

# How identity is created in a Minikroniek

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2016

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## **Abstract**

*Background:* By reconstructing the past, evaluating the present and integrating the expected future people are able to form a more coherent life-story. The narrative about the self provides people with unity, purpose and meaning in life. Therefore people make sense of the self and a coherent life-story is created. Central topics in these self-defining stories are the personal constructs agency and communion. The unique application of visual narratives let people engage in contextualized communication and can hence be seen as a meaning making occasions. Life-review is a form of memory recollection and re-evaluation, which aims to connect episodic memories into a more connected whole. This study contributes to the evaluation of the course Minikroniek as a form of life-review.

*Objective:* This study is designed to explore: How is identity created in a Minikroniek?

*Methods & Results:* The study analyses three specific video portraits, which were created by course participants. Thereby grounded theory is used. It is focussed on indicators for narrative identity and the personal constructs agency and communion. Moreover, the application of visual narratives in the presentation of the self is investigated. The results are immensely rich in information due to the visual component.

*Conclusion:* People engage in identity construction by creating a coherent narrative of the self. Agency and communion serve as powerful conceptual categories by supporting the retrieval process and organizing motivational content behind memories. Video as a method for data collection and production is empowering. People engage in meaning making through facilitated contextualized communication. These features serve as means for identity construction in a Minikroniek.

## **Samenvatting**

*Achtergrond:* Door de reconstructie van het verleden, evalueren van het heden en de integratie van verwachte toekomst zijn mensen in staat om een meer coherent levensverhaal te vormen. Het verhaal over het zelf biedt mensen eenheid, doelgerichtheid, en betekenis in het leven. Door deze methode gaven mensen een betekenis aan het zelf en kan er een narratieve identiteit worden gecreëerd. Centrale thema's in deze self-defining stories zijn de persoonlijkheidsdimensies agency en communion. De unieke toepassing van visuele verhalen laat mensen in het zinsverband communiceren en zo is er gelegenheid om betekenis aan het leven te geven. Life-review is een vorm van herinneren en re-evalueren. Het doel is om episodische herinneringen te verbinden en een samenhangend geheel te vormen. Dit onderzoek draagt bij aan de evaluatie van de cursus Minikroniek als een vorm van life-review.

*Doel:* Deze studie is bedoeld om het volgende te onderzoeken: Hoe wordt identiteit gecreëerd in een Minikroniek?

*Methode & Resultaten:* Deze studie analyseert drie videoportretten die cursisten hebben gemaakt. Er wordt gebruik gemaakt van de grounded theory. Er wordt binnen deze theorie gezocht naar indicatoren voor narratieve identiteit. Daarnaast werd er gekeken naar de persoonlijkheidsdimensies agency en communion. Bovendien wordt de toepassing van visuele verhalen in de presentatie van het zelf onderzocht. De resultaten zijn bijzonder, deze zijn namelijk doormiddel van het visuele component rijk aan informatie.

*Conclusie:* Mensen vormen hun identiteit door het creëren van een coherent verhaal over het zelf. Agency en communion dienen als krachtige conceptuele categorieën. Deze ondersteunen bij het ophalen en het organiseren van motiverende inhoud in herinneringen. Video als een methode voor het verzamelen en de productie van resultaten werkt bekrachtigend. Mensen nemen deel aan zingeving door middel van gefaciliteerde contextualiseren van communicatie. Deze functies dienen als middel voor het creëren van een identiteit in een Minikroniek.

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## **Introduction**

Although it is hard to imagine a world without videos anymore, their use in visualizing the own life-story has been underrepresented in psychological research. In times of frequent use of new media and changing application of technologies in everyday life, videos could provide new possibilities of self-expression. In comparison with other media, as for example written text or pictures, videos are multimedia. They can involve moving images, sounds, texts and pictures. In contrast to conventional media, these video recordings could have a major impact on the way individuals present themselves.

The following article will deal with a "cultural, educational, self-development project" called *Minikroniek*. During the project participants generated videos about their life. The multifarious and innovative character of this project demands a more detailed look. An investigation will be done on the basis of narrative psychology and reminiscence. This paper aims to get an insight in how identity is created in a *Minikroniek*.

## **Narrative Psychology**

### **Background**

In the beginning of the 80's some psychologists were unsatisfied with the outcomes of traditional psychological approaches. Among them was Theodore R. Sarbin, who became known as a pioneer in narrative psychology. According to Sarbin, psychology using "mechanical, spatial and energy metaphors" [...] was "worn out, no longer capable of generating interesting concepts" (1986, p. xi). One major point of critics was the reproach, that classical psychology, applying mostly the methods of natural sciences, was too much focussed on cognitive performance. The missing point in psychology, according to Sarbin (1986), was the process of helping individuals making sense out of their lives.

An influential book was Bruner's (1990) *Acts of meaning*. According to Bruner we could differentiate two forms of thinking. First paradigmatic thinking, which could be seen as scientific view of the world, working with classifications and categorisations (Smith, 2007). Moreover, Bruner suggested a narrative form, as the process of making sense of everyday life. This, according to Bruner (1990) is the challenge of contemporary psychology.

## **Narrative Identity**

Furthermore, the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur was influential in his view on human meaning making. He postulates that not only we are making sense of the world by applying stories, but also we make sense of our self (Ricoeur, 1984). In doing so, we have the possibility to create an own identity, connecting our separated actions to one story and define us from others; an idea that is referred to as narrative identity.

According to Singer (2004) the life story is what psychologists today call "narrative identity." A broader explanation gives McAdams (1985, p.10), by describing the life story as "an internalized and evolving narrative of the self that incorporates the reconstructed past, perceived present, and anticipated future."

By reconstructing the past, connecting episodic memories in an integrative way, individuals are able to reach "some degree of unity, purpose and meaning" in their life (McAdams & McLean, 2013, p.1). In doing so, the questions dealt with are: who we are, how we got there, thus who we were and who we are going to be. Hence, the own identity plays the central role. In the next section the personal constructs agency and communion will be discussed.

## **Agency and Communion in the Presentation of the Self**

The idea of the personal concepts agency and communion is nowadays popular in personality psychology. Agency puts an emphasis on the existence as an individual, aiming for control and influence. By contrast, the personal construct communion manifests itself through bindings with others as well as through cooperation with one another. Several different theories coincide in their accounts of the concepts, which could be attributed to agency and communion (Yzerbyt, Kervyn, & Judd, 2008). It could be expected that they provide useful building blocks to organize and explain the motivations behind decision processes in episodic autobiographical memories. According to Bakan a simple explanation of agency is "existence of the organism as an individual" (1966, p.15) emerging through self-expression and mastering the environment. Communion could be seen as the opposite, referring to the individual as participating in "some larger organism of which the individual is a part" (1966, p.15). Indicators for communion are love, union and intimacy.

During the last decades autobiographical memories raised the interest of researchers. McAdams, Hoffman, Day and Mansfield state that adults provide their life with "meaning and

purpose" by applying agency and communion as "the central thematic lines in [...] self-defining stories" (1996, p.341). According to research women's interpersonal memories are more detailed and vivid than they are in men (Ross & Holmberg, 1990). McAdams et al. (1996) suggest that there are eight central themes in autobiographical memories, which can be assigned to either agency or communion. The first agency theme is *self-mastery*, which appears when the protagonist masters, controls or perfects the self. The second agency theme is *status*, which can be achieved through attaining a high position or prestige. Moreover, there is *empowerment*, which can be assigned to a narrative if a protagonist associates with "someone or something larger and more powerful than the self" (McAdams, Kaplan, Machado & Huang, 2002, p.7). Finally, describing the self in terms of productivity, efficacy and persistence can be assigned to the agency theme *achievement*.

The first basic concept in communion is *love/friendship*. According to McAdams, Kaplan, Machado and Huang it can be categorized as intensive love and friendship among individuals of the same age "as in heterosexual or homosexual relationships and same-sex as well as opposite-sex platonic friendships" (2002, p.8). The second central theme in communion is *dialogue*, a "reciprocal and non-instrumental form of communication" (2002, p.9). Another important concept is *care/help*, which implies supporting others in need. Finally, the last theme assigned to communion is *community*, being part in a relationship with a few or one other person.

The next section will deal with the application of videos in the presentation of personal memories.

## **Visual Narratives**

Video research is increasingly applied in qualitative research. This method gets more affordable, is relatively user-friendly and "manipulated with a minimum of training" (Gibson, 2005, p.2). This is especially the case in young individuals who have been grown up in an environment where smartphones belong to everyday life and who are familiar with the handling of video devices. In a recent study on "the integrated use of audio diaries, photography, and interviews in research with disabled young men" participants, even uninstructed, made use of videos, this way providing the researchers with additional data (Gibson, Mistry, Smith, Yoshida, Abbott, Lindsay & Hamdani, 2013). Using videos can be

assumed to be successful because they enable participants to "communicate and express themselves in meaningful and contextualised ways" (Azzarito & Sterling, 2010, p.213).

Video as a source for data collection has the advantage that it combines verbal and nonverbal information. According to Heath and Hindermarsh (2002) it includes talk, interaction and comportment. Additionally, features of place and material objects are captured with video methods (Hodder, 2003). Hence problems created through "rationalistic or logocentric tendencies of verbal approaches" (Buckingham, 2009, p.227) could be overcome. Consequently, the possibilities of videos are described as democratising and empowering (Jones, Fonseca, De Martin Silva, Davies, Morgan & Mesquita, 2015) since they are not limited to written words anymore. Videos can be disorganised by allowing to draw conclusions to an extent where participants "engage with shifting, sometimes contradictory, insights and emotions throughout a given time span" (Cashmore et al. 2010, p. 108). Others suggest that videos are "routes to (intercultural) understanding and ways of knowing not available when represented through written words" (Pink, 2013, p. 141).

Furthermore, Janvinen (2000) describes videos as reality constructing and meaning-making occasions. Having enough creative freedom when speaking in their videos, participants behave as speaking for a perceived audience, thereby adopting certain subject's positions and "doing identity work" (Gibson, 2005, p.3). Due to these circumstances it could be said that videos should rather be seen as a way to understand participant's perspectives and not as a mere collection of facts. Evidence originating from a recent study applies video diaries. In this study it was shown that even children use such devices as a possibility to reflect on culture, institutions, social groups as well as on themselves and are hence shifting their own positions (Iivari, Kinnula, Kuure & Molin-Juustila, 2014). On top of that it was shown that cultural conventions have an influence on children as young as four and a half to five. They were already discriminating among different forms of genres and using varying forms of intonation (Wade & Moore, 1986). This could be seen as an indicator of children applying and working within narrative frameworks.

Keeping in mind these features it could be said that videos could have beneficial effect on the presentation and creation of the own identity. However, videos as a medium might not be the ideal solution for everybody since they could lead to increased public self-awareness and consequentially to the fear of being judged (Lindon-Morris & Laidlaw, 2014).



## **Intervention - Basis of Minikroniek**

### **Episodic Autobiographical Memories**

The basis for the Minikroniek are episodic autobiographical memories which are the building blocks of a life story. According to Brewer (1996) these episodic autobiographical memories have several core characteristics: they do not only concern unique, personal events situated in time and space, but also presuppose phenomenological details (i.e. perceptual, cognitive and affective internal contextual details), self-relevance, the conscious recollection of these events and the rememberer's personal perspective. To give an example, Schacter, Gilbert and Wegner (2011) state that episodic autobiographical memories are the basis to metaphorically travel back in time, to remember an event arranged in time and space.

The functions of memory recollection will be discussed in the next section.

