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The Artist as Changemaker: A Critical Reflection on Neoliberal Subjectivities, Entrepreneurship and Social Practice Art

A New Perspective on the Relationship between Neoliberalization and Social Practice Art

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Abstract

Many academics have investigated how artistic and creative processes have been captured and hijacked by policymakers and politicians in cities during neoliberalization for the sake of profit-making and financialization: art has become instrumental to neoliberal goals (Harvey, 2007; Leslie, 2013; Peck, 2005; Peck, 2012; Pratt, 2011). However, more recent research in the field of social practice art produced a view that problematizes some of these findings' aspects: especially the relationship between neoliberalization as structural transformations and the agency of artist individuals within social practice art, a field focusing especially on the instrumentality of art, remains underexplored (Haiven, 2018; Harvie, 2011). Even though the social practice artist as an active, neoliberal subject, or a 'changemaker', is often mentioned within the literature concerned with social practice art, it has not been researched thoroughly to what extent this artist is a neoliberal subject and how social practice artists would exhibit or oppose to subjectivities associated with neoliberalization (Haiven, 2018; Harvie, 2011), which is the starting point of this research. This question has been researched qualitatively, using interviews and participant observations, in the context of an Amsterdam-based arts and culture organization that aims to connect and empower changemakers who are interested in using artistic processes to make a societal impact. Findings indicate that there is a tensed relationship between neoliberalization and social practice artists' subjectivities. Entrepreneurial as well as artistic sides of changemakers' identities are perceived as a necessity for social practice artists to be or become 'changemakers' in a contemporary Western society. Without entrepreneurial characteristics, which participants do not always seem to feel comfortable with and which do not come naturally to them, they perceive it to be impossible to navigate through a society that is so obviously entrenched in the market (Harvey, 2007). A way in which they seemingly oppose to neoliberalization, is by trying to share work processes, thereby creating a new way to organize creative work and deal with the precarity of their work lives. By trying to incorporate neoliberal language and entrepreneurial characteristics, they attempt to oppose to the consequences of neoliberalization and make their 'recipients' value their work. Even though this opposition, for now, seems to be largely in ideology, it provides practitioners of social practice art with hope for something that could be an actualized practice in the future.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Although many artists will usually bridle against the instrumentalization and 'Disneyfication' of artistic processes, they are often placed within neoliberal thought-systems and practices in academic research (Peck, 2012). Previous research has shown how artistic and creative processes have been captured and hijacked by policymakers and politicians in cities during neoliberalization for the sake of profit-making, economic growth and financialization. In other words, art has become instrumental to neoliberal goals (Harvey, 2007; Leslie, 2013; Peck, 2005; Peck, 2012; Pratt, 2011). In this research, I will follow Harvey's (2007) conceptualization of neoliberalism: *"Neoliberalism is a theory of political economic practices proposing that human well-being can best be advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, individual liberty, unencumbered markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices"* (p.22). Hence, neoliberalization is a process and a political regime, with profit-seeking and profit-making as its main drive. Monetary or financial capital thus is, or should become, the main force in societal changes during neoliberalization. Moreover, from this definition it becomes evident that neoliberalization requires a particular kind of subjectivity, which I will further discuss below. The relationship between art and neoliberalization seems to be complicated, however. Contrasting predominant ideas within cultural policy about creativity being a source for economic growth, some authors have investigated this relationship and found that creative strategies are not effective in creating economic growth (Harvey, 2007), or at least it cannot be proved that it is (Peck, 2012). Nevertheless, most authors agree that arts and culture have become instrumentalized during neoliberalization and has become a means to reinforce competitiveness, increase the value of the creative (elite) class and a way to validate the market (Peck, 2005; Peck, 2012; Pratt, 2011). Furthermore, these large-scale changes in cultural policy seem to have affected the working practices of artists and have promoted a 'neoliberal subjectivity' (Haynes & Marshall, 2018; Loacker, 2013; Win, 2014).

However, a new type of art form has emerged that makes us reconsider the tensions between neoliberalization and art that previous research has shown for other artistic practices. This considerably new type of art form, which has existed for a couple of decades, has been conceptualized with terms such as 'relational aesthetics', 'social justice art', 'social practice' or 'community art' (Thompson, 2012) to name a few. These are practices in which the artist focuses on achieving social goals and change through artistic processes. Madyaningrum and Sonn (2011) describe these practices as *"a form of a cultural practice in which art is produced and used by local people within their communities as an instrument for social change"* (p.3). Interestingly, this new type of artistic practice came up in a time that is often associated with contemporary financialization (Haiven, 2018). As a type of artistic practice in which artistic and instrumental goals merge, social practice art is an especially compelling study area for neoliberal tendencies related to the instrumentality of artistic processes. Specifically, the understanding of the social practice artist as the (supposedly progressive) initiator, agent or maker of

change present in this movement is of interest. Namely, it might tell us something about tensions between structural transformations and social practice artists' agency, their 'neoliberal subjectivities'. Following this, the question arises if social practice artists follow or oppose structural neoliberal transformations with their work.

Nevertheless, possible tensions between structural transformations and social practice artists' subjectivities remain underexplored. An extensive literature search indicated that although the social practice artist as an active, neoliberal subject is often mentioned within the literature about social practice art, it has not been researched thoroughly to what extent this artist is a neoliberal subject and how social practice artists would exhibit or oppose to characteristics of neoliberal subjects (Haiven, 2018; Harvie, 2011). Therefore, this research is concerned with the relationship between neoliberalization and social practice art by exploring the tensions between neoliberalization as a structure and social practice artists' agency on the ground. From the literature, it becomes evident that neoliberal governments mainly require their citizens to be (or become) active citizens (Dey & Steyeart, 2016). Neoliberal citizens have to be self-reliant or self-responsible (Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012), they have to have the freedom to act and choose between competing strategies (Read, 2009), they have to be calculative agents (Read, 2009) and flexible subjects (Pink, 2001; Leadbeater & Oakley, 1999; Read, 2009). An ideal type of the neoliberal citizen in relation to the artistic field is the cultural entrepreneur, who exhibits characteristics such as a capacity to take initiatives and realize visions, who exhibits courage in oneself and one's vision, is able to convince him or herself and others of actions to be undertaken, exhibits risk-taking behaviour, is an innovator and focuses on creativity (Klamer, 2011; Marttila, 2013). Although one could argue that artists have been engaging in these types of entrepreneurial activities and exhibited these entrepreneurial characteristics in Western countries since the 18th century, many authors have argued that this has shifted to a more explicitly capitalist mode in which the entrepreneurial discourse has become intensified in the creative industries (Haynes & Marshall, 2018; Win, 2014). By investigating the characteristics of social practice artists as 'changemakers', I will be able to show if, how and to what extent these artists follow neoliberal principles and subjectivities in their pursuit of social change.

The purpose of this research is, therefore, to further explore the relationship between neoliberalization and social practice art by investigating how social practice artists interpret structural transformations on the ground. Hence, it focuses on tensions between structure and agency and addresses the following question: *"Is there a relationship between neoliberal transformations and social practice art and how do social practice artists interpret structural transformations on the ground?"* This question is of importance because even though artists often do not want to be placed in neoliberal discourses, the academic literature suggests a different relationship, making this question of societal and theoretical relevance simultaneously. I will explore this relationship by further investigating a category of (self-)identification that has become more prevalent in the social-artistic world today: the social

practice artist as a changemaker. To research this category is of importance because it could signify a particular discourse: why and how is the category used and what are the values associated with it? Thereby, this research provides a lens on how individuals adapt to and take a position regarding neoliberal subjectivities and specifically the role that creativity plays in neoliberal transformations. Several sub-questions will deal with this issue and thereby sketch a characterization of the contemporary social practice artist and shed light on the relationship between neoliberalization and social practice art:

- What does 'the changemaker' as an identity entail for social practice artists? (chapter 4 and 5)
- How do social practice artists engage in the practices of 'making' change? (chapter 4)
- What are the interpretations social practice artists attach to change? (chapter 6)
- What is the relationship between other drivers or partners of contemporary changes and social practice artists? (chapter 6)
- What is the role of 'the artist mindset', as a concept central to the organization studied, in current neoliberal transformations of societal issues? (Chapter 4, 5 and 6)

As I will elaborate in Chapter 3, the context of this research is an Amsterdam-based arts and culture organization. This organization aims to connect and empower changemakers who are interested in using 'the artist mindset' to implement societal change. The research questions have been investigated using qualitative methodologies, namely interviews and observations. This methodological approach was considered most fruitful because it allowed me to grasp the local context, lived experiences and processes, as well as the practices the organization engages in.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Considerations

Practitioners of socially engaged art are not unproblematically positioned as progressive changemakers. In this chapter, I will show this by combining several different literatures, starting with exploring the instrumentalization of arts and culture during neoliberalization. Thereafter, I will delve into a gap in the literature concerned with this relationship within social practice art, which has not investigated the tensions between neoliberal transformation and social practice artists' subjectivities sufficiently. Finally, I combine literature on active citizenship and cultural entrepreneurship, to provide some possible characteristics of the artist as a changemaker, focusing on neoliberal subjectivities. Thereby, I show how a variety of individual characteristics could be argued to be present in the socially engaged artist as a changemaker: those of the active citizen and the cultural entrepreneur. In doing so, I will show how we could think about a relationship between neoliberalization and art in an insightful way.

Before starting the discussion of how academic research shows a relationship between art and neoliberal governmental agendas, we should note that many artists *"will often bridle against the crass instrumentalization or 'Disneyfication' of culture"* and *"against the bourgeois subject positions that it would confer upon them"* (Peck, 2012, p. 469). Not many practitioners of social entrepreneurship, such as social practice artists, identify themselves with the neoliberal governmentality repertoire (Dey & Steyaert, 2016). The way in which for example policy-makers project social entrepreneurship is not in accordance with the way in which social entrepreneurs construe their worlds and their selves (Baines, Bull & Woolrych, 2010; Howorth, Parkinson & McDonald, 2011). This means that the neoliberal discourse might be followed within policies, but that a different meaning is attached to it at the micro level. As Dey and Steyeart (2016) argue, following Foucault, this illuminates that "*there is no relationship of power without the means of escape or possible flight"* (Foucault, 1982, p.225). According to Haiven (2013), this would be especially true for socially engaged artists as they still have a range of creative freedom that is denied in most other realms, which also means that they could "*explore the limits, borders and weak-points of financialization*" (p.539). Thus, even though social practice artists might be expected to act and think like entrepreneurs in neoliberal times, it is still possible for them to reflect and oppose to the way in which they are being shaped (Dey & Steyeart, 2016).

2.1 Context: Arts and Neoliberalization

Artistic and creative processes have been used and captured by governments and politicians during neoliberalization. Florida's (2004; 2012) ideas, for example, have become especially seductive to state and city officials (Peck, 2005; Peck, 2012). He argues that the success of a city depends on its capacity to attract and retain the 'creative class', who are the driving force behind economic growth (Florida, 2004; 2012). Creativity would thus have become a commodity. Many authors have observed a relationship between neoliberalization and cultural policies (Peck, 2005; Peck, 2012; Pratt, 2011) and the creative industries (Harvey, 2008; Morgan & Ren, 2012; Peck, 2012). This is unsurprising, as many authors would argue neoliberalization "*has become incorporated into the commonsense way we*

interpret, live in, and understand the world" (Harvey, 2007, p.23; and Marttila, 2013). Importantly, however, and in contrast to what Florida (2004) argues, Harvey (2007) claims that creative strategies have not been effective in creating economic growth. Peck (2012) follows this argument when stating that: "*while creative strategies may aspire to the instrumentalization of the artistic process, capturing, codifying and accounting for the returns on such investments is extremely difficult*" (p.475). This means that even though many urban policies follow the logic that creativity is the driving force behind economic growth, academic research leaves us unconvinced of these ideas.

Leslie (2013) provides another angle and argues that cultural policy plays an explicit role in the neoliberal commodification of arts and culture, as arts and culture have become instrumentalized. Artists, however, have a complicated relationship with the political in neoliberal times: "*Their aesthetics embraces the politics, rejects it, transforms it, negates it, spurns it, cannot avoid it. […] The words, the rhythms absorb the tensions of a new age. As poems they record, transform and rise above the tensions*" (Leslie, 2013, p.12*).* Thus, artists mask and reinforce the problems central to neoliberal times by trying to solve them, but they can transform them too through their art. If we want to understand the role of arts in society, Leslie (2013) states, we need to understand its relation to the market. Because even if arts are meant to be progressive, it is often also made to sell. This leads us to the conclusion that art is being made instrumental in neoliberal transformations, and therefore also needs to be researched in this context.

Interestingly, a new art form has emerged that positions itself differently than other artistic practices. Socially engaged art is a compelling study area for neoliberal tendencies, because of its explicit focus on instrumentality, with art and culture perceived as means to other ends (Haiven, 2018). Especially during neoliberalization, it becomes of interest to see whether, how and to what extent these practices follow neoliberal principles in their pursuit of social change. Even though social practice art has especially been lauded as a socially progressive form of art (see Bourriaud, 2002; Kester, 2004 via Harvie, 2011), it has also been associated with neoliberalization and capitalism by some authors. Haiven (2018), for example states*: "I argue that both participatory art and financialization rely on the conscription of agency, autonomy and creativity" (*p.531*).* Although there appear to be many reasons to be interested in exploring the relationship between neoliberal transformations and art in the field of social practice art, an extensive literature research generated limited results.

When looking at the limited research that has been done relating to social practice art and neoliberalization specifically, the research by Haiven (2018) and Harvie (2011) stands out. While they do relate social practice art to neoliberal subjectivities occasionally, these authors do not explicitly research the relationship between neoliberalization and social practice art by studying neoliberal subjectivities. Even though useful, Haiven (2018) investigates the practices of three social practice artists, who focus on the impacts of financialization in their work, without investigating how they were

constituted as an active, creative subject in the first place. Harvie (2011) also argues that socially engaged art risks being absorbed by an elitist, neoliberal agenda, concluding that there are multiple ways in which socially engaged art projects can contribute to neoliberalization. She takes into consideration the use of 'pop-up' venues and relates this to artists' entrepreneurial activities. Her research shows how artists can rise to opportunities, as well as a neoliberal focus on individualism and self-interest as these practices reward initiative, enterprise, entrepreneurialism, and opportunism (Harvie, 2011). Even though she notes that artists within participatory art practices are constituted as active, neoliberal subjects, she does not thoroughly investigate how this type of neoliberal subjectivity manifests itself, what it means and to what extent artists follow this subjectivity in their work, which is the starting point of this research.

2.2 Active Citizenship and Cultural Entrepreneurship

As Lingo and Tepper (2013) argue, we *"need to pay attention to the role of artists as catalysts of change"* (p.348). In the case of the social practice artist as a changemaker, it is of importance to explore 'complex personalities' as there might be *"contradictions between one's self-image and the image and expectations that society has of you"* (Lingo & Tepper, 2013, p.352). That is to say, there might be tensions between structural transformations and how artists perceive themselves and their work. It appears that many characteristics of the artist as a changemaker come close to arguments made in active citizenship literature about a particular type of self, related to neoliberal subjectivities. Having shown that the tensions between structural transformations and social practice artists' subjectivities have not been researched sufficiently, I will now highlight some key characteristics that are central to neoliberal subjects. By combining literature on active citizenship and cultural entrepreneurship, I will show possible characteristics of the socially engaged artist as a changemaker. This combination is necessary because the literature on active citizenship mostly focuses on how passive citizens become active citizens. However, socially engaged artists can oftentimes be considered active citizens already, making it relevant to add literature on characteristics of the cultural entrepreneur, showing where they overlap with characteristics of the active citizen.

