

The effect of Values, Norms, Beliefs and Behaviours on the environmental movement

Bachelor thesis



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Foreword

Herewith I present my graduation project for the Premaster Geography, Planning and Environment at the Radboud University of Nijmegen. This bachelor thesis is about the traits of the people in the environmental movement of Nijmegen. I have conducted research into Nijmegen Green Capital, in the period of February 2017 until June 2017. The information in this report is intended to the board of Nijmegen Green Capital, the assessors of Radboud University, and for further studies related to the environmental movement.

During my previous studies “International Business and Languages at the Hogeschool van Amsterdam”; I have visited some interesting countries. These travels have formed the basis for my interest in sustainability and motivates me to help saving the planet. I wonder how we can shift society in such a way that it stays liveable for generations to come. Therefore, I want to attain my master’s degree in Environment and Society studies next year. Doing so, I hope to deliver a positive contribution to preservation of our beautiful planet.

First of all, I would like to thank Bert Lagerweij, for making it possible for me to do the research. Secondly, I would like to thank all the encouragers who have taken the time to be interviewed, and have shown hospitality during the observation. Lastly, I would like to thank my supervisor from the Radboud University, Peter van de Laak, for his excellent support and guidance throughout the writing process.

I wish you an enjoyable read.

Summary

In 2016, Nijmegen, the Netherlands, has won the award for Green Capital of Europe in 2018. This honour implies that Nijmegen is one of the top of cities in Europe regarding sustainability, and brings about a lot of change for its future. The topic of the thesis is the people behind the scenes: the challenge encouragers of Nijmegen Green Capital. The aim of the research is to investigate what drives these people, with the intention to mobilize more people who support the environmental movement in achieving the municipality's goal of becoming climate neutral in 2045.

The problem that is leading in this report is the ambiguity of the motives of the people actively engaged in the environmental movement in Nijmegen. The current ambiguity of the movement is a liability for investments. In order to create sufficient investment support for Nijmegen, it is imperative to grow this group of support: the environmental movement. But what drives these people exactly? That depends on people's values, norms and beliefs regarding the environment. Hence, what determines the drive of these individuals supporting the cause is unclear, as well as the identity they share as a group which has formed over the years. Therefore, the topic of this research is the degree to which the encouragers of the challenges' norms, values and beliefs are affecting the environmental movement. The main question of this thesis is therefore:

To what extent do personal norms, values, beliefs and behaviours of people actively engaged in Nijmegen Green Capital challenges, influence the environmental movement of Nijmegen?

In order to answer this question, Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory (Stern, et al., 1999) is chosen because it provides a model that suits the process of identifying underlying mechanisms for the motives of individuals in a group. It suggests that the process of environmental movement support can be deducted from a causal chain of five variables, namely Values, New Environmental Paradigm (NEP), Awareness Consequences (AC), Ascription of Responsibility to self-beliefs (AR), and Personal Norms.

It is decided that an ethnographic design is the approach that best suits the research in the encouragers' values, beliefs and norms, or in ethnography, a so-called culture-sharing group. A culture-sharing group means *a group who share beliefs, behaviours and language*. Researching into a culture ethnographically means on the one hand looking at individual behaviour, and on the other hand looking at group behaviour. Therefore, two methods are used to research into this culture group: interviews and

observations. The interviews are used as a method to find out what the values, norms and beliefs are of the individuals, and the observation to verify these traits to their behaviour. In total, seven interviews and one observation have been conducted. These have been structured by the VBN-theory, and practically analysed with Atlas.ti.

From the results of the research can be concluded that the people actively engaged in Nijmegen Green Capital challenges do not perceive themselves as being part of the environmental movement. This is due to the negative connotation they perceive with “environmental movement”. When the main research question would be adapted to “To what extent do personal norms, values, beliefs and behaviours of people actively engaged in Nijmegen Green Capital challenges, influence the *modern, rational, environmental movement* of Nijmegen?” The answer would be **to a certain extent**. A community may on the one hand influence the movement positively; by sharing the same traits towards the same cause (the environment) making it easier to unify and carry out a similar message. On the other hand, it may influence the movement negatively; by naturally forming an in-crowd group, they unconsciously form a barrier to diversify the group. The latter may cause the size of the environmental movement to stagnate, because of the decrease in attractiveness for demographically-differing groups. However, the analysis is based on merely seven interviews and one group observation, which may imply that the conclusions are non-applicable on the whole group, or on the whole environmental movement.

Table of Content

COLOPHON	I
FOREWORD	II
SUMMARY	III
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 RESEARCH TOPIC	1
1.2 DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT	3
1.3 PROJECT FRAMEWORK	4
1.3.1 SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE	4
1.3.2 SOCIETAL RELEVANCE	7
1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT	8
1.5 RESEARCH AIM	9
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	9
1.7 RESEARCH MODEL	10
2. THEORY	11
2.1 VALUE-BELIEF-NORM THEORY	11
2.2 CONCEPTUAL MODEL	13
3. METHODOLOGY	15
3.1 ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH	15
3.2 RESEARCH STRATEGY	16
3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN	17
4. VALUES, NORMS, BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOURS	20
4.1 BEHAVIOURS	20
4.1.1 ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT BEHAVIOUR	20
4.1.2 THE FORMATION OF THE CULTURE-SHARING GROUP	22
4.1.3 CONSEQUENCES OF IN- AND OUT-CROWD	25
4.2 NORMS	26
4.3 BELIEFS	27
4.4 VALUES	30
4.5 CONCLUSION	32
5. CONCLUSIONS	34
5.1 KEY CONCLUSIONS	34
5.2 ANSWERS TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	36
5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	38
BIBLIOGRAPHY	41
APPENDIX A – FULL CRITICAL LITERATURE STUDY	44
APPENDIX B – FULL TRANSCRIPTS INTERVIEWS	48
APPENDIX C – ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY	99
APPENDIX D – INTERVIEW GUIDE	102
APPENDIX E – ATLAS.TI WORKSHEETS	104
APPENDIX F – OBSERVATION PROTOCOL	106

1. Introduction

This report is a bachelor thesis written for the premaster Geography Planning and Environment at Radboud University of Nijmegen. In 2016, the municipality of Nijmegen, the Netherlands, has won the award for Green Capital of Europe in 2018. This development implies that Nijmegen is in the top of cities in Europe regarding sustainability, and brings about a lot of change for its future. The topic of the thesis is the people behind the scenes: the challenge encouragers of Nijmegen Green Capital (NGC). The aim of the research is to find out what drives these people, with the intention to mobilize more people who support the environmental movement in achieving the municipality's goal of becoming climate neutral in 2045.

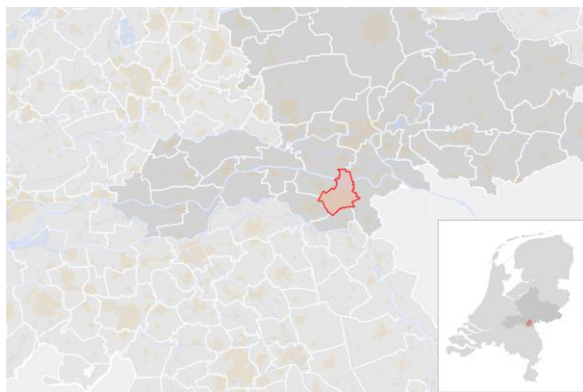
The report begins with investigating what social movements are and what scholars have discussed about previous movements. The main question of this thesis is to what extent personal traits of people in the Nijmegen Green Capital challenges affect the environmental movement. In order to answer this question, people's values, norm, beliefs and behaviours are researched into; hence, an ethnographic research is the applied approach.

The project framework consists of two elements, namely a scientific framework, and a societal framework. The scientific framework is a means to come to the scientific relevance of the research. Therefore, relevant publications from scholars on the topic of social and environmental movements are discussed. Next, the research aim is based on the societal relevance. Subsequently, the research questions are formed. In the second chapter of this report, the theory that is applied during the research process is discussed more thoroughly. In chapter three the methodology used to operationalize the empirical research is discussed. The research results are presented in chapter 4, and the conclusions are presented in chapter 5. Additionally to chapter 5, recommendations and a discussion are included.

1.1 Research topic

In November 2016, Nijmegen, the Netherlands, has won the award for Europe's Green Capital in 2018. Because of her past sustainable efforts, and future sustainable plans, the city of Nijmegen is selected by the European Commission (Power2Nijmegen, 2016). Nijmegen has a population of approximately 174.575, and is geographically located in the mid-east of the Netherlands, as shown in the pictures below. Most of the population of Nijmegen is left-wing oriented in the political dimension, and votes for the green party GroenLinks or D66¹. In addition, the city counts many students because of the Radboud University and the Hogeschool Arnhem Nijmegen.

¹ http://www.nijmegen.nl/gns/no_index/verkiezingen_2017/index.html



2



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The city currently has forty-two initiatives and projects running, initiated by civilians who share one common goal; realise Nijmegen to become 100% climate neutral in 2045 (Power2Nijmegen, 2017). These initiatives differ from small solar projects on rooftops of primary schools, to larger projects like windmills built alongside highway A15, which produces enough energy for 8,900 households (Windpark Nijmegen-Betuwe, 2017). In order to become 100% climate neutral, the city needs sufficient social and economic support. NGC is an unique opportunity to communicate with society and economy, and may positively affect the growth of the support for becoming climate neutral. Moreover, the recognition of European Green Capital gives Nijmegen a responsibility to influence other cities in Europe, and for this reason this city is chosen for this research.

Target group

In order for the city to live up to the expectations of the European Commission, fourteen so called *challenges* have been conceived, i.e. circular economy, waste, biodiversity, energy, and so on⁴. The focus of the thesis is on the people behind all these different environmental activities. A project group of approximately fifteen people has been assigned to each of these challenges, and is guided by one assigned *challenge encourager*. The group of people operating for these projects are potentially part of an environmental movement. Researching into the characteristics of the encouragers could confirm this. Moreover, the municipality of Nijmegen has the ambition to become climate neutral in 2045 (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2011), wherefore this group of people could have a catalysing effect. For Nijmegen to achieve her goal of becoming climate in 2045, it is imperative to the city, both socially and economically, to find out what motivates these people.

² [https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nijmegen#/media/File:NL_-_locator_map_municipality_code_GM0268_\(2016\).png](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nijmegen#/media/File:NL_-_locator_map_municipality_code_GM0268_(2016).png)

³ <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/36/Gem-Nijmegen-OpenTopo.jpg>

⁴ <http://www.greencapitalchallenges.nl/>

As mentioned earlier, for the municipality of Nijmegen to become climate neutral the city requires thorough support from her civilians. But what drives these people exactly? That depends largely on people's backgrounds. Thus, on people's values, norms and beliefs regarding the environment. Hence, what drives the individuals supporting this cause is unclear, as well as the identity they share as a group which has formed over the years. Therefore, the topic of this research is the degree to which the norms, values and beliefs of the encouragers of the challenges' are affecting the environmental movement.