### **Functions of Memory Recollection**

In society, the main opinion that reminiscence and recapping life are activities which primarily older persons engage in (Erikson, 1959). This could be described as the *death preparation*. Nowadays reminiscence is seen as an activity, continuously applied during adult life, especially in stages with life crises and transitions (Westerhof & Bohlmeijer, 2010). Reminiscence has the function to discover and clarify who individuals truly are. Westerhof and Bohlmeijer (2012) described this phenomenon as *identity function*. Furthermore, a *problem solving* function can be assumed. In this case reminiscence is used to apply former problem coping strategies on present problems (Westerhof & Bohlmeijer, 2010).

Moreover, memory recollection is used to overcome tediousness (*boredom reduction*), to keep memories about dead people alive (*intimacy maintenance*) or to consciously recall negative experience (*bitterness revival*). An additional function of reminiscence is *conversation*, which implies the connection with others in an informal way. Last but not least memory recollection can function to *teach/inform* which is used to relay to others important information about life (Webster, 2003).

The next section will take a closer look on how memory recollection is applied in interventions.

## **Life Review and Reminiscence Interventions**

In this section two different forms of memory recollection interventions shall be discussed. Over the last decades the personal narrative had broad influence across the fields of psychology. As diverse are the target groups, as diverse are the methods. According to Petraglia the goal of narrative interventions is "to induce a significant shift in one's worldview and the way the person understands a range of significant relationships and reemplots past experience and future expectations" (2007, p.500). Nevertheless, it is hard to understand the total picture behind reminiscence. Interventions are due to different names difficult to compare. Furthermore, there are huge differences in the adaption of reminiscence-based interventions. Characteristics of target group, skills of counsellors, goals of the intervention and theoretic background have to be taken into account (Lin, Dai & Hwang, 2003). What implications the interventions *life review* and *simple reminiscence* have will now be discussed in more detail.

*Life review* can be described as a structuralized and intensive way to evaluate the own life, thereby being supported by a caregiver. Individuals who struggle with finding meaning in their life, have problems dealing with transitions or adversities are most suitable (Westerhof, Bohlmeijer & Webster, 2010). During the process there should occur a re-evaluation of past experiences, whereby it is equally looked on positive as well as on negative life experiences. The goal is to integrate in both positive and negative experiences by connecting former separate experiences and forming a more connected whole. The aim of what Ganzevoort and Bouwer call "heavy intervention" is "to relabel and reevaluate earlier experiences in a more positive way" (2007, p.5).

*Simple reminiscence* is compared to the *life review* less structured and less intensive. It is practicable in healthy adults who enjoy the recollection of memories (Westerhof, Bohlmeijer & Webster, 2010). The positive experience of this intervention has a major importance (Ganzevoort & Bouwer, 2007). During the recollection process there is the possibility to enhance socialisation by sharing these memories. Central during the recollection is the identification with positive memories (Westerhof & Bohlmeijer, 2012). The caregiver asks the client to recall positive events from the own life story which shall lead to more favourable thoughts about the self and the future (Cappeliez & O'Rourke, 2002). This is a possibility against the tendency of some individuals painting a too negative image about themselves. It is for the client to choose to either talk about a specific episode of life or life as a whole. The Minikroniek as a form of life review will be discussed in the next sequence.

## **The Course Minikroniek as a Form of Life Review**

The course content could be separated in three different domains that aim to initiate life review. First, the course instructor is applying conversational skills, looking for central themes in the life of course participants. These conversational skills could be classified as originating from neuro-linguistic programming, especially within the framework of Robert Dilts logical levels. Therefore, the concept of a premise has importance. A *premise* includes a beginning situation, an end situation and a "motor" in between. All in all, a premise provides building blocks to generate a story. By using the conceptual building blocks one is able to enhance recollection and meaning making of memories, generating change in participant's life (Dilts & DeLozier, 2000). The model aims to locate problems, goals or resembling concepts in a client's life story and contributes to a solving process of today's discrepancies. The logical levels influence each other and could be classified in order of rising complexity. These are: Environment, Behaviour, Capability, Beliefs/Values and Identity (Dilts, 1996). Changes in higher levels include necessarily changes in lower levels. Changes in lower levels can, but not necessarily have to, lead to changes in higher levels. The rules leading to change differ per level.

In the second place memory recollection exercises are performed. Some originate from the course instructor and others are based on the book "Op verhaal komen" (Bohlmeijer & Westerhof, 2010). "Op verhaal komen" provides a framework to explore own memories and expectations about the future, to deal with different stages in life and to find a central theme in it.

Finally, the course aims to encourage every course participant to make a videoportrait of about ten minutes. To accomplish this, participants are introduced in different film techniques, from practical knowledge about camera handling and editing, to theory about storytelling. Within this video, memories and the self should be illustrated. Importance has the presentation of central themes in the life of the course participants. In this way the participants have the opportunity to retrieve, tell, form and visualize their life story.

## **Purpose of this Study and Research Question**

During the last decades it became apparent that personal narratives are inevitably created to fulfil the demands of social roles and making meaning of its own life (Singer, 2004). Furthermore, research made progress in examining the personal constructs agency and communion. According to McAdams, Hoffman, Day and Mansfield (1996) individuals

provide their life with meaning and purpose," by applying agency and communion as "the central thematic lines in [...] self-defining stories" (1996, p. 341). The use of video shows benefits in comparison with verbal approaches. Through the visualisation possibilities problems created through "rationalistic or logocentric tendencies of verbal approaches" could be overcome (Buckingham, 2009, p.227).

Previous studies on narrative identity and the personal constructs agency and communion did not made use of videos, whereas existing research applying videos didn't ask participants to create a more or less coherent life story. Through the spread of smartphones, video production gets easier and more affordable. Analysing how individuals use these frameworks presenting their life story is therefore necessary at this point. According to the preceding aspects, this study is designed to explore how participants construct the self during a Minikroniek. The research question can therefore be formulated as follows:

**How is identity created in a Minikroniek?**

## **Methods**

The course Minikroniek took place during six appointments. During the two and a half hours lasting appointment the participants were supported in their attempt to create a Minikroniek. The study is not aiming to gather "objective facts". It rather takes a closer look on the results of participants who successfully completed the course Minikroniek and created their own videoportrait in the end.

## **Participants**

The participants of the course Minikroniek are residents of eastern Netherlands in the province Overijssel and the neighbouring German border region. The videos analysed during this research are results of a course designed for seniors aged 65 and above. Nevertheless, one of the participants attended at the age of 60. A large part of the course participants did not create the final product. The little quota of final results in independent work with videos is described in existing research and explained due to insufficient control of researchers. Moreover, the resource demanding of video projects is reported (Palen & Salzman, 2002). Therefore, three completed Minikroniek were chosen. In order to provide a broad picture with variation between the participants it is decided to analyse the video portraits of two women and one man. Two of the participants are born in the Netherlands; a 60 years old woman 60 and a man aged 65. The other woman has Polish origin but lives since 33 years in the Netherlands and possesses Dutch citizenship. She is 66 years old. All identifying features are removed or obliterated.

## **Data analysis**

The data analysis consisted of nine steps which will be introduced during this section. At the beginning, the goal was to avoid to specific hypotheses, to develop a realistic theory. Using predefined coding schemes seemed therefore unsuitable, resulting in the decision to work within the framework of grounded theory. The first step during the analysis was an exploration of the data using bracketing to weaken possibly adverse effects that may have influenced the research process. During the second step a transcription of the data was conducted, paying attention to various forms of non-verbal information. This included beside speech, material objects that were used, the environment the video took place in, gestures, facial expressions and the use of music. During the third step summaries and sections with

general information about the participants work were created. Afterwards, during step four, the descriptions of the videos were divided in sequences. Furthermore, sequential interpretations were made for each participant. These interpretations were done by paying fully attention to the seen and heard material. Afterwards, during step five, different topics in the narration of the participants were distinguished. Then the narrative identity of the participants is examined in step six. During step seven, sections of the participant's narrations are assigned to the personal constructs. Moreover, in step eight, the use of video in the presentation of the self per participant is reviewed. Finally, during step nine, it was decided to further interpret the findings in the discussion by using the theoretical background given in the introduction.

### **Ethical Issues**

The consideration of ethical issues took place during all parts of the study. Individuals provided detailed and private data in the course Minikroniek. During the Minikroniek private life and intimate memories were shared. For these reasons, names of the participants during the analysis of the Minikronieks were modified. Nevertheless, the richness of the given data could provide the possibility to draw conclusions about the participant's identity. This is not conflicting with ethical standards because the videos are made available via Internet to public with the consent of the creators. Furthermore, an approval for the study by the ethic commission of the University Twente exists.

## **Results**

### **Participant 1**

#### **Summary and Topics**

At the beginning of the Minikroniek Irene is highlighting common features between her hometown Bielsko-Biala and her current place of residence Enschede. Afterwards she is reporting about her migration to Enschede, following her husband, while her mother stayed alone in Poland. During the next period, Irene is describing her residence in Poland to visit her mother who introduced her to the world of theatre and music. During the visit in Poland her stay extended involuntary to months. Afterwards the participant describes her discovery of photography in Enschede; from a photo workshop at the Biennale, to an art study at the local art university which she reports to finish with a degree in photography and graphic design. Furthermore, she tells about her involvement in an art gallery in Enschede. She later reports about becoming president in that gallery. Afterwards she is talking about the death of her mother during a time she experienced a professional break trough. In the end of her Minikroniek she is talking about her legacy and remembrance of her mother.

During her Minikroniek five central topics can be distinguished. First we have her hometown Bielsko-Biala that serves as the counterpart to the second topic, her new place of residence, Enschede. The presence in one city leads to conflict because it implies the absence at another place. The locations are interconnected with two other central topics. The first of these two topics is her husband, who works and lives in Enschede. Furthermore her mother is a central topic, she lives in Bielsko-Biala. The last central topic that influences a major part of her Minikroniek and intervenes with the other topics is photography.

#### **General Information**

The participant is 66 years old. For the Minikroniek the participant chose the title "Choices." Choices refer to the life decisions the participant is reporting about. During the narration she is talking in Polish with English subtitle shown, it seems as if she is reading off the text. On the one hand the participant is showing herself as the narrator during her Minikroniek, sitting inside. On the other hand, she illustrates her Minikroniek with pictures and films from past and present. Additionally, she is making use of classical music. During her Minikroniek she

plays Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's "Die Zauberflöte" as well as Zbigniew Preisner with "Requiem dla mojego przyjaciela" and "Kyrie Eleison." For the analysis it is decided to divide the Minikroniek in six sequences based on their thematic orientation.

## **Minikroniek - Description and Interpretation**

### **Sequence 1: Similarities between Enschede and Bielsko-Biala**

*In the beginning of her Minikroniek Irene talks about two cities, the town where she was born, Bielsko-Biala and the town where she spent her adult life and still lives, Enschede. She points out the similarities between the two, thereby answering her rhetorical question if these common features are "a destiny." During this sequence she shows videos and pictures about the resemblance of the two cities, as the collapsed textile industry depicted through old factory chimneys. In the course of this sequence she begins to play Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart "Die Zauberflöte."*

During this sequence the themes Enschede and Bielsko-Biala emerge. In the view of the fact that the participant had a life physically separated from either her husband in Enschede or her mother in Bielsko-Biala this could be interpreted as an attempt to connect the two cities by highlighting their common features. The choice of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's "Die Zauberflöte" as background music creates a fabulous impression. Nevertheless this sequence could be seen as the participants urge to be present by her husband as well as by her mother. The impossibility of being present for both of them seems to cause tension in the participant.

