded by Michael Lipsky, argues that the ones that are responsible for actually implementing the policies are often caught between high expectations on the one hand, and scarce means to meet these expectations on the other. The process of translating policy on paper into actual concrete policy is done by street-level bureaucrats, who find themselves in between private individuals and public authorities (Brodkin 2012). This theory seems to fit perfectly to the breeding place policy.

In this case, Kinetisch Noord can be considered a street-level organization. Bouwe Olij thus can be considered a street-level bureaucrat. This argument holds ground, as Olij, when appointed, was given the task of reducing the debts of the organization; a tough task, and with scarce means to achieve the goal. It is therefore only logical that he receives a lot of critique from the people who might suffer from his decisions: the artists.

### **High-modernism**

Another reason for the opposition against the local representatives of the institutional is the fact that – according to the respondents – they do not listen to the artists. The institutional actors are accused of implementing whatever plan they have without consulting or listening to the local artists. To address this issue, I will shortly discuss the book “Seeing Like a State” written by Scott (1998). He presents various cases to illustrate that grand, what he calls “high-modernist”, top-down plans fail, if they do not recognize the importance of “metis”, translated here as local know-how<sup>27</sup>.

This high-modernist attitude is something we have encountered in the theoretical framework, when the state took the lead in rebuilding the country after the Second World War. The idea was that society was makeable, from the top-down. As described, citizens then gradually demanded and received a larger voice in decision-making. However, the question is if this development has really put through; clearly, if all the respondents have expressed frustration about being ignored by the institutions, something has gone wrong. This indicates that governmental attempts to achieve participation remain clumsy, at best. The high-modernist attitude might not totally have disappeared after all. Bart Stuart provides this argument with a

clear conclusion, from an artist's perspective: "Nothing has been learned from other examples, how it could have been different. The centralized planning and thinking that you are superior, or if you want to put it a little friendlier: firmly believing in the bureaucracy, that still continues. That is something I have become very cynical about."

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<sup>27</sup> Scott actually provides a lot of synonyms in his book of which this is not one; however, in this case this translation seems to be the most suitable.

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