1.2 Definition of Social Movement

The search for the underlying problem of a phenomenon starts by *defining* the phenomenon one tries to solve. In order to define an environmental movement, one first needs to define a social movement. Unfortunately, no specific definition for a social movement is agreed upon between sociological scientists. However, scholars have agreed upon the large differences between movements (Kriesi, et al., 1995), which is why some of them divide them into strategy-oriented or identity-oriented (Cohen, 1985). According to Jamison, Cramer and Eyerman (1990) social movements are "neither spontaneous uprisings nor determined events, but rather historical projects which exist for rather short periods." How short these periods are differs per movement, yet, the environmental movement will only succeed once Nijmegen is completely climate neutral. This would take approximately another thirty years, which can be interpreted as rather long-term. Therefore, it is not like any other rather short-term movements.

According to M. Diani (1992), who conducted research into most of the attempts to define the concept of social movements, all attempts or approaches have three elements in common: "Social movements are defined as networks of *informal interactions* between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural *conflicts*, on basis of shared *collective identities*." - (Diani, 1992). The people active in the challenges form a network of informal interactions, engaged in the climate conflict between society and politics, based on shared identities. These informal interactions are being illustrated by the project initiatives. Also, by involved organisations, such as the municipality. To sum, Diani's attempt to define social movements comes closest to the concept occurring in the area of Nijmegen. Thus; this definition of a social movement is used in the thesis.

Furthermore, it appears to be quite difficult to find a common definition for an environmental movement, too. This is probably due to its basis for being a scientific, social, as well as a political movement for addressing environmental issues. John McCormick (1991) admits the lack of environmental movement parameters in his book *Reclaiming Paradise*: "Is it a way of life, a state of mind, an attitude to society,

or even a political philosophy? Perhaps it is all of these, or only some of them.” - (McCormick, 1991). Furthermore, the emphases of social movements that have occurred in the past differ, such as the peace movement or the nuclear movement. The emphasis of the social movement that is researched into in this thesis has an emphasis on environmentalism. The concepts are defined as follows:

1. Social movement: “Networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflicts, on basis of shared collective identities.” - (Diani, 1992).
2. Environmentalism: “Advocacy for or work toward protecting the natural environment from destruction or pollution.” - (American Heritage, 2016)

1.3 Project framework

The scope of the research is narrowed down in this chapter. Firstly, the scientific relevance is determined by discussing what various scholars say about this topic. Moreover, it is discussed which theories exist in this field of study, what is researched and how. Only the most relevant theories are discussed in the following chapter. How the scope is narrowed down with more literary support is shown extensively in appendix A. Lastly, the societal relevance is determined by discussing why the society of Nijmegen may benefit from this research.

1.3.1 Scientific relevance

In general, scholars have especially focussed on feminist, nuclear, environmental and peace movements (Klandermans, 1993; Klandermans & Oegema, 1987; Snow, Burke Rocheford, Worden, & Benford, 1986) which were occurring in these given decades. In order to narrow down the literary scope of social movements, the focus will be reduced to only two theories, namely Resource Mobilization theories and New Social Movement theories.

Many scholars have researched into New Social Movements (NSMs) trying to define what a movement is. They compared movements in their own countries to others, by researching into theories about mobilization and movement identities, among others (Cohen, 1985; Kriesi, 1989; Stern, 2000; Jamison, et al., 1990; Stern, et al., 1999). Habermas (1981), for example, argues that what is new about these movements is the differing conflicts surrounding them. This implies that every movement with a differing conflict is by any means a new movement.

Various studies attempted to figure out how to mobilize people to join social movements by identifying the reasons why people participate in the first place. Kriesi (1989) has conducted such research, by analyzing NSM on the ‘New Class’ or technocrats in the Netherlands, based on a survey conducted in 1986. Kriesi explains how the NSM theories sought to emphasize on *why* new movements arise, in contrast

to resource mobilization theories who emphasize on *how* they arise (Kriesi H. , 1989). He has researched several layers of the Dutch society, by analyzing surveys on whether people have participated. However, this research dates back to nearly three decades ago. He asked the people if they (1) had sympathy for the movement, (2) if they were ready to participate in the movement, (3) if they would sign petitions for this cause, and (4) if they had ever actively participated in a movement. He finds that people from both public and private spheres constitute the new class and mobilize NSMs. He concluded that most NSMs were supported by large parts of the society, but that the leaders and their active participants had their roots originating in the new middle class. His research method will be very useful for this bachelor thesis, because he provides indicators to be used when studying layers of society, linking them to social movements.

Paul C. Stern (2000) attempted to create a coherent theory of environmentally significant behaviour in social movements, by breaking it down into four types of behaviour. He defines environmentally significant behaviour by its impact. The extent to which environmental behaviour has an impact on the availability of energy or raw materials, or, the extent to which it affects the dynamics of the biosphere or ecosystems (Stern, 2000). The four types of behaviour that he suggests are (1) Environmental Activism, (2) Non-activist Behaviours in the Public Sphere, (3) Private-Sphere Environmentalism, and (4) Other Environmentally Significant Behaviours. He links theories in determining environmentalism with theories of altruistic behaviour and Value-Belief-Norm theory. This theory deducts the process of environmental movements into five variables (see chapter 2.2), which operationalizes the *why* people participate very clearly, and is therefore interesting for this thesis.

Resource Mobilization Theory emerged in the 1970s and focuses on acquiring resources to mobilizing individuals to accomplish social movement's goals (Oliver & Marwell, 1992). Resource-mobilization theorists share, Cohen argues, the following postulations:

"1. Social movements must be understood in terms of a conflict model of collective action. 2. There is no fundamental difference between institutional and non-institutional collective action. 3. Both entail conflicts of interest built into institutionalized power relations. 4. Collective action involves the rational pursuit of interests by groups. 5. Goals and grievances are permanent products of power relations and cannot account for the organization, and opportunities for collective action. 6. Success is evidenced by the recognition of the group as a political actor or by increased material benefits. 7. Mobilization involves large-scale, special-purpose, bureaucratic, formal organizations." - (Cohen, 1985)

What differs from the environmental movement to another is that this movement will not experience success until the energy transition is completed, which may take up to another half a century. It is therefore a long-term movement, perhaps by disrupting entire layers of status quo for the area, and possibly the country. For this reason, it is imperative to conduct more research into this movement, starting with the group of people actively engaged in the municipality.

Klandermans argued in 1984 how resource mobilization theorists had nearly abandoned social-psychological analyses of social movements (1984). Therefore, he approached the subject with new psychological evidence, as well as by applying the Expectancy-value theory. He used this approach to prove that his theory of how the willingness to participate in a movement is dependent on the perceived costs and benefits of participation (Klandermans B. , 1984). Moreover, he argues how the differences between individual cost and benefits to participate can be quite large across regions and during the life cycle of the movement. Furthermore, Klandermans argues that the agreement with the aims of the movement does not always lead to participation in the movement. He argues that it is of high importance to distinguish between consensus and active mobilization, or, between the processes of convincing and activating. These arguments will be considered during the analysis phase of the research process, when determining whether i.e. the respondents have to make trade-offs in their daily lives.

To conclude the scientific framework, Kriesi's research method provides indicators to be used when studying layers of society, linking them to social movements. He asked the people if they (1) had sympathy for the movement, (2) if they were ready to participate in the movement, (3) if they would sign petitions for this cause, and (4) if they had ever actively participated in a movement. These indicators shall be very helpful in designing the empirical research. Stern distinguishes four types of environmentally significant behaviour, which will be used when analyzing the research' results. Moreover, it can be concluded that the environmental movement differs from other social movements because it differs from Cohen's findings on resource mobilization theorists. Moreover, it is also presumable it differs from the environmental movement from the 70s, since it is nearly half a century later. One could argue it is a new social movement. Since it is such a recent phenomenon, there exists a scientific gap. Lastly, the research of Klandermans has given insight into why people behave in certain ways in social movements.

1.3.2 Societal relevance

During the past decade in the Netherlands, more and more cooperation's have started initiatives to produce renewable energy, such as building wind turbines and solar panel fields, because citizens believe they are part of a movement (Groene Courant, 2012; NOS, 2016).

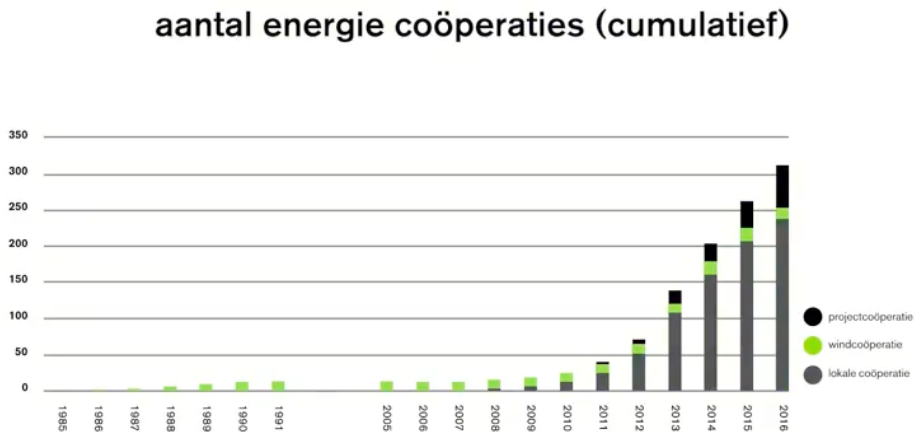


Figure 1.1 Number of energy cooperation's in the Netherlands has grown cumulatively and will be expected to grow exponentially from 2016 on forward (HIERopgewekt, 2016).

This is a movement of civilians who, for many different reasons, are motivated to create sustainable and local energy for themselves and others. It is a movement of civilians that believe the future is dependent on how we utilise our limited resources on the planet. It is also a movement that is tired of waiting for the government under cabinet Rutte III, who is currently taking on a *facilitating* role, to take the lead on the matter. A movement that is ready to take the lead themselves.

In addition, more and more companies are taking responsibility themselves to reduce CO2 emissions in other ways, and recycle the raw materials they use to produce their products. Innovative companies are creating a circular economy in their own product-life-cycles, without the help of the government. Overall, these developments thus originate in a bottom-up fashion, decentralising the organisation of the country's economy and society in a progressive way. Arguably, this shift would leave the government with less and less influence. Professor Jan Rotmans of the Erasmus University of Rotterdam is calling this decentralising shift of society a *kantelbeweging*, or in English a "tipping point movement" (Bloovi, 2017). This is most obviously shown in the number of local energy initiatives in Nijmegen alone, namely, the city currently has 42 initiatives and projects running, initiated by civilians (Power2Nijmegen, 2017) who share one common goal; taking back control over their energy.