### **Sequence 2: Husband and Arrival in Enschede**

*In the second sequence Irene illustrates her situation when arriving in Enschede. In the Minikroniek old photos of her husband in front of a university building are paired with a current video of her husband as an older man at the university. She reports that her husband started to work at the University Twente and obtained a scholarship from the Dutch government. Furthermore, she tells that their plan was to stay only for one year.*

The themes during this sequence are Enschede and Irene's husband. It shows that the



reason for her to come to Enschede was that her husband had the possibility to work at the University. The situation includes the necessity to leave friends and her family back in Poland. Furthermore she is emphasising the temporary character of their residence. Their plan was to stay was initially for a limited period of one year. During this sequence her husband is the central topic. Furthermore the feeling appears that the two cities are not as similar as illustrated during the first sequence but rather different.

### **Sequence 3: Residence in Poland and Irene's Mother**

*In the next sequence Irene illustrates the situation in Poland. This begins with a short description of her family situation in Bielsko-Biala, mentioning the death of her father, being killed helping in a train accident. She uses a newspaper article over the train accident to illustrate this event. In more detail and depicted via a displayed photography, she is talking about her mother who has been her "whole world" after this accident. Her mother introduced her to the world of theatre and music. Irene wanted to visit her in Poland as a "need of my heart and in desire of duty."*

*Moreover, she tells that her husband couldn't accompany her to Poland, as he was a member of the "Solidarity" trade union, opposing the ruling communist party, displayed though a Solidarity sticker. Due to problems with her visa and closed borders caused by what she once calls "unexpected [...] events on the 9 December 1981," she explains that she was forced to stay for months in Poland. Irene tells that she still hears the words of a young clerk from the passport department telling her that she will not be allowed to leave, even if her husband dies in Holland and that she should return to her previous work in Poland. She additionally reports that telephone contact with her husband did not exist and letter correspondence was censored. During this part unclosed letters were shown and the "Requiem dla mojego przyjaciela" by Zbigniew Preisner begins to play.*

The topics in this sequence are Bielsko-Biala, her mother and her husband. In my opinion this sequence further illustrates her situation being literally trapped between Poland and the Netherlands. While in Enschede she was anchored through her working husband, in Poland this husband was not desired anymore as political opposing. It can be assumed that the "unexpected [...] events" refer to the martial law 1981-1983 when Polish politics took action against the strengthening Solidarity movement where her husband was an active member.

Furthermore this sequence emphasises that her mother was left alone without family members due to the death of the participant's father and her migration. Irene seems to have a feeling of guilt. The dramatic character of this sequence intensifies by her choice to use "Requiem dla mojego przyjaciela" by Zbigniew Preisner as background music. Of further interest is the sequence where she justifies the visit of her mother as a "need of my heart" and a "desire of duty." Here it seems as if Irene would rather be close to her mother in Bielsko-Biala instead of living in Enschede with her husband.

#### **Sequence 4: Back in Enschede and the Discovery of Photography**

*In the next sequence Irene is describing that through "great efforts of my mother and help of my husband's professor" it was possible for her to come back to Enschede. In Enschede she "wanted to get involved in something," describing waiting at home for her husband was not "my style." She explains that she wanted to study something "humanistic, however having been a realist." From doing some free-lance work at the University Twente, she tells about how she discovered the art college in Enschede, the AKI, wanting to do something "entirely different" than her husband. She describes that this entirely different entered her life in form of the Foto Biennale in Enschede 1984 in being "something new and interesting in a town where normally not too much was happening." The materials shown in the Minikroniek during this sequence are photos of the Biennale and the narrator herself at a workshop by the Dutch photographer Paul Huf. She describes this occasion as the starting point where her "adventure with photography begun." What follows is a numeration of her experience in the world of photography, manifested through a degree in photography and graphic design at Aki, more and more becoming a good linked person within this world, including the position of the president of the photography gallery "Objectief" in Enschede and being personally invited to participate in the Foto Bienale 1993. She describes this as a pleasant recognition. This sequence is illustrated through many videos of photo exhibitions and fade-in catalogues. In the end of this sequence Irene uses a part Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's "Die Zauberflöte."*

This sequence can be seen as a phase of self-discovery and be further interpreted as a turning point in the life of the participant. It becomes clear that Enschede is now her permanent place of residence. In her description how she decided to study, she makes clear that she was aware of the fact that choosing a humanistic orientation would make it harder to find a job. From my point of view this could be interpreted as assessing arguments of her

decision process. Back in Enschede she wanted to get involved, and found photography as the possibility to do something entirely else than her husband who was working at the university. She describes her professional development as quite successful since she was gathering degrees at the Aki and made exhibitions. Furthermore, she reports about collecting more and more competences in form of practical work as a photographer. Through this way she experienced "power" and "recognition." The use of a short part of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's "Die Zauberflöte" gives her narration about her artistic work and the presentations of her exhibitions a moving touch. During this sequence her reason to stay in Enschede changes. Before her residence was based on the employment of her husband. Now the participant herself and her passion for photography are anchors to stay in Enschede.

### **Sequence 5: Death of her Mother and professional Breakthrough**

*However, during this period of artistic activity her mother passed away. While the narrator tells about the death her face shows deep sadness and she crosses herself. Irene states that in her life "happiness often overlaps with deep sadness." Nevertheless, she directly continues to tell about her work which was "received with big attention" everywhere.*

The themes of photography and of Irene's mother shape this sequence. It can be seen as another turning point in her life. On one hand it involves the information that the narrator is to a less extent rooted in her place of origin, having lost her last family member there. It is obvious that she is even today deeply affected by her death. On the other hand this can be seen as the end of an intense period, splitting her life between Bielsko-Biala and Enschede. Rather than telling about her mother's death in more detail, she is directly switching to her work which attracted "big attention" on many other exhibitions. The participant depicts what she calls the overlapping of happiness and sadness by showing herself as the narrator visibly moved by the death of her mother and directly switching to a video of her in the enthusiastic atmosphere of an exhibition. The death of her mother seems to interrupt during a phase in Irene's life where Enschede and photography previously seem to be her central topics.

## **Sequence 6: Irene's Legacy and Remembrance of Mother**

*In the end sequence Irene is talking about the following course of her life. In Enschede the engagement of the photography scene was declining which she attributes to missing enthusiasm and the financial situation. Nevertheless the decline was accompanied by a jubilee catalogue and exhibition of Objectief. During this sequence Irene shows videos of the exhibitions and catalogues. Furthermore, she talks about the launch of a Photo Art Festival in her hometown Bielsko-Biala as a "combined factor" with Enschede, while she shows the catalogue of the festival. Then she reports about additional connections to other photography enthusiasts and photography events she participated and collaborated with all across Europe, while she shows shots of herself, exhibitions and catalogues.*

*This sequence comes to an end when Irene states "Maybe at the end of my life remain after me catalogues, photographs and negatives and nothing else, but these are in reality my children which I should always protect." Showing many catalogues and a bound book containing a collection of her works she closes with her hands. Afterwards Irene uses a picture of her mother again. Now the song "Kyrie Eleison" from Zbigniew Preisner is playing. She closes her story with the question "why can others decide about our destiny?" Irene's last sentence with a tear in her eye is "who can give me back these 10 years in which I could not be physically present for my mother?"*

The covered topics in the preceding sequence are photography, Enschede, Bielsko-Biala and her mother. This sequence can be seen as a brief summary about her further life progress in the world of photography. During this sequence one realizes the extent to which the participant is involved and connected within the European photography scene. The photography art festival in Bielsko-Biala seems to have a redemptive character for her, naming it a "combined factor" with Enschede, after she trapped there during visiting her mother. Moreover, one recognises her productivity, when being confronted with the collection of her catalogues and pictures. One understands how the participant sees her work, namely as her "children" whom she "should always protect." Her photos are her legacy. They should maintain in the future even after her absence.

Then follows another summary, examining a topic that seems to have been important for her, namely the situation to not be present for her mother. Moreover, she asks why others who imply the people responsible for her situation being trapped in Poland could decide about her destiny. Her face filled with emotion, the dramatically music and the emphasis of her last

sentences seems as if these life events aren't fully processed. She seems to be still very moved when talking about these experiences.

### **Narrative Identity**

Irene's Minikroniek is shaped by struggle. She characterises herself as being split up between Bielsko-Biala and Enschede. Thereby she is also divided between her mother and her husband. The fights between these themes run like a red line through her Minikroniek. In the process of her Minikroniek the personal theme photography becomes more and more apparent and her narration becomes thematically and causally coherent. As a consequence the conflict between other conflicting themes is pushed more and more in the background. Photography gives her meaning and purpose, resulting in her statement that her photographs are her "children" which remain after her. Nevertheless the struggle with her other themes beside photography seems to persist till today. In her last sequence she is referring to the death of her mother and accuses people responsible for her situation being spilt up between two countries.

### **Agency and Communion in the Presentation of the Self**

During the first sequence Irene tells about the similarities between Enschede and Bielsko-Biala. In the view of the fact that her mother is in Bielsko-Biala and her husband in Enschede, this could be seen as an attempt to connect both cities to be present for both of them, which could be attributed to *community*, a theme belonging to communion. Afterwards, in her second sequence, Irene talks about her arrival in Enschede accompanying her husband. Due to the fact that she seems to submit the own progress to the work and presence for her husband this could be attributed to *community* as well. Irene's third sequence deals with the visit of her mother as a need of her heart and desire for duty. The prevailing theme is *community*. In the next sequence Irene is back in Enschede and engages in self-discovery. This sequence in her Minikroniek can be seen as a turning point. She enumerates her experiences in the world of photography that corresponds with the theme *achievement*. Furthermore she reports over becoming president of a photo gallery which is consistent with the theme *status*. Both themes can be assigned to the personal concept agency. During her fifth sequence Irene is mentioning the death of her mother which could be attributed to the theme *community*. Moreover, she reports about her professional breakthrough, receiving everywhere "big attention." This can

be assigned to agency and the theme *achievement* in particular. Furthermore the notion of attention includes prestige which indicates the theme *status*.

Finally in Irene's last sequence, she is mainly reporting about her legacy. Confronted with the collection of works one recognizes the theme *achievement*. Furthermore the use of photos and videos of herself in a central role during exhibition openings corresponds with the theme *status*. The remembrance of her mother can be seen as a recurrence of the theme *community*. In conclusion, the beginning of her *Minikroniek* is shaped by themes corresponding with the personal concept communion. After reporting over her transition phase, which concerned self-understanding and self-mastery, Irene's *Minikroniek* emphasises agentic growth.

### **Film and Visual Narratives in the Presentation of the Self**

Irene uses the additional possibilities of expressions which videos provide to illustrate her conflict in being split up between Enschede and Bielsko-Biala as well as on her achievements in photography. The background music she is using originates for the most part from the works of the Polish composer Zbigniew Preisner. Furthermore one recognizes that she is talking Polish thereby providing English subtitles. Both provide evidence that her Polish origin still serves as a source for identity construction. This becomes more apparent during her openings sequence, in which she emphasises verbally and visually the similarities between Bielsko-Biala and Enschede in using photographs. Irene's use of photography is omnipresent in her *Minikroniek* and supports her narration. Furthermore the use of photography self is a form of identity construction and representation, as Irene is a professional photographer. Emphasising how important her photographs are for her she considers them as equal to absent kids. Besides photos, videos provide a possibility for Irene to present her personal achievements. She uses videos to demonstrate her role in the world of photography, as for example through showing herself opening a photo exhibition. During her *Minikroniek* she is frequently showing herself as well, thereby acquiring the position of forming narrator.