2.2.1 Aspects of Active Citizenship

Neoliberal governments require their citizens to be(come) active citizens: "*Neoliberal governmentality places a strong emphasis on proactive individuals who participate in the quest to improve their own welfare*" (Dey & Steyeart, 2016, p.631). This means that a citizen should be actively engaging with societal issues on a day-to-day basis and has to be free to operate within society and transform the societal issues he or she observes too. From the literature, I have distinguished four somewhat overlapping characteristics of the subjectivity neoliberalization desires.

Firstly, the ideal citizen must be self-reliant or self-responsible. Not only for their own lives, but also for societal issues and others around them. Citizenship in neoliberal times can be related to two closely related trends within society: the individualization and responsibilization of citizenship. Both

trends promote self-reliance, in which there is a shift *"of responsibility from (withdrawing) government to (empowered) individuals"* (Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012, p.9). What is valued and desired in a good citizen from this perspective is self-sufficiency, initiative, and entrepreneurship. Active citizenship would have to be stimulated in all areas of social life (Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012; Marttila, 2013). Citizens have to feel responsible for particular issues and populations and see enterprise as the solution for the issues they perceive (Dey & Steyeart, 2016; Marttila, 2013).

Secondly, citizens must have the freedom to act and choose between competing strategies (Read, 2009). This is closely related to the third aspect that an active citizen should be a calculative agent. It means that citizens are capable of calculating their own interests and desires and that the government provides the conditions in which citizens have the freedom to act on those. Thus, even though the state wants to transfer responsibility to their citizens, this is not achieved by controlling measures but by producing conditions under which individuals can act as free beings (Dey, 2014). This means that advice should be given as to how subjects should conduct themselves and how they can make the most use of their personal freedom (Marttila, 2013). In some ways, this is about the ability of citizens to self-govern. Autonomy would exist when individuals feel capable to treat and transform social conditions they perceive in their surroundings (Lorey, 2015).

Thirdly, a neoliberal subject should be a calculative agent. Read (2009) states that Foucault would argue that in neoliberalism, just as in liberal times, there is a focus on the process of making economic activity central to social and political relations (Read, 2009). However, in neoliberalism, the focus lies on competition instead of exchange. This has significant implications: whereas exchange is considered to be natural, competition must be *"protected against the tendency for markets to form monopolies and interventions by the state"* (Read, 2009, p.28). This means that there is a significant role for the state to intervene in the conditions of the market. This shift from 'exchange' to 'competition' also means that there has to be a redefinition of labor and the worker (see Marttila, 2013; Read, 2009), in the sense that there is a more explicit focus on the human capital that working obtains. In some ways, *"the worker has become 'human capital'"* (Read, 2009, p.28). Labor is the activity, whereas human capital becomes the effect of this labor. This is also where the calculating agent of neoliberal times comes in: *"From this intersection the discourse of the economy becomes an entire way of life, a common sense in which every action – crime, marriage, higher education and so on – can be charted according to a calculus of maximum output for minimum expenditure; it can be seen as an investment"* (Read, 2009, p.31). In this way, the model neoliberal citizen becomes an economic subject that weighs its options in social, political, and economic domains. This citizen does not strive to alter these options but tries to navigate them to gain maximum profit.

Lastly, the neoliberal citizen should be a flexible subject. This is reflected in the literature that celebrates the free, independent worker (Pink, 2001; Leadbeater & Oakley, 1999). The most obvious

way in which flexibility becomes visible in contemporary Western societies, is by the trend away from long term labor contracts, towards more temporary and part-time labor (Read, 2009). This is especially an effective strategy of subjectification, besides of being an effective economic strategy. Namely, it encourages individuals to not see themselves as 'workers' but as 'companies of one', for whom there can be no benefits assumed. This idea of the 'flexible subject' should be related to the concept of precarization. This concept highlights the darker side of being a flexible subject: the precarious work conditions contain no social support, and everything is the workers' responsibility (Pratt, 2011). Precarization focuses on living with the unforeseeable, with contingency. More broadly, it can be described as *"insecurity and vulnerability, destabilization and endangerment"* (Lorey, 2015, p.10). Moreover, the concept stipulates that it is not only about work, but life itself that has become unstable, or to phrase it in a positive way 'flexible'. In neoliberalization, precarization becomes normalized, which means that a state and its citizens are governed through insecurity (Lorey, 2015).

2.2.2 Cultural Entrepreneurship
Before outlining possible characteristics of cultural entrepreneurs, one should note here that the concept of 'cultural entrepreneurship' originates from far before a process of neoliberalization began. Dimaggio (1982), for example, had already noted characteristics of cultural entrepreneurs in Boston at the end of the 19th century. Even though artists have exhibited entrepreneurial characteristics in the West since the 18th century (Win, 2014), multiple authors have shown how this has shifted to a more explicitly capitalist mode during neoliberalization in which the entrepreneurial discourse has become intensified (Haynes & Marshall, 2018; Win, 2014). Thus, even if entrepreneurial characteristics were not necessarily neoliberal from the start, if contemporary artistic self-conceptions do follow characteristics that are currently perceived as neoliberal, they could strengthen *"the neoliberal subject ideal of the flexible and empowered individual"* (Loacker, 2013, p.125). Although there is no way we can distinguish when and if characteristics are part of a specific neoliberal subjectivity or of a wider pre-existing artist identity, one could argue that entrepreneurial characteristics have become amplified during neoliberalization.

How can changemakers be placed against or within the characteristics of cultural entrepreneurs, a particular type of neoliberal subjectivity? 'The entrepreneur' is a concept that conveys something: it can mean different things in varying situations, making it all the more important to study it in the context of socially engaged art as it might show a different culture of enterprise. The entrepreneur has become one of the projected role models and scripts of neoliberal times and according to Marttila (2013) has become a specter: "*an entrepreneur is no longer the founder or innovator of a business but a general idea of how enterprises and individual subjects should get things done*" (Chapter 1, Specters of Entrepreneurship, paragraph 8). It appears that the entrepreneur already is an ideal active citizen, and should therefore exhibit all of the, or at least many of the, individual characteristics of the neoliberal subject described above.

Hence, the entrepreneur is not just a founder or innovator of an enterprise but has become a role model displaying several individual characteristics instead. The extension of the range of individuals that could be entrepreneurs resulted in the conception of the entrepreneur as a role model (Marttila, 2013). I have distinguished a couple of key characteristics of the cultural entrepreneur in the literature. Firstly, the (cultural) entrepreneur has the capacity to take initiatives or the organizational power to realize visions and has faith in his or her personal capacity (Klamer, 2011; Marttila, 2013). Related to the idea of the active subject being able to self-govern, they feel capable to treat and transform the social conditions they perceive in society (Lorey, 2015). Hope and faith, and exhibiting courage, in oneself and one's vision are of importance for the entrepreneur, as Klamer (2011) argues "*for without that he or she would not make the sacrifices that entrepreneurial activity usually requires. And faith stands for conviction, a clear sense of self, without which a vision never would carry and inspire others*" (p.153). Secondly, the entrepreneur should be able to convince themselves and others of actions to be undertaken (Klamer, 2011). Thereby one should not only appeal to logic and facts, but also to emotions and have a sensitivity towards the story and visions of people you are trying to persuade. Persuasion relies on the credibility and authority of the speaker too (Klamer, 2011). Klamer (2011) would even go as far as to state that without being able to persuade, someone can have all kinds of entrepreneurial characteristics, but not be an entrepreneur.

Thirdly, the entrepreneur exhibits risk-taking behavior, and is adventurous. Cultural entrepreneurs have to be willing to trespass boundaries and try something new (Marttila, 2013). Fourthly, a cultural entrepreneur has to be an innovator (Klamer, 2011; Marttila, 2013). As Steyert and Katz (2004, p.182; via Marttila, 2013) argue: "*[e]ntrepreneurship [has become] a model for introducing innovative thinking, recognizing the established and crafting the new across a broad range of settings and spaces and for a range of goals such as social change and transformation beyond those of simple commerce and economic drive*". Thus, innovation would be used as a source for social change. Fifth, the cultural entrepreneur is focused on creativity. Cultural entrepreneurs are creative specifically related to artistic content and the way in which they organize conversations and arrange finances: "*the artistic content is their passion and commitment; everything else, including the economics is subsidiary*" (Klamer, 2011, p.155). But how can a socially engaged artist be creative in an environment in which he has to be calculative and focused on profits too? Lastly, cultural entrepreneurs are alert to opportunities, and they perceive opportunities others do not perceive (Klamer, 2011). Moreover, they would act on these opportunities too.

2.2.3 Learning Neoliberal Subjectivity

What is necessary for citizens to become these ideal neoliberal subjects? Hurenkamp, Tonkens, and Duyvendak (2012) argue that citizenship is not something that can be dictated, but that it is a commitment that changes over time and needs to be kept up to date. It is "*a process, just as dependent on individual motivation as on imaginary outcomes on offer, on the language, ideals and techniques*

that masters of the trade express. Tacit knowledge has to be recognized" (Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012, p.16). From their book, it becomes evident that there are three factors that help individuals to become active citizens: conditions, confidence, and skills. Some of these factors can be related to what social practice art can do following previous research, as I will argue below: social practice artists can empower individuals to see problems within themselves and their environment and provide them with skills and mindsets to change these conditions.

Firstly, individuals need to have the opportunity to become active citizens. It is not just about willingness or ability, but also about circumstances (Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012). For example, there have to be opportunities for people to launch their initiatives, to get feedback, and to meet like-minded people. Secondly, people have to feel confident: that their efforts are useful, and that people will not laugh about their ideas. Especially for citizens that were inactive before, it is important that they start "*to believe instead that their efforts will make a difference, and that their suggestions will be taken seriously by more experienced citizens. When citizens see that they are needed, most of the time they will act"* (Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012, p.16). Research by Matarasso (1997) and Popple and Scott (1999) shows that participatory art can contribute to individuals and groups becoming more employable, committed, convinced, and active in their contribution to local communities.

Lastly, skills are an important factor in carrying out active citizenship. There is an overrepresentation of the educated in civic engagement (Bovens & Wille, 2009). This suggests that higher education and professional employment provide skills that help people to act on their citizenship. In higher education, one does not only practice skills, but it also provides people with tacit knowledge, for example what the right tone is when speaking to a politician or knowing the right people and how to approach them (Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012). Interestingly, this overrepresentation of the higher educated already hints to an elitist practice. Earlier research has shown that within social practice art, participants can learn organizational skills that can help them to create change (Landry et al., 1996). Besides practical skills, one has to know and internalize how society works (Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012). Previous research for example has shown how social practice art can increase public awareness about local or societal issues and its alternatives (Carey & Sutton, 2004; Cleveland, 2011; Kelaher et al., 2012) and show the community which actions and answers are viable to solve societal problems (Carey & Sutton, 2004; Kelaher et al., 2012).

In this chapter, I have shown how the tensions between structural transformations and social practice artists' subjectivities have not been researched sufficiently. By exploring the characteristics that are attached to the active citizen and the cultural entrepreneur within the literature, I will show if and how social practice artists are construed as ideal neoliberal subjects. Are there ways in which social practice artists as changemakers go against neoliberal subjectivities, or are they mostly following them in their practices?

Chapter 3: The Case

The fieldwork took place from October 2018 to January 2019 in the context of an Amsterdam-based arts and culture organization, which aims to connect and empower changemakers who want to use the artist mindset to implement societal change. The organization was set up because the founder felt a need to build a bridge between art, self-employed professionals, organizations, and societal issues. Existing for approximately 2 years, several events have been organized, designed to connect and empower changemakers who are already able to use or understand the artist mindset to organizations and individuals who are interested in using the artist mindset in society. The organization tries to support and empower its members to make an impact in society, outside of the art world. The organization is based on membership, with members of the core-team also being a member, now including over 300 members. There is a variety of members: their professions, for example, include philosophers, social scientists, musicians, theatre-makers, visual artists, civil servants, program designers, process counselors, and creative entrepreneurs. The only requirement for membership is to be able to use the artist mindset, understand it, or be convinced of its value. Membership is not paid, even though some events are. Currently, the organization is looking for funding and partnerships.

This research has followed a qualitative research design, using qualitative methods of data gathering and analysis. The research design was selected, because of its inherent focus on lived experiences and it enabled the investigation of changemaker identities, their life-worlds, and their practices. This is what social scientists do: they find out the meanings people give to things and what they think they are doing, by talking to them and observing them in their ordinary activities (Becker, 2008). Following this idea, in this chapter I describe how data was gathered and what type of information the qualitative methodologies generated.

3.1 Interviews

Twenty-three interviews have been conducted with 20 participants. This number of interviews could be considered a sufficient number of interviews to achieve data saturation, theoretical saturation or informational redundancy, but not too large to make it difficult to undertake a deep case-oriented analysis (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). All interviewees, except for one, were part of the organization in some way: they were part of the (core) team, they helped design events or participated in them, or they were members of the organization in another way. Hence, these participants were selected because of their direct relation to the research question and the organization itself, which means a form of purposive sampling was used (Bryman, 2012). Moreover, as some participants were selected because they were mentioned during interviews with core team members, key-informant recruitment was also used (Bryman, 2012). However, there are risks accompanying this approach. For example, the researcher might develop an extensive reliance on key informants (Bryman, 2012). I therefore also met interview participants during events. This resulted in a sample with short- and long-term members, with them also being more or less involved with the organization. Moreover, there is a broad variety of professions

among participants (for a description of research participants see Appendix A). As mentioned, one interviewee was not a member of the organization: this research participant was one of the first clients of the organization.

The themes the interviews focused on differed slightly depending on the role of the interviewee within the organization (for interview guides, see Appendix A). Nevertheless, all interviews focused on the identity of the artist as a changemaker, their practices, and their interpretations of the changes they want to make. Three members were interviewed twice because they are (or were) members of the organizations' core team. Interviews with core team members were concerned with their visions behind the organization, their practices and the goals they are trying to achieve. How are they trying to help their members to implement changes, and what should members learn in their perception? Moreover, more in-depth questions were asked about their understanding of change, their practices, their relationship with funding bodies and other partners, and how they understand the artist mindset. I also tried to understand their role as a self-proclaimed changemaker: do they feel that they are active citizens and capable of changing the societal issues they perceive? Interviews with other members focused on their experiences with the organization and its events. They were asked about the circumstances that brought them there, how they value their experiences, and what their membership has brought them. Moreover, I wanted to gain understanding of their identity as changemakers, the practices they engage with, what they are trying to change, and how they try to do so. Besides, some questions were concerned with understanding the artist mindset and how they are 'using' it in practice. Lastly, the interview with the organizations' first client was concerned with how and why they value the organizations' practices and how they had experienced the cooperation.