Nijmegen has the goal to become climate neutral in 2045 (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2011). In order to achieve this ambitious goal, many projects have been supported by the municipality and coordinated by Power2Nijmegen, which is a network of organizations, research- and education institutions, governments and citizens cooperate towards this goal. These ambitions led to the attention from the European Union. In 2016, the city of Nijmegen has won the award for Green Capital of Europe 2018 (Power2Nijmegen, 2016). This recognition from the European Commission means that the city is already quite successful when it comes to sustainability. Yet, the municipality will be constructing several projects to make the city even more sustainable, so that the city can function as an example for other European cities. Between now and 2018, projects will be constructed like Nature and Biodiversity, Water management, Waste production and management, Ambient air quality, Circular Economy, and so on. The people working on these projects are taking on an active role for the next two years to finish these projects. These people volunteer in order to bring Nijmegen further, by facilitating the achievement of becoming climate neutral in 2045 (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2011). For this reason, the researcher will perceive the people taking on an active role in the achievement of environmental goals for Nijmegen as part of a social movement, with the emphasis on environmentalism.

Cooperation's that have been founded in the Netherlands over the past years have the ambition to grow, and are looking for a reliable group in society to become co-owners (Greenchoice, 2016). This sustainability transition will have a large impact on several layers in society, both socially and economically. Nijmegen's goal to become climate neutral in 2045 thus requires support from its civilians, as well as from the market to achieve it. The municipality of Nijmegen and project initiatives in the area can benefit from this research, to identify, mobilize and persuade civilians at the cause of this environmental movement, triggered by the economic incentive as added value. When the market can rely on the movement's potential, the market gets incentivised to invest, and therefore, the sustainable society transition will benefit from this development. This research helps to identify the motives of the people involved in the Green Capital challenges, as well as the potential of this movement. Thus, the research contributes to the achievement of Nijmegen's goals and has societal relevance.

1.4 Problem statement

The problem that is leading in this report is the ambiguity of the motives of the people actively engaged in the environmental movement in Nijmegen. The current ambiguity of the movement has a dramatic effect on the economics of it all: it is a liability for investments. The effect of this liability is that the sustainability transition as a whole lacks the economic incentive to pull through, and thus, municipalities like Nijmegen may not be able to achieve the goal of becoming climate neutral in 2045. The reason

why there is no scientific proof for this is probably because it is such a recent development in the society as a whole.

1.5 Research aim

The aim of the research is to specify what the potential of this movement is, by clarifying the motivations of the people volunteering for the cause. When this is identified, the society and economy of Nijmegen can build on the knowledge to achieve the sustainable goals.

The aim of this research is to find out what drives the people of NGC, with the intention to mobilize more people who support the environmental movement in achieving the municipality's goal of becoming climate neutral in 2045.

When this aim is achieved and people are mobilized to strengthen the movement, the local society can build on and invest in it, which ultimately helps Nijmegen to become climate neutral in 2045. In chapter 1.3 is discussed how the people volunteering for Nijmegen Green Capital 2018 will be perceived as the movement in the thesis. The researcher identifies traits of individuals participating in this movement, parameters subject to intrinsic motivations, actions, and other reasons to participate in this movement.

1.6 Research questions

Researching the motivations of people means looking for the values, norms, behaviours and beliefs of a group of people; people who share a culture. When linking the motivations of culture-sharing people working on this project to the broader social movement, many questions arise. Questions such as; Are the active people intrinsically motivated, or are there other reasons for participating? And if the latter appears to be the case, would they then still belong to the movement? What effect does the group-culture have on the environmental movement as a whole? Clarifying what these people mean for the society of Nijmegen will support the goal of becoming climate neutral in 2045. The central question of this research is:

To what extent do personal values, norms, beliefs and behaviours of people actively engaged in Nijmegen Green Capital challenges, influence the environmental movement of Nijmegen?

To find an answer to this question, the researcher attempts to base the research on multiple theories by comparing personal traits, subject to values, norms and beliefs, of one group of people. The method used is both an observation during the group projects, and individually through interviews. In order to answer the main research question, the following sub questions ought to be answered:

1. What traits that define the people actively engaged in an environmental movement are identified in literature?
2. What personal values, norms and beliefs can be identified in actively engaged people in an environmental movement?
3. Do the common traits have consequences for the expansion of the environmental movement?

In order to answer the first sub question, theory is consulted. The second sub question is researched into by means of field research. For the third sub question to be answered, behaviours of the respondents is observed. If these questions are answered, the knowledge that results from it can provide insight in how to mobilize more people and get them to participate in the movement. When this movement grows, more people can join in, and the process of achieving the municipality of Nijmegen's goal of becoming climate neutral in 2045 would become more effective.

1.7 Research model

The aim of the research can be achieved by means of analysing one culture-sharing group, namely, actively engaged people. By getting to know these people better, thus, by interviewing them personally as well as performing an ethnographic study, the research questions are answered in the conclusions. The researcher has interviewed the culture-shared group unstructured, with general categories identified. The categories that will be discussed in the interviews are summed as follows:

1. What the respondents indicate as their personal values, norms and beliefs;
2. What the respondents' actions express these traits;
3. Which differences or similarities are notable between personal interviews versus group observation?

The relationship between the first and second category is imperative to answer the main question of the thesis, because the former illuminates what the respondents *say* they think is important, while the latter will *show* what they think is important and how important it is based on their behaviour. The third category will indicate how reliable the respondent's answers in the interviews are.



Figure 1.2 Research Model

2. Theory

In the first chapter a project framework is created, and the research relevance, aim and direction are determined. In this chapter, the theory that will be used in the thesis is discussed more thoroughly. Subsequently, a conceptual model is presented. In order to answer the main research question, a theory is required that looks into the underlying motives of the people in the group. Underlying motives can be characterised as values, norms and beliefs, and can be tested by observing their behaviour. The following chapter discusses a theory that, for this reason, fits the research very well. How this theory is implemented in the research methodologically is discussed in chapter 3.

2.1 Value-Belief-Norm Theory

The following theory is according to the scholars the best available account of support for environmental movements (Stern, et al., 1999). It is called the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory, which suggests that the process of environmental movement support can be deduced from a causal chain of five variables, namely Values, New Environmental Paradigm (NEP), Awareness Consequences (AC), Ascription of Responsibility to self-beliefs (AR), and Personal Norms. The definitions summed up as follows, and will be extensively discussed below:

- **New Ecological Paradigm (NEP):** is a scale that measures broad beliefs about the effects of human action on the biosphere. For example, one could ask a true or false question, such as “Climate change deniers are ignorant by definition”, or “Earth is like a spaceship with limited room and resources.”;
- **Awareness Consequences (AC):** moral norms are the cause of pro-environmental action, activated by beliefs that environmental conditions are a threat to humans and other species. For example, one could ask: “Do you think climate change will be a very serious problem for you and your family, somewhat of a problem, or not really a problem at all?”
- **Ascription of Responsibility to self-beliefs (AR):** in order to limit those threats they have to initiate action. For example, one could ask: “Do you feel like the Dutch government is taking sufficient measures to fight climate change?”

This theory is chosen because it provides a model that suits the process of identifying underlying mechanisms for the motives of individuals in a culture-sharing group. The model provides causal relationships between specific variables, which will link the findings of the ethnographic research to each other. Then, the researcher can categorize the findings into norms, values and beliefs, and link them to cause and effects. Ultimately, by using this theory to help analysing the research, the researcher can answer the main research question. The ways in which values, norms and beliefs will be identified are further concretized in chapter 3.3.

Stern et al. (1999) test the theory empirically by means of comparative tests to three other theories, namely the norm-activation theory, the theory of personal values, and the New Ecological Paradigm hypothesis. The norm-activation theory of altruism, created by Schwartz (1977), holds that moral norms are the cause of pro-environmental action, activated by beliefs that environmental conditions are a threat to humans and other species (AC), and that in order to limit those threats they have to initiate action (AR) (Stern, et al., 1999). The theory of personal values posits three types of values relevant to environmentalism, namely self-interest, altruism towards humans, and altruism to other species and the biosphere. Stern et al. used two of these, altruism and self-interest, to see if they corresponded to value clusters defined by Schwartz, namely Self-Transcendent and Self-Enhancement. Moreover, they examine two value types, also identified by Schwartz, Conservation values and Openness to Change (Stern, et al., 1999). Lastly, the New Ecological Paradigm (NEP) scale is comparatively tested to the VBN theory, which is a scale that measures broad beliefs about the effects of human action on the biosphere (Stern, et al., 1999). For example posing statements such as “Climate change deniers are ignorant by definition”, or “Earth is like a spaceship with limited room and resources.” The scholars link VBN theory to these theories through a causal chain, and examine the predictive value. As shown in figure 2.1 below, the theories have a causal effect on each other (Stern, et al., 1999).

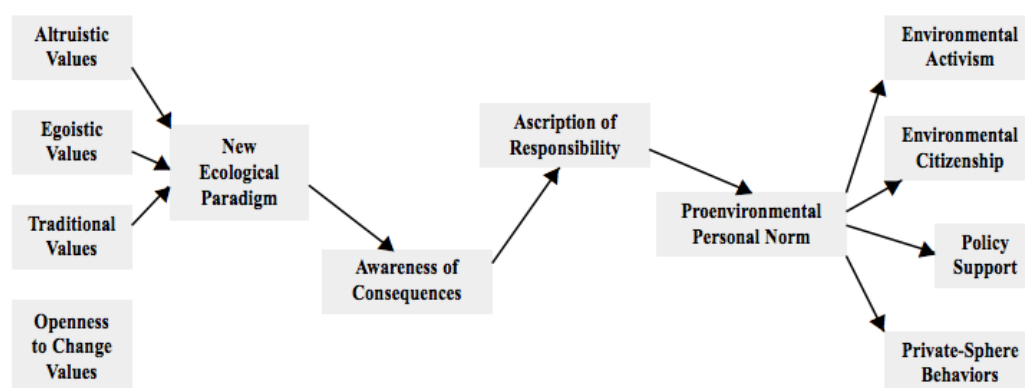


Figure 1. Schematic model of variables in the Value-Belief-Norm theory as applied to environmentalism, showing direct causal relationships between pairs of variables at adjacent causal levels.^a

^aEffects of egoistic and traditional values on other variables are negative. Variables in this model may also have direct effects (not shown) on variables more than one level downstream. In addition, each of the variables in the model may be affected by variables not shown, which are not elements of the VBN theory. However, only personal

Figure 2.1 Schematic model of variables in the VBN-theory (Stern, et al., 1999)

In their research, Stern et al. (1999) have collected data from 420 respondents via telephone interviews that included 17 behavioural items. These items suggested three factors corresponding to three components of environmentalism; the three dimensions of non-activist support for the environmental movement, namely consumer behaviour, environmental citizenship, and policy support or acceptance.