## **Participant 2**

### **Summary and Topics**

This participant was born as the third child in her family. Having twelve siblings she was early involved in a provider role for her family, recognizing the overload of her mother. A central theme in the Minikroniek is her education. At the age of twelve she went to a catholic household school for girls where she mentions having learned many practical things. Afterwards, at the age of sixteen, she decided to work. After a couple of years, she was faced with the birth of her son and emphasizes that she wanted to care well for him and herself. For that reason, she entered second-chance education. The participant continues enumerating important life events. She reports doing an internship in a nursery school. Later she found a permanent position there. She was steadily following different classes. A profession she learned as well was tailoring, but it wasn't possible to earn enough money with it. Another life event she mentions was the death of her father. Afterwards she was confronted her mother who asking for a lot of support and attention. In the end of her Minikroniek the participant reports that she immigrated to Germany. She tells about participating in her local community and becoming part of the neighbourhood. In the end the participant is examining her family situation. Finally, she takes a look at her further path of life.

There are three central themes that can be distinguished. First of all we have Marie's path of life. She is among others portrayed as the protagonist on a field road, narrating about her course of life using the field road as metaphor. This central topic runs through her Minikroniek and is highly related to her second topic family. All in all, family is a key feature of her Minikroniek and influences many of her decisions. Sometimes conflicting, sometimes supplementing is her third central topic, personal achievements.

### **General Information**

For the Minikroniek the 60 years old participant took the title "Kiezen en doen" what could be translated as "choose and do." The title refers to different life decisions which she is reporting about. During the narration she is talking in Dutch, mostly without notes. Nevertheless, she sometime looks up information which she seems to have written down beforehand. During the Minikroniek the participant makes use of photos and documents from

the past and the present. The photos and documents she uses were filmed lying either on a living-room table or a desktop. Moreover, she shows human plastic figures, which she uses to explain her family constellation. Most of the time the participant is speaking directly to the camera. During her Minikroniek two songs were used as background music. First the song "The Light Will Stay On" by the Walkabouts, which is used in the beginning as well as in the end of her Minikroniek. Furthermore she plays "Jetzt oder Nie," a song by Herbert Grönemeyer. For the analysis it is decided to divide the Minikroniek into five sequences and depend on the environment the participant stays in. In the first sequence she is shown on a field road, walking through the garden and sitting down in the living room. During the two next sequences she sits at a desktop. Afterwards she is in her backyard garden and during the last sequence she shows herself standing on a field road again.

## **Minikroniek - Description and Interpretation**

### **Sequence 1: Family Situation and Childhood**

*In the first sequence Marie introduces her life story. She describes who she is and where she comes from. During the introduction she stands on a field road and asks - addressing the public - if you now how she get there. She decided to use as background music the Walkabouts, an American rock band with the song "The Light Will Stay On." From the field road she walks through the garden into a house and sits down in an armchair in a living room. She introduces her family situation as a child and talks about herself using the third person singular. That begins with the notion that "the girl" was the third born in the family and after a period of ten years she had all in all 12 siblings. She portrays her family as a safe environment to grow up; while her father was calm she portrays her mother as anxious. She further describes that the girl went to a catholic girls' nursery school with her sisters and emphasized that the girl loved to learn. During this narration she shows old photographs of her family and class. Afterwards she holds a pencil with the left hand and tells that she was forced to write with the right hand in school because the "left hand was the devils hand." This had a lasting impression on her.*

*During this sequence she is making use of plastic human toy figures. She introduces the plastic figures, standing in a rough circle, with the words "this is my family." While she and her siblings stand in a half circle, her mother and father stand on the opposite side.*



*Pointing at a plastic figure, she explains, "that's me, the third in the row." Then Marie changes from "me" to "the girl" again, she explains how "the girl" experienced the unfounded fears of her mother. Afterwards she moves her plastic figure next to her mother and tells that "the girl" supported her mother with providing care for the family, even more than what was expected from her. With twelve Marie explains that she had to face an important decision. She had to choose between middle school and a homecraftschool. Afterwards she describes that it was decided for her to go to the Roman Catholic homecraftschool. At the same time she shows a class picture. On the class picture she highlights nuns. She tells about practical things she learned during her four year lasting time at the school. She states that cooking and sewing were her personal strengths.*

In the beginning Marie deals with the themes path of life, family and less detailed about personal achievements. During the first sequence the participant talks about her personal background and thereby the starting point of her personal path of life, effectively put in the limelight by using a field road as the venue. Her decision to use the Walkabouts with the song "The Light Will Stay On" creates a melancholic atmosphere. From my point of view she is portraying how important and influential the theme family was during her childhood years. She describes her family as a safe environment to grow up. Having 12 siblings the birth order seems to be important for her. During the first sequence she is two times mentioning being the third born in the family, depicted also in the positioning of her human plastic figures, representing her family. Moreover, I would like to highlight her use of the third person singular, applied during most of the time when describing her youth. The use of the third person singular gives me the impression of her taking distance to her former self. It appears to me as if the participant now sees herself as a different person.

From my point of view the fact that she is mentioning to take the "provider role" in her family is important as well. Describing that the girl supported her mother in the household "even more than expected" contradicts in my opinion her statement explaining that it was decided for her to go to a homecraftschool. In a homecraftschool one learns to do the household in a more efficient and extensive way. Nevertheless that could also be the consequence of her being twelve years old and don't exactly know where to go on her own. Furthermore her notion of being forced to write with the right hand seems important, she reports that this circumstance still has an impression on her, and puts her former self in a relative powerless position.

Moreover, I would like to highlight the theme personal achievements. In the beginning

Marie is already referring to her enthusiasm about learning. She reports that she was "willing to learn, loved to learn, and liked it to go to school." It seems as if she was able to take away something positive from her attendance in school, reporting that the acquired skills are her personal strengths. In combination with her reporting of how she supported her family more than expected, a picture about a hardworking and highly motivated child can be drawn.

### **Sequence 2: Birth of Marie's Son**

*Marie reports that at the age of sixteen she had to face the next important decision. While she is sitting down at a desktop she explains that she decided to start to work instead of continuing to go to school. She did so until an "important and intervening event" occurred, the birth of her son. While Marie talks about this important event she changes the background music, which turns out to be profound and blue. Now the song "Jetzt Oder Nie" by the German rock pop musician Herbert Grönemeyer is played. Marie explains that the birth and circumstance that she wanted to take good care let her reflect. "To have a basis" she starts following evening classes.*

From my point of view this sequence shows that the participant is distancing herself from her parental home. Worth mentioning is that from now on she steady talks in first person singular in a continuous matter. The protagonist seems to have reached a point that is overlapping with her present idea of herself. The theme family revives change through the birth of her son. Now she is suddenly in the position of being the head of a small family on her own. The work she did for some years after finishing the homecraftschool seemed not to be enough to have "a good basis" for them. From this point second-chance education seems to be important to create such an improved basis.

### **Sequence 3: Enumeration of Marie's Life Events**

*Afterwards pictures of her diplomas fade-in. Marie tells that after the birth of her son she started volunteering in a nursery school. Furthermore she reports that she was going to middle school and needed an internship. She did the internship at the nursery school and "years later," she got a permanent position there. Now Marie shows other diplomas and explains that learning was very important for her during her whole life. Then Marie describes*

*that she also likes to be creative, which was realized through the qualification to become a tailor. Her tailor diploma and clothes fade in. Nevertheless Marie reports that it wasn't possible to earn enough money with it.*

*Marie shows documents belonging to the process of buying a house, as the land register, mortgage file and pictures of the house itself. In her twenties she describes her life as hectic and tells that "a lot was going on." She lists parenting a son, to be busy with work and schooling. Then pictures of a house start to fade-in. She continuously talking about her building a house, getting a relation, her son getting a relation and what she calls "very important" the birth of her three grandchildren. The notion of her grandchildren is accompanied by showing pictures of them. While the song "The Light Will Stay On" by The Walkabouts is played a second time, Marie describes the death of her father as another important event in her life and mentions the demand of support articulated by her mother. She looks down and stands up from the desktop.*

During this sequence family and especially personal achievements are clearly present. From my point of view, the diplomas demonstrate that it was possible for her, besides doing tasks in the household and other mundane jobs, to achieve something in different domains. In my opinion her notion of doing a tailor training and proudly demonstrating self-made clothes shows the importance to do something creative, something different than the tasks to fulfil in the household. Her passion for learning, which has been perceivable during the first two sequences, becomes even more crucial.

As her diplomas mark her educational achievements, the participant shows documents belonging to her house purchase. I assume that as the diplomas did, the house documents shall demonstrate that she reached a point, which is referred to as "good basis" in the second sequence. By providing an own home and having a job, it is possible to care good for her son and herself in a good way which is independent from decisions of her parental home. From "the girl" she refers to in the beginning of her Minikroniek we are now confronted with a woman who is the head of a small family as well as a house owner. During the course of the sequence she is enumerating other important events, which can be assigned to her theme family such as telling about her son and herself both getting a partner. Afterwards she is reporting about the birth of her grandchildren. Her offspring and the romantic relationships seem to be very important for her.

During an event the parental family as her personal background emerges once again.

Her new role becomes apparent being confronted with the death of her father, who seems to have been the head of her extended family, and a mother she now has to take care of. The background music results in a melancholic atmosphere. In the face of her father's death and the need for care of her mother, the participant is pushed into a completely new role.

#### **Sequence 4: Migration to Germany**

*Marie shows herself walking in the garden, passing four plastic human toy figures she puts on top of a stone, but not further mentioning them. She tells about her migration to Germany in 2007, and calls it an important decision. Afterwards she explains her situation in the "different Germany" and how she integrates herself in the neighbourhood. She is involved in all kinds of social activities, for example marriages and having breakfast with neighbours. Moving in front of a young tree she explains that in 2012, when she married, she got this tree as a present from her neighbours, which touched her deeply. In a quite detailed way, Marie explains how they planted the tree, while every neighbour gave a little bit soil from his own garden as the ground for the tree. Marie tells that this can be seen as a symbolic way of showing the connection between them and the neighbours.*

During this sequence Marie talks about the process of her theme path of life. From my point of view this sequence shows Marie's affinity to be connected with others. What previously has been her family now becomes her neighbourhood. I assume that the local community fills the blank which emerged through the fact that for the first time in her life Marie is not surrounded by that many people anymore, as she is used to from her former days. Marie is grateful about being accepted and feeling welcome in her German neighbourhood, even if it's different. However, mentioning that this was also achieved through her efforts to become part of the local community, allowing to restrictedly assigning it to her theme personal achievements.

#### **Sequence 5: Marie's Path**

*In the last sequence Marie is walking stopping on a field road, explaining that this is her new "starting point." She shows her family as plastic human toy figures on the ground, herself with children and grandchildren. Marie describes the positioning as showing a situation*

*where everyone is going his own way, but they also going part of their ways together. Furthermore she explains, showing the field road and afterwards herself holding a small treasure box, that you have good memories and bad memories, but you are able to put them in a small treasure box and take them with you. While showing the parting of the field road she tells about unknown decisions that will be coming in the future. Quoting the motto of her father she explains that "everything will be all right, stay calm." She ends with saying that she thinks her father was right, while showing a 180-degree panning shot over the fields.*

Finally, the theme family and particular path of life become evident. Her view about her today's family seems to be quite different than about her personal surrounding when she was young. Rather than showing the family as a circle, as she did when describing the group of persons she was growing up in, these are structured in a line. Following my opinion, this shows a different group dynamic. She tells about the constellation that everyone is going his/her own way, but that also some part of this way is shared. From my point of view this shows that her family structure now is less hierarchic and might be more flexible. As in the beginning she uses a field road to represent her path of life. While she talks about her father, quoting him that "everything will be alright," it seems as if she uses her positive memories to gather an optimistic view into the future.

### **Narrative Identity**

Marie's Minikroniek is determined by a constant development. In the beginning of her Minikroniek she is using the third person singular to describe herself as "the girl." This externalising form to talk about the self suggests that she does not see herself as "the girl" anymore. The thematic and causal coherence increases in her Minikroniek after the birth of her son. From now on her striving for "a good basis" shapes her narration. Marie puts emphasis on her personal achievements and develops with the course of her Minikroniek a broader and more integrative way to talk about herself. The introduction and end of her Minikroniek by using the metaphor of a field road in order to describe her point of origin and even look into her future seems to have a profound influence on Marie meaning making. To give an example Marie uses the words of her dead father and applies them to look in the future. Thereby Marie creates a coherent account of identity in time.

