



*What kind of governmental support makes
WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups function
better?*

MASTER SCRIPTIE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of my thesis is to uncover what kind of governmental support makes WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups function better. I choose this topic as the subject of my thesis for I felt that it did not receive the attention it deserves. WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups with an affiliation to a third party make up roughly 30% of the total WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups in the Netherlands, yet the focus in scientific research and the media remains on those groups without an affiliation (Lub, 2016a).

The research focuses on two types of groups with governmental support; those affiliated with a community police officer (GAP) and those affiliated with a local municipality (GAM). The well-functioning of these groups is affected by two independent variables; their affiliation (either GAP or GAM), and by four dependent variables; group hierarchy, group activities, the goals and rules of the group and the longevity of the group.

Data was collected by conducting interviews and by participating as an observer in meetings. In total, 15 WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups were involved in this research. The samples were collected through snowball sampling and random sampling.

My results show that GAMs function better than GAPs. On average, they have a higher membership total, group members abide better to the group rules, adhere better to group goals and have a higher longevity

Based on the results of my research, I propose a policy change in which the special investigators of the local municipalities take over the role of the community police officers in WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups. This proposed policy change brings all actors together and results in a group that enjoys the best of both worlds; lower costs for the national police and the municipalities since costs are divided and better functioning neighborhood watch groups with a higher longevity.

ABSTRACT

Het doel van dit onderzoek is om erachter te komen welk soort overheidssteuning WhatsApp Buurtpreventie groepen beter laat functioneren. Ik heb voor dit onderwerp gekozen omdat het niet de aandacht krijgt die het verdient. WhatsApp Buurtpreventie groepen die ondersteunt worden door een derde partij beslaan grofweg 30% van alle WhatsApp Buurtpreventie groepen in Nederland. Echter, de focus in wetenschappelijk onderzoek en in de media ligt vooral op de overige 70%, de groepen die alles zelf doen en geen ondersteuning genieten (Lub, 2016a).

Dit onderzoek richt zich op twee soorten groepen die steun genieten van de overheid; Groepen die steun ontvangen van de wijkagent en groepen die steun ontvangen van de gemeente. Het functioneren van deze groepen wordt aangetast door twee onafhankelijke variabelen, namelijk door wie ze ondersteunt worden, en door vier afhankelijk variabelen; de hiërarchie in de groep, de activiteiten van de groep, het doel van de groep en de regels van de groep en de levensduur van de groep.

De data in dit onderzoek is verzameld door het afnemen van interviews en door het bijwonen van bijeenkomst als een observeerder. In totaal hebben er 15 WhatsApp Buurtpreventie groepen deelgenomen aan dit onderzoek. De deelnemers zijn gekozen op basis van de willekeur methode en de sneeuwbal methode.

De resultaten van dit onderzoek laten zien dat groepen die ondersteund worden door de gemeente beter functioneren dan groepen die ondersteund worden door de wijkagent. Ze hebben een hoger gemiddeld ledenaantal, leden houden zich beter aan de regels, handelen volgens de doelen van de groep en hebben een langere levensduur.

Op basis van dit onderzoek stel ik een beleidsverandering voor waarbij de buitengewoon opsporingsambtenaar de rol van de wijkagent gaat overnemen bij WhatsApp Buurtpreventie groepen. Dit voorstel brengt alle actoren samen en zal zorgen voor een groep waarin het beste van beide werelden wordt gecombineerd; de kosten voor de politie en de gemeente zullen gedeeld worden en lager zijn en groepen zullen beter functioneren en een langere levensduur hebben.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Neighborhood watches are not a new phenomenon in the Netherlands and have been around since the late 1960's (Lub, 2016a). In recent years, the number of neighborhood watches has continued to increase (Lub, 2016a). However, these groups display marked differences in comparison to the older version of neighborhood watches. These differences can be ascribed to technological developments and the rise of smartphones. In the past few decades, the developments concerning electronics and ways of communications took a large leap. Contact through mobile phones was limited to phone calls and text messages, while we now see that it has become unimaginable to not have contact through smartphones with apps like WhatsApp, Telegram or Facebook Messenger. The developments in technology in communications also had its effect on community police officers and neighborhood watch groups. Apps like WhatsApp makes it much easier to create such groups and create new possibilities for community police officers to keep in touch with inhabitants of a neighborhood and simultaneously receive information addressing issues in those neighborhoods Lub (2016a); (Meijer, Grimmelikhuijsen, Fictorie, & Bos, 2011). This, paired with the fact that the usage of smartphones and apps keeps increasing, is a good explanation for the continuing rise of the number of neighborhood watch groups (Bervoets, van Ham, & Verwerda, 2016).