3.2 Observations

Twelve (participant) observations have taken place at several events, meetings with (potential) partners and team meetings. This was considered valuable because it is related to the research questions concerned with the practices of changemaking and relations to other drivers of change. The events included: 1) 3 workshops by the founder at two conferences concerned with art and society, 2) a presentation of a project of the organization with a partner at a bank, 3) a pitch night co-organized by the organization with other companies and businesses, 4) a presentation and workshop held by the founder at a university [*hogeschool*], 5) four team meetings and one meeting with a (potential) partner, 6) other events organized by the organization, such as a 'changemakers day' and a 'changemakers weekend'. The 'changemakers weekend' was especially relevant because it provided me with an opportunity to investigate how members interacted with each other in a group. As other research has suggested, hierarchy within groups, the possibility to share ideas and difficulties in work processes and collaboration are of importance when it comes to active participation in societal issues (Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012). I considered this weekend ideal for studying these types of processes and interactions because the organization wants to attain its goal of exchanging knowledge and

experience between (prospective) members, by bringing people together. During this weekend, people using the artist mindset come together, network and help each other to develop clearer questions about and ways to work on their dreams and ambitions. Moreover, if participants want to, they can share a project they have been working on to get feedback.

My role during these events depended on the event dynamics. Most of the time, however, this role could be considered to be the role of a partially participating observer (Bryman, 2012). This meant sometimes engaging in the groups' core activities, but not as a full member. Partially participating allowed for a broader understanding of how the practice of empowering members works, but at the same time being able to observe group dynamics without being part of them. During the observations I focused on who came there, the way in which people behaved, the activities they engaged in, how participants were engaging with each other and most importantly the practices the core team engaged in to empower its members. This means that there was a specific focus on how a group identity was being formed and how they together (come to) identify as a group of changemakers. The observations were also concerned with the (societal) problems that were being discussed and the way in which participants engaged with them. During team meetings, a different role was assumed. To let these meetings flow as naturally as possible, I was there as an observer. This means that there was a focus on listening to the conversation, taking notes, and possibly ask for clarifications when needed. These observations served as a way to get to know the thought processes behind the events and the organization in general better.

3.3 Analysis

All interviews were transcribed literally, anonymized and afterward coded in four rounds using Atlas.ti. The coding process was approached inductively because I wanted to be open to anything that came up during the process. An inductive approach allows the researcher to keep *"more of an open mind about the contours of what he or she needs to know about"* (Bryman, 2012, p.12). Within the coding process, I therefore made sure to look at the data in as much detail as possible, to only later start developing more focused codes.

The analysis process started with open coding four interviews. After coding these four interviews, I regrouped the codes into code groups and reduced the codes within those groups. This means that I started a cutting and sorting process, to come to Organizing Themes, which was described by Ryan and Bernard (2003) as: *"identifying quotes or expressions that seem somehow important and then arranging the quotes/expressions into piles of things that go together"* (p.94). This meant that I could reduce some codes to one code that conveyed a similar message or delete codes that already belonged to another code group. In the second round, I started using these 'new' codes to code the other interviews as well. After coding all interviews in the second round, I again reduced the codes within the code groups and designed a preliminary code tree. In the third round of coding, I coded the observations using the code tree resulting from the first two rounds of coding and included codes that showed

important signs of interactions, such as body language and facial expressions. The last round included checking all interviews and observations to ascertain that codes were assigned to the data coherently.

Chapter 4: (Re)Producing Changemaker Identities

It is a Monday morning in December, and I am writing down observation notes on my laptop, sitting at a brightly colored table in a foodbank supermarket in the city center of Amsterdam. From today onwards this space will function as the organization's office on Mondays, and I have just observed the first team meeting taking place here. The atmosphere is amicable: core team members hug each other when coming in and ask each other about their weekends and their personal lives. During the morning, several people come in and out continuously to discuss their plans for the organization or their own projects, always eager to hear what Tristan, the founder, thinks. This is also how I meet William. He is a man that seems to be around his sixties, he has bright blue eyes that light up when he smiles, and his muddled blonde hair draws me into a first impression of a turbulent personality. As Tristan tells me before William comes in around the end of the morning, he has known William for a long time. He has been a member of the organization for over a year and has been to some events. Today, he came in to ask Tristan for his advice on a video he made for a subsidy application. Showing us the video, he introduces his project, which is concerned with telling the stories of people living in an apartment building in the East of Amsterdam. After showing us the video and engaging in a short conversation with Tristan about practical advice regarding this subsidy, I ask him if I could talk to him a bit more, as I would like to hear his story. Especially the way in which he was looking at Tristan, the leader and authority of the group as I will show in Chapter 5, for help with the more entrepreneurial sides of his work, interested me. Why and how does the organization help its members with especially these kinds of tasks? William enthusiastically agrees to have a conversation with me and says that he would even have some time to talk to me now.

We sit down at one of the tables and talk through how he got to his project. At one point, I ask him how he got into this world. In just four sentences he springs four different professions and educational trajectories at me: he engages with theatre, has been a music therapist, has been to the conservatory and has been a professional musician for twenty years. The organizations' methodologies at events were not always helpful to him, he argues, because he was already experienced and did not have to find his dream anymore, which is one of the things the organization focuses on. He tells me: "*At a certain moment, you see, I am very used to being a self-employed entrepreneur, on the one hand to earn your own money, on the other hand to find your own sources of inspiration. So, what happened there was trying to find people who help you, who can support you, I was looking for those people but I was already doing that. But those people were outside of this organization*". Within a few minutes, William has indicated many different aspects of his professional 'self' to me, such as earning your own money, finding your own inspiration and creating your own support network, so I ask him what all of these aspects mean to him. He answers: "*I am at two extremes now. I have to make this [video], you know, and I have to put on paper how much it costs. Well, then you have entrepreneurship on the one hand, and being an artist on the other. You unite that in one person. That has to be united in one person,*

because otherwise it dries out". Apparently, there are two sides of his identity that are necessary to make a change: the artist and the entrepreneur. Many members struggle with these two sides, mainly by relating entrepreneurial characteristics to their artist mindsets: a concept central to this organization and that I will return to in several different contexts in this research. Even though here he states that he is an artist, later in our conversation I ask him:

Me: Would you consider yourself an artist?

William: No, no

Me: Because?

William: I think actually we have to get rid of that word.

Me: Yeah?

William: Yeah. What does that suggest?

Me: Yeah? What does it suggest for you?

William: What does it suggest? What does it suggest? Artist that is, yeah. I think we have to get rid of that word. Then, what are you? Well you can say, that is, there are way more facets united in being an artist. If you say that you are an artist, you are almost selling yourself short. Because I'm also an entrepreneur. I also work in assignments, you know. If you work with assignments, then it isn't smart to always keep doing your own thing. [...] So, if you say that you are an artist, you can say that, but you are excluding the possibility for dialogue. At least, that's what it is for me. And let the other decide. Other people call me that [an artist] and I'm fine with that. But I don't have to, I'm a filmmaker, I make music, I talk to people."

William was one of the first members of the group who explicitly pointed me to the confusion that appears to be inherent to being a socially engaged artist: not wanting to be considered an artist (but not minding when others call him that) nor being certain about their entrepreneurial side. At the same time, some members are convinced that without being an entrepreneur, one cannot make a change, because that would be indicative of lacking impact. Nevertheless, most members seem to deal with the different facets of their identities in a less explicit way than William does: they mainly relate these entrepreneurial characteristics to their so-called 'artist mindsets' rather than explicitly saying that they are entrepreneurs or sometimes even stating that they are not. Daniel, a short-term member, for example discusses his own company with me during the lunch at the 'changemakers weekend', which is a weekend designed by the core team of the organization for members in which they followed personal development workshops. Daniel tells me how creating a website is part of being an entrepreneur, but that he does not want to be placed inside that box. I ask him why not, to which he replies: *"I don't have my own office, I don't have my own company and I don't straighten my tie"*. Relating entrepreneurship

to rather one-dimensional aspects of this professional status, he tries to distance himself from being an entrepreneur, which others have shown to do too. Moreover, although there are entrepreneurial characteristics that members relate to the artist mindset, this does not mean that they always feel comfortable in dealing with the entrepreneurial side of their work, which I will further discuss in Chapter 6.

In this chapter, I will show how changemaking requires a particular sense of self. As I already indicated in the introduction of this chapter, I will argue that this sense of self is characterized by two 'extremes' of changemaker identities: entrepreneurial characteristics as well as their sense of selves as artistically inclined individuals. However, as this identity is produced, the meaning of making-a-change also gets a different connotation as it can mean many different things in many different contexts. It appears that it largely functions as a concept to indicate how members feel they should engage with the process of changemaking: artistically and entrepreneurial.

4.1 Setting the Stage: The Artist and Entrepreneurial Characteristics

Marttila (2013) sees the entrepreneur as a subject who exhibits certain individual characteristics, for instance being a calculative, responsible subject, who continuously engages with society in an enthusiastic way and who can be considered a creative subject and innovator. Moreover, an entrepreneur has to exhibit risk-taking behavior and be confident and convincing. In his book, Marttila (2013) used a discourse analysis to study how the entrepreneur has been promoted as a role model by different governments with different political agendas in Sweden between 1991 and 2004. Looking at the members of this group, the image Marttila (2013) puts forward seems to be mainly an idealized image too: even though many of them argue for and exhibit some of the characteristics, with some being more 'entrepreneurial' than others, others are still learning to navigate the field of which they have become, some recently, a part. For example, I meet both Diane, an experienced socially engaged artist and long-term active member of the organization, and Naomi, a musician, a short-term member and aspiring socially engaged artist, at a 'changemakers day' arranged by the core team of the organization.

This day takes place at an ecological, cultural 'breeding ground' that used to function as a church and metal factory. The day is all about finding a step participant can take within the following year, and methodologies were used, and personal stories were shared to try to get there. Out of the approximately ten (prospective) members that were there, four present their ideas that day, which they have to end with a question for the group, among who are both Diane and Naomi. Naomi shares her ideas with the group first. She draws a picture of what happens when a train comes to a standstill in the middle of a meadow and people start engaging with each other: at first people are grumbling because of public transport, but rather quickly people would start engaging with each other. At least, so she argues. This is an experience Naomi would like to recreate with music, and she is looking for people who share this fascination with her. Diane presents her ideas after Naomi. She tells us that she is a visual artist and that she wants to use

creativity to work with the issue of 'loneliness'. Her project will be about making collages and gifting them to others. The question she shares with the group is: how can you become a receiver and giver within a project? After they share the project with the group, every participant gets to go with one of the presenters to further develop their questions. The way in which they share their questions with the group, as well as how they pitch their ideas and how they came to these ideas, can tell us something about the entrepreneurial sides of their selves.

I meet both Diane and Naomi again a couple of weeks later, a couple of days apart from each other, because I want to hear more about their life and work. I meet up with Diane first, in her art studio in an old school building in Amsterdam. Her story starts with an experience that she deems of significance in many ways throughout her work-life trajectory: *"I am the seventh child of my mother, and she had seven children in seven years. So, when I was born she collapsed and was hospitalized, so she disappeared. So that's a way of being dead, away from our family. And because of that I have always felt like I was too much, or as if I didn't belong. And in the past years, there have been a couple of deaths in our family, and I got rejected every time, in every way, whatever I did. [...] And then I thought what's happening here? I am doing my best and I just didn't get it"*. She considers this personal experience an important motive for her work as an artist. For instance, she has worked on projects in which she gave 'terminal care' to places or worked with elderly people on translating their life lessons into testimonies. Interestingly, and as can be observed for almost every other member of the group, Naomi has also worked from personal experience. When we discuss her work in a café in Rotterdam, she shares with me how she got to the theme of connectedness: *"I notice for myself, and of course my personal life plays a big role in that. The fact that I was bullied in the past and also that, I really want to be seen for who I am. [...] So I really think that all of that connects, so I think that you really put yourself under a magnifying glass and you mirror that to the world around you"*. Hence both of them have worked from and for their own interests to some extent as a more or less calculating agent (Dey & Steyaert, 2016), but, as is appropriate for the ideal image of entrepreneurs, they both wanted to do something for the greater good too (Marttila, 2013). It seems that their need to make changes is embedded in their individual trajectories and experiences, rather than an external social pressure or a need to imitate.

While talking to them, a picture emerges of what they feel is required of them to be able to make their changes. For instance, by reflecting, observing, and questioning themselves and the world, as Naomi for example also exemplifies in the quote above, they would actively engage with society on a day-to-day basis. According to many members, among whom is Naomi, this can be related to the artist mindset: "*But also the fact that you dedicate yourself to that. That you spend time on that. To just look at the world and to see hey what's happening here and how can we do that better?*" Moreover, because members of this group perceive themselves as questioners of particular issues in society, they would not assume anything to be self-evident. Related to the artist mindset, they have the ability to be amazed, to be curious about what they see going on in society and to question it. For example, Diane talks about

how she wants to 'create magic' using her artist mindset. Framing themselves in this way shows how they relate to the ideal, active citizen. This citizen is continuously engaging with and looking at society and does this in an enthusiastic way (Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012). Then again, this seems to be mostly an idealized image: it might for example be hard for Diane to be 'naturally' enthusiastic, considering her feelings of not fitting in.

Members often translate the personal experience and observation and questioning of societal issues into feelings of responsibility. Most members show these feelings of responsibility by talking about giving themselves or seeing others taking up 'societal assignments', or issues becoming their 'life projects' or 'missions' and working on those projects too. Interestingly, it is mostly Naomi who discusses these feelings of responsibility, rather than Diane who has been in the field much longer. This could point to Naomi still being in the process of figuring out where she stands. Naomi tells me about how she has dedicated herself to the subject of connectedness, and even though she does not always feel like doing something with it, she feels like she "*shouldn't get away with it [not doing something] too easily*". Not having done something with her topic yet, while perceiving 'doing something' to be of importance, is one reason why she came to the organization. As an entrepreneurial characteristic, she has not been able to act on her feelings of responsibility as yet (Marttila, 2013). Although Diane does not discuss this responsibility explicitly, she shows her dedication to the topic by developing projects around 'her' theme continuously. Thereby she shows that she feels capable of making a change and that she perceives enterprise (initiating projects) as the solution for the issues she perceives (Dey & Steyeart, 2016). These ideas must be related to the idea of the 'responsibilization of citizenship', which means that active citizens have to feel responsible for particular issues and populations and act on this responsibility (Dey & Steyaert, 2016).

Feeling capable of making changes (Marttila, 2013) is connected to the artist mindset by a couple of members. Especially members of the core team are convinced that the artist mindset provides ways in which to deal with feeling insecure, as it provides them with 'something to hold onto'. This, for example, came up while talking to one of the core team members, Sandra: "*Well something that seems very complicated to you and something big, and reducing that [with the artist mindset] to something that is clearly set out, that you understand or that you can do something about. That you might also get the feeling as a citizen hey but there are ways to change this instead of thinking this is such a big problem, I can't do anything about that on my own*". Hence, the artist mindset would be necessary for some members to reduce complexity, make their ideas more tangible and thereby feel capable to make their changes. Although there is no evidence that they do make a change when they feel capable of doing so, it does seem that the artist mindset provides them with a concept that helps them to put into words why certain characteristics would be helpful to them in changemaking processes.