### **Agency and Communion in the Presentation of the Self**

During Marie's first two sequences the main topic is her relationship with other persons, especially her family and the social environment she was growing up in. Another topic is the birth of her son. These topics can be assigned to the theme *community* and overarch the personal construct communion. Another theme of communion, which can be detected during the first sequence, is *care/help*. Marie is supporting her mother recognizing her demands. After the birth of her son, Marie is enumerating life events, which lead to a good basis she wanted to provide for her son and herself. These can be seen as *achievements*, and can be assigned to the personal construct agency. During the fourth sequence Marie is reporting over her migration to Germany, and gives a detailed description about her involvement and integration in the neighbourhood. On the one hand this can be seen as a personal *achievement*, involving her notion that Germany is very different. On the other hand, it implies to relate with others which is an example of the theme *community*. Finally, Marie is talking about her relatives and quotes her father which again shows the importance of her family and the presence of the theme *community*.

All in all her Minikroniek constitutes mainly out of themes that can be assigned to the construct communion. Nevertheless, Marie points out what she already achieved in her life, emphasizing it as an individual accomplishment. Therefore the personal construct agency emerges as well, although to a less extend.

### **Film and Visual Narratives in the Presentation of the Self**

Marie uses the additional features provided in the videos in order to reflect and focus on the central themes that constitute her life story for a large part. The background music she is using gives a melancholic impression but seems of no further relevance. During the narration it is particularly striking that she is using the third person singular in the first sequence. It gives the impression that she is not seeing herself as the same person anymore. The central themes she is reflecting upon are family, personal achievements and her path of life. They are presented through materials and the location where the narration takes place. Her family constellation and therefore also the power relation within the family are displayed via human plastic figures. Moreover, her personal accomplishments are shown by using diplomas to give proof for academic achievements; as well as materials as the clothes she made during her tailor training. Her third topic, the path of life, becomes evident because she talks about her past and the expected future on a field road. Thereby, she is expressing her attitude towards

life in a highly contextualized way. During her Minikroniek she is often shown in front of the camera in different locations. Thereby, her forming position becomes evident.

### **Participant 3**

#### **Summary and Topics**

Peter, grown up in Rotterdam Kralingen, describes his youth as consisting of two worlds: his parental home and Rotterdam's "vein of gold." He felt welcome in both of them. The participant narrates that he was engaged in many activities during his school years; as for example in the student representation, the school newspaper or the cabaret. An important event for him was the "Pop Festival Kralingen." Influenced from the participation and the freedom he moved to Utrecht. In Utrecht he learned a lot about himself, slipping in different roles and making connections between the "different worlds" he was living in. During his time in Utrecht he was studying psychology and wrote for the university paper. He founded his company "Perspektief" and with this company he arrived in Enschede. In Enschede, he reports playing many roles again, as being a businessman, a journalist or an advisor. Furthermore, he tells about playing theatre again and how he successfully expanded his meditation skills. He also mentions that his son was born.

There are four central themes in his Minikroniek. First, we have the theme self-discovery, which seems to be influenced by the *Zeitgeist* during his youth. The participant is referring to different occasions, leading to the conclusion that he doesn't have to be the same person all the time. On the basis of his conclusion it is decided to assign a part of his activities to ordinary life. Work and common fields of activity can be attributed to this theme. Furthermore he is referring to activities he is describing as action research. This theme will be assigned to activities which can be classified as extraordinary. The last central theme is engagement. It becomes apparent in the other themes, in which the participant shows his devotion and effectiveness.

## **General Information**

For the Minikroniek, the 65 years old participant, choose the title "bloemen pukkan in het puin," what translates to "picking flowers in the rubble." From my point of view, his title is chosen to depict his optimistic view on the world. Instead of seeing the rubble as a sign for destruction, he emphasizes the flowers as embodying vitality. During the narration he is talking in Dutch, it seems as if the participant speaks without notes. The participant presents himself as the narrator in four different environments. On the basis of these environments and his theme selection it is decided to analyse his Minikroniek in five sequences. First, he sits on the ground next to a pile of rubble. Afterwards, he is shown talking about his life sitting on an open-air stage. Then, the participant shows himself walking through the city centre of Enschede. In the end of the Minikroniek, the participant stays in a backyard garden. During the Minikroniek, the participant makes use of pictures from his youth until his adult years. In the course of the Minikroniek psychedelic rock is used as a musical framework. During his Minikroniek Peter choose to play "A Whiter Shade of Pale" by Procol Harum, Soft Machine with "Why Are We Sleeping?" and "Shine on you crazy diamond" by Pink Floyd. Furthermore two other songs were played which were not possible to identify.

## **Minikroniek - Description and Interpretation**

### **Sequence 1: Peter's environment during his Youth**

*Peter starts the first sequence of his Minikroniek with musical accompaniment by Procol Harum's songn "A Whiter Shade of Pale." A rubble pile is shown while Peter starts with his narration. He tells that he has grown up in the rubble next to their house. Furthermore, Peter explains that the rubble originates from Second World War and consists of the remains of his grandfather's house. He reports that his parental home is located in Rotterdam Kralingen. While Peter fade-in on the screen, he tells that he saw primarily the flowers in the rubble. He describes Rotterdam during his childhood years as under construction and outlines the mood as strongly focussed on progress. While Peter let photo`s of his family, such as his parents wedding fade-in, he tells that they had to be spare with the flowers to be able to buy the*



wedding dress. While the narrator's hands are shown, both gesturing open, Peter is describing his life in Kralingen as consisting out of two worlds. First, he is mentioning the backyard, and afterwards what he calls Rotterdam's "vein of gold." Peter states that Rotterdam back then was in motion. While Peter is shown in a park, walking towards an open-air stage, he describes his life as always being welcome. He states living his whole life as in the theatre. While showing old pictures of kids, he describes his roles during his life as changing between actor and director.

During the first sequence, the participant is referring to the title of his Minikroniek "picking flowers in the rubble." He tells that in the rubble he was primarily focused on the flowers, which could be interpreted as an attempt to express his optimistic view on the world: seeing flowers instead of the rubble generated through war. His choice to play a psychedelic rock song called "A Whiter Shade of Pale" by Procol Harum, his notion of the preceding war and the motive of the flower let the viewer suggest the Zeitgeist of the hippie movement had an influence on the protagonist.

From my point of view, the participant uses the first sequence to take a closer look at his beginnings. The way he shows his family through pictures, explaining always being welcome in "two worlds," it seems to me as if the participant tries to depict his home or backyard as an unexceptional place of origin which could be assigned to the theme ordinary life. The backyard contrasts to Rotterdam's "vein of gold," which he not further expand on; but from my point of view is associated with or lays the foundation for the theme extraordinary life. This impression intensifies through gestures of his two hands, supporting the concept of two worlds he is referring to. Rotterdam's "vein of gold," the second world, was under construction and there was a strong idea of progress. From my point of view, the participant is depicting Rotterdam as the ideal environment for self-discovery. On the one hand safe in the backyard and on the other hand rich in possibilities to develop. The theme self-discovery becomes more evident when Peter is mentioning the first time changing roles. He depicts the different roles as changing between director and actor, which from my point of view could be seen as an attempt to give different personalities and qualities a try. He thereby emphasises the importance theatre of theatre in his life, which is substantiated by the choice of the next shooting location.

## **Sequence 2: Peter's Development in School**

*During the next sequence, Peter is shown on the open-air stage. He tells about his time in secondary school showing family pictures. He describes his participation in the cabaret, in*

*the school magazine and in the student representation. Peter talks about his interest in science fiction, showing a photo of a stage performance of teenagers. Moreover, he tells that in school it was the time of student protests, what he calls "revolution." Meanwhile, he shows pictures of long-haired guitar players. Afterwards he shows himself again, opening a magazine on the open-air stage. He tells that pupils forced the school authorities to allow for participation in school decisions; to get a school that fulfils the pupil's needs. While closing the magazine and carefully emptying out a red bag, Peter reports that the contact with teaching staff changed to be more equal.*

From my point of view, during this sequence, Peter further tries to depict the environment and mood he was growing up in. He calls it "revolution." By using the assignment "revolution," the following activities are attributed to the theme action research. At that time, political engagement as student representation and writing for the school paper had a different reputation, peers encouraged it. In secondary school, the pupils forced codetermination and the participant took part, not devoted to only one activity, but engaging in cabaret, the school magazine and student representation. That gives the impression of the participant as a committed and active member of the school community and serves as evidence for the theme engagement. Furthermore, Peter's report about engaging and trying out different personal affinities can be seen as a lightweight form of the theme self-discovery. Through his choice reporting on the open-air stage it seems quite likely that the participant maintained his preference for performing to the present.

### **Sequence 3: Student Representation**

*During the next sequence Peter is shown sitting on the open-air stage. The material of his bag is spread out in front of him. He is describing his passion for sailing. He tells about a vacation to Zeeland he calls "a wonderful time." Then his father allowed him to take along the boat. Now the song "Why we are sleeping?" by Soft Machine begins to play. Peter is shown, still sitting on the open-air stage, browsing through photos and talking with a more thrilled intonation claiming after this holiday he knew what he wanted. He wanted to be in the student representation and with two friends they successfully run for the board. After reporting on their election, Peter outlines their engagement. They organized parties and wrote down "colossal manifests." He describes them as unbelievable busy. Placing pictures on a mind map Peter tells how he discovered to achieve more in a group than alone. According to him he learned a lot at school, but rather outside the lessons in extra-curricular activities.*

Peter's holiday is important because it introduces his decision to run as student representatives with his friends. By using the holiday as the foundation for his decision process he is strengthening the importance this position implies. This sequence depicts from my point of view Peter's personal theme engagement. He is depicting their mandate as productive and busy. The viewer can get the impression that Peter is highly dedicated in activities that are important to him. Despite Peter's recognition to achieve more in groups, his decision to run actually was made in isolation.

#### **Sequence 4: Pop Festival Kralingen and Utrecht**

*During the next sequence Peter is describing the venue of the Pop Festival Kralingen during his youth in Rotterdam and how he moved to Utrecht. He describes Rotterdam back then as a place where everything was possible. Furthermore, Peter depicts the festival in terms of freedom and music. Rather than categorizing his role as part of the audience, he refers being part of the festival itself. He refers to this period of his life as action research. In his words: "Being there, participate." During the next minute Peter shows video recordings of the Pop Festival Kralingen with fast, unknown, psychedelic rock. The video shows visitors of the festival as well as performances. Afterwards, he is talking about how he moved to Utrecht. Peter is shown on the open-air stage, as soon as he starts to tell about Utrecht, he lets video recordings of the city fade in. In the course of this sequence Peter choose to play "Shine on you crazy diamond" by Pink Floyd. According to him, he took the feeling of freedom gathered through the pop festival with him. He talks about living in squatted houses and studying psychology. Furthermore, he is reporting being part of the digitalisation. He views working with computers as an advantage, stating "you can work 24/7." This made it possible for him to have an "absurd day and night life." Peter describes his life in Utrecht as studying, giving lessons and working with computers. But most of all he attended to a lot of parties. Moreover he reports the time consuming character of living in community. In addition to the video he shows pictures showing a young, longhaired man. Peter tells to have learned a lot about himself in the community. He describes being busy with the questions: "Who am I? What can be my Identity?" Moreover, he tells about discovering for himself that he doesn't have to be the same person all-the-time. He is not differentiating between loving boys or girls. Furthermore, he depicts his life in Utrecht as being determined by making connections between the different worlds he was living in, as "the world of computers and the world of music; the world of junkies and the world of the bank director." Moreover, he is reporting writing in the university paper, over problems of the students and corrupt docents at the*

*University of Utrecht, "who" as Peter states threatened him at the telephone as "many others" with death. He tells that this never really bothered him. Furthermore, he talks over his company "Label" and later "Perspektief" which he still owns. Simultaneous he shows a zoomed in photograph of himself.*

During this sequence the participant is depicting the major circumstances that formed the person he is today. All four themes can be found during this sequence. The mood in Rotterdam "where everything was possible" and the festival initiating the theme "action research" formed his attitude towards life. This attitude appears in Peter's break with common understanding of life plans. One would suggest that you could either be part of ordinary life. In Peter's case it took the form of giving lessons, studying psychology, establishing a company and working with computers. Another perspective could be what Peter calls action research. He is living in community in squatted houses, doing a lot of parties and is busy with finding personal gender preferences in romantic relationships. While others would suggest that these life plans exclude each other, Peter states that connecting these different domains formed his life in Utrecht. This can be assigned to the theme self-discovery. Meanwhile Peter depicts himself as self-confident. He reports being threatened by death for his journalistic work but claims it didn't bother him. Furthermore, having established a company in Utrecht reveals his ambitions. All in all it appears as if Peter was trying out everything he could during his time in Utrecht. He seems to be proud of this life period and to survive unscathed.