Many of these neighborhood watches are products of a self-responsibilization processes that resulted from an appeal that the Dutch government made to their citizens to become involved in public matters (van der Land, 2014). In many neighborhoods, citizens patrol and keep watch of their own neighborhood to improve the overall safety. In almost half of the Dutch municipalities a neighborhood watch team is active, adding up to a total of 661 neighborhood watches active in the Netherlands (Lub, 2014, 2016a). The current consensus is that around 70% of these groups are initiated by civilians while the rest are (local) government initiatives (Lub, 2016a). The increase in neighborhood watch groups can be partially ascribed to the rise of developments in electronics and communications such as WhatsApp. Akkermans and Vollaard (2015) show in their research that the intertwining of such groups and electronics result in the increase of such groups and the decrease of crime in the neighborhoods where these groups are active.

A lot of research has been conducted concerning the effects of neighborhood watch groups on crime and the legitimacy of the community police officer (Akkermans & Vollaard, 2015) (Lub,

2014, 2016a) (Henig, 1984). Even the demographic of members of these groups and what types of groups can be identified has been researched (Bervoets et al., 2016; Kang, 2015). However, the effect of group type on the performance of the group is a topic that is under-researched (Lub, 2014; Van der Land & Van Leeuwen, 2014; Van Eijk, 2013). The academic literature currently acknowledges three organizational types of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups, namely the groups that have no affiliation with a third party, groups that are affiliated to a local government/municipality and groups that are affiliated to the police (Lub, 2016a, 2016b). In this research, the focus will be on groups that are affiliated with either the police or the local municipality. To gain a better understanding of what Neighborhood Watch Groups are, what their history is, what role WhatsApp plays and what the role is of third parties like the community police officer, literature of other researchers was used. The works of (Kang, 2015; Lub, 2016a; Smith, Novak, & Hurley, 1997) were used to gain background information on Neighborhood Watch Groups and their history. Research by (Akkermans & Vollaard, 2015; Lub, 2014); Seufert, Schwind, Hoßfeld, and Tran-Gia (2015) provided me with information on what role WhatsApp play in local crime prevention and Neighborhood Watch Groups. (Lub, 2014, 2016a, 2016b); Terpstra (2008); (Van der Land & Van Leeuwen, 2014; van Glabbeek, 2016) provided me with information concerning the role of local municipalities and community police officers.

The focus of this research is on the role the 3rd parties like the police and the local municipality play in the performance of the WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups. The effect the absence of these 3rd parties has on these groups is something that is well researched and the general result is that the groups will develop themselves as vigilante groups that have no respect for the law and law enforcement (Lub, 2016a, 2016b; Van der Land & Van Leeuwen, 2014; van Glabbeek, 2016). Recent development shows that these groups tend to show racist behavior, discriminate against women and frequently cross the line concerning the law and use of violence (Akkermans & Vollaard, 2015; Quekel, 2015). Nonetheless, these groups are also useful for the police and the community since they lighten the work load of the police and apprehend criminals (Lub, 2016b). However, what if 3rd parties are not absent? What if the police and/or the local municipality affiliate themselves with WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups? This research will research the effects that the community police officer and the local municipality have on the well-functioning of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups.

1.1. RESEARCH QUESTION

For this research, the following research question was posed: “ *What kind of governmental support makes WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups function better?*”. By taking in account the different aspects that the different types of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups have to deal with, and by comparing the results, the evidence will show which type functions the best in certain situations and which type functions the best overall. But in order to take in account the different aspects that the different types of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups have to deal with and their effects on the performance of these groups, it is prudent to know more about Neighborhood Watches. As such, in the next segment, I will discuss current theories regarding WhatsApp Neighborhood Watches, the types of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups and my expectations concerning the influence of 3rd parties on the well-functioning of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups.