The method they used results in a regression analysis and concluded that they were strongly consistent with the theory of VBN. Personal norms had strong associations with the behavioural indicators of each type of non-activist environmentalism, as well as that they were the strongest predictor of willingness to sacrifice and consumer behaviour (Stern, et al., 1999). Unfortunately, the researchers have not taken 'adoption of an environmentalist identity' into account when conducting their research, which leaves the question whether *values* affect *activism* open. Therefore, it is interesting to research into what this environmentalist identity is, and what motives are affecting participation in the movement (not merely a demonstration).

Stern et al. (1999) imply that in any mobilization strategy for non-activist movement support the mobilization is vested in particular human values. Therefore, movement activists and organisations will highlight those values during the persuasion to participate. Then, highlight the threats if they do not participate (AC). Lastly, highlight the effects that alleviate when they do participate (AR) (Stern, et al., 1999). To sum, the VBN theory fits very well to the aim of the thesis, due to its function to facilitate motivational measures of participation in actively engaged behaviour in the environmental and decentralising movement. How this theory will be implemented concretely in the research is discussed in chapter 3.

2.2 Conceptual model

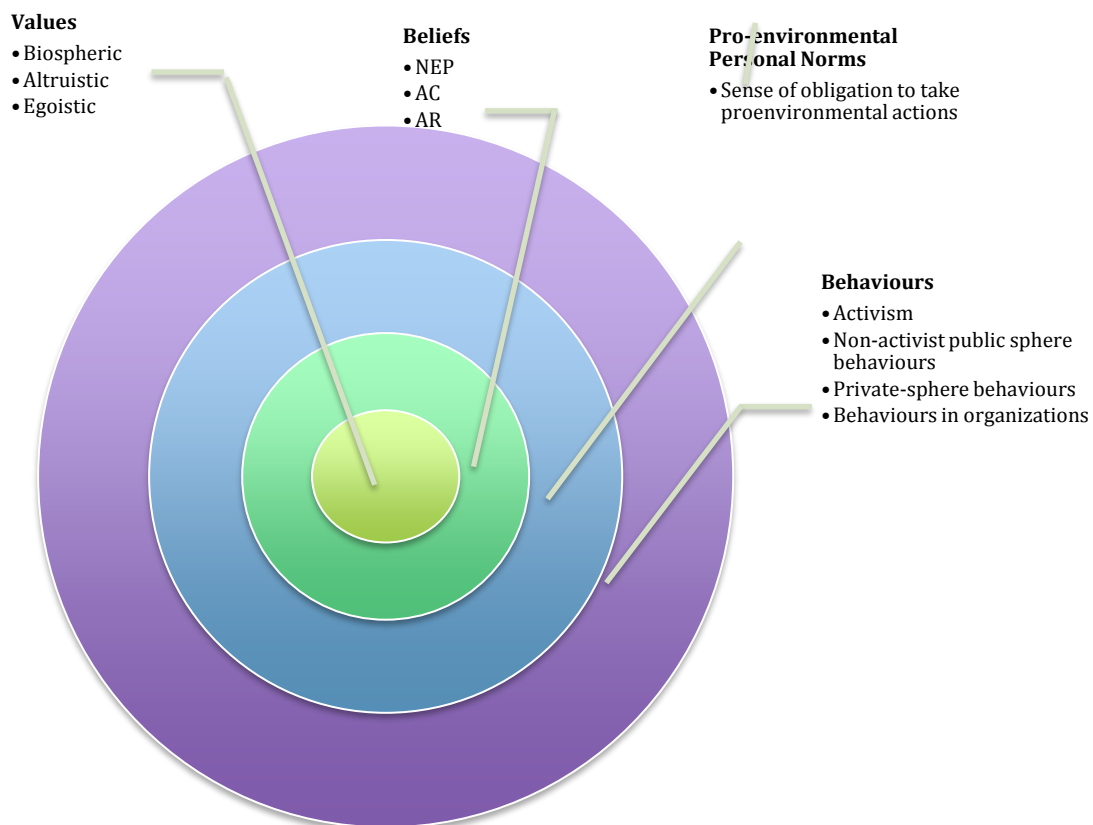


Figure 2.2 Conceptual Model based on VBN theory (Stern, 2000).

In order to achieve the goal of understanding the underlying mechanisms of participation in the movement, the spheres of the model as shown above are created accordingly. The four layers of the onion-shaped model are dynamically coherent to each other. Firstly, the people actively engaged in the Nijmegen Green Capital challenges share an active attitude towards achieving environmental goals. In this case it is described as a culture, which they share. Then, motives of participating can be distinguished between values, beliefs, pro-environmental personal norms, and behaviours. In order to determine the underlying values, firstly a person's behaviour ought to be observed in order to link them to norms. Secondly, a person's norms ought to be determined in order to understand their core values. Thirdly, a person's beliefs ought to be determined, so that one can link beliefs to norms and behaviours. Lastly, these factors should provide the researcher with enough information to determine one's values. In the next chapter, the method is further discussed, and the values, norms and beliefs are further concretized.

3. Methodology

This chapter describes what research methods have been used during the research and analysing process. Firstly, the method that has been chosen is explained. Secondly, the research strategy is explained, and lastly, the research design is operationalized. Several theories that have been discussed in the project framework are used in the research design, because they complement each other. Together they form a fitting combination for this research to be well executed.

3.1 Ethnographic research

To conduct this research, the researcher had two feasible options to choose from as a method: ethnographic design and case study. The topic of social movements is quite broad and thoroughly discussed academically, so it is quite a challenge to narrow down the research scope to specific boundaries. A case study could have been chosen to narrow down the scope of the research. However, an ethnographic research design looks rather at how a culture-sharing group works by observing the group and interviewing them, instead of determining what a specific situation looks like, which is the function of a case study (Creswell, 2007). The societal and scientific relevance of the research would benefit most from the entire dimension of the movement, rather than just one specific case such as Nijmegen Green Capital of Europe. Therefore, it has been decided to choose a more general approach to study patterns of values, behaviours and beliefs. It is not the case of NGC from which in-depth understanding is necessary, it is the entire *shared-culture* of actively engaged people that requires in-depth understanding. Therefore, it is decided that ethnographic design is the approach of research in this thesis.

Culture-sharing group

A culture-sharing group means in ethnography *a group who share beliefs, behaviours and language*. Researching into a culture ethnographically means on the one hand looking at individual behaviour, and on the other hand looking at group behaviour. Therefore, two methods for data collection are used to research into this culture group: interviews and observations. The interviews are used as a method to find out what the values, norms and beliefs are of the individuals. In order to get to their core values, I will start by their beliefs. Then, I will try to get to their norms, and lastly to the core of their behaviour: their values. This is also shown in the conceptual model in chapter 2.2. Subsequently, the observations are used as a method to find out if these norms, values, and beliefs have an effect on the group behaviour with regard to environmentalism. Also, what the behaviours are of the individuals in the group, the interactions in the group, and the dynamics in the group are coherent to how they responded individually. The research results from both methods are interdependent on each other. When the interview and observation results are combined, the

researcher will be able to define how the culture group works, and interpret to what extent it influences the environmental movement in Nijmegen.

3.2 Research strategy

The aim of the research is to clarify the indistinct role of the movement in the area. This will be researched through the values, beliefs and norms of people actively engaged in the Nijmegen Green Capital challenges. As discussed in chapter 3.1, the focus is on the overall values, beliefs and norms of people. In an attempt to determine the shape of a movement, these concepts are to be measured by two strategies, namely interviews and observations.

Interview strategy

In total, seven encouragers of NGC have been interviewed. The researcher invited all ten of the encouragers, but unfortunately only seven were able to participate. The persons that have been interviewed are anonymous. Two of the encouragers are also in the board of NGC. These two, plus three other encouragers have known each other for a long time and have been part of NGC since the beginning. Two of the participants have joined later. This may be an interesting addition to see whether it has affected the group-culture.

As discussed in chapter 1.7, it is decided that the researcher is going to interview the culture-shared group with general categories identified:

1. What the respondents indicate as their personal values, norms and beliefs;
2. What the respondents' actions express these traits (behaviour);
3. What differences or similarities are notable between personal interviews versus group observation?

The respondents that will be interviewed shall be interviewed in person, independently from one another. The interviews will serve as a means to dig deeper into what the respondents believe are their values, norms, beliefs and behaviours. What each question has added to the analysis is shown in the interview guide (Appendix D).

Observation strategy

The researcher has observed one encouragers meeting. At first, the researcher wanted to conduct more observations. Unfortunately, due to unfeasibility in the timeframe in which the meetings were planned by the organisation, this was the only opportunity given. The aim of the observation was to measure whether what the respondents have answered during their individual interviews differs from their in-group behaviour and actions. During the observations, the researcher will take notes thoroughly. The situation will be observed and described fully and in a story-like way. In order to be able to write down everything that is observed, an observation protocol

is created, as Creswell recommends in his book (Creswell, 2007). This protocol (appendix F) helps to separate descriptive notes from reflective notes, which will later on help to illuminate the most important details and interpret them correctly. In addition, during the observations, the researcher has taken on a 'Nonparticipant/observer as participant' as a role. This means that the researcher analysed the situation from a distance, and took notes without direct involvement (Creswell, 2007). This way the researcher kept the full focus on the situation without distractions.

3.3 Research design

As Wolcott (1994) recommends, the three aspects of ethnographic research that are used in this research design: description, analysis, and interpretation of the culture-sharing group. The interviews are therefore documented in a descriptive form, up to a point where it is analysed and interpreted. These three aspects are fully discussed in three phases.

Phase 1: Description

Below is elaborated on the concrete type of questions in the interviews in the first phase of the research: description.

Values

Motives of participating can be verified by measuring the extent to which a person's values can be categorised as altruism, egoism, traditionalism, and openness to change (Stern, 2000). Altruism is determined by i.e. their thoughts toward social justice, and caring for the weak. Prevention of pollution, and conservation of natural resources, and their feeling of unity with nature determines altruism as well. Egoism is determined by i.e. social power, searching control over others, and materialism. Traditionalism is verified on feelings of loyalty, honouring elders, feelings of dutifulness, family security and so on.

Beliefs

A person's beliefs can be determined by measuring them with NEP, AC and AR. New Ecological Paradigm (NEP) is measured by asking the respondent provocative questions such as "What do you think of climate change deniers?" or "Are humans abusing the planet?" Awareness of Consciousness (AC) is a somewhat less provocative approach to discover the degree to which someone beliefs are environmentally significant. Questions are formed in such a way that respondents can indicate whether they somewhat agree, fully agree or totally (dis)agree, with provocative statements. Ascription of Responsibility (AR) has the function to discover the feeling of obligation of the respondents regarding environmental issues, for themselves or for the government.

Norms

A person's norms can be determined by observing their sense of obligation to take pro-environmental action. This can be distinguished by their willingness to sacrifice for example their consumer behaviour. Do they eat a lot of meat? Do they own a diesel-powered car? Additionally, what the respondents view as a group-norm is also taken into account in the research design.