### **Sequence 5: Peter's Roles in Enschede**

*During the last sequence, Peter is shown walking through the city centre of Enschede. Peter uses an unknown slow psychedelic rock song as background music. He describes arriving with the company "Perspektief" in Twente. Furthermore, Peter reports about giving lessons while showing a photo of him at work. He labels himself outgoing, showing a photo of him in a colourful batik shirt. Peter narrates that he played many roles in Enschede giving the example of being a businessman, a journalist and later becoming an advisor. Peter visualizes the many roles he had through showing photos of him, for example in a doctor's coat at a performance, or listening carefully to someone talking at the chimney. Furthermore he wrote books about communication and glass fibre. Afterwards he reports that he started to play the theatre again. Moreover, reveals that in Enschede his meditations went much deeper. He shows three pictures of him sitting cross-legged. He reports that he travelled to India where he met Bachchan, an event he attributes to have a big impact in his life. Also, Peter reports of the birth of his son, accompanied by two pictures of a child. In his last sentence Peter*

*concludes that in Twente it was possible to do a lot of beautiful things. Afterwards he is shown in a garden, smelling on a wild rose, picking it and putting it in the lap of a Buddha statue.*

During this sequence Peter gives an enumeration of his further live course. While Peter describes his life in Enschede, he is again referring to playing many roles. Nevertheless, the theme self-discovery seems not to be as present and diversified as before. Giving examples about the roles he played, he is referring being a businessman, journalist and advisor. That gives the impression that his time in Enschede was less effected by action research, but could rather be assigned to the theme ordinary life. Nevertheless, he seems to have maintained a part of his former self. Peter is not becoming content with having a normal lifestyle. He describes himself still as outgoing, wearing colourful shirts, showing himself during meditation and reports about a holiday to India. Meditation could be seen as new attempt to engage in the theme self-discovery. The birth of his son is mentioned, but plays a minor role in his *Minikroniek*. Furthermore Peter presents himself as active and productive, reporting over successfully playing theatre, still owning his company and having written two books. As a result the topic engagement is evident. Finally he is showing himself devout picking a flower and putting it on the Buddha's lap. This gesture, attached to his opening sequence, gives the impression of person who is on the one hand still adventurous but resting in himself.

### **Narrative Identity**

Peter is reporting a more or less coherent life story. During the course of his *Minikroniek* he is referring to many life-events, links these and gives meaning to them. Nevertheless one has to recognise how this coherence comes about. Rather than building one coherent account of the self, Peter is adopting many identities. His coherence is based on multiplicity. This gives him the possibility to describe a self, which remains the same during his reconstructed past. Identity construction seems to have been a constant purpose in his life. In sequence four Peter is describing his life in Utrecht as shaped by the questions "Who am I? What can be my Identity?" Therefore I conclude that even though his coherence emerges trough multiplicity, the decision to do so seems to have been a conscious reflection process over the self.

### **Agency and Communion in the Presentation of the Self**

Peter describes himself holding many roles. These different roles emerge in different situations, but can all be characterized as shaped by the personal construct agency. Therefore it seems practical to take a closer look how the different agency themes appear in his Minikroniek. First, we have the theme *self-mastery*, which can be outlined as a process during which the protagonist is perfecting or controls the self. Peter describes being busy with the questions "Who am I? What can be my Identity?" Afterwards he reports having found the solution, namely "that you don't have to be the same person all-the-time." Moreover, he reports about repeatedly being threatened with death. He states never really being bothered by it. Furthermore the theme *status* is present in his Minikroniek. During his school time he tells in detail about his election as a student representative. For him, this position seems to hold prestige. Moreover, the participant describes his school time as dominated by the student protest, he is referring to it as "the revolution." According to Peter, they forced the to allow for more student participation. Peter seems to identify himself with something larger, namely "the revolution," which can be assigned to the theme *empowerment*.

Finally, there are many parts of his Minikroniek where Peter is talking about personal engagement and about his productivity. For example, his time as a student representative is depicted as unbelievable busy, organising parties and writing down "colossal manifests." Furthermore, he reports being part of the digitalisation. In summary, the agency theme *achievement* dominates his Minikroniek.

### **Film and Visual Narratives in the Presentation of the Self**

Peter is using the additional creative freedom videos provide, to demonstrate factors that had influence on his identity construction process. The music he uses can overall be assigned to psychedelic rock, giving evidence that the participant has been engaged in counterculture during his youth. Furthermore the music is especially evident during the use of original video recordings of the Pop Festival Kralingen, which he describes as a turning point in his life. The music gives an impression of the Zeitgeist he was living in, enabling him to express himself contextualized. Additionally, he is making use of photograph's, which show him engaging in a variety of activities. This variety supports his notion of having played multiple roles in his life. His film location gives further evidence. He is using the place of an open-air stage to promote his notion of having played many roles in his life. Additionally he thereby put emphasis on the importance theatre has for him. During his narration he is shown speaking clear and without notes, yielding a self-confident impression.

## **Discussion**

During the preceding section the content of the Minikronieks and its implication were discussed. This section is dedicated to answer the question: How is identity created in a Minikroniek? We will thus take a look on how the participants created their narrative identity. To provide more insight in the identity construction process we will discuss how the personal construct agency and communion emerge in the Minikroniek of the participants. Furthermore the additional presentation possibilities of visual narratives in the construction of identity will be taken into account. Finally the limitations of the study will be reported and suggestions for further research will be given.

## **Narrative Identity**

Singer (2004) states that narrative identity is a central in or the same as life-stories. According to Ricoeur (1984) we are not only making sense of the world by applying stories, but rather we make sense of our self. McAdams (2009, p.10) describes the life story as "an internalized and evolving narrative of the self that incorporates the reconstructed past, perceived present, and anticipated future." By reconstructing the past, connecting episodic memories in an integrative way, individuals are able to reach "some degree of unity, purpose and meaning" in their life (McAdams & McLean, 2013, p.1). The establishment of a coherent account of the self during a Minikroniek is demonstrated in the path of life by participant 2. By applying additional videos showing her on a field road, she is highlighting the personal development she has undergone. During this sequence a bridge is built between the past and possible future, using the field road figuratively depicting her life course.

The preceding findings show how the participants made sense of their lives by creating stories about the self. "People use narratives to try to derive some measure of unity and purpose out of what may otherwise seem to be an incomprehensible array of life events and experiences (Bauer, McAdams & Pals, 2008, p.84)." Furthermore, the results show that the participants engaged in quite different forms of identity construction. While the narrative identity of participant 1 is shaped by struggle, the narrative identity of participant 2 is presented as a constant development. Participant 3, on the contrary, reaches a coherent narrative about the self by accepting the multiplicity of his being. Nevertheless, a narrative identity shaped by struggle or development allows conclusions to be drawn. Pals (2005) found, contrary to expectations, that narratives about negative events lead to more explanatory narrative processing and also to more evidence for the development of maturity. Moreover, McLean and Thorne (2005) state that meaning making is more frequent in self-defining

memories containing conflict. This means that although participant 3 reported the most coherent account over his self-defining memories, it does not imply that he created the most mature or meaningful narrative identity. Rather, he gave understanding for the variety of manners, individuals use to create a coherent narrative over the self. However, we can conclude that identity construction emerges through the engagement in meaning making and the creation of a coherent self-narrative in the Minikroniek, particularly if it is dealt with transition phases. The life story is also structured by certain consistencies, revealed in the personal constructs agency and communion. How these personal constructs come about in the Minikroniek will be discussed in the next section.

### **Agency and Communion in the Presentation of the Self**

During this section the emergence of agency and communion in the meaning making of episodic autobiographical memories will be discussed. McAdams et al. (1996) state that agency and communion are suitable for autobiographical accounts of emotionally very positive scenes as peak experiences but also for episodes of dramatic change as turning points. During the Minikroniek the participants were engaged to report over such transition phases in their lives.

According to Woike, Gershkovich, Piorkowski and Polo (1999) agency and communion are powerful conceptual categories for organizing the motivational content of autobiographical memories. To represent the development during the Minikroniek, we discussed the application of the personal constructs separate for each participant in the previous section. It became clear that the variation in self-portrayal the participants engaged in not only emerged through verbal accounts of agency and communion, but rather through different forms of audio-visual behaviour. The use of extra, non-verbal materials often lead to a simplified distinction process between the personal constructs. The fade-in of diplomas serves as a prime example for agency demonstrating personal achievement. A prime example for communion is the use of human plastic figures to show the personal community.

Furthermore the relationship between the two distinct personal constructs agency and communion and narrative identity is important. In the case of the two female participants the personal constructs seem to serve as a framework organizing the personal narratives. Both of them make use of the personal construct communion during the beginning and end of their Minikroniek. Only the central part of their Minikroniek is characterized by agency. This could be seen as an indicator for the influence of traditional cultural determined gender roles. These emphasise an orientation on interpersonal relationships in woman. It differs from the male



narrative, using agency as the core element to report over his episodic autobiographical memories. This finding goes in line with research about gender differences, suggesting a differentiation between the "feminine" personal construct communion and the "masculine" personal construct agency (Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1974). It shows that culture shapes the narrative identity as well. Even if these findings carefully have been called "gender stereotypes" (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007) they can be considered as sub-factor influencing the construction of narrative identity. Ross and Holmberg (1990) support this notion reporting that female interpersonal memories are more vivid and detailed than those of males.

McAdams et al. (1996) show that agency and communion are suitable to report over transition phases. According to Woike et al. (1999) agency and communion serve as conceptual categories to organize the motivational content of autobiographical memories. Furthermore McAdams et al. (1996) state that one's current identity is the story of the reconstructed past, perceived present and envisioned future. In conclusion, the personal constructs organize the motivational content behind depicted memories in the *Minikroniek*. Therefore a coherent life-story and thus narrative identity are created.

### **Film and Visual Narratives as Research Methods**

During this section we will discuss how film and visual narratives are involved in the creation of identity. According to Gibson (2005, p.2) videos are user friendly and "manipulated with a minimum of training. It becomes apparent in the *Minikroniek*, where participants learned within 15 hours to engage in different film techniques. The works of the participants show that they successfully used different forms of storytelling, applied different forms of camera handling and were able to edit their film material to create a consistent and comprehensive final result.