Another entrepreneurial characteristic is that many members perceive themselves as creative thinkers and innovators (Klamer, 2011). Thereby, they would inspire new ways of thinking. Diane, for example, explains this by arguing how she sees fewer boundaries and more possibilities with her artist mindset: *"I just see more things than someone else. Someone will see a tree and I will see a carpet of leaves and how do you say that? Something people have to relate to and how? Like, that is a nice trunk, there was a time when people belonged to a tribe as well"* [note: trunk and tribe are signified by the same word in Dutch]. Another indication for her wish for renewal was when she discussed how she considers herself a pioneer in her artistic field. According to other members, creative thinking would allow them to come up with new ways of thinking. They never insist on calling this 'innovative' thinking, but rather refer to it as forms of 'renewal', developing 'new ways of thinking' or 'sketching alternatives' with their artist mindsets. This seems to be a way to distance themselves from typical entrepreneurial language, such as 'innovation', even though they still seem to refer to the same type of entrepreneurial characteristic.

Another aspect of the artist mindset that can be related to entrepreneurial characteristics is that it includes the ability to doubt, to fail, and to be insecure. This aspect of the artist mindset is clearly related to characteristic of cultural entrepreneurs, who is someone that is willing to take risks (Klamer, 2011). Naomi for example discusses how *"It's pretty hard. So that I have to, I have to overcome myself in that and even if I don't know, even if I don't have the answer, I should just do it"*. Although she is not able to do so yet, she values being able to deal with her own insecurities, even if it might mean that she fails. Other members, who have been in the field for a longer time, also state that they want to permit it to themselves to get into an adventure and to blunder. To stress the importance of this entrepreneurial aspect to members, the organization has offered a workshop during the 'changemakers weekend', which gave members tools to help them deal with failure in a 'healthy' way. Some participants afterward told me how they appreciated this opportunity as it would help them to dare to do more. Although some of them might not feel comfortable with risking failure yet, they apparently do feel convinced of its usefulness in changemaking processes.

Lastly, both Diane and Naomi, as well as other members, find it important to be convincing and confident in their work. As Diane argues: "*you have to have the total package. To only make beautiful things, that's not it. It is also selling, convincing and you have to have a strong vision and always keep working on that research"*. Thus, she feels it is necessary to be a strong, self-willed, confident person, to make her change as many other members seem to be convinced of too. This is related to the conception of the artist as a leader, as Diane puts forward. She explains to me that whatever she does, she always goes back to being 'the manager', even if she might not want to be. Naomi, however, does not yet exhibit the same confidence as Diane does. She talks about feeling hesitant or that she feels like she "*just does not have the balls*" to do something with her topic yet. This conception of entrepreneurship was also

discussed by Klamer (2011), who argued that the entrepreneur should be able to convince themselves and others of actions to be undertaken.

The way in which members of this group narrate themselves has shown various characteristics that have been related to (cultural) entrepreneurship and active citizenship before (Dey & Steyaert, 2016; Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012; Klamer, 2011; Marttila, 2013). There are many entrepreneurial characteristics that members relate to being an artist or having 'the artist mindset'. Moreover, even if some members exhibit some of these characteristics, they might not exhibit others, showing that the way in which they frame themselves is mostly an idealized image. And why do they feel the need to create and recreate this entrepreneurial, active citizen image of themselves towards one another, while distancing themselves from being an entrepreneur or trying to keep from using typical entrepreneurial language in their work? This is a question that I will further engage with in Chapter 6, when focusing on how members perceive themselves in relation to 'the recipients' of their work.

4.2 Changemaker as a 'Specter'

There is an inherent openness to the concept of 'entrepreneurship': being an entrepreneur can mean many different things in many different contexts and hence, can be applied to many different practices, activities, and projects (Marttila, 2013). As Marttila (2013) argues, it has become a *"dictum or ethos for the way in which a number of different social practices should be carried out"* (Chapter 1, para.3). In other words, it has become a 'specter', which means that the term provokes a vague image as to *how* individual subjects should get things done rather than *what* they work on (Marttila, 2013). These two aspects of the concept 'entrepreneurship' in the sphere of socially engaged arts practices, its inherent conceptual openness and the focus on 'how things should work', are something I have observed for the members of this organization, and hence for the concept 'changemaker', to some extent. It is not only educated artists that are attracted to be a member: they also include philosophers, ministers, civil servants, primary school teachers, and social scientists. Moreover, members of this group focus their changemaking efforts on different areas of social life, with topics ranging for instance from depression to sustainability to gender inequality. Although this could denote some kind of inherent openness to membership and the 'changemaker-identity', this does not mean that there is no boundary at all to members' topics. There seem to be some shared core values as to what type of topics one can (or should) work on when being a member of this organization. As Iris, one of the core-team members argues, the changes members want to make cannot *"cross certain lines. And I can't give you that line, but I think, god yeah I don't know. Something like racism or those kind of things. Yeah that's just opposed to what we want to do, want to give off"*. Attracting members that are concerned with similar topics, which serves as an indication of shared core values, seems to work well: I have observed no signs of disagreement regarding topics between members at observations or within interviews. This means that although the concept of 'changemaking', similar to the concept of 'entrepreneurship', can refer to different types of

practices, projects and activities, there seems to be agreement as to which topics members should (or should not) work on. This also results in group cohesion and a sense of solidarity between members.

Although the topics they focus on appear to relate to deeper shared core values, it seems that their like-mindedness as a group largely stems from an ideal perception related to *how* they should work. This applies to the idea of entrepreneurship as a 'specter' and tends to contribute to an elusive kind of connectedness for members of this organization. This, for example, came up while talking to Sandra, one of the core team members, when discussing if she felt she would disagree with the changes members of the organization are trying to make:

Sandra: I don't know all the projects exactly, so I don't know if I agree with everything but I have a very strong feeling that everyone is on the same wavelength and also in how you approach things and that just goes, like almost automatically in the same direction.

Me: And how you approach things, what do you mean by that?

Sandra: well yeah, just what I said, from pureness and realness, like being economical with things and good nutrition and against all crime as regards banks and as regards you name it. Just in how you deal with things, how you look at things and how you approach things. It seems like you are automatically on the same wavelength.

This indicates an elusive kind of connectivity: without being able to stipulate what exactly the connectivity includes, and without knowing everyone in the organization, members feel like others within the organization are 'like them'. Members discuss concepts such as 'pureness' and 'realness' as if I, and other members of the group, would understand what they mean by it immediately. These feelings of connectedness seem to be based on how they think they should work and especially 'what' they work with: the artist mindset. This means that the artist mindset not only signifies individual entrepreneurial characteristics of members but that it is also part of their collective identity as the artist mindset serves as the embodiment of how they work and what they work with. It creates their sense of 'togetherness'. Or as Tim, a long-term active member, and philosopher argues: "*Often it [the artist mindset] is this kind of attitude, an attitude to life that you take on. That is not something that you turn on or off*". Thus, the artist mindset is considered to be a way of seeing an understanding the world, which is perceived to trickle through every part of members' daily lives, indicative of their core values and hence their changemaking efforts.

Members thus use or at least seem to believe in, the artist mindset as a way of working to generate changes. The artist mindset hence depicts 'how' members work, appropriate to the conception of changemaking as a 'specter'. As Samantha, one of the former core team members describes, when discussing why she came to the organization: "*I wanted to get to know other people that also work in a way that art isn't just art that you pile up, but more that it almost has a function*". Although members

do not wish to discuss art as a means to an end, as I will further discuss in Chapter 6, they do engage with artistic processes in their work, or they believe in the strength art can have in creating changes and want to stimulate its wider 'use'. This is also stipulated by the kind of members the organization wants to attract: they do not all have to have the artist mindset, but they have to at least understand it or be convinced of its value. Tim, a long-term active member and philosopher for example tells me: *"I felt very attracted to that [the artist mindset] as a philosopher. And that is what it has been about for this organization often, that there are a lot of people coming in who are not an artist per se, but of course it is an artist club, and it is about the artist mindset, and you do not necessarily have to be an artist for that"*. This stresses the point I am trying to make here: there is a shared belief that individual subjects should make a change *artistically* using their *artist mindsets*.

The agreement on how they should work, related to the idea of changemaking as a 'specter', can be emphasized by showing how they 'exclude' people from membership who do not work with artistic processes in the 'right' way. I observed this at the 'changemakers day', where I met Naomi and Diane too. Christa, who introduces herself as a musician and composer, also used the possibility to present her plans and pose a question there. She tells us that she wants to use the profits of her music composition to plant trees and she wonders how she can go about doing this. When I talk about this day a couple of weeks later with Tristan, the founder, he tells me how he felt she did not fit in with what the organization was trying to do. If what they need is an audience or money, which is what Christa needed, they can find that somewhere else according to him. Most importantly, Christa wanted to use the money resulting from her artistic endeavors to make a change, rather than using the artistic process itself to create changes. Other members indicated to me as well that it is not about being an artist in the 'traditional' way, but that it is about making a change through art. In Chapter 5 I will dive further into the distance members are trying to create between themselves and 'autonomous' artists.

There are two other aspects related to *how* they work that seem to establish a shared changemaker identity. Firstly, the fact that they perceive something going wrong within society, and translate these feelings of urgency into action, is what connects them as changemakers according to some. For example, Anne, one of the former core team members, argues that the connectedness is *"in the belief. So, you know, a new religion is a bit strong, but we can make a shift together and actually a shared curiosity of what we can do together in other ways"*. Exhibiting hope and faith has been argued to be an important entrepreneurial characteristic before (Klamer, 2011), and this belief in doing something about the problems they perceive is something that appears to connect members of this group too. Secondly, members often initiate projects and programs to deal with the issues they perceive, thereby showing that they see enterprise, and hence taking initiatives, as a solution to these problems (Dey&Steyeart, 2016). For example, during the last day of the 'changemakers weekend', all participants get the opportunity to share their plans and initiatives with the group in a pitch. For instance, Ruby wants to set up a club, 'We Matter', about the connection between people and nature and Kirsten wants to set

up a project in which she can introduce sustainable ways of living by 'Knitting in the Boardroom'. By introducing their plans in this way, they show how they perceive taking initiative with regard to an observed societal issue as a way to make change.

The issues members experience and questions they have while working in this way are shared during events for members of the organization, which strengthens their connectedness as a group. The meetings and trainings are used as 'tools' and 'technologies' of connectedness. The founder, Tristan, especially believes in the sharing of processes: *"What happens when the process is shared? The process isn't only, come to my studio and look because I am working on that and that and that, and maybe you want to help. But it is also that research, and the doubt and the observations that are at the start"*. By doing this, they find out they are not alone in their frustrations, and they find recognition of their troubles with others who work in a similar way. For instance, they share difficulties with recruiting people for their project or how to raise awareness for the societal issues they are engaging with. Importantly, by doing this the organization provides the circumstances in which members can launch initiatives, get feedback and meet like-minded people, which is of importance to the creation of active citizenship (Hurenkamp, Tonkens, Duyvendak, 2012). The organizations' methodology facilitates conversations about work-related issues among members. For instance, during the 'changemakers weekend', Tristan asks members to write down an obstacle they come across in their work, to later share this with the group. Members then have to divide themselves across the room: to the left side of the room if it is a big obstacle to their work and to the right side of the room if it is a minor obstacle. Obstacles that members mention are, for example time, impatience, the fear to not be valued and the fear to really do something, trusting or being confident in yourself and rules. Interestingly, and as I will further discuss in chapter 6, it seems that these obstacles are concerned with the entrepreneurial sides of their identities and 'the recipients' they work with.

In this chapter, I have shown how members produce and reproduce their identities individually and as a group of changemakers by framing themselves as ideal active citizens, often relating entrepreneurial aspects to their 'artist mindsets'. They relate being an artist to entrepreneurial characteristics, without explicitly arguing that they *are* entrepreneurs, which might be due to some level of discomfort with the term and what it is associated with as I will show in Chapter 6. First and foremost, they seem to relate to the artistically inclined aspects of their identities. Thus, I have engaged with the idea put forward by Marttila (2013), that the entrepreneur has become a role model displaying several individual characteristics, among others for example the ability to realize visions, being convincing and exhibiting risk-taking behavior. Moreover, I have argued that the categorical identity of the changemaker, can be considered a 'specter': it includes a variety of practices and activities, focusing mostly on *how* members work. The organization tries to strengthen connectedness by focusing on the way in which members work, for example through sharing personal stories and issues they come across in their work.

Chapter 5: the Artist Individual and Professional Embeddedness

I am sitting on the second row of chairs in the restaurant of the city theatre and arts center of a small city close to Utrecht, the Netherlands. I have just listened to some key-note speakers at the conference about art and care in the large hall. In the remainder of the afternoon, many workshops related to this theme will take place. Tristan, the founder of the organization, was also asked to set up two workshops, taking place in the restaurant, about the organization and its goals. Having met Tristan, a forty-something year old experienced and considerably well-known socially engaged artist, for the first time a couple of weeks ago, I am getting more familiar with him and his personality. Others generally describe him as a passionate composer and a charismatic idealist and are often inspired by him. One member, for example, told me: "*I got to know Tristan as an inspired and passionate person with an enormous internal drive*". Unsurprisingly, many members seemed to be drawn to the organization because of him as they felt inspired and impressed, as I was myself, after hearing him speak for the first time.

Right now, he is standing on a big, round carpet in front of his presentation. Three rows of chairs are situated at both of his sides, and he is preparing himself for the workshop that will start soon. While he engages in a conversation with a woman in the front row, I observe the other workshop participants who are just coming in. The group of participants seems to be fairly homogenous: most are women, they are wearing decent clothes with bright colors, and seem to be around their thirties or forties. As Tristan jokingly shares with us when he observes the composition of the group: "*I am glad that you all got the dress code. It is a shame though that there's one man here, usually there are only women*". Although this comment denotes that there seem to be some gender and class dynamics present within this organization, it was not a focus in this research, nor has it come up as central during the research itself, and will therefore not be discussed thoroughly (for more information on class dynamics within the creative sector see for example McLean, 2014; Peck, 2005; Peck, 2012; for gender dynamics in the creative industries see for example Conor, Gill & Taylor, 2015). Some participants chuckle at Tristan's comment, and this is the instant he uses to draw everyone's attention and start the workshop. He engagingly discusses how he founded the organization, how he came up with the concept of the 'artist mindset' and the urgency for change he perceives in society. When he presents his and the organizations' story he speaks playfully and draws you into his story, using gestures and body language to express what he wants you to take away from his presentation. His ability to inspire seems no just to be based on how he talks, he knows where to speak louder and where to pause, but also on what he says: he knows which words to use to draw you into a visualization.

At the end of his introductory talk, he wonders about leadership and the kind of leadership artists can offer. He relates his vision on artists' leadership to his own trajectory and discusses how he went to the conservatory to become a composer. He shares with us a picture of a choirmaster with an orchestra in front of him: "*Look, there you are, in a hall, quiet as a mouse, you strike up the choir, and very softly they start singing. It's all standing. Yeah, that's a very, very unique moment. That's the attention you*

get". He did not feel at home at this stage, however. He felt it was too elitist, too exclusive and why, he wonders, was it such a struggle for him to be able to stand on that stage? Therefore, he went on to find ways to break through 'scarcity', as he calls these struggles. For example, what would happen if you blindfold your audience? If you let music be everywhere in the hall? At one moment he even let a basket full of table tennis balls drop down from the balcony. When people cannot see what is going on, according to Tristan, this creates a special experience. Tristan feels like as an artist, he should have the role of a host: "*come into this world of beauty. I haven't created this world, but I have invited you in some way. And isn't creating those meeting spaces, the task of the artist? Isn't that much more important for me as a creator, to make that happen? As a contrast to this is my piece, this is my masterpiece, it has my name on it, and there's copyright"*.

Here, we see again an illustration of his charismatic presence, which might be connected to or enhanced by his training as a performing musician: he has been a composer for quite a while, after all. His ideas of 'inviting' someone into the world of beauty can be related to his conception of 'the traditional artist', which is something he has struggled with and tried to distance himself from throughout his work-life trajectory. This traditional artist apparently signifies something that he does not want to be perceived as: elitist, exclusive, and creating things by yourself that belong to yourself only. After performing a discourse analysis on parts of an earlier conversation I had with him, it appears that what he does not appreciate mainly in this 'autonomous artist' is that a couple of characteristics that are related to this artist by him, would hinder making a societal impact, which I will further discuss in the following chapter. He seems to feel some kind of fear or discomfort to not make an impact, an aspiration to increase societal impact himself, and an admiration for people who make an impact through art. However, 'the autonomous artist', by working within the 'establishment', as he calls it, focuses on results, accomplishments, and successes, which I will further consider in the next chapter, which would isolate this artist and decrease the possibility for impact tremendously, according to Tristan. In other words: these artists would focus on working by themselves, on their own works, which would be unfavorable to making a social impact. One of the things he told me during this earlier conversation serves as an illustration of his conception of the autonomous artist:

"I had this idea that I myself as 'the composer' or 'the artist' was standing in the way of making an impact. And that's why I am also very much looking at how we can, like as mid-career art professionals can increase impact. I have always had this as two tracks. The one track was within the establishment and the other was all the way outside of it. Outside of it was what I organized myself, and which I had funding for, so that you can call the establishment as well of course. But sometimes it was a lot about loose assignments, sometimes commercial, but well, so that were those two worlds. And those worlds I want to bring together. So, I did not want to deny that I have a lot of background, or a base in the art world, but that is also why this organization wants to make the connection"

As this comment exemplifies, he does not want to get away from the 'autonomous artist' completely, as he feels that it is necessary for him to work in that 'system' too. There are several reasons for this: he has a 'base' in the art world, he likes training himself musically which is apparently only possible within the establishment for him, and lastly because 'the establishment' is where he earns money to be able to work on his projects outside of 'the establishment'.

Here we can also see, as we have already observed in Chapter 4, the two sides that need to be or become united in the contemporary social practice artist to be a changemaker: the artistic and entrepreneurial side of their selves. Only if both sides are present, in Tristan's and other members' belief, one could make an impact and create changes, which I will further discuss in Chapter 6. However, both parts of their selves, the entrepreneurial and artistic side, are traditionally perceived to work autonomously (Haiven, 2018; Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012), but this is not a characteristic conducive to social action, at least in their perception. Although, at first glance, the image I drew above seems a way for Tristan to reject the idea of the typical 'active subject', who is supposed to be a free, individual, and autonomous agent, there is a particular kind of tension between the 'two extremes' of his identity, which seems to occur for other members too. This tension reveals itself specifically when members try or say they want to work in a more connected way, thereby trying to distance themselves from their vision of the 'autonomous artist'. In practice, however, they do not always seem able (or want) to give away ownership and step away from their autonomy and freedom.

In this chapter, I will explore the tension between the ideal image of the 'active subject' and the autonomous artist, who is supposed to be a free and autonomous agent, and how members of this group would like to work in a more professionally embedded way. Could trying to work together, to create connectivity, be viewed as an attempt to renegotiate the condition of artists' autonomy? Even though members believe that they should work together to make a change, feelings of ownership and self-interest seem to be complicating the creation of shared processes. Interestingly, the wish for shared processes is not only present with members that perceive themselves or are perceived as artists, but also by members with other professional trajectories. This might signify that we need to think about members' wish to work together more broadly: then it would not just be about trying to distance themselves from 'the autonomous artist', but from the notion of self-reliance, ownership, and individualization in a wider context altogether.

5.1 Identity Construction and Creation of Boundaries

One of the first things I noticed when getting to know the members of the core-team, was something I jotted down at a first observation: "*Tristan = [name organization]*?". Not knowing yet how noteworthy this observation would be, in the next months I would come to understand the complexities inherent to Tristan's role within the organization and what his role can tell us about the intricacies of being a socially engaged artist in a contemporary Western society. His role mainly displays that it would be too simple to argue that because there are artistic and entrepreneurial sides to his and other members' identities, they would identify one-dimensionally as 'lonely inventors', 'outsiders', 'hermits' or 'individual

geniuses', which is an image that often arises in relation to the free and autonomous artist (Haiven, 2018) and the neoliberal subject (Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012). However, it also shows that it would be too simple to argue that they do not have to deal with these characteristics that they, and others (Kester, 2011), perceive to be central to the 'autonomous artist' at all, as being artistically inclined is a part of their identities too. In this respect, I follow an idea put forward by Banks (2010) in that I challenge *"both one-sided upbeat notions of cultural or creative industry employment as always liberating and abject notions of creative work as comprised only of alienation, compulsory individualism and/or camouflaged self-interest"* (p.263). Even though autonomy and freedom are considered important entrepreneurial characteristics within the literature (Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012; Read, 2009), members mainly try to distance themselves from these characteristics by relating them to 'traditional' or 'autonomous' artists rather than the entrepreneurial sides. Could this mean that they mainly perceive these characteristics as artistic rather than entrepreneurial? Thereby, they try to distance themselves mainly from the traditional view of the autonomous artist as a "*special, self-regulating being and 'free spirit' possessed of rare and precious gifts"* (Banks, 2010, p.253).

The wish to share processes seems to be a way for Tristan and other members to distance themselves from typical aspects of their perception of the autonomous artist. Many times, members make it clear to me that what they do 'is not for all artists', thereby trying to establish themselves as a separate group within the art world. They do not feel connected to the idea of the artist as an 'individual genius': they want to create and work in connection to and with others. This is also what the concept of collaborative, socially engaged art suggests: that it is possible to produce new insights via shared processes, rather than singularized expression (Kester, 2011). Working collaboratively would be one of the things that separates members of this organization from the 'traditional' artist. Or as Jasper, a long-term member and social designer, tells me: *"In comparison to the classic autonomous educated artist, you have to be able to allow others into your work"*. This means that, as is perceived by other members in the group as well, if one wants to create changes in society, one should let others (among whom are non-artists) into the process too, which is something the autonomous artist is not perceived to do.

Members' understanding of the artist mindset can be related to how they want to make art less 'elitist' and more 'for everyone', thereby trying to recreate the understanding of art as something that is shared, rather than individual as it would be within autonomous art. Because, as Tristan argues, the artist mindset is opposed to 'sheer art', thereby referring to autonomous art, and *"is very tangible. That is something you can do yourself, it is in everyone"*. When I asked one of the core team members, Iris, why she had the feeling that the artist mindset was not only for artists, she told me that they, as an organization, "*want to get art out of the box of art is for artists*". She goes on to explain how the artist at one point in time moved into the museum, becoming part of the elite. The idea of the artist mindset being 'for everyone' makes one wonder how the artist mindset can be a boundary marker between members and the autonomous artist but be 'for everyone' at the same time. Confusingly, the artist

mindset is something 'the autonomous artist' also has, according to members. Clearly, the concept of the 'artist mindset' is understood by members as a deliberate step away from the ideal of 'the autonomous artist', although those artists would have the artist mindset too. What distinguishes members from autonomous artists who also have the artist mindset, is that they want to create shared processes with people outside of the art world. As one member, Diane, explains: *"[the artist mindset] isn't too 'thrilling' art, that's something I don't like, it has to be manageable for people. It shouldn't be too abstract or complicated".* Hence, the artist mindset would help them to be more approachable for people outside of the art world (and maybe, in their view, it provides possibilities to increase impact?). Moreover, it tends to provide members with a concept they can use to say: we can share processes, and everyone can be part of it. Or in Tristan's memorable words:

> *"My mission is completed if people appropriate typical artist ideas, without giving it the label art. As an artist you succeed if the whole concept of art isn't needed anymore. Then it is something people carry with them".*

Thus, in his perception, one can be successful as an artist, as a changemaker, if one can share the concept of art, without having to say that something is art. Hence, one should be able to make artistic processes, shared processes. Tristan's discomfort with the word art could also be interpreted as not feeling comfortable with the concept art, which is often linked by members to art schools, art education and therefore autonomous art.

There are two other interpretations possible when thinking about why members want to connect with others and distance themselves from the autonomous artist. This means that even though they might not want to be associated with certain characteristics of the autonomous artist, there are also other reasons for following a more socially engaged work trajectory. Firstly, some members argue that they do not enjoy or were not able to work as an autonomous artist. As already noted by Tristan above: why was it so hard for him to be able to stand on that stage? Even though some members simply are not interested in standing on that stage, or getting into that museum, others noted that they felt they were not good enough to be able to get up that level in which they could actually make a living with their art. Moreover, working in the 'autonomous art world', also means a lot of stress and pressure to do well and have successes, which some members do not aspire to do.

Secondly, some members indicate that they cannot go on working as they have: they have to do too much and are too busy. They are not always able to handle this well: many members mention that they have been struggling with stress, depression, and burn-outs. They feel like they need others to *"be able to go on"*. This is also what Samantha, a former core-team member notices: *"Artists often work by themselves or very small in groups and also people have more artists, we also have more creative entrepreneurs, people who believe in a creative way of working, but also those people often work alone or they don't have the reinforcement or the support behind them and people directly from that world"*.

This highlights the darker side of being a flexible subject: the precarious work conditions contain no social support, and everything is the workers' responsibility (Pratt, 2011). Trying to find support from people working in the same way within this organization, should therefore also be perceived in this context, in which members might be *"surviving rather than prospering"* (Beirne, Jennings & Knight, 2017, p.217) in their field. This means that we could perceive the organization in two ways: a compensatory mechanism of sorts that helps artists to cope with the precarity of their work, or that they truly strive for an alternative way of organizing their creative work.

5.2 Boundary Markers in Practice

Although there is a wish to share processes, and to thereby step away from ideas of ownership and autonomy that are central to members' conception of 'the autonomous artist', *in practice* this is an ongoing investigation and it does not always run smoothly. For some members, it means questioning if they are sharing processes with others sufficiently, oftentimes observing that they become the leader of processes even though they do not want to be, for others it means that they want to learn more about sharing their work with others. The most prominent example of someone struggling with this issue, is Tristan. There is no other way to put it than that Tristan *is* the key figure of this organization, and it is not hard to see why or how. Members describe him as convincing, they admire him, and he inspires them. Note that there is also a relationship here with entrepreneurial characteristics, among which are being convincing and being able to persuade others of your vision (Klamer, 2011), as Tristan apparently does. He is the reason why many members became members of the organization and they are often interested in hearing what Tristan thinks about their plans and ideas (see for example William in Chapter 4). Some even call the organization *his* organization.

His centrality to and ownership of this organization can be stressed by his responsibilities within the organization: he writes the organizations' newsletters, has paid for the organization's expenses when they were looking for funding, he is the brain behind 'the artist mindset', he develops the methodologies for many workshops, he is always present at events and (re)presents the organization at other events and conferences. Even though there are of course other aspects of and tasks within the organization that are the responsibilities of other core-team members, and co-creation by other members seems to happen to some extent as I will show below, he seems to be self-reliant to a large extent (Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012; Marttila, 2013). Furthermore, during events organized by the core-team, his presence cannot be denied. When he talks, which is often, he takes up some time and when workshops are organized by other members during the 'changemakers weekend', he jumps in to provide his own ideas. For example, when Tristan asks if a large canvas has to be removed from the room we are in for a workshop, someone in the room replies: *"I don't know it's Richards' session"*. To which another member next to me silently replies, laughingly: *"Richards' session?"*, thereby implying that it was not Richard who was owning the session anymore, but that Tristan had taken over.

Nevertheless, Tristan seems to be aware of and frustrated by his role within the organization. When I talk with him in the bus on the way to the conference I described introducing this chapter, he emotionally shares with me how he dislikes his position within the organization which he feels "*is really shitty*", as he does not want the organization to be his own thing. When I ask him how he thinks he got there, he does not seem to know. There are several ways in which he tries to distance himself from his dominant role too. For example, during the 'changemakers weekend', he decided to not be present on Saturday afternoon, and he explicitly told me that this was because he did not want to be the owner of the processes anymore. Does this mean that when he *is* present, he does not feel able not to take ownership and share the process instead? Has he internalized this aspect of his identity so much that he cannot distance himself from it, even if he wants to? Or does it mean that participants perceive him as a leader so much, that he would disturb a possible process of co-creation just by being present? Moreover, he has asked several people to organize their own workshops, which means that he would not be the leader of the day anymore. However, as mentioned above, this does not always seem to work out in practice. Tristan's centrality to this organization should also make us think about the idea that the artist mindset can be 'for everyone': maybe anyone can have the artist mindset, but can anyone be what Tristan is for this organization? It appears that in practice, it is difficult to share processes when conceptions of autonomy, ownership, and perhaps leadership are traditionally central to members' identities. Moreover, the boundary they are trying to create between them and the autonomous artist does not seem to be solid, as members still exhibit and struggle with some of the characteristics that they deem undesirable in the autonomous artist.

5.3 Achieving Internal Coherence

"How do you unite incompatible people?", Tristan wonders. This is the question he started with when founding the organization and which seems to be at the core of many workshops and methodologies: find your own dream, idea or passion, get feedback and help from others to then go out in the world to do something with it. It also contains a considerable assumption: members would be incompatible because they all have their own dreams, passions or projects, and Tristan wanted to find a way for members to work together without doing projects together. It shows one of the conditions that is part of their artistic work, which we would associate with competitiveness and individualism. The way in which this group tries to produce groupness shows how there is no organic way for these members to become a group: they all want to be 'individuals' with their own dreams and passions at the end of the day too. Groupness is therefore not 'default' for these members: it needs to be created. Before starting the discussion of how they work with this idea more concretely, one should note that finding dreams or passions, is not something all members want to do. There are more experienced members within the organization, such as William, who I described in Chapter 4, who feel like they have already found their dream and passion. For some of these more experienced members, this is a reason to not join many of the organizations' activities anymore. Other experienced members, however, still join these workshops

for other reasons, for example because they want to support the organizations' efforts or want to get feedback or help from others.

Groupness is produced with specific techniques, in which individual passions, dreams and values are maintained and used to create some sense of togetherness. This was, for instance, reflected in one of the workshops, led by Richard, one of the members, on the second day of the 'changemakers weekend'. Richard is a program manager and has known Tristan for several years. While standing at a corner of the canvas that lies prominently in the middle of the attic in the old school building where the 'changemakers weekend' takes place, he tells us that he wants to build on a workshop that took place yesterday. During that workshop, which I will describe more thoroughly in Chapter 6, participants had to choose pictures from a newspaper that were scattered around the room, and by investigating the emotions that came up when looking at the pictures they had to find their personal values. In the end, every participant's most important value was written down on a sign and placed on the large canvas in the middle of the room, which shows the floor plan of a house with different rooms (see figure 1 below). What Richard wants to do with the participants today, and what he usually does when developing trainings, is to connect each other and to make workshop participants realize that you do not have to do it on your own. He organizes activities, which he calls 'valuable cooperation', in which he wants to *"embrace uniqueness and work together"*. He then introduces the assignment: "*Can we see if that uniqueness, that we have now translated into a value, if we can pick that up and get it out of the house, to then, in peace, walk through the room and see if you can connect this to a value someone else is carrying. In that way, pairs can develop and then you can research your values together*".