Behaviour

Lastly, a person's behaviour can be confirmed by his previous and current actions. This final step determined whether the respondent shows environmentally significant behaviour. In designing the research the four types of environmentally significant behaviour, determined by Stern (2000), are imperative. Stern divides the significant behaviour into Environmental Activism, Non-activist Behaviour in Public Sphere, Private-Sphere Environmentalism, and Other Environmentally Significant Behaviour. These four types have been integrated in this research, in order to categorise the respondents in the analysing phase.

Phase 2: Analysis

In total, seven interviews and one observation have been conducted. In the second phase, the analysis phase of the empirical research, the researcher transcribed the interviews fully. As soon as the transcripts were finished, the researcher shared them with the respondents individually, and asked them whether they accepted the transcripts as they were, and if they had anything to add to the dataset. When none of the respondents objected, the researcher continued the analysis. The transcripts have been structured by the VBN-theory, and practically analysed with Atlas.ti. The VBN-theory is applied as the structure wherein the most striking results in the interviews have been identified. During the formation of the interview questions (appendix D), the researcher categorised the questions into desired outcomes by linking them to become either values, beliefs or norms. After transcribing the interviews, Atlas.ti was used as a tool, which is discussed in the next paragraph.

Atlas.ti

Atlas.ti has been used as an analysing tool to categorise the values, norms, beliefs and behaviours, by grouping them into families and super families. Firstly, the researcher coded the transcripts. The coding process went well, since most of the statements were striking. Secondly, the researcher merged certain codes in order to create a more compact dataset. Thirdly, the codes have been selected and categorised into families based on the VBN-theory. The program showed the relations between the families, as shown in appendix E. This method helped structuring the findings and has been applied on both the interviews and the observation. When the researcher was

analysing the results, every family was studied and discussed in chapter 4. The families were created and structured according to the VBN-theory. Due to the application of this method, the values, beliefs and norms were neatly identifiable. Unfortunately, the researcher has not succeeded to automatically link families with the right super families, to create cause-and-effect relationship indications. The links remained a red, “weak” relationships, instead of strong, which would have been needed in order to create the causal overview. Therefore, this part of the analysing process has been conducted manually, and interpreted by the researcher herself.

Phase 3: Interpretation

In the final phase, interpretation phase, the researcher has interpreted the findings based on the VBN theory. Throughout chapter 4, the findings from the interviews together with the findings from the observations have been compared. Moreover, the intrinsic motivations of the respondents that have become apparent in the analysis were taken into account while the results have been interpreted.

The researcher shared the transcripts of the interviews with the respondents in question, and asked whether they had any additions or objections. None of the respondents had any. Furthermore, once the conclusions were drawn, the researcher shared these with the group by email, asking them if they recognized the result of the research. Three of the encouragers responded to the email, and interpreted the results as a wake-up call. All of the encouragers recognised the struggle of involving the entire city, as well as the failure at it, so far. However, at the time this thesis is written, NGC is in the early stages, so there is enough time to elaborate on the conclusions. Moreover, the interpretation of the research is based on merely one observation, which may result in the researcher having to draw conclusions far from the truth.

4. Values, norms, beliefs and behaviours

In this chapter the results of the research are discussed. As the layers of the onion-model in the conceptual research model show in chapter 2.2; behaviour stems from norms, whereas norms stem from beliefs, and beliefs stem from values. Behaviour, in this case, has a double function in the analysis of the findings; how the respondents show environmentally significant behaviour, and how the respondents have behaved during the observation. The former is the outer layer of the conceptual model and are therefore discussed firstly. The latter, how the respondents have behaved during the observation, are organically included throughout the analysis of all the layers. Secondly, the norms are discussed, thirdly the beliefs and lastly, the values.

4.1 Behaviours

In this chapter, the findings on behaviour are divided into two separate sub-chapters. Certain findings did not fit perfectly to the theory of Stern (2000) regarding environmentally significant behaviours, since it are more socially-substantiated behaviours, rather than environmentally-substantiated. Therefore, the theoretically structured findings are discussed in chapter 4.1.1. Then, specific group-behaviours and their consequences are described in chapter 4.1.2 and 4.1.3.

4.1.1 Environmentally significant behaviour

Stern (2000) divides environmentally significant behaviour into four categories; Environmental Activism, Non-activist Behaviour in Public Sphere, Private-Sphere Environmentalism, and Other Environmentally Significant Behaviour. These four categories and the findings are discussed thoroughly.

Environmental activism

Overall, the respondents have indicated that they do not perceive themselves as activists. More specifically, they consider activists as being aggressively, too emotionally-involved environmentalists, whose strategy will not achieve the desired outcome of getting a message across. The respondents often referred to these activists in the environmental movement during the 1970s. The respondents are convinced that *rational activism* would have the desired outcome, where an act of activism is based on facts and figures and where the message is positively distributed. This indicates the respondents have a negative connotation with activism and the environmental movement. Some of the respondents participate in demonstrations, but not often, and others find demonstrations too much hassle. “Je kunt alles opzij zetten om dan koste wat kost (...) naar zo'n demonstratie te gaan, maar dat is gedoe”, one respondent claimed, meaning: one can push everything aside in order to be able

to go to a demonstration, but it would be such a hassle that they would rather not (interview 1, appendix B). One respondent translated it as follows: “He uhm, stenen gooien naar de politie ofzo. Tégen de staat, het woord tégen, daar ben ik tegen. (...) Maar om ieder weekend de straat op te gaan [ACTIE, ACTIE!] nee. Zo zit ik niet in elkaar. Dus ik ben daar wel terughoudend in”, which means that this respondent associates activism with people protesting on the streets every weekend, against state and against law enforcers. He/she does not associate himself/herself with these stereotypes.

Non-activist Behaviour in Public Sphere

Non-activist Behaviour in Public Sphere entails an active kind of environmental citizenship, such as signing petitions and joining Greenpeace. It also entails the support or acceptance of public policies, such as accepting to pay higher taxes for environmental reasons (Stern, 2000). The respondents are either participating in, or appreciating organisations like Greenpeace, because they understand the value of the approach Greenpeace maintains. Overall, the respondents do not mind to pay more taxes for environmentally unfriendly behaviour such as flying, or for meats. Furthermore, they share similar behaviour with regard to their consumption. They all eat less meat, or are completely vegetarian, and buy as much organically produced products as possible. One respondent indicated a desire to completely change the taxing policies for certain foods. For instance, by taxing meat with 21%, biological food with 6%, and vegetarian or vegan food with 0% (interview 5, appendix B). This indicates the respondents are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products. They also indicate to do so. However, they desire that this development would be easily accessible for all layers in society, by making environmentally-friendly products cheaper and increasing the supply. An example as the one given above would allow this accessibility to improve.

Private-sphere Environmentalism

Private-sphere Environmentalism entails the consumption behaviour of people which have a direct impact on the environment (Stern, 2000). The respondents have all indicated to live consciously by i.e. flying less, to consume less meat and cycling to places instead of taking the car. Where possible, they have solar panels on their rooftops, and they try to reduce plastic waste, among other things. When the researcher asked a certain respondent whether he/she eats organic meat, he/she responded by saying “Je bent gestoord als je dat niet doet”, which translates into one being mentally disturbed when one does not eat organic meats (interview 6, appendix B). The respondents live sustainable lives. However, several respondents indicated that they would experience issues over certain behaviour. For example, in one case it concerned an issue with family members of getting into a fight over purchasing plastic-packaged products they were not allowed to buy any longer. This indicates that

sometimes they do have difficulties with living sustainably, demonstrating that there are limits to living sustainably. They are fully aware of the limits to their sustainable consumption. The society also demands people to consume many products, such as smart phones being one of the essentials in our daily lives. One respondent indicated that people from other demographics in Nijmegen may naturally live much more sustainable lives than they do themselves. For example, people from other demographics can afford one laptop, instead of five. Interestingly, certain people indicated that it is a norm in the culture-sharing group to conduct private-sphere environmentalism. With regard to the encouragers making unsustainable decisions, one respondent said: “Niemand loopt daar persé mee te koop”, meaning that nobody would show off unsustainable behaviour (interview 7, appendix B). Sustainable consumerism is no longer a part of an individual’s identity, but part of the group’s identity.

Other Environmentally Significant Behaviour

Other Environmentally Significant Behaviour entails behaviour that may have significant impact on the environment by, for example, influencing the organization he or she may work for (Stern, 2000). Basically, participation in the Nijmegen Green Capital (NGC) organization is already a form of Other Environmentally Significant Behaviour. NGC influences the behaviour of the municipality of Nijmegen significantly with its challenges. Some respondents compared NGC as an embodiment of the municipality, but others disregard this. Also in the observation it became apparent that the respondents disregard this by perceiving themselves as civilians. They definitely do not perceive themselves as unpaid employees of the municipality, or as professionals (observation, appendix C). They believe that carrying out a message as a civilian, to a civilian, is the best approach to reach their goals. Moreover, the NGC challenges involve and stimulate many organizations in Nijmegen to participate, which may have a significant, positive impact on the environment. One respondent highlighted that NGC ensures the municipality to become more forceful by stimulating organizations in Nijmegen (interview 5, appendix B). Another respondent said that with the help of the municipality, the challenges can flourish long after the year of Green Capital, which is in 2018 (interview 6, appendix B). Moreover, certain respondents have indicated to have spent their life trying to influence their employers (mainly in governmental institutions) to have a positive environmental impact. To sum, the challenge encouragers show other environmentally significant behaviour.

4.1.2 The formation of the culture-sharing group

In the analysis of the interviews it has become apparent that half of the culture-sharing group have been involved from the beginning, and others have joined later on. How these people came to the idea to create challenges for the city will first be

explained. Independent from their ideals regarding the environment, there is a difference visible between the two halves in their motivations, and expectations of the group. These are discussed in chapter 4.1.3.

Ljubljana, Slovenia

Certain group members have known each other for years. They went on a cycling trip to Copenhagen and to Bristol, Green Capitals of Europe in previous years, to promote the city of Nijmegen. On a third trip, they went to Ljubljana, Slovenia, by bus because it would have been too far of a distance to cycle. During this bus ride the idea of the challenges was born, and consequently, the in-crowd feeling. The people that were on this bus ride described the trip as giving them a “schoolreisjesgevoel”, meaning a school trip feeling (interview 4, appendix B). Twenty-seven people joined for the trip, including the mayor of Nijmegen and an Alderman, civil servants, students, and others who have had a significant role with regard to sustainability for the city. It gave them a lot of positive energy, which helped them to kick-start the project of Nijmegen Green Capital. When they returned from the trip, they organised a reunion and so it began.

When the people who joined for this trip see each other at events, they greet each other by means of kisses on the cheeks, warm-welcoming each other (interview 4, appendix B). They have a different recognizance to people who have joined for this trip, than to the ones who have not. They are a community. In the observation it became apparent that the ones who did not join for Ljubljana were treated slightly different than the ones who did join for the trip. One of them who did not join was overlooked when he/she wanted to discuss difficulty he/she experienced with regard to the challenges (observation, appendix C). This indicates some slight estrangement between group members. Another group member who has not joined for Ljubljana had a more passive-aggressive attitude towards the board, responding sceptical on a couple occasions (observation, appendix C). This may indicate that this person does not feel as understood as he/she desires. It also indicates that the warm, in-crowd, community-feeling others have for this group (interviews, appendix B) are not completely truthful, at least, not for the entire group the entire time. However, it is important to note that these observations are based on seven interviews and merely one observation, which means that it may be a biased result. Moreover, every social group knows their peck range orders. Even though it is understandable that it is comfortable to have a strong peer-group; unconscious in-crowd behaviour shuts out-crowd people out. Unaltered, the consequences are that the group’s performance may suffer under these circumstances, and the desired outcome to expand the environmental movement may not be achieved.

Demographical challenge

Most of the encouragers have indicated to be struggling with the right way to reach all layers of the population in Nijmegen (interviews, appendix B). “Het zit nog wel in de witte bovenlaag van de stad”, said one respondent, pointing out that sustainable lifestyles are still in the white, high-class part of the population (interview 4, appendix B). “Ik denk dat je zelden zo'n hoog gehalte aan "ons soort" mensen bij elkaar vindt”, one respondent said. This means that it is a unique circumstance to find so many like-minded people in one group. He/she added to this statement that he/she and two other encouragers have studied in the same program, decades ago. He/she then highlighted that it is almost scary how many similar things they have done in life. But, that they still have different personalities, which is good (interview 7, appendix B). These statements clearly show the similarities of the respondents. There is a beautiful English saying to this regard: ‘birds of a feather flock together’. This means that people who share the same interest, often find each other. However, the respondent who indicated the above also indicated that he/she finds it difficult being part of an elite: “Waar ik wel mee stoei is het morele superioriteitsgevoel dat er een beetje inzit. Dat elitair. Betweterig. Dat vind ik zelf ook wel erg”(interview 7, appendix B). This can be translated into how the feeling of superiority is present; elite and know-it-all behaviour, generally for himself/herself as well as other people that are involved in environmental work. This person shows that he/she feels uncomfortable with it, yet he/she confirms it to be true. Arguably, it is in this person’s norms and values to be open-minded and welcoming to other people, yet the social reality hampers it from happening.

The above may have a significant effect on the environmental movement. The encouragers’ norms, values, beliefs and behaviours may be similar since they belong to similar demographics. In addition, the demographic challenge was an issue during the observation as well. As mentioned in chapter 4.4., openness to change, a few people in the group made certain immoral jokes regarding people from different cultural backgrounds. The jokes were related to the term “Nederlanders met een migratie-achtergrond”, which can be translated into Dutch people with a migration background (observation, appendix C). The jokes were mostly targeted at the definition, rather than at the people with a migration background themselves. Even though, the jokes were immediately corrected by one person in the out-crowd. Possibly, this indicates that most of the group may feel morally obliged to be open-minded regarding other demographic groups, rather than that they really desire to welcome them. At least, their behaviour in this moment does not show it. However, this is merely an observation, but not a hard conclusion since it is based on seven interviews and one observation.

4.1.3 Consequences of in- and out-crowd

As analysed in the observation, the culture-sharing group has an in-crowd and an out-crowd, which may pose a barrier to the growth of the environmental movement. It may form friction in the group, which leads to the group becoming unattractive for newcomers. What are the differences between the in-crowd and the out-crowd? And what are the consequences?

In-crowd

The in-crowd, or, the people who went to Ljubljana, have known each other for years. They envision the group as warm, dynamic, and safe. They do not wish to exclude anyone: on the contrast, they honestly desire to include as many people as possible. They want to diversify the group by adding younger people, as well as people from different cultural backgrounds. They try to be as positive, and open-minded as possible. A close relationship has formed between the members of the in-crowd. They feel comfortable with one another; sharing the same aim, and the same vision on how to achieve it.

Out-crowd

The out-crowd are the newcomers. People who share the same ideals as the in-crowd. They do not describe the group as warm, but rather as an elite. One respondent called the group “socially unsafe” (interview 6, appendix B), which was probably a coincidence of time, but still. He/she said it is not possible to have a laugh in the group. They feel like the outsider. However, that does not mean that they cannot see the strength of the group as a whole. It certainly does not imply that they do not like the people in the group personally. They recognize and understand the opportunity of the project. Moreover, they would like to see more diversity in the group, and less people from the same ‘sustainable community’ of Nijmegen. They believe that more diversity would add to more innovativeness and progressiveness (interview 6, appendix B). They may share the same aim, norms and values as the in-crowd, but perhaps may envision the achievement of the aim slightly different.

Consequences

Both the in-crowd as the out-crowd share the same ideals. They both get satisfied by reaching the same goal; to make Nijmegen more sustainable. Moreover, both the in-crowd and the out-crowd want more diversity in the group. They both understand that the more diverse the group becomes, the more the group can achieve. However, they currently do fail at this ambition. The average age of the encouragers is approximately fifty years, and they are all highly educated, Dutch descendants with high incomes. They have similar backgrounds with regard to education and work areas. Moreover, the individuals have given a number of examples where they show their struggle with, on the one hand, a desire to spread their beliefs, which originate

from their similarities in norms and values. On the other hand, the group / community feeling, which also originates from their similarities in norms and values, hampers to reach other groups of people. This demographic similarity may be the cause for their similar norms, values, beliefs and behaviours. Moreover, these similarities may be the cause of their culture. As a result, the group will do everything the same way it has always done, with the same people of the same age. Thus, the demographic background of the people involved in NGC plays a major role. Unaltered, the consequences are that the group's performance may suffer under these circumstances, and the desired outcome of growing the environmental movement may not be achieved.

To conclude, the most important behavioural traits are summed as follows:

- ✚ The group does not position themselves as activists;
- ✚ Individuals in the group live quite sustainable lives (eating, transportation and general consumption habits);
- ✚ Sustainable consumerism is no longer a part of an individual's identity, but part of the group's identity;
- ✚ The group may behave similarly due to their demographic similarities, thus their demographic background plays a major role;
- ✚ Individuals experience a conflict in wanting to be open-minded to invite people from different demographic backgrounds, but do not seem to succeed in their behaviour.

4.2 Norms






As mentioned in chapter 3.3, a person's norms can be determined by observing their sense of obligation to take pro-environmental action. In this research, other social norms than environmental norms are also taken into account to analyse whether certain norms have effect on the behaviour as a culture-sharing group.

As the analysis of Private-Sphere Environmental Behaviour already indicated, the respondents definitely take sustainable measures in their daily lives. Sustainable measures account for their eating habits, use of energy in their homes as well as consideration for their use of transportation. Interestingly, the respondents have indicated that it is more a natural process to take sustainable measures, rather than an obligation. This is also the key message they want to get across; that sustainability is not hard, nor comes with restriction: it is fun. "Het is normaal om de fiets te pakken", meaning an indication that respondents think it is perfectly normal to take the bicycle instead of the car (interview 4, appendix B). Nevertheless, the respondents have learned the ability to make trade-offs when it comes to taking sustainable measures in their personal lives. "Super duurzame mensen hebben geen leven", meaning people who live completely sustainable have to discard everyday things to such an extent,

they do not have a life at all (interview 5, appendix B). This demonstrates that there is a limit in what one can do (or not do) in regard to the climate. An example of a trade-off they make in their daily lives is i.e. an individual has a vegan diet, but does not consider recycling her plastic waste (interviews, appendix B). To sum, the limit to living sustainably varies for everyone. It varies between living sustainably by adjusting their consumption behaviour, but still remain a high level of comfort.

Unpaid dedication for the environment is considered as a group-norm for Nijmegen Green Capital. This unpaid dedication seems to increase the group solidarity. Moreover, they have indicated that solidarity is very important. Solidarity within the group in order to work together to achieve their goals, but also as a means to reach people from different demographical backgrounds. They feel like solidarity adds to their innovativeness, progressiveness, and to the positive energy of the group. A respondent who emphasized on solidarity a lot in the interview also showed solidarity in the observation. The solidarity this person showed was regarding a previous Challenge encourager who is on sick-leave with burn-out symptoms. This person said “Het is belangrijk om voor elkaar te zorgen” (interview 4, appendix B), implying that many people committed to sustainability feel much responsibility, which makes it important to support one another. Some argue that this risk of mental health issues is an example of why the unpaid dedication has a limit, too.

Another topic worth interpreting is the work method of the respondents. Many of them indicated to prefer a go-with-the-flow and free work method when working with their Challenge groups, rather than to have structured and organized meetings. This can be interpreted into a laid-back work method, where fun and room for creativity is prioritized. As long as the working processes lead to actions and results. Some have said to strategically use the Nijmegen Green Capital challenges as a means to achieve their personal environmental ambitions. They said the trick of sustainability is to keep doing the same things we have always done, but then in an environmentally responsible way (interviews, appendix B). The go-with-the-flow work method as a norm is taken into account when concluding the research. To conclude, the most significant norms that can be distinguished are summed as follows:

-  It is natural to live sustainable, rather than obligation;
-  Unpaid dedication;
-  Individuals make trade-offs when determining how sustainable they live;
-  Solidarity as group ethics;
-  Laid-back working ethics.

4.3 Beliefs

In order to determine the respondents' beliefs, their responses have been divided into three categories (Stern, 2000);

- **New Ecological Paradigm (NEP):** is a scale that measures broad beliefs about the effects of human action on the biosphere. For example, one could ask a true or false question, such as “Climate change deniers are ignorant by definition”, or “Earth is like a spaceship with limited room and resources.”;
- **Awareness Consequences (AC):** moral norms are the cause of pro-environmental action, activated by beliefs that environmental conditions are a threat to humans and other species. For example, one could ask: “Do you think climate change will be a very serious problem for you and your family, somewhat of a problem, or not really a problem at all?”
- **Ascription of Responsibility to self-beliefs (AR):** in order to limit those threats they have to initiate action. For example, one could ask: “Do you feel like the Dutch government is taking sufficient measures to fight climate change?”

For further explanation on these concepts see chapter 2.1 and 3.3.

New Ecological Paradigm

Most of the respondents argue that people have to be saved, rather than the planet. “Die aarde redt zichzelf wel”, implying that Earth will be alright if humans would become extinct (interview 2, appendix B). This indicates they are highly convinced of human action being the cause of climate change. Moreover, the respondents are happy that sustainability has finally established itself in people’s minds, both civilians and organizations. However, they are aware of the long road ahead. The awareness of the work that still has to be done is perceived as a long-term motivational factor.

The respondents point out that the work they conduct for Nijmegen Green Capital gives them a satisfying feeling. They feel happy to commit to it, as well as proud to be a part of it. Some say they cannot really *be* any different; that it is in their core of being to commit to environmental justice (interview 4, appendix B). They do describe having difficulty with people accusing as hypocrites. Sustainably living people will never be able to live fully sustainable, and outsiders judge them for it.

Most of the respondents said they are not part of an environmental movement. This has to do with the negative connotation they have with the environmental movement of the seventies. This environmental movement is described as aggressive and negative, full of angry, yelling, and emotional activists (interview 5, appendix B). The encouragers do not want to be considered as activists, and do not see Nijmegen Green Capital as part of the movement, either. However, they do feel like they are part of a ‘modern environmental movement’, since they feel like this movement is positive, rational and based on facts. So the group not being part of the environmental movement merely has to do with the definition of “environmental movement”. When this definition was clear and shared, most of the respondents did say to be part of it.

One respondent also said that the younger generation, who are part of the modern movement, are part of a movement about social justice rather than environmental. Equality and justice for the human race. The challenge encouragers estimated that about five hundred people in Nijmegen are part of the modern movement, including the reach of the challenges, organizations and civilians. Even though that is considered as quite a large number in comparison to other cities in the Netherlands, the encouragers still feel like this number is too small on a population of 174.575 people.

Awareness Consequences

Some respondents point out that *regular* people, or people who do not engage in environmental issues, are not aware of climate change, due to it being a long-term problem. This frustrates the encouragers. They feel like it is such an urgent problem, yet in order to solve it, it is dependent on the ability of others to recognize the urgency, to transform into action. One respondent indicated that his generation (baby boomers) have lost sight of the planet's needs during the creation of welfare (interview 5, appendix B). Therefore, he feels especially responsible for the problem his generation caused. The road to redemption for what their generation caused is perceived as a long-term motivational factor.

Overall, the Nijmegen Green Capital encouragers are very well-read into the subject of climate change. They all believe firmly that climate change is caused by human action. Arguably, it is a belief to such an extent, that it is a norm in the group to back up the science. The different kinds of challenges also reflect what they believe have the biggest consequences of human behaviour (waste, energy, food and fair-trade, mobility and so on).

Ascription of Responsibility to self-beliefs

Generally, the encouragers feel proud to be part of Nijmegen Green Capital (interviews, appendix B). They believe that the work they are conducting really adds to solving climate change. Interestingly, they view themselves as a community rather than an environmental movement. Moreover, when asked whether they feel guilty when they make unsustainable decisions in their daily lives, they say they do not. As mentioned before, they make weighted decisions in the form of trade-offs regarding environmental behaviour. In addition, the encouragers say that their environmental behaviour is more naturally than anything else. They grew up with a sense of responsibility. When asked whether they feel a sense of guilt one encourager responded with: "Ik doe het nog duizend keer beter dan een ander", meaning that this person even with trade-offs is still a thousand times more sustainable than any other who is not involved in environmental behaviour (interview 4, appendix B). Most of the respondents have indicated to feel pessimistic or sad when they think of how other people live unsustainably, adding to the environmental problem (interviews, appendix

B). This pessimistic feeling can be perceived as a motivational factor to initiate action to limit environmental threats.

Most of the respondents did not have any doubts when they were asked to become a challenge encourager. They were and still are very enthusiastic about the project. However, one of the respondents did have certain considerations. The respondent pointed out he/she had some worries regarding the usual suspects as a community in Nijmegen Green Capital. He/she worried about the lack of innovation that would be inherent to the team (interview 6, appendix B). During the observation it became clear that the encouragers value diversity in their group, but they seem unable to reach other demographics, such as younger people and people with different cultural backgrounds.

The respondents were unanimous when they were asked about the current political dimension in the Netherlands: the government is and has been failing to meet sufficient environmental expectations. They say the government acts confusingly, insufficient, and that the environmental issues are highly underexposed (interviews, appendix B). They believe the greater change needs to come from the government, and are sceptic about a green-right coalition (interviews, appendix B). They even say the government is waywardly handling environmental issues, blocking any environmental progress coming from the public. A conservative way of handling this age's problems, in the eyes of the respondents.

To sum, the most significant beliefs that can be distinguished are as follows:

- ✚ Commitment to pro-environmental work satisfies them;
- ✚ The group does not see themselves as the (emotional) environmental movement, but as a modern, rational environmental movement;
- ✚ The group feels a responsibility towards pro-environmental behaviour because they believe their generation is to blame;
- ✚ Feeling of pride to commit to pro-environmental work;
- ✚ It is a strength that some feel like they are part of a community, but some also view this as a weakness;
- ✚ The group shares the same political views.

4.4 Values

The extent to which a person's values account for motivations of participation can be measured in the following categories; altruism, egoism, traditionalism, and openness to change (Stern, et al., 1999).

Altruism

Most of the respondents link environmental justice to social justice. Some say they are involved in environmental justice for the sake of social justice. Their feeling of moral obligation for social justice often originates from their childhood upbringing (interviews, appendix B). Some of the respondent's parents were also feeling morally obliged to stand up for their ideals, and to fight for social injustice. Their concerns for future generations is one of the most important reasons why they desire to commit to environmental work. One respondent said "Ik kan niet anders", pointing out that he/she simply is unable *not* to worry about the environment, and to commit to environmental action (interview 4, appendix B). As they believe mankind does not stand above nature, they have a strong sense of environmental responsibility regarding their daily habits and work related dedication. As analysed in chapter 4.2, it is a group-norm to take care of each other in the commitment to attaining environmental goals. When a person gets overworked they tend to take care of them by carefully delegating tasks to others. This is an example of a value for most of the encouragers; the strong care for the weak (observation, appendix C).

Egoism

Egoism is less visible in the group. However, if one considers certain acts of altruism as ultimately becoming an act of egoism (to feel good by doing good for others), then egoism would be visible. Environmental commitment is something they do because it feels good (interviews, appendix B). Materialism is no value for the encouragers, they tend to consume less because of the impact it has on the environment (interviews, appendix B). Searching control over others is out of the question for the encouragers; they seek ways to positively stimulate sustainable behaviours in others. They indicate it by identifying themselves with the modern environmental movement; the movement that positively tries to motivate others towards environmental change.





Traditionalism

Sustainability is for most of the respondents such an integrated part of their lives to an extent that it can be labelled as traditionalism: they are loyal to the environment. "Ik kan me niet anders voorstellen dan dat duurzaamheid onderdeel is van mijn leven" one respondent said, meaning he/she cannot imagine otherwise than sustainability being a part of me (interview 1, appendix B). Environmental justice is their religion. Other moral activities they perform, by means of acting in the name of social justice, are no different. It is in the core of their values to "do good" (interviews, appendix B). One of the respondents said it was in his/her genes to do good. In addition, this encourager also added *serviceability* as a value to his/her list. Serviceability in the sense of dutifulness towards the environment. They feel like it is their *duty* to commit to the environment, because they blame their own generation.

Openness to change

One may argue that openness to change should be part of the respondents identity since they are trying to change society into a more sustainable one. Interestingly, openness to change challenges the current dogma in the group. On the one hand, the group indicates, both in the interviews as well as in the observation, that they require diversity in the group. Younger people from other generations as well as different cultural backgrounds should be added to the group (observation, appendix C). On the other hand, they are currently unable to trigger them to join the group. One respondent blames sticking to the status quo of the group: the community, or in-crowd feeling (interview 6, appendix B). The barrier of the in-crowd group is both naturally, and socially, defined and created and prevents the group from becoming innovative. At the same time, the group made certain immoral jokes regarding people from different cultural backgrounds, when one of the encouragers immediately corrected them. He/she said it is not okay to make jokes about the term used for the Dutch with a migration background. In conclusion, the openness to change is limited.

To conclude, the most significant values that can be distinguished are summed as follows:

-  Environmental justice is social justice;
-  It is in their core of being, due to their childhood upbringing to “do good”;
-  They identify themselves with the modern environmental movement; the movement that positively tries to motivate others towards environmental change;
-  The group values demographic diversity.

4.5 Conclusion

The findings show that the individuals in the culture-sharing group share the same beliefs, norms, values and behaviour when looking at environmental justice. The love they share for sustainability and social justice is what keeps the group strong, and the group-culture alive. In addition, the group seems to blame their generation (baby boomers) for the damage that is being done to the climate. This may be an intrinsic motivational factor for them, and perhaps a non-existent motivational factor for other demographics, to actively engage in such projects. However, the analysis is based on merely seven interviews and one group observation, which may imply that the conclusions are non-applicable on the whole group, or on the whole environmental movement. Moreover, the research has shown that there is a limit to how sustainable one can live, and still live a pleasant life. The individuals are aware of this phenomenon, and by making regular trade-offs they are at peace with it. It can be concluded that their childhood education has formed them into adults caring for social and environmental justice. Moreover, it can be concluded that the individuals seek more diversity in the culture-sharing group, yet do not succeed. The individuals all

agree upon diversifying the group, yet the paradox is that they agree upon being a community. The group is described by their members as elite, and as a community of people with similar backgrounds (interviews, appendix). Ironically, one of the group norms is to dedicate their spare time to an unpaid job, namely NGC activities. Yet, people from other demographics, i.e. people with lower incomes, may not be able to do unpaid work next to their daily jobs. Perhaps these people already need to have three paid jobs just so their children can get a college degree. The group may believe that involving people from different demographic backgrounds is the key in expanding the environmental movement, yet they first need to reconsider how to make it attainable.

5. Conclusions

In this chapter the key conclusions are discussed, illustrated by an adapted conceptual model. Then, the research questions are answered, followed by recommendations and a discussion.

5.1 Key conclusions

The key conclusions are summed as follows, and discussed more broadly below.

- (1) The group does not view themselves as an environmental movement, neither do they want to be viewed as such, due to the negative connotation with the definition. Rather, they view themselves as a community. However, they do recognize the shortcomings that entails.
- (2) The group forms an unconscious barrier to diversify, which hampers the group to expand the environmental movement, even when they do not consider themselves as a movement.