Working within the theoretical framework of Robert Dilts logical levels (1996) the concept of the premise guided the participants to illustrate relevant transitions in their life. According to Buckingham the "rationalistic or logocentric tendencies of verbal approaches" (2009, p.227) can be overcome by using video methods. Therefore, relevant transitions can be displayed in different ways and likely in more detail. Others support this, calling the possibilities of videos "democratising" and "empowering" (Jones et al. 2015, p. 4). The chance to display identity through videos can thus enable participants to enlarge and actualize their account of the self.

Findings from Hodder (2003) show that videos enable individuals to communicate by using features of place and material objects. This gives participants the possibility to

contextualize their autobiographical memories. Moreover, videos provide possibilities allowing the participants to engage in various forms of self-portrayal. Videos give information about social attachments, life contexts, histories and culture of the producers, potentially leading to innovative new insights (Iivari, Kinnula, Kuure & Molin-Juustila, 2014). Therefore, Azzarito and Sterling call on an advantage of videos in the presentation of the self that it enables individual to "communicate and express themselves in meaningful and contextualized ways" (2010, p.213).

During the Minikroniek the participant's presented information was much more comprehensive than written data could be. Attention was given to various forms of non-verbal information. Beside speech this included material objects, the environment the videos took place in, gestures, facial expressions and the use of music. Besides wording and other presentation forms participants also communicated through shifting the narrator's role. One example is the change in narrative perspective participant 2 has gone through. Gibson (2005) states, that having the creative freedom of videos, individuals start shifting the protagonist position lead them to do identity work.

A prerequisite for shifting positions is that participants have to possess the ability to express themselves comprehensively. Former accounts on narrative identity construction using only written language. For participants who are not able to sufficiently engage in written verbal accounts, videos could provide new possibilities to create and express narrative identity. For others, it adds the possibility to express the self in a multifaceted manner. Videos as a means for data collection are empowering in contrast to traditional verbal approaches. Individuals have more freedom to present the self. Therefore, participants engage in meaning making of their own life story through contextualized communication and shifting of the narrator's role. The additional possibilities videos provide enable participants to engage in identity construction during the Minikroniek. Due to these empowering features videos are the method of choice in identity construction.

## **Conclusion**

The results of the study are in accord with existent research. They provide an answer to the question: How is Identity created in a Minikroniek? It can be concluded that individuals in the Minikroniek engage in identity construction through meaning making and creation of a coherent self-narrative, particularly if they report over transition phases in their life.

The personal constructs agency and communion facilitate identity creation through supporting the retrieval process of important autobiographical memories. Furthermore they serve as powerful conceptual categories organizing the motivational content behind these memories. Therefore a coherent life-story and thus narrative identity are created.

Videos as a method for data collection and production is empowering in contrast to traditional verbal approaches. Individuals have more freedom to present the self. Therefore participants engage in meaning making through contextualized communication and shifting of the narrator's role. The additional possibilities videos provide, let individuals engage in identity construction.

## **Limitations**

This study involved three individual, which were chosen to represent a broad picture of participants engaging in the creation of a Minikroniek. Their Minikronieks were informative and well implemented. They show that video`s can be applied as a promising alternative in research on narrative identity. Nevertheless it has to be taken into account that all three participants are creative. While the first protagonist is to a large extent involved in photography, the second protagonist literally reports that she is creative and the third protagonist is involved in theatre since his youth. Therefore it can be assumed that they are used to engaging in creative self-portrayal.

For that reason a following Minikroniek project should be directed on creative individuals only to ensure a meaningful result. In case of normal creative individuals this would ask for a more resource demanding supervision. Despite of its resource demanding nature, the various presentation possibilities videos facilitate suggest the usefulness of visual methods.

Additionally, it should be taken into account is, that this was a course for seniors. The works of younger protagonists can be assumed to differ substantially.

Another limitation one must emphasise on, is that the videos created are not objective illustrations of reality, but rather individual perspectives on life events. Additionally, the

works are not analysed entirely objectively. The researcher's perspective on the life-stories and the personal background can be assumed to have an influence on the interpretation of the data. This scope for interpretation could have been increased through working with grounded theory. A disadvantage of working within the framework of grounded theory is according to Thomas and James (2006) the "everydayness" of inductive reasoning (2006, p.3). It should be described as "inference to the best explanation" or "abduction" (Haig, Miller & Fredericks, 1999) and is thus inappropriate for qualitative research.

Nevertheless, grounded theory matches because it meets the challenges of the visual narratives. It provides ecological validity, the degree to which the results resemble the actual data in the Minikroniek. Furthermore, an advantage of working with grounded theory is the freedom of analysis. Working without being bound by pre-existing theory allows entirely new findings. Finally it orientates on the law of parsimony, a problem solving principle stating, "among competing hypotheses, the one with the fewest assumptions should be selected" (Gauch, 2003). Therefore the application of grounded theory for the analysis of the Minikroniek is reasonable.

### **Suggestion for further Research**

In general, the findings of the present study have to be investigated on validity through quantitative research. This would allow getting a more comprehensive and hedged view. Furthermore it should be investigated how attendance in the Minikroniek affects well-being. During the Minikroniek individuals work in the theoretical framework of narrative psychology, recollecting memories and making use of visual methods. Thereby, they form a more coherent account of the self which can be assumed to have a beneficial effect on well-being. How the construction of a Minikroniek affects well-being could be examined using an adjusted form of Elliont's Change interview (2001).

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## Appendix

### Participant 1

**Name: Irene**

**Title: Choices**

**Length: 13:22 min.**

Participant 1: *This is a short story about two cities, Bielsko-Biala and Enschede, which are inseparably connected with me and in which I was and I am living.*

Accompaniment: Video Bielsko-Biala

Participant 1: *By a strange coincidence although they are situated in two different countries, I found in them many similarities. An Incident or a destiny?*

Accompaniment: Video Enschede, Narrator

Participant 1: *The both cities were connected in the past with the textile industry. Bielsko-Biala by many years was famous with the production of the high quality wool and Enschede with the production of the cotton. In the both cities for decades the factory chimneys did emit fumes, while today this textile industry completely collapsed. Remaining still are alone factories chimneys, as it the near Jannink's sinning factory, but some years ago were many of them.*

Accompaniment: Video chimney

Participant 1: *By the end of 19th century, as reported, in Bielsko and in Biala existed about 150 textile factories. Until today has been retained maybe one.*

Accompaniment: Showing old drawing, Video Enschede

Participant 1: *On the places of the old factories, recently raised in Bielsko-Biala and in Enschede new buildings, or parts of them were transformed in museums, schools, discos, shopping malls, apartments, restaurants, etc.*

Accompaniment: Video Twente

Participant 1: *Bielsko-Biala is the place where I was born, my parents were working, I spent my youth, and have some lasting up to now friendships. The second city is Enschede, the place in which from 33 years I am living together with my husband. My husband started to work in September 1981 at Technical University Twente, thanks to the received scholarship of Dutch government.*

Accompaniment: Video University Twente, Photos University Twente

Participant 1: *We planned to stay only one year, but the martial law on the 13th December 1981 changed our lot and that time I learned a lot about the system in which I was living up to now.*



Malte Thiel

*Unknowing forthcoming events 9th December 1981 from the need of my heart and in desire of duty I went alone for some days to Poland, to visit my Mother.*

Accompaniment: Narrator

Participant 1: *She was my all world after the tragic death of my father, who was killed in the age 37 helping others in the train catastrophe near Piotrkow.*

Accompaniment: Video and Photo of newspaper report tragedy

Participant 1: *I owe her taking me in the world of the theatre and music, possibility of study and good beginning of my life.*

*Therefore I wanted to make her a surprise by the arrival for some days.*

Accompaniment: Pictures of mother

Participant 1: *My husband for his good luck was working in Enschede. In Poland he could be threatened by arrest, as he was an active member of solidarity.*

Accompaniment: Solidarity Stickpin

Participant 1: *My few days in Poland changed into months. The passport, which I had valid for five years, with the Dutch visa for one year, I had to return. The boarders were closed, the telephone connections totally broken. Until today sound in my ears the words of a young clerk from Passport Department in Katowice that I won't be allowed to leave even if my husband dies in Holland. I was determined to return to my previous work, from which I had got one year of unpaid holiday to go with my husband according to the official leave for his scholarship in Enschede, then my passport was given back to me. To the word should be shown that martial law is nothing wrong, so after great efforts of my Mother and help of my husbands professor in Holland I got the passport back in 1982 and could return to Enschede.*

Accompaniment: Narrator

Participant 1: *Surprisingly, as telephone contacts between us did not exist, while the letters were censored and arriving with huge delays or never.*

Accompaniment: Showing letters, zooming on censor mark

Participant 1: *Upon return to Holland I wanted to get involve in something, as the holiday is holiday, but longer and lonely sitting at home and waiting for husband was not in my stile. So at first for one and half year I worked free-lance at the Department of Chemistry of Twente University, and the when I learned about the existence of AKI in Enschede, I decided to test my will. Deep in my heart I always wanted to study history of art or Mediterranean archaeology, or something humanistic, however having been a realist I knew that as an engineer I should easier find a work after studies. Actually when my husband worked at the University and I had a free time, I wanted to try my strength in something entirely different. I decided to begin studying at the AKI. Prof Spike Huisman at that time director of the school proposed, to begin at one on the second year, having let me know that or I would fulfil the requirements or has no sense wasting time and money.*

Accompaniment: Narrator

Participant 1: *Still before beginning of academic year 1984 in September was organized in Enschede the I Photo Biennale dedicated to American and Dutch photography. The initiators of the Biennale were Martha Haveman and Rutger ten Broeke. This was something new and interesting in town in which not too much was normally happening.*

Accompaniment: Photos of Biennale

Participant 1: *And then, also for the first time I took part in a workshop given by the well-known Dutch photographer Paul Huf, at present deceased, who was that time also a participant of the Biennale. In such way my adventure with photography begun.*

Accompaniment: Photo of Irene in photo workshop

Participant 1: *After four years in AKI and receiving a diploma in photography and graphic design, since 1988 I begin activities on my own.*

Accompaniment: Photos and video of photo exhibition

Participant 1: *At the same time next to the Biennale was organized by four young Enthusiasts the photography gallery at Walstraat which exists till now, is active and has the name of Objectief. When after my first exhibition in the gallery Objectief together with Taeke Henstra I received from the organizers an offer to collaborate, I accepted it and up o now for already 25 years I am in the board of Objectief arranging the exhibitions and taking care of its graphic outlook.*

Accompaniment: Photos Objectief members and catalogues

Participant 1: *In 1993 I was personally invited by the organizers of V Photo Biennale to participate in it. This was for me a very pleasant recognition in however a very difficult time. I had to prepare a new although relatively short series, very time-consuming, while my Mother was paralysed after a stroke in at first hospital and later at home in Bielsko-Biala.*

Accompaniment: Photos and catalogue Biennale

Participant 1: *Dividing my time bested Bielsko and Enschede, as already since a year I had the Dutch passport, I succeeded to accomplish everything in time and appear at an opening of Biennale, and then soon returned to my Mother.*

Accompaniment: Photos and magazine "Kunst & Cultuur"

Participant 1: *Unfortunately, still before it is end my mother passed away [Sighing, Gesture with Hand, Sign the cross]. In my life often happiness overlaps with deep sadness. The series from V Biennale I was later showing on many other exhibitions, everywhere received big attention. Two years later the photography fans in Enschede lost the Biennale due to weakening of financial possibilities and enthusiasm of organizers. At the end foundation of Photo Biennale Enschede still supported financially and administratively the celebration of Objekrief's Xth anniversary by making possible editing of jubilee catalogue and arranging the exhibition "surprise yourself and others" with participation of 70 Dutch and foreign photographers.*

Malte Thiel

Accompaniment: Video of photo exhibition Biennale

Participant 1: *When in Enschede the possibilities of organizing a large photo manifestation ended up, in my birth town Bielsko-Biala, once again thanks to enthusiasts of photography, town authorities and Ministry of Culture was born an idea to organize something unknown yet in Poland in such a large scale, namely Photo Art Festival presenting work and personalities of art photographers in the land along Vistula River as better express in the town on Biala. Until now since 2005 were already organized V Festival editions and the work is going on the 6th one.*

Accompaniment: Browse trough exhibition catalogue and photos

Participant 1: *So that, not only the decline of textile industry in both towns, but also the photography appeared to be combined factors for them. Operates there, already since 22 years, the photo-gallery B&B, with which we keep contact and some years ago was organized an exchange exhibition named "Triangle" with invited to collaborate one more gallery from France, with which I had been acquainted before having had the exhibition there.*

Accompaniment: Street sign of B&B and video of exhibition

Participant 1: *Our collaboration does not end up with B&B. We also keep in contact with the Szczecin branch of Union Polish Art photographers, of which I am a member since 1998. With the photographers from Szczecin and these associated around the gallery Objectief we organized two exchange exhibitions untitled "People of our Planet" and "Changes" the last on XXth anniversary of our gallery in Enschede.*

Accompaniment: Photos and video of exhibition

Participant 1: *In Objectief during all this years we presented not only the works of Dutch and Polish Photographers, but also of many well known of photographers from USA, Italy, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, U.K. and others. The photography allowed me to meet many interesting persons and participate myself in important festivals and events such as for example Biennale of Female Photography in Brescia or Reencounters in Arles.*

Accompaniment: Video Italy exhibition opening

Participant 1: *Getting acquainted with the world I could simultaneously admire and depict it. Maybe at the end of my life remain after me catalogues, photographs and negatives, and nothing else, but these are in reality my children, which I should always protect, although I never could find enough time to put them correctly in an order.*

Accompaniment: catalogues, photographs, closing photo book with own works

Participant 1: *The remaining question is whether choosing the own good and way we do not hurt our close relatives, in my case the own mother by living them alone.*

Accompaniment: Photo of mother

Participant 1: *And the second is, why the others can decide about our destiny? Who gives them the rights to do this? And who can give me back these 10 years in which I could not be physically present for my Mother [Tears, Hand gesture]?*

Malte Thiel

Accompaniment: Classical Music

## **Participant 2**

**Name: Marie**

**Title: Choose and do**

**Length: 11:07 min.**

Participant 2: *The place were I stand now is the place were I live, were I work, were I work in the garden, this is the place were I live. Do you know how I get here? That was a long way.*

Accompaniment: Narrator, Narrator walking in house

Participant 2: *Long time ago, here in the fields, a girl was born, as the third in the family, after two boys. Ten years later the family consisted of ten boys and three girls. The special thing about it was that there were twins. With a calm dad and a mother with many concerns. A family were always something was going on, but there was time for friends as well. That gave a safe and relaxed feeling as a child.*

Accompaniment: Narrator, Photos of family on table

Participant 2: *The girl grew up, went to school, with her sisters, to the catholic girl school. She was willing to learn, loved to learn, and liked it to go to school." What stayed was that she was left-handed, and she was forced to write with the right hand. Writing with the left hand was writing with the devils hand.*

Accompaniment: Photos of family on table, Pencil in left hand

Participant 2: *What is standing on this table here is my family, these are my parents and these are my siblings. This is me, the third in the row. And what this girl felt in the family, was that her mother was anxious sometimes and that she felt powerless when thinking about here family and that she has to handle it all, which she did. What the girl did, additionally to here position as a daughter and sister, is that she was next to here mother, helping with the washing and the cooking.*

Accompaniment: Plastic human toy figures of family members, moves her figure next to mother

Participant 2: *When she, I was 12 years old, I was faced with an important decision. Should I go to the secondary school or to the household school, were you learning things as cooking and these sort things. So, It was decided that she would go to the catholic household school. Here is a picture also with nuns. This school I finished successfully, it took four years. I learned a lot, cooking, sewing, practical things which are still useful.*

Accompaniment: Photos school

Malte Thiel

Participant 2: *As sixteen years old I was faced with the decision if I should continue learning or start working; and decided to go working. I did that for a couple of years. Till there was an important event, this event was the birth of my son. That makes you want to care good for him and good for yourself. Also it made me think.*

Accompaniment: Photo of birth of son

Participant 2: *I started to go to evening classes. That time I worked as a volunteer in a kindergarten. After I successful finished HBO I started to follow social education and needed an internship. I did that at the kindergarten. Later I got a permanent position there.*

Accompaniment: Many Diplomas on table

Participant 2: *Learning was important in my whole life, thus I followed many classes in my life, most of them part time. I learned many different and beautiful things.*

Accompaniment: Diplomas, Narrator

Participant 2: *What I think is beautiful is to be creative, that is why I learned Tailor. That wasn't my main work because it was not possible to earn enough money with it.*

Accompaniment: Diploma, Narrator and clothes

Participant 2: *That life period a lot happened. I was busy with my son, with work and with schooling. Additionally I moved, bought a house, got into a relationship, my son as well, and what was really important the birth of my grandchildren. Three in total. It is amazing to see how they grow up and that they are all right.*

Accompaniment: Photos of family

Participant 2: *Another important event in my life was thirty years ago the death of my father. Additionally a mother who found that very difficult, she asked for a lot of attention and care.*

Accompaniment: Narrator walking in garden, Narrator

Participant 2: *2007 was as well a very important year for us, with important events. One was our decision to move to Germany; to immigrate. There are many differences between Germany and the Netherlands. I live in a small "Nachbarschaft" how they say it here and that also means that we decided to engage and participate and not only live there.*

Accompaniment: Narrator in garden

Participant 2: *That includes weddings, parties, and funerals; that was very special. What really had a huge impact on me. What was moving was in 2012 that we get married and got this tree from our neighbours. The special thing about hits tree is that, we of cause put it in the ground, and every one of our neighbours had a bag with soil out their own garden and put it in the whole for the tree. The symbolical message for them and for us was that they wanted to say that they share the ground with us, that they are connected to us. That was moving.*

Accompaniment: Tree

Malte Thiel

Participant 2: *The place were I stand now is the place were I am, a new starting point. If you watch at our family, we together with children and grandchildren, where everyone follows his way, but we are going together as well. I think that is a nice image.*

Accompaniment: Standing on field road, showing plastic human toy figures of actual family members and treasure box

Participant 2: *The life, which you lived, many memories, good memories, bad memories, you are able to put them in your treasure box. You can take it with you, on the way in the future. Where you will face again decisions. In the end of the way you can see, you can go left, or right. You can't see what comes this way; you can't see what comes that way. But what is important, what my father would say, everything will be all right. Handle it relaxed, and then everything will solve itself. I think that is right.*

Accompaniment: Showing field road route, Narrator, 180 degree camera panning

### Participant 3

**Name: Peter**

**Title: Picking flowers in the rubble**

**Length: 09:20 min.**

Participant 3: *I grew up in the Garden next to our house in Rotterdam Kralingen. In the rubble of World war II and the rubble of the house of my Grandfather. In the rubble I was especially focussed on the flowers. Rotterdam was under construction, there was a strong idea of progress, but all in all it was very modest. For example at the wedding of my parents, they had to be very spare, to have money for the dress. I lived in Kralingen between two worlds. In the backyard on the one hand, and on the other, lets call it vein of gold of Rotterdam. In both worlds I was welcome. This way I lived my whole life as in the theatre, sometimes in on role, than again in another one, sometimes in the audience, then again as actor or director. Rotterdam after World War II was not alone moving; it happened a lot as well.*

Accompaniment: Rubble pile, Narrator, Photo Family, Photos Wedding Parents, Photos as Child

Participant 3: *In secondary school I was able to engage in many things, I was in the Cabaret, in the school magazine, in the student representation; I was interested in science fiction and in school it was the time of student protests, the revolution. We forced the school authorities to get participation in school decisions; we forced to get a school that fulfils the pupil's needs. Also the contact with the teaching staff changed. Some teachers became pupil's friends, also the school administration. It's now hard to believe but we smoked cigarettes with the director of the school.*

Accompaniment: Photo student Representation, Photo Cabaret, Photo Guitar Players, Narrator, Magazines

Participant 3: *The school gave me much more, but what also was important was that sailing. I loved it most when there was pretty hard wind. With a friend of mine I had tournaments, and that we overturned was usual. Sailing was the sport in my life that time and when, after the 4th class after the middle school, I moved to Zeeland for vacation my father allowed me to take the boat with me. I celebrated that for a month on the sea. I woke up on the boat by the girls from the farm and went dizzy to bed in the evening on the same boat, a wonderful time.*

Accompaniment: Music change, Narrator, Mind Map

Participant 3: *After the vacation I came back to school and knew what I want. I wanted to be in the student representation, with two friends we run for the board. Thanks to this we got elected as a team. We organized parties, wrote down colossal manifests, we were unbelievable busy.*

Accompaniment: Start placing pictures on mind map

Participant 3: *What I learned there was that you are able to do so much more together than alone. I have thanks to the school; but outside the lessons, learned so much. The Kraligen were I spent my youth was also the venue of the pop festival Kralingen; the place where everything was possible. Friends of mine wore Shirts "We help you." The freedom, the music, I wasn't the audience, I was part of it. This part of my life could be described as action research. Being there, participate.*

Accompaniment: Video Pop Festival Kralingen

Participant 3: *With the festival in Kralingen behind me I moved to Utrecht. What I took with me was a feeling of freedom. I lived in squatted houses. I studied psychology. At the same time I worked with computers to earn money. The digitalisation had begun. And I was part of it. The advantage of working with computers is that you can work 24/7 and I could perfectly combine it with an absurd day and night life. On the one hand studying, giving lessons, working with computers but most of all a lot of parties as well, Discos. Furthermore, to live in community, that also takes time.*

Accompaniment: Video Utrecht, Photo of Peter

Participant 3: *In the community I learned a lot about myself. Who am I? What can be my Identity. Most of all that I don't have to be the same person all-the-time. Do you love boys, do you love girls? What does it matter? Life, in Utrecht again, were all this different life's and to make connections between them. Connections between the world of computers and the world of the music to give an example. Connections between the world of the Junkies and the world of the bank director.*

Accompaniment: Video Utrecht

Participant 3: *I wrote for the university paper over the problems of the students. At the same time over corrupt docents at the University of Utrecht which afterwards threatened me at the telephone with death. Afterwards many others did that and sorry, that never really occupied me. As a student I already had my own company that was first called "Label" and later "Perspektief;" I still have it.*

Accompaniment: Photo of himself [zooming in]

Malte Thiel

Participant 3: *With that company I also arrived in Twente. In Twente I started again with giving lessons and was going out quite often. In Twente I also played many roles. On the one hand I was businessman, on the other hand I was journalist and later I became and advisor. In Twente I also wrote books, before that I have already written a book about communication. Here in Twente I wrote a book about glass fibre.*

Accompaniment: Video Twente, Photo in lesson, Photo in colourful T-shirt, Photo`s Theatre, Photo in debate, Video Twente

Participant 3: *In Twente I could also play theatre again, and I don`t just mean in the town hall. Furthermore, in Twente my meditations went much deeper then before. I went to India. In India I have among others met Bachchan. That had a big impact on my life.*

Accompaniment: Photos Meditation

Participant 3: *In Twente also my son is born. In short, from Twente, in Twente, I was possible to do a lot of beautiful things.*

Accompaniment: Photos of Peter with son, Video picking flower and putting it on Buddha statue in garden, psychedelic rock