Once people have done this and formed groups of two or three, they spread around the attic or other parts of the old school building. They seem to be engaged with the conversations they have with each other: they nod, smile, make gestures with their hands, touch each other, and one pair even hugs each other. After engaging in these conversations, Richard and Tristan get all the groups back together in the attic around the canvas. Here Richard introduces the next assignment to the group: to place their signs with their personal values in the house, in silence, but this time together in the groups that they have just formed. Slowly the group starts moving while whispering to each other where they want to go: one pair jumps from room to room together, others stand on the side looking at the canvas, and one group stands still in the middle of the house looking at the rooms around them. Gradually, people start to lay down their values in the rooms, until everyone is done and Richard says *"the house is now populated"*. Each group now gets the chance to share with all other participants why they are standing in a particular room, which results in every group having a place in the house. This, according to Richard, creates some kind of connectedness: *"this is our house"*. Richard now wants to apply this idea to see how we can come to more concrete connections. This is where Tristan steps in with several other assignments and methods for the remainder of the afternoon: for example, when giving pitches about their plans and ideas to the group, all participants get feedback notes in which they can write down if

Figure 1: 'changemakers weekend'' – floor plan of house with individual values

and how they can help the 'pitcher'. Even though there is no certainty about if people met up as a result of these assignments at the 'changemakers weekend', many members have told me before how they met up with people through other of the organizations' events. Even though some connections are thus created through the events and some meetings are set up between members, we should wonder about the type and strength of the network that ensues, especially in relation to the like-mindedness and strong feelings of connectedness I have described in the previous chapter. To what extent can meeting up and creating connections be perceived as creating shared processes, rather than finding professional embeddedness?

Moreover, the biggest impact the organization focuses on is personal development. Many members argue that the organization provides a space for them where they can focus on individual development: to be challenged, inspired and find a space for personal reflection and meaning-making. For example Tim, one of the long-term members and a philosopher, discusses what he got out of some

events: *"just that question what do I want to do, how do I want to go further with what I have now and how can I personally develop myself in that in a positive way, and what do I need?"* This means that the organization uses methodologies to help members work on the 'reinvention' of their selves. Lingo and Tepper (2013) also argue that it is currently a necessity for artists in their careers *"to have a strong personal compass – a sense of what makes them tick, what they are good at and what network of enterprises or projects will best sustain their career"* (p. 350). Two members even indicated to me that this is why they came to the organization: they wanted to learn new things and improve themselves in some aspects of their work, for example how to network. This is of significance in relation to what Read (2009) has argued, that there has become a more explicit focus on the human capital that working obtains. Coming to this organization to learn something, and to develop personally, can be observed as being part of this active subjectivity.

Both working on personal change and focusing on their own dreams and passions shows how there mainly is a focus on the individual, to then get to their connectedness as a group. It is the shared belief of the core team of the organization that they need each other to create changes but work from their own ideals and passions too: *"Don't do it alone but stay faithful to your passion"*. By doing that, they believe they could increase impact. Thus, even though they try to distance themselves from the ideas of ownership and autonomy to some extent, by wanting to share processes, there seems to be no radical rejection of 'doing your own thing'. Thereby, they only seem to depart from the idea of the free and autonomous artist or entrepreneur, who works from self-interest and an individual perspective (Harvie, 2011), to some extent. Why do they, on the one hand try to distance themselves from these characteristics, while on the other hand they keep working from self-interest and personal experiences and development within their methodologies? Does this serve as an indication for *"their own normative commitments to autonomy"* (p.261), as Banks (2010) has observed before? Or can it be perceived as a way to create groupness while holding onto their individual dreams and passions at the same time?

Outside of the connections they are trying to create within their membership group, occasionally there are tensions in creating connections with partners and clients, resulting from members often working as self-employed professionals. For example, even though the first client of the organization really liked working with members of the organization, she also saw some downsides to their cooperation: *"most parties I work with, or most people I work with, are working full-time or at least four days so they are very easy to reach. Always fast replies. […] with this organization this is more difficult because not everyone has as many days, or different hours than I am working. So I think that that's why they are sometimes a difficult partner to work with, because they're not as easy to reach"*. This means that there is also a more practical downside to working with a group of self-employed professionals: they all have other obligations, and their membership is one of the many things they are working on. This is also something that Anne, a former member of the core team and economist, indicated: *"you know, it's [the organization] built on self-employed people. So, everyone has his own*

things […]. So, Tristan stays, and he has, it's his thing, but I also have other things. And others have that too, and then you can't commit to something in the long term. At least I'm connected to it." The fact that other members have other obligations, whereas for Tristan the organization is his main practice, might be a factor that influences his ownership of the organization. Even though their methods to create groupness might work to create some sense of togetherness within the group, it seems that there is also a need for techniques that enable working with a group of free, independent workers outside of the membership base.

In this chapter, I have shown how members of the group produce and reproduce their identities as a group of changemakers by framing themselves as opposed to the 'autonomous' artist. By wanting and trying to share processes, they want to distance themselves from their conception of the traditional artist as a free and autonomous subject. In doing so, they distance themselves from conceptions of the active subject and entrepreneurial characteristics too, even though they do not seem to perceive this is the case themselves. Although they believe in connectedness as opposed to autonomy, feelings of ownership and self-interest, aspects related to the entrepreneurial and artistic sides of their identities, seem to be standing in the way of finding these connections and creating shared processes. This organization works from personal values and passions to find a sense of groupness, as there is no 'default' groupness for members of this organization. Thereby, they do not seem to want to depart from the idea of the individualized subject radically.

Chapter 6: Valuation and 'the Societal Other'

Whereas the previous chapter focused on how members frame themselves towards the art world, this chapter illustrates how members frame themselves towards the 'non-art world' and the tensions that arise while working with 'recipients'. 'The recipient' can be understood as the receiver of members' change-making efforts: they are the 'material' members engage with and whom they want to leave their imprint on. It is important to see how members relate to and differentiate themselves from recipients, as this tells us something about who members are and how they perceive themselves. Members frame themselves towards the recipient by focusing on their way of working instead of defining the recipient as distinct groups. The recipient can, therefore, mean many different organizations, corporations, institutions and sometimes people in different situations, such as the police, funding organizations, businesses, funeral branches, housing corporations, banks, citizens, passersby, resident associations, orchestras, sport schools, libraries, law firms, and universities. Every member has his or her own personal recipient, but the way in which members distance themselves from their recipients, is comparable. Especially them working in a process-oriented way is not perceived to abide well with their recipients, because they would be focused on results and products. Although members believe that their way of working makes their efforts worthwhile, they do not perceive that their work is taken seriously by the recipient.

One members' story is characteristic of the tensions I discuss throughout this chapter and can serve as an introduction to the themes. I first meet Kirsten, a member of the arts and culture organization and a visual artist, at an event that takes place at a large legal and tax advice firm located in Zuidas, the business district of Amsterdam. It was co-organized by four parties: the firm where the event is located, an organization focused on the development of young professionals, a young professional platform, and the arts and culture organization itself. The night was organized around the questions of six pitchers, which focused on the theme of the sustainable city with subjects such as healthy food, loneliness and cars in the city. After hearing the pitches, all participants had to choose one pitcher and work together on the pitcher's question in a workshop. The role of the organization under study was to recruit three pitchers and other participants for this event.

I meet Kirsten at the beginning of the evening, in a spacious room where a dinner buffet organized for tonight's' participants has been set up. Kirsten has short, dark wavy hair, big brown eyes, and a pale countenance. Her soft and steady voice serves as a demonstration of her quiet, thoughtful personality. I meet her while she is talking to another member of the arts and culture organization, Natasha. Natasha has been an involved member of the organization for a while, and as she and Kirsten want to work together on a project, Natasha has introduced her to the organization. We have dinner with other members of the arts and culture organization, who have found each other quickly among 50 other participants without knowing each other beforehand. The contrast between this small group of members and other participants, who were recruited by the other organizations co-organizing the night, is striking:

they constitute one colorful female dot among many, mainly male, suit-wearing individuals. Over dinner, Kirsten shares with us that she has gotten more involved with politics and activism in her art lately and that she is very interested in the role of art in gentrification. In the remainder of the evening, I do not get a chance to speak with her again, but I do ask her if I can contact her to talk about her work and experience of the night.

We meet up two weeks later in Kirsten's art studio in the north of Amsterdam. Located in an old industrial area, her studio is based in a building with many art and creative businesses. She shares her large studio with another artist, she tells me. As I sit down on her couch, she makes me some tea in the kitchenette and tells me about the artwork that she has scattered around her part of the studio, in which she seems to currently work mainly with brightly colored fabrics. When she sits down she tells me that she became a member because she was interested in working with businesses and corporations, and wanted to learn more about possibilities and network with others interested in doing the same: *"what interests me very much, is to get into a conversation in that way with like almost a kind of enemy or something. When I think about business, I am at first instance sceptic, because it is part of an abstract capitalist, neoliberal, malicious, something. And sometimes it is nice to see that from a distance, but actually, it is also a bit, it is not entirely fair. You have to get into a conversation with exactly those people"*. Thereby she is casting businesses as her recipients, or 'others' that she needs to get into contact with straightaway. As the participants of the last event mainly were individuals working at corporations and businesses, I tell her that I wonder how she experienced the event. This is where she gives me a first indication of how the recipient is, in her and other members' perception, mainly different because of the way in which the recipient works and how this differs from how members work. Usually, according to her, the recipient uses the creative process in a very superficial way:

"There was this five D's she mentioned, this method that was used and that feels a lot like that with that method you squeeze out creativity in an hour. And for me, in my opinion it can't work in that way or for creativity you need more, you need more this kind of rest or doing nothing where something happens. And you can give that some direction I think, but it is also something you have to get some experience with or you have to know yourself where you get the most, or when you get ideas or. So, I feel like it comes of a bit forced. Some kind of brainstorm session and I don't really believe in that."

So even though creativity is used in nights like these, it is only used in a superficial, fast, cognitive way. It is used more like a 'brainstorm session', which to her does not come off as a right or respectful way to go about creative processes. That is why I ask her how she feels about the organization putting in action artists on such a night. She replies: *"I think artists would have to be taken way more seriously. Especially in that creative process that they have a lot more experience with that. But that it is of course also hard to measure, so then it is really hard to, like how do you know what kind of result will come out? How can you, you can't really structure it. It is very hard to explain that you give someone some*

kind of freedom in that and then you'll see what comes out of it. It is very, of course it is not very structured or a whole other way of thinking. So, I think that it is the art to convince people that it is important that that gets some space". Apparently, there is some difference with the recipients, in her case businesses, which creates tensions in working together. The differences seem to mainly refer to differing morals or values: it is not just that recipients would be different entities in members' perception. As Kirsten says, and what other members have also mentioned for their projects, this would be mainly due to recipients working in a product-oriented way and members working in a process-oriented way: after all, in her opinion, you do not know what comes out of a creative process. More importantly, she feels like she would have to be taken seriously as an artist, to not be swallowed by the recipients' way of working.

Despite these tensions, there appears to be an interest in working together from both sides. Kirsten wants to get into a conversation with businesses because they are milling around issues that she concerns herself with, such as consumerism and climate change. But what does the recipient want from the cooperation? And could the collaboration be perceived as a cooperative, manipulative, or another type of relationship? Summarizing her point of view on working together with business-like figures and corporations, she tells me: *"I think you're swallowed by it very fast, because it often of course are very sluggish systems already those companies. And then you have to fit your trick into that, in their processes. So, I think you have to make sure that that doesn't happen. That you are taken seriously in what you have to offer and that you get the space to do that even if you can't directly measure that or that it is clear for them within their structures or ways of thinking".*

6.1 Working Methods as Boundary Markers

Kirsten gave me several insights as to how she, and other members, relate themselves to recipients, who work differently from them. Interestingly, and as I argued in chapter 4, their group identification as changemakers is for a large part about *how* they work, appropriate to the conception of the changemaker as a 'specter'. Therefore, it is not surprising that creating boundaries between them and recipients is concerned with how they work too. Following their line of thinking, the recipient works from rationality and objectivity instead of subjectivity and emotions, and the recipient works in a product-oriented way instead of process-oriented as they would do.

Their belief in working from subjectivity and emotions was, for example, reflected in one of the workshops at the 'changemakers weekend'. Around 20 participants are sitting on chairs in a circle in the bright, white, attic. The old beams that hold the peaked roof in position characterize the room as part of an old school building. It is the first day of the 'changemakers weekend', and the room is filled with an air of excitement to start the second workshop of the day. I am part of the circle, sitting on a chair close to the row of windows, that display the grey weather of this Saturday's afternoon. We have just started a game, in which we are going to find out, together, the values we hold individually, working from our emotions. On a big canvas in the middle of the room, with all of us in a circle around it, more than 100

large pictures from the Dutch newspaper NRC lie in systematic rows and patterns. The workshop leader Diane, who is a visual artist and a long-term, active member, first asks everyone to walk around the room, and choose two pictures: one that invokes a positive emotion and one that invokes a negative one. Scurrying around the room everyone takes two and writes down what they feel when looking at their pictures. Then, Diane asks everyone to gather in groups of three so that they can find out together which values underlie these emotions. To this end, everyone gets a page with possible values, although this should not limit what they could think of, as Diane tells us. I end up in a group with Dean (a musician), Netty (a primary school teacher) and Daniel (a coach/societal artist). One by one, they explain what they felt when seeing the picture they chose. When Dean started talking about the first picture he picked, he gave me an indication as to how he perceived the outside world to work from rationality and cognition, whereas he would work from emotions and humanity. His picture displays a couple of people, standing side-ways, holding open binders in front of their faces. He heatedly starts discussing what he sees: *"These men are in denial. I got a bit mad because they hide behind laws and numbers. They are so involved with the numbers that they can't see true life anymore, causing them to deny true existence. They are afraid to lose their material safety and they are selfish".*

Netty starts to laugh: "*You do have an opinion about this, don't you?*"

Daniel starts to laugh too, while Dean continues to tell his story: *"They're standing in a row, that shows loneliness. Denial is connecting them. It is a warfare against bureaucracy, with the binders as helmets signaling a new era*".

Netty asks him: "*You mean of rationalism, the new way of thinking?*"

Dean nods and says: "*The picture made me feel rebellious, angry and sad. The men are detached from the soul, from the source*".

Visibly impressed, Daniel replies: "*Phew*". We all laugh together.