A community may on the one hand influence the movement positively; by sharing the same traits towards the same cause (the environment) makes it easier to unify and carry out a similar message. On the other hand, it may influence the movement negatively; by naturally forming an in-crowd group, they unconsciously form a barrier to diversify the group. The latter may cause the size of the environmental movement to stagnate, because of the decrease in attractiveness for demographically-differing groups. However, the analysis is based on merely seven interviews and one group observation, which may imply that the conclusions are non-applicable on the whole group, or on the whole environmental movement. The conceptual model that has been presented in chapter 2.2 is slightly adapted accordingly to the conclusions:

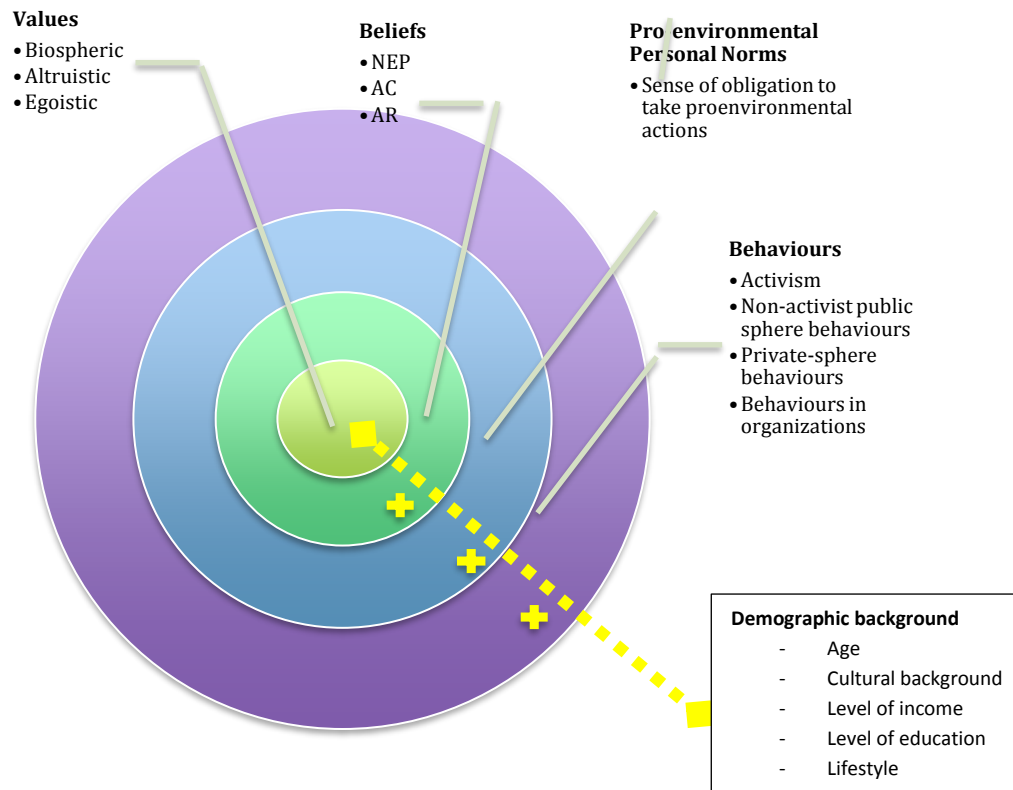


Figure 5.1 Adapted Conceptual Model based on VBN theory.

A fifth dimension is introduced to the onion-shaped conceptual model: demographic background. This addition to the model provides the existing theory with another dimension, since the demographic background of people affect all the other dimensions. The yellow plusses stand for the addition of the dimension to the layers. If one wants to reach the values as unbiasedly as possible, it is imperative to take demographic backgrounds into account. Therefore, this dimension needs to be taken into consideration when analysing environmental behaviours, norms, beliefs and values. As mentioned in chapter 2.2, in their VBN-theory, Stern et al. have not taken 'adoption of an environmentalist identity' into account when conducting their research, which leaves the question whether *values* affect *activism* unanswered. This 'environmentalist identity' is based on where these people come from; their demographics. Additional academic research to find out what the best strategy is to reach certain demographic groups to join the modern, rational movement, should allow the movement to expand. Once expanded, the movement becomes an incentive for investment opportunity, which will support municipalities like Nijmegen to achieve the goal of becoming climate neutral in 2045.

5.2 Answers to the research questions

The main research question was formulated as follows:

To what extent do personal norms, values and beliefs of people actively engaged in Nijmegen Green Capital challenges, influence the environmental movement of Nijmegen?

It can be concluded that the people actively engaged in Nijmegen Green Capital challenges do not perceive themselves as being part of the environmental movement. This is due to the negative connotation they perceive with “environmental movement”. When the research question would be adapted to “To what extent do personal norms, values, beliefs and behaviours of people actively engaged in Nijmegen Green Capital challenges, influence the *modern, rational, environmental movement* of Nijmegen?” The answer would be **to a certain extent**. From the results of the research can be concluded that the group culture is viewed as an elite group. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the group culture and demographic background of the individuals, stemming from their values, norms and beliefs, do form a barrier for people from different backgrounds to enter and join the group. The following sub questions were defined in order to answer the main question, and are answered as follows:

1. What traits, that define the people actively engaged in an environmental movement, are identified in literature?

According to Stern et al. (1999;2000), the following traits can be identified in order to define the people actively engaged in the environmental movement:

- **New Ecological Paradigm (NEP):** is a scale that measures broad beliefs about the effects of human action on the biosphere. For example, one could ask a true or false question, such as “Climate change deniers are ignorant by definition”, or “Earth is like a spaceship with limited room and resources.”;
- **Awareness Consequences (AC):** moral norms are the cause of pro-environmental action, activated by beliefs that environmental conditions are a threat to humans and other species. For example, one could ask: “Do you think climate change will be a very serious problem for you and your family, somewhat of a problem, or not really a problem at all?”;
- **Ascription of Responsibility to self-beliefs (AR):** in order to limit those threats they have to initiate action. For example, one could ask: “Do you feel like the Dutch government is taking sufficient measures to fight climate change?”.

2. What personal values, norms, beliefs and behaviours can be identified in actively engaged people in an environmental movement?

Behaviours	Norms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ The group does not position themselves as activists; ✚ Individuals in the group live quite sustainable lives (eating, transportation and general consumption habits); ✚ Sustainable consumerism is no longer a part of an individual's identity, but part of the group's identity; ✚ The group may behave similarly due to their demographic similarities, thus their demographic background plays a major role; ✚ Individuals experience a conflict in wanting to be open-minded to invite people from different demographic backgrounds, but do not seem to succeed in their behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Commitment to pro-environmental work satisfies them; ✚ The group does not see themselves as the (emotional) environmental movement, but as a modern, rational environmental movement; ✚ The group feels a responsibility towards pro-environmental behaviour because they believe their generation is to blame; ✚ Feeling of pride to commit to pro-environmental work; ✚ It is a strength that some feel like they are part of a community, but some also view this as a weakness; ✚ The group shares the same political views.
Beliefs	Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ It is natural to live sustainable, rather than obligation; ✚ Unpaid dedication; ✚ Individuals make trade-offs when determining how sustainable they live; ✚ Solidarity as group ethics; ✚ Laid-back working ethics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Environmental justice is social justice; ✚ It is in their core of being, due to their childhood upbringing to "do good"; ✚ They identify themselves with the modern environmental movement; the movement that positively tries to motivate others towards environmental change; ✚ The group values demographic diversity.

3. Do the common traits have consequences for the expansion of the (modern, rational) environmental movement?
 - a) It can be concluded that the individuals in the culture-sharing group share the same beliefs, norms, values and behaviour when looking at environmental justice. The love and interest they share for sustainability and social justice is what keeps the group strong, and the group-culture alive. However, the research has shown that there is a limit to how sustainable one can live, while still living a pleasant life. The individuals are aware of this limitation, and by making daily trade-offs they are at peace with it. It can be concluded that the childhood education has shaped these individuals into adults caring for social and environmental justice. Moreover, it can be concluded that the individuals seek more diversity in the culture-sharing group. Arguably, they believe that this is the key in expanding the environmental movement. In addition, the group seems to blame their generation (baby boomers) for the damage that is being done to the climate. This may be an intrinsic motivational factor for them, and perhaps a non-existent motivational factor for other demographics, to actively engage in such projects.
 - b) Looking at the group behaviour in its current circumstance, some rupture has been identified between an in-crowd and an out-crowd. Even though it is understandable that it is comfortable to have a strong peer-group, unconscious in-crowd behaviour shuts out-crowd people out. Unaltered, the consequences are that the group's performance may suffer under these circumstances, and the desired outcome to expand the environmental movement may not be achieved.

5.3 Recommendations

In order to overcome the demographical barrier in the environmental movement, it is recommended that the group appoints a specific person who advocates the demographics of the group. This person should get the transparent responsibility to involve people from every type of demographic to the group. A second responsibility would be that this person analyses the group repetitively on the *openness to change* of the group, and give feedback to the board of Nijmegen Green Capital. The group could also consider taking another trip as a teambuilding activity. Moreover, it is recommended to apply the same research conducted in this thesis again in one year time. Such research would verify whether the movement has expanded demographically, and what the effects will be on the culture-sharing group.

Discussion

Looking back on the research that has been conducted, a few matters should be discussed. In this paragraph, the researcher reflects on the method, theory and role of the researcher.

Firstly, the method is reflected upon. The use of both interviews and an ethnographic study has been slightly confusing. The addition of the observation to the interviews has been highly valuable to the findings. Nonetheless, one observation is shortcoming on an ethnographic research design. Ethnographic studies usually consist of months, or years of fieldwork, instead of observing one meeting. Unfortunately, it was unfeasible in the timeframe in which the meetings were planned by the organisation to conduct more observations. Moreover, the use of Atlas.ti was somewhat disappointing. After coding 433 bits of text, and having categorised them, the relationships between the codes and families was not as flawlessly converted into one overview as expected. Perhaps there were too many traits to be considered. The program ensured that the many values, norms and beliefs could be categorised, but ultimately in a more unclear way than imagined beforehand. Furthermore, the research is merely based on seven interviews. In the end it seemed like a too small number of respondents to base group norms/values/behaviours conclusions on, when comparing them to a movement. If the research would be expanded, by i.e. including a quantitative study among the population of Nijmegen, the researcher would have been able to compare the traits to a broader spectrum of the environmental movement. Moreover, the interpretation of the research is based on merely one observation and seven interviews, which may result in the researcher having to draw conclusions far from the truth. It has been interpreted in a coincidence of time. Therefore, the researcher could not draw hard scientific conclusions, but merely present observations. However, these findings can contribute to further studies with regard to this topic. Furthermore, at the time the research was conducted, the group was only fully functioning for a few months. Considering this was the relative starting point for the group, they still have much time to adjust their behaviour to their norms. Consequently, the conclusions may perhaps be slightly premature.

Secondly, the theory is reflected upon. The VBN-theory has been valuable to categorise environmental norms, values, and beliefs, but did not consider other relevant norms, values, beliefs. Certain findings were difficult to categorise under the environmentalist theory. For example, the group behaviour towards each other. The theory provided a tool merely for more environmentally-substantiated behaviour rather than for socially-substantiated behaviour. Moreover, in their VBN-theory, Stern et al. have not taken 'adoption of an environmentalist identity' into account when conducting their research, which leaves the question whether *values* affect *activism* unanswered. This 'environmentalist identity' is based on where these people come from; their demographics. Additional academic research to find out what the best strategy is to reach certain demographic groups to join the modern, rational movement, should allow the movement to expand. Here, the VBN-theory fell short in this research.

Lastly, the role of the researcher is reflected upon. Defining one's values, norms and beliefs always depends on the researchers' personal interpretation, which are also dependent on certain values, norms and beliefs. This is a liability for the interpretation of the research findings, and this bias should be taken into account for further studies.

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