1.2. SCIENTIFIC AND SOCIAL RELEVANCE

My research contributes society as a whole and has scientific relevance. This is due to the fact that the results of this research could potentially help the Dutch National Police, local municipalities and citizens with the creation of much more stable WANWG’s with a 3rd party affiliation that can actually assist police officers instead of hindering them (Van Vliet, 2017). Knowing which organizational type ensures a proper functioning can increase the survivability of the WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups while it can also improve crime rates and the citizens feeling of safety (Bervoets et al., 2016; Brown, Perkins, & Brown, 2003; Lub, 2014, 2016a, 2016b). Besides that, many municipalities are wondering whether they should control the neighborhood watches, if they should simply guide them into the right direction or if they should facilitate them by providing funds and goods (Lub, 2016b; Quekel, 2015). Through this research, local municipalities can better understand what kind of role they should play. This research can help the police and the community police officer in finding their respective roles when they affiliate themselves with neighborhood watches. Learning about the different types of groups and knowing which kind of support they can or should give should improve their view of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups. The findings of this research can be extrapolated to the whole

population of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups that are affiliated with either a local municipality or a community police officer in the Netherlands since it envelopes two of the core types of WhatsApp Neighborhood watch groups that are present in the Netherlands.

This research is scientifically relevant since it focusses on a topic that is hardly researched (Akkermans & Vollaard, 2015; Lub, 2014).

WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups with an affiliation to a third party make up roughly 30% of the total WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups present in the Netherlands, yet the focus in scientific research and the media remains on those groups without an affiliation (Akkermans & Vollaard, 2015; Lub, 2016a; Quekel, 2015; Seufert et al., 2015). Furthermore, questions like which type of groups functions better and why these groups function better remain unanswered because of that. As I mentioned before, research has been conducted on group demography and the effect of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups in general (Bervoets et al., 2016; Kang, 2015). The effects of specific group types, however, are unknown. This research can serve as a stepping-stone for future research on WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups with a 3rd party affiliation as it shows a new perspective on how to view and evaluate WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups and their successes and failures concerning safety.

The research is also scientifically relevant since it focusses on groups of which the members are connected with each other on a completely different level than we are used to. Instead of frequently meeting each other like the old fashioned Neighborhood Watch Groups, they act much more like online societies like chat boxes and forums even though they are, geographically speaking, much closer to each other. With the rise of apps like WhatsApp and Facebook this is a phenomenon that will become present in a lot of social circles, especially as they are slowly becoming most important mean of communication. By researching this phenomenon, a better understanding concerning the process and consequence of this development can be created.

2. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Neighborhood watch groups have been around since the early 1950's and can be seen as a form of civilian police without the power and protection that has been granted to the police by the constitution, laws and regulation created by the government (Henig, 1984). Lub (2016b) defines it as a form of organized volunteering that attempts to contribute to the safety and liveability of neighborhoods. Many neighborhood watches are products of a self-responsibilization processes that is the result of the appeal the Dutch government made to their citizens to become involved in public matters (van der Land, 2014). The first part of this analytical framework will focus on what civic participation is, how this resulted into neighborhood watch groups and what types of neighborhood watch groups can be identified.

2.1. TYPES OF WHATSAPP NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH GROUPS

WhatsApp neighborhood watch groups are neighborhood watches that use WhatsApp as their primary mean of communication. Communicating with each other through applications on smartphones is something that has become part of our everyday lives. As a result, a society without mobile phones to interact with each other seems unthinkable. Technological innovation is the primary cause for this. When we look 15 years back in to the past, we see that it was a whole lot different. At that time, events were unfolding concerning chat platforms and social media. The shift from normal Neighborhood Watch Groups to WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups as we know them today was made possible due to those technological innovations and products (Seufert et al., 2015).

It all started with chat platforms that focused on one-on-one contact like MSN Messenger and AIM. The core feature of these chat platforms was that people could have contact with each other through either plain text messages with emoticons or through video chats. This type of contact became known as 'one-on-one'(Seufert et al., 2015). This all changed when Social Media like Facebook, MySpace and Twitter were introduced. The one-on-one type of contact shifted to a one-to-many form where one person could interact with people all around the world at the same time (Seufert et al., 2015). WhatsApp is the next step in this process as it introduced the 'many-to-many' type of contact through chats that can contