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Spatial quality of cultural production districts

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Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:

2012

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Smit, A. J. (2012). *Spatial quality of cultural production districts*. [Thesis fully internal (DIV), University of Groningen]. [s.n.].

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**Spatial Quality
of Cultural Production Districts**



**university of
 groningen**

faculty of spatial sciences

ISBN: 978-90-367-5832-1 (printed version)

ISBN: 978-90-367-5839-0 (electronic version)

The fieldwork for this thesis was funded by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Cambridge, USA; NICIS (Netherlands Institute of City Innovation Studies), and the municipalities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Groningen.

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Printed by: Drukkerij Ipskamp, Enschede

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English correction: Giles Stacey (Chapter 1,2,4,5,6), Gina Rozario (Chapter 3).

RIJKSUNIVERSITEIT GRONINGEN

**Spatial Quality
of Cultural Production Districts**

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van het doctoraat in de
Ruimtelijke Wetenschappen
aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
op gezag van de
Rector Magnificus, dr. E. Sterken,
in het openbaar te verdedigen op
donderdag 1 november 2012
om 11:00 uur

door

Annet Jantien Smit

geboren op 18 december 1972
te Avereest

Promotores: Prof. dr. P.H. Pellenbarg
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Beoordelingscommissie: Prof. dr. C.H. Mulder
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Preface

This dissertation is the result of an independent research project inspired by many interactions with a wide group of people enthusiastic about geography and urban planning. I have worked in various places and affiliations, in chronological order: Delft University of Technology, Department of Urban Planning; Harvard University, Graduate School of Design; Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Cambridge, USA; University of Amsterdam, Department of Geographies of Globalization; and the Netherlands Institute of City Innovation Studies. From 2009 onwards, I have earned money with my own firm Denkbeeld, and written my dissertation in my spare time. Finally, I finished it as an external PhD researcher at the University of Groningen.

Along the way, many people have asked me how I experienced doing this scientific project, since I had been educated as an architectural designer, and because I did not do this PhD project in a research group. It was indeed quite a search: What would I investigate? With which methods? On the way, I needed to self-educate in geography and scientific methods. Thus, I would compare it with a walk through an English landscape garden: a “buitenplaats” with gardens, meadows, meandering streams, follies, trees young and old, bosco’s, views and atmospheres. One has to move through such a garden to see how the components fit together, because it lacks a formal composition that one can oversee from one standpoint. And yes, there was wilderness, where I was looking to find a track towards producing a study that makes sense. But that also made it adventurous, to try and use different perspectives for creating new and applicative knowledge for urban planners and architects.

Working this way would not have been possible without the formal and informal help and inspiration of many people. I want to thank them all. First, I like to thank my various advisors and hosts in academia, in chronological order: Taeke de Jong, for hosting my first proposal that gave me a position in academia; Rob van Engelsdorp Gastelaars, for many inspiring talks about how to connect geography and planning; Joost Schrijnen, for support and sharing his broad practitioners’

experience and interest; Alex Krieger and Armando Carbonell for introducing me into American planning practice, and for academic hospitality at Harvard and the Lincoln Institute; and Robert Kloosterman, for valuable advice during the field-work. Finally, I am grateful to my promoters at the University of Groningen: Piet Pellenburg, for his constructive feedback in a very effective manner; and Jacques van Dinteren, for his energy in refining the almost-final version of this thesis.

Just as important are all the people I directly worked or still work with in writing papers and educational projects: Veronique Schutjens, Lia Karsten, Ewald Engelen, Anne Risselada, and Jos Olsthoorn. Invaluable in the writing process were also the strict but constructive editors and referees of various journals. I also like to mention a few other academics in particular, for frequent conversations and advice on different topics in geography: Marietta Haffner, Erik Louw, Erik Stam, Jan Jacob Trip, Arie Romein, Erik de Graaff, Gert-Jan Hospers and Carl Steinitz. For sharing thoughts on urban policy implications, I like to thank in particular Jos Gadet, Koos van Zanen, Iris Dudok, Gerard Tolner and Fancy van de Vorst. Furthermore, I deeply appreciate the flexible work space in the Urban Design Studio of the Municipality of Groningen, providing me with opportunity of getting to know the work, discussions and dilemma's of urban planners - the people that in the end, I intend to be users of my knowledge. Jan van de Bospoort and Tjerk Ruimschotel, thank you for this hospitality.

Then, many thanks to the interviewees, the 63 creative entrepreneurs for sharing their time and insights; and to the research assistants who helped in conducting and analyzing these interviews: Michael Pavicic, Nadine Hendriks, Joni Hayen, Marieke Kuijer, Björn van Noord, Jolina van Dijk, Maureen de Haan and Mirrijn van Eijk. Two of the research assistants, Jos Olsthoorn and Henrick van Niekerk, were also my colleagues in working in projects for my firm, and I am very happy that they agreed to be my paranymphs.

For correcting my English, I like to thank Giles Stacey and Gina Rozario. In the following long list, I will try to mention all other people by name, and I apologize beforehand for whom I may have forgotten to mention. But what counts most, is that writing this thesis was much more fun and more productive through all conversations, sharing thoughts and papers, auditing classes, giving lectures and doing paid research projects. Creating knowledge is a collaborative effort, and I like to thank you all (in alphabetical order): Martijn Arnoldus, Irina van Aalst, Oedzge Atzema, Martin Aarts, Mariette van Baaren, John Beardsley, Pascal Beckers, Marianne Bronkhorst, Marco Bontje, Maria den

Boon, Arjan van den Born, Willem Boterman, Anton Brand, Aleid Brouwer, Pi de Bruijn, Arnd Bruninghaus, Bert Bukman, Margaret Crawford, Roy van Dalm, Michael Deinema, Kees Dignum, Brian Doucet, Aldo Dorsman, Jan Doorakkers, Marscha van Dijk, Mathijs Dijkstra, Katja Draper, Marije Drost, Eelco van der Eijck, Arie van der Ent, Rodrigo Fernandez, Emma Folmer, Michael Froentjes, Josef van Genk, Rogier van der Groep, Rosalind Greenstein, Ada van Gulik, Tialda Haartsen, Bettina van Hoven, Don Hofstee, Gert Jan Hagen, Barbara Heebels, Ylva Hendriks, Bettina van Hoven, Bregit Jansen, Martine de Jong, Jan Willem Kattenbeld, Jerold Kayden, Ina Klaasen, Simone Ketelaars, Susan van 't Klooster, Sierdjan Koster, Peter Lüthi, Tineke Lupi, Edith de Meester, Sabine Meier, Wille mijne Moes, Ria Niclaas, Ivan Nio, Inge Noback, Carine van Oosteren, Kris Oosting, Gert-Joost Peek, Cees-Jan Pen, Karin Pfeffer, Sandra Phlippen, Otto Raspe, Caroline Rodenburg, Robert Röling, Bart Sleutjes, Nancy Stieber, Aukje Teppema, Harm Tilman, Viktor Venhorst, Erwin Vening, Gerrit Jan van 't Veen, Theo van der Voort, Frank de Vries, Walter de Vries, Anet Weterings, Hiltje van der Wal, Merijn van der Werff, Erik Wip, Herman Wilken, and David van Zelm van Eldik.

Finally, of course, I thank my family and friends for their tireless interest in my work life: my mother, father, Marijke, Piet and Tineke, Kasper and Sylvia, Aat and Bé, Perry and Simone for listening to all of my work talk. Angèle and Sipke, Marten and Tess, Arnd and Livia, Lidewij and Martijn, Nico and Jacobien, Ivo and Marjon, Dita and Peter, Iemke and Artsje, Marc, Chris and all other friends: thanks for all dinners on your busy family weekdays in Delft, The Hague, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, and Cambridge when I was travelling for work and happy to look up friends. Caspar, you inspired my work by so much trust, useful advice and sense of perspective from a different academic field, I could not have persevered without you. Caspar, Marg and Amke, I enjoy your happiness and energy for all kinds of activities: hiking, biking, art workshops, exploring places. I hope we will enjoy many more adventures together - the first one in a few days, back to the USA!

Annet Jantien Smit
Groningen, September 2012