This example shows how members criticize the attitudes and values that would be present in the outside world, the world of their recipients, as too rational and cognitive. As artistically minded individuals, in their beliefs, they could provide a counterbalance because of the way in which they work. The artist mindset, according to them, provides a space for the senses, emotions, expressions, and goes beyond linguistics, objectivity, and cognition. It is about things that cannot be described in words: it is non-verbal, for example an expression. As Tim, a philosopher and a long-term, actively involved member describes it: *"it [the artist mindset] is this kind, this kind of other logic. Or daring to let go of logic approach almost, well not necessarily irrational, but it is one in which you work from your intuition".* Artistically minded individuals would be *"informed by their heart, their belly and their hands"*. Working from emotions and their senses is one of the aspects that is part of their working methodologies and what would make them different from recipients.

Although they perceive themselves to work in this way, one could doubt the extent to which this happens in practice. The opposition to rationality and cognition is reflected in the organizations' methodology, but only to some extent. Within the artist mindset, it is important that there are other ways to express yourself than verbally. Their way of working supposedly is about doing, experiencing, feeling and discovering, rather than working from cognition and on products: "*it is about the aesthetic world of let's discover together what it is*". That is why the organization always directs some part of their events at 'doing'. During the 'changemakers weekend', for example, members get the opportunity to express their visions in cartoons, they take walks, they dance, they sing, and they meditate. However, another important part of the methodology during this weekend consists of storytelling, which is mainly about expressing your vision verbally. Moreover, as I will argue later in this chapter, there are aspects of their identities as changemakers that focus mainly on being able to formulate your value to recipients, which could be argued to be opposed to working from emotions and senses too. It seems that although working from emotions and senses is part of their working methodologies, formulating their value and expressing things verbally, is part of it too.

Secondly, members' working processes would differ from the recipients' way of working in another way: according to members they would work in a process-oriented rather than product-oriented way. This fits a broader trend within participatory art: there is a movement towards *"process-based experience and away from a "textual" mode of production in which the artist fashions an objects or event that is subsequently presented to the viewer"* (Kester, 2011, p. 7-8; also see Bishop, 2012). In the section about valuation below, I will place this idea of working in processes rather than products in the larger debate within the social sciences that is concerned with the instrumental and artistic goals of socially engaged art practices.

For now, I will show that members of this organization are convinced that their art does not work in a fast and efficient way: no results would be assumed beforehand. As Tim, one of the long-term and active members, argues: *"And I think that maybe this is also part of the artist mindset, that you don't, it's no linear thinking. In the sense of you have to get somewhere and at some point that's done. The artist mindset knows better than that. That's, that's the idea, creating the new all the time and keep transforming yourself. And yeah it is not this kind of, it doesn't have to do with this idea of well we have to get to this world and if we have reached that then the picture is complete. Then the work is done. That would be very naïve."* This is also what many other members argue for: there is no 'getting somewhere', at least you do not know where that somewhere is when starting the process. Interestingly, there also seems to be a relation here with innovative and creative thinking, as they would argue to create new things continuously (Klamer, 2011; Marttila, 2013). In their way of working it would not be about accomplishing something *"because that makes it too resolute"*. This is what Bishop (2012) has also noted in her work: "*the work as a finite, portable, commodifiable product is reconceived as an ongoing or long-term project with an unclear beginning and end" (p.2).* Bishop views these shifts as more

powerful as ideals than as actualized realities, however, *"but they all aim to place pressure on conventional modes of artistic production and consumption under capitalism" (p.2)*. This should, therefore, make us think about whether working in a process-oriented way is something that happens in practice, or that it is 'merely' used as a boundary marker from the recipient in their minds.

Working in different ways than their recipients creates some tensions with the recipient in practice. Recipients, according to members, would want standard procedures and a certainty of results. As Diane, for example, tells me: "*They want to know what they are getting. And I can never give 100% clarity, [but] I can always guarantee them that if they hire me that almost every time it becomes a successful celebration*". Even though they feel like this might create problems in working with recipients, we could doubt the extent to which they actually work in these ways in practice: besides emotions and senses, spoken words play an important role in the organizations' practices too. Moreover, it is not clear whether members truly work in a process-oriented way or if this way of working just serves as a boundary marker in their minds.

6.2 On Valuation

"Do you want a Trojan horse or a court jester?", Natasha wonders when discussing what organizations can expect when hiring her as an artist. Although she does not want to give herself too much credit, she feels like a socially engaged artist should be perceived as a Trojan horse: an organization does not know what they would get out of it if an artist comes in, as they work with processes instead of products. However, it seems that members are often perceived as court jesters: they are not taken seriously, or they are asked to work with or for an organization to make something 'more fun' or 'more beautiful'. This causes many frustrations with members: why are they not on the payroll, and why do recipients not value their work properly? Moreover, it results in a constant fear or struggle to not be valued and the feeling that they need to protect themselves and their way of working. Although members mainly feel the lack of recognition with recipients, members mention friends or organizations within the art-world expecting them to do 'things for fun' and 'things for free' as well. This is surprising because recipients are generally cast as non-artists, but artists and other people in the art world apparently can act as recipients when they do things that recipients would do: undervalue their socially engaged artistic processes. Understanding – or not understanding – of the working method and the value of the process stands in as a boundary-maker between the changemaker and the other, the recipient. Thereby 'understanding' serves as a sociological mechanism to determine which recipients need to be convinced and which recipients members can already work with.

I have distinguished two ways in which members try to argue why their work should be perceived as valuable and how it should be valued properly in their opinion. Hence, this part of the chapter is about how valuation is organized by members. The first one should be related to a larger debate within the social sciences about socially engaged art practices, which focuses on the instrumental and artistic goals of social practice art. These practices suggest that *"we should expand our conception*

of what artistic value can be" and that *"unlike ready-mades, these works worryingly disregard the confines of the artworld and aim to be judged for their social usefulness" (*Simoniti, 2018, p.72*)*. This is what members would argue for too: they believe that they do make a societal impact and create changes by working with artistic processes and that they should also be valued for that aspect of their work. Making an impact is inherent to their identity as self-proclaimed changemakers, after all.

Even though they perceive their work to be productive, they do not feel like this part of their work is respected nor recognized by recipients. This is also why there is a repeatedly expressed wish among members to prove the impact of art, and also the reason that the organization wants to prove and show 'what art can do'. By clustering the projects of all members together within one organization, they hope to provide a bigger gesture towards the 'outside world'. Core-team members are not necessarily interested in recognition of the organization, but of recognition of the impact of art. An interesting rationale lies behind their wish to make the role of art in societal issues more visible: if you are visible, people will see that what you do works, which apparently to them also means that 'the outside' will start to value their work properly. Or as William, one of the long-term members, told me: *"If you are not visible, nothing happens. So, it is of course very nice and on a variety of levels, that you can get your recognition, whatever that may be, somewhere as an artist"*. Does this mean that they have found a way to adapt their way of working into the market system so that they feel comfortable with it? It appears that, at least for some members, there is a wish to be validated by the market, by making their work visible there.

Although most members seem convinced of the impact of their work, there is one member in particular who has her doubts about this: Samantha. She is a former core team member and social designer and argues: *"If artists, I think some people have to feel that impact is yeah maybe just not that important. Maybe your work isn't that important? Maybe you have to accept that you're doing it to make yourself happy and maybe that's enough. Maybe it's enough to just simply accept that you're doing it for yourself. That we work as some form of entertainment, so this kind of self-important entertainment"*. Even though she is the only one who directly expresses her doubts about the impact artists can make, there is a lot of discussion within the membership group as to how one increases impact and how and if one can prove that the impact that was made was due to art. Are they thereby trying to convince themselves or others of their worth? Although most of them seem to be unequivocally convinced of the social impact their work can have, the way in which they try to increase and prove their impact might point to them either not being convinced totally or them trying to convince others. 'Understanding' the value apparently is not a rigid boundary marker after all, if there are members who doubt the societal value their work has.

Furthermore, an interesting relationship between getting paid for their work and making a societal impact became visible. Most members feel like they should get paid as if they are professionals,

who make an impact, not as 'successful hobbyists'. As mentioned before, they want to be judged by recipients for the social impact that they make, as socially engaged artists. As Emily, one of the short-term members, argues: "*I can think that you want or need something, but if someone else cannot do anything with that I call it a hobby. Because only if you give it social relevance, so someone can do something with it in the sense that you can do something with it to share that, and someone values that in the sense that you pay for it, then you are working as a professional. Until that time you are a hobbyist.*" This means that she would argue that if you are being productive, and give your work societal value, you should also get paid for it. Without making social impact, without making a change, your work would then be without financial value. Hence, to them, the social impact they make should be financialized. One of the former core team members, Samantha, has a strong opinion on the relationship between societal impact and money. She believes that it should not be about money at all, when saying that: "*when are we going to live in a world where being a billionaire isn't about having a billion, it's about helping a billion? And why do you need to have a billion before you can help a billion?*" Following her rationale, members as changemakers would be the 'rich' people because they try to make an impact. Although this is not mentioned as much by other members, it can serve as a step towards more research in which we can think more about if social and financial value can and should be separated from each other within socially engaged art practices.

There is a second way in which members are trying to argue for the value of their working methodologies. They dispute that they can work on wicked problems. These are problems, according to members and others (see for example Webber & Rittel, 1973) that are not solved easily, they are complex issues that work their way through in different areas of society. Because of their artist mindsets members believe they would be able to see things that others are not able to see, or that people just do not pay attention to. Thereby they would be able to work on these wicked problems. Interestingly, the term 'wicked problems' originates from the social policy domain (Webber & Rittel, 1973). This might indicate that some members try to use the recipients' language, to convince them of the value of their work, as I will also show in the last part of this chapter. For example, when Jasper, a long-term member of the organization, discusses the societal issue of loneliness, which is a wicked problem according to him, when he argues that: "*A lot of people are working on that, there are a lot of intelligent people doing their best to do something about it, and still it doesn't work. So, I think, a lot of people I work with, talk about wicked problems. So, problems that, even though a lot of smart people have been working on it for a long time, they can't seem to solve it. And exactly with these kinds of questions I think that the artistic repertoire, or the social design repertoire, or the artist mindset, can be a valuable addition*". This is not only the contention of members of the organization, the first client of the organization also discusses how she thinks the artist mindset is especially, or only, useful in complex issues: "*I think that you would be dealing with more complex issues. […] I wouldn't initially involve artists in something if I could solve that myself or with my colleagues*". She argues for this because she was dealing with an

issue that she considered to be complex: healthy behavior for youngsters in an Amsterdam borough. Especially with the artists' ability to think less in boundaries, she was interested in seeing if they came up with different solutions than they already had come up with. In the end, she perceived that the solutions they came up with were not that different from what they found earlier in the project, but that members of the organization knew how to make the ideas more tangible quickly. This might serve as an indication that members' argument that they come up with new or different things might be more powerful as an idea than as a practice.

6.3 The Necessity of Entrepreneurial Characteristics

Members do have ideas as to how they can ensure a more successful cooperation with recipients and make them believe in the value of their work. For many of them, this means residing to the more entrepreneurial sides of their selves. A striking example in this case is Jasper. He is an experienced, and considerably successful, social designer and has been a member of the organization for a longer time. When talking about one of the projects he worked on right after finishing his education as a social designer, in which he worked with housing corporations, the municipality and citizens on media and city branding, he tells me how he observed a skill that was necessary for him to be able to work with his recipients and hold onto his working methodologies at the same time:

"To win over people you have to get what is important for them, and also be able to explain to them and engage them with what you are doing. So, you have to understand the interests of involved parties and be able to translate that on a mechanism level. So, to start with the example of this project. I didn't know what it was going to be. As an artist you never know what it is going to be. You only know that you are curious about something. So, I was curious about how that powerful media could play a role in this kind of bottom-up city branding? And for residents to tag along, I explained them that it was fun to be on television. Well a couple of them liked being on tv. Said quickly. For the housing corporation or for the municipality it was of importance that they got in touch with the residents and that they heard what they found important, you know. So, the mechanisms in my proposal, I had to explain them very well what the value of that was for the involved parties, without knowing what it was going to be. But also with a traditional client saying that you don't know what it's going to be, but that you do want money. Well then it's convenient if you have the right language to explain what you're doing, that you can also show that you've already done things, but if you're not making agreements on results level, you can make agreements on process level. And you can't guarantee success, but you can guarantee that you will do your best, a promise for effort. And if you, if you just show the process that you want to have and that you can reassure a client that anyway, that there will be moments in which you coordinate and make decisions together. That builds trust."

From his story, we can deduce a couple of different entrepreneurial characteristics that are important for him to enable him to work with recipients. For example, being able to persuade and convince others (Klamer, 2011): by trying to understand all the different perspectives of involved parties, Jasper tries to

convince them of the value of his work. Hence, he tries to reformulate his way of working so that it fits into something his recipients can understand. Moreover, he feels like he has to be able to explain this in a coherent way to be convincing. Other members also believe that they have to be convincing and therefore have to be able to formulate their value. Some members also mention that it is important to have faith in yourself (Klamer, 2011), otherwise recipients will never be convinced of your value. This does not mean that this is something members easily do. As Iris, one of the core team members, tells me: *"you have to convince others of what you do, and some artists miss that a little bit. Yeah it is annoying that you apparently need that, but yeah if you can't tell what you want or what you can do then it becomes very difficult"*. This is also one of the reasons the organization focuses on pitching their projects and telling about their plans in their workshops and methods. Apparently, this part of the entrepreneurial sides of their selves does not come naturally, and therefore needs to be learned. It appears that members feel the need to learn skills that are central to the entrepreneur, to be able to keep standing and be valued within the market.

In this chapter, I have shown how members create a boundary between themselves and 'the recipient' by focusing on the way in which they work: whereas recipients would work from rationality, cognition and in a product-oriented way, members would work from emotions, the senses and in a process-oriented way. Thereby there is no clearly defined recipient: it can mean many different things in many different situations, projects and sometimes even people. A commonality between members is that it seems that their different way of working, at least in their perception, is not valued and recognized properly by many recipients. The main boundary, from their point of view, is therefore between those who do understand the value of their way of working and those who do not understand. In their perception, they should be valued regarding the social impact they would make through artistic processes, especially with regard to complex issues, as has been perceived more broadly within the literature about socially engaged art as well (Simoniti, 2018). It seems that they try to, almost desperately, convince others of the societal value that their working processes could generate. When trying to convince the recipient of the value of their working methodologies, they mainly work from entrepreneurial characteristics: namely the ability to formulate their value, make it understandable for recipients and thereby convince them.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

"Is there a relationship between neoliberal transformations and social practice art and how do social practice artists interpret structural transformations on the ground?", is the question that began this research. The Amsterdam-based arts and culture organization, which has been explored in this research, has proved to be illuminating to study this relationship. As an organization focused on bringing together artistically-inclined individuals as changemakers, it has shown many different ways in which neoliberalization could possibly be related to something that is perceived as socially progressive as social practice art (Harvie, 2011), but also the tensions between structural transformations and social practice artists' agency. The conclusion is that there is a tensed relationship between neoliberal transformations and how social practice artists interpret these on the ground. How could there not be, if the principles of the market are so highly entrenched in every area of social life (Harvey, 2007; Marttila, 2013) but artists generally do not want to be associated with them (Dey & Steyeart, 2016; Haiven, 2018; Peck, 2012)?

Investigating how social practice artists interpret neoliberal transformation on the ground, has proved to be fruitful to study the intricacies of being a contemporary socially engaged artist in a Western urban area, as it has shown tensions and possible escapes from neoliberal subjectivities. Members of this organization display or idealize characteristics that have been related to the entrepreneurial neoliberal subject before, such as being a calculative, responsible subject, who continuously engages with society in an enthusiastic way and can be considered a creative subject and innovator. Moreover, as neoliberal subjects, they perceive it necessary to exhibit risk-taking behavior and be confident and convincing (Klamer, 2011; Marttila, 2013). However, while they consider both artistic and entrepreneurial sides as inherent to their identities, they seem to first and foremost identify with the artistically inclined sides of their selves, even though some are unwilling to categorize themselves as artists too. Namely, relating to the entrepreneurial side of their identities mainly occurs by perceiving it as aspects of their 'artist mindset', thereby avoiding having to call themselves entrepreneurs and openly relate to entrepreneurial characteristics. Even though they perceive entrepreneurial characteristics as necessary to be a changemaker, they try to internalize them in a way that makes them feel comfortable instead of relating entrepreneurial characteristics to the market directly. Thereby, members distance themselves from the notion that the activities they engage with could be interpreted as entrepreneurial mixed with an explicit rejection and in only a few cases acceptance of that label (partially following Haynes & Marshall, 2018).

Although many members frame themselves as an ideal active subject, and some exhibit characteristics related to that subject too, this side of their identity does not seem to come naturally. Rather, for many it needs to be learned. Within this organization, they follow workshops in which they learn how to deal with failure, pitch their stories and convince others of their projects, which are skills that are related to the entrepreneur (Klamer, 2011; Marttila, 2013). This means that even though they

perceive characteristics of the active, neoliberal subject necessary to be able to make their changes in their current working environments, they do not incorporate the characteristics instinctively, but they need to be learned. This makes it seem like they are entrepreneurial by necessity, rather than choice. Besides entrepreneurial and artistic characteristics being central to their individual identities, these characteristics also produce their identity as a group of changemakers. It appears that being a changemaker is largely concerned with how members work and what they work with: the artist mindset. This means that being a changemaker can include a variety of practices and activities, as the concept of entrepreneurship has shown to do too (Marttila, 2013). The artist mindset therefore not only signifies individual entrepreneurial characteristics of members, but it is also part of their collective identity as the artist mindset serves as the embodiment of how they create changes: artistically and entrepreneurial.

Internal tensions arise when members consider parts of their entrepreneurial and artistic identities to not be conducive to their changemaking efforts. Creating societal changes is central to who they are and want to be seen as, after all. Both the entrepreneurial and artistic sides of their selves are traditionally perceived to work autonomously, but this is not a characteristic conducive to social action, at least in their perception. That is why members try to distance themselves from their conception of the free, individual, and autonomous artist by working with shared processes and in connectivity. Note here that interestingly they do not seem to perceive these characteristics as entrepreneurial, even though they could argue to be. Wanting to share processes is related to neoliberalization in two ways: on the one hand, it could be interpreted as an alternative way of organizing their creative work as a socially engaged artist, thereby working in opposition to neoliberalization and their perception of the autonomous artist that would promote working autonomously. On the other hand, it could be interpreted as a compensatory mechanism of sorts that helps members to cope with the precarity of their work and insecure existences. They need others to *"be able to go on"*, and not fall back into stress and burnout that seems to be an inherent part of their work-life trajectories. The organization, then, provides members with a supportive, although maybe brief, period and space where collective ties function as the 'wind beneath members wings' and sometimes even the physical or practical means to carry on. In practice, however, sharing processes does not seem to be something that comes naturally. Often it seems that they cannot or do not want to step away from their ownership and autonomy. Trying to stay in line with the more individualized sides of their selves, they try to achieve internal coherence and 'togetherness' by working from their own passions and ideas, instead of disregarding their individuality straight away. Groupness is not default for these members, and if they want to step away from the individualization during neoliberalization by sharing processes, it needs to be created.

Another conception enacted or enhanced by members of this group opposes the instrumentalization of artistic processes in neoliberalization to some extent. Namely, members claim they would work in a process-oriented instead of product-oriented way, and from emotions and the senses instead of rationality and cognition, thereby opposing some ideas central to neoliberalization such

as working for products and profits. Even though at first glance, this is fitting to the idea that artists would oppose to instrumentalization during neoliberalization (Peck, 2012), a particular tension between neoliberalization and social practice art becomes visible here. While members want to be valued for the process-oriented way in which they supposedly work, they also want to be valued and recognized for their social usefulness, as befits contemporary socially engaged art practices (Simoniti, 2018) and changemaking practices. Following Bishop (2012), working in a process-oriented way might, therefore, for now, be more powerful as an ideal than as an actualized practice opposing neoliberalization. Moreover, it seems that for many members recognition of the value of their work needs to come from their recipients who are part of the market, where they want to become visible and where many of them want their social impact to be financialized. Not finding recognition in that market yet might also be why there is some vagueness around what 'change' and 'impact' means to them: they sometimes seem to be shouting desperately that they *do* make an impact and *are* productive, but the market does not seem to hear them yet. To convince their recipients of their value, they use the language and workings of the market, focusing on their entrepreneurial characteristics that they consider helpful in convincing and persuading others. Thereby they would become embedded in the market and increase their impact. Therefore, they do not radically reject neoliberalization, but try to work with it, to be able to work against its consequences. This is also what Haiven (2018) would argue, in that participatory artists are currently more subtle, patient and self-reflexive than in the past, which made him wonder how effective they can and should be as activists against neoliberalization.

The essence is that, in trying to navigate the spaces that are so obviously entrenched in the market, members rely on the entrepreneurial side of their selves to be able to move forward and oppose to neoliberalization as a process. With resilience and faith, they try to actively persuade the recipients of their work of the value of their artistic processes, resigned to find opportunities to draw up ideals rather than practice actualized realities. Almost desperately, they try to move through society and purposefully change it, while also continuously being discouraged and frustrated by a market that does not yet seem to value what they supposedly do. Sharing these processes with others working in the same field gives them a brief space of enlightenment and a breath of fresh air to be able to continue. Using the language of the market and entrepreneurial characteristics, they try to convince and persuade others the value of their way of working, which would be opposed to neoliberalization. Even though this might not work out as yet in practice, it helps members to feel comfortable working in a system that they are so obviously trying to oppose.

7.1 Limitations and recommendations for future research

This research has been enlightening as to exploring the tensions in the relationship between social practice art and neoliberalization. It has shown where and to what extent changemakers follow neoliberal subjectivities in their work, as well as where they try to oppose them. It would be valuable to expand on this research in three ways. Firstly, even though there has been a thorough investigation of the social

practice artist as a neoliberal subject from the changemakers' perspective, there was much less opportunity to explore how these subjects are perceived by others outside of the membership group. For example, what is the perspective of other recipients than the one client I interviewed, as considered in chapter 6, on the value of members' changemaking efforts and how they try to achieve this change? Secondly, as has also been discussed above, it seems that a considerable part of the opposition to neoliberalization these changemakers try to establish happens on the level of ideals rather than practice. Even though this might be due to this actually happening as other researchers have argued for (see for example Bishop, 2012), it might have also resulted from the fact that the actual practices of members were not thoroughly investigated. This research was mainly concerned with the practices of an organization that tries to empower its members to (continue to) be changemakers, rather than the practices of members themselves and thus their changemaking efforts. Could we perceive them to actually work in a process-oriented way and from emotions and senses instead of rationality and cognition, or is this more of an ideology than an actual practice? Notwithstanding that discourses can be very powerful too, it would be valuable to explore how their ideals work out in practice. Lastly, and as has been mentioned in chapter 6, an interesting relationship between financialization and social impact has become visible. Many members feel like they should be recognized and valued for their social value and should be paid accordingly, whereas a few perceive that social impact should not be financialized at all. Especially considering the relationship between neoliberalization and social practice art, it would be interesting to investigate further if and how socially engaged artistic practices are and should be financialized. A side-note I want to make is that in this research, there has been a focus on the entrepreneurial side of changemakers' selves and how this interrelates or cooperates with the artistic side of their identities. Hopefully, this research has not obliterated these artistic characteristics as insignificant because of its theoretical-led focus on characteristics of neoliberal subjects. Let us remind ourselves that even though there might be neoliberal sides to changemaker identities, in this research I have also observed many instances of beauty, creativity, imagination, and astonishment that should not be forgotten as an inherent part of socially engaged artists' work and identities too.

What could be drawn from this research is that entrepreneurial, as well as artistic sides of changemakers' identities are a necessity for social practice artists to be or become changemakers in a contemporary Western city. Without entrepreneurial characteristics, which do not seem to come naturally, they perceive it to be impossible to navigate through a society that is so obviously entrenched in the market. By trying to incorporate neoliberal language and entrepreneurial characteristics, they attempt to oppose to the consequences of neoliberalization. Even though this opposition, for now, seems to be largely in ideology, these ideas provide members with hope for something that could be an actualized practice in the future.

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Appendix A

Overview Interview Participants

Table 1: Overview research participants audio-recorded interviews

Pseudonym	Role Organization	Duration Membership
Tim	Design Weekends	Long-term
Emily	Member	Short-term
Kirsten	Member	Short-term
Iris	Core Team	Long-term
Diane	Design weekend	Long-term
Sandra	Core Team	Long-term
Anne	Former member core team/ Facilitator	Long-term
William	Member	Long-term
Susan	Member	Short-term
Sarah	Partner	/
Natasha	Workshop leader	Long-term
Lisa	Member	Short-term
Tristan	Core Team and Founder	Long-term
Lara	Member	Short-term
Samantha	Former member core team/ facilitator	Long-term
Naomi	Member	Short-term
Jasper	Member and Funder	Long-term

Interview Guide Core

Interview 1
Introduction

- Introducing the research shortly
- Answers will be treated as confidential information
- Ask if it is okay if I record the interview
- Ask if there are any questions

Can you tell me something about yourself?

- Background (study, jobs, anything else that comes up)
- What are other activities/jobs you engage in outside of [name organization]?
- Role within the project

Can you tell me something about [name organization]?

- What is the purpose of [name organization]? → What do you think is the importance of [name organization]?
- What does [name organization] do? (for example activities, events)

- What is the philosophy behind [name organization]?
- How and why did you get involved with [name organization]?
- Who is the ideal [name organization] member? Is there an ideal member?
- What does a member of [name organization] do?
- What do you think it means to be a member of [name organization]?
- How do the members engage with [name organization]? → Which channels for feedback does [name organization] have?
- What does being part of [name organization] provide for you/mean to you?
- What are the accomplishments of [name organization] so far, in your opinion?
- Are there things that you think [name organization should pursue, but is not pursuing now?

The notion of change is central to [name organization]. Can you tell me more about this? For example:

- What kind of change does [name organization] pursue? Do you personally agree with this?
- What does making change mean to you, in your own life?
- What, in your opinion, should be the eventual goal of changemaking?
- If you consider your own life, where and when have you made change or are you making a positive change right now?
- If so, how did you do this? And why do you consider this a positive change?
- Can you give me examples of where positive change occurred in your opinion? (This question should be asked throughout the interview)
- Can you describe to me your vision of a better world?

What do you do as [name organization] to help people make change?

- Can you give me specific examples of methods or tools you use to empower or help members?
- Have you seen ways in which the members have already made their change, if so how?
- Why do you think your practice will work or is already working?
- Are there ways in which the process of making change through art could work better?

How do you see the relationship between [name organization] and partners?

- Who are funding or have funded [name organization]?
- Who are working together with [name organization] in other ways?
- What do you consider when you are looking for organizations to work with? (if applicable for the role of the team member)
- How does or did the collaboration with the organization play out?
- How did you experience working together with the organization?

Interview 2
The artist mindset is a central notion of [name organization]. Can you give me some ideas of what you think about when you think of the artist mindset?

- If you think about the artist mindset, what do you mean by it?
- Can you describe the artist mindset to me?
- What does the artist mindset do for you?
- What do you think the artist mindset could do for others?
- How do you see the artist mindset working in practice? Can you give me examples?
- Why do you think the artist mindset is of importance?
- Who do you think already has the artist mindset, and who needs to learn it?
- Why would it be valuable for people outside of the arts to learn the artist mindset?

- What is the value of the artist mindset to you?

Interview Guide Members

Introduction

- Introducing myself (short)
- Introducing the research
- Answers will be treated anonymously and confidential
- Ask if it is okay if I record the interview
- Ask if there are any further questions

Can you tell me something about yourself?

- Background (who are you, what do you do)
- Daily activities
- Anything else that comes up

Making change is one of the central notions of [name organization]. What do you think about when you think about the change that you want to make?

- What are changes that you would like to make?
- How would you like to make them?
- Why do you want to make these changes? → Why do you think change is important?
- What, in your opinion, would be positive change? Can you give me examples?
- If you consider your own life and experiences, where and when have you made change or are you making a positive change? → why do you consider this a positive change?
- Which societal issues are in most need of change, in your opinion? (depending on interviewee)
- Regarding this societal issue, what would be your vision for the future?

I would now like to ask you some questions about [name organization].

- Why did you join [name organization]? What attracted you to it?
- How long have you been part of [name organization]?
- To what [name organization] events have you been?
- What do you get out of the [name organization] events?
- How does being a member of [name organization] help you?
- Can you give me examples of how being a member of [name organization] helped you?
- What have you learned during the events? Can you give me examples of how you used what you learned in your own practices?
- How did you experience the events you have been to?
- Does being a member of [name organization] make you see certain issues in a new light? For example, has it changed your perception on issues you perceive in the world, in your surroundings or for yourself?

[Name organization] advertises about the artist mindset. What does the artist mindset mean to you?

- What does the artist mindset mean to you?
- Do you feel you have the artist mindset?
- If so, how do you use it?
- Can you give me examples of how having this mindset helped you to solve issues?
- How do you think, generally speaking, the artist mindset can be helpful? Can you give me examples?

- Who do you think could use the artist mindset?
- Why do you think people outside of the arts would want to learn to use the artist mindset?
- Why do you think the artist mindset could be of importance for others to learn?
- Or phrased differently: why art and not something else? Do you think something else could have a similar impact? If so, what?

Interview Guide Partners
Introduction

- Introduce myself and the research
- Say that all the answers will be treated confidentially and anonymously
- Ask if I can record the interview
- Ask if they have any further questions

Can you tell me a little bit more about your organization?

- Find out before what the organization does, explain what you think they do. Ask if I missed something?
- How often do they work together with other cultural organizations? Which organizations?
- What is the purpose of the organization?

Can you tell me a little bit more about your organizations' relationship to [name organization]?

- How and why did you get involved with [name organization]?
- How and why was the decision made to start working together with/funding [name organization]?
- What was is that attracted you to [name organization]?
- How did/does the collaboration with [name organization] go?
- How did/do you experience working with [name organization]?
- If not working with [name organization] anymore: Would you consider working with [name organization] again? Why/why not?
- What is the value of what [name organization] does to you?

Artist Mindset

- What does the artist mindset mean to you?
- Can you describe the artist mindset?
- How do you feel about using the artist mindset to engage with societal issues?
- Do you think working with the artist mindset has an impact?
- Who do you think the artist mindset could be useful to?
- Would you consider the artist mindset an important asset? If so, why?
- Why the artist mindset and not something else?
- Do you have examples of situations in which the arts, or the artist mindset, was successfully used to engage with a societal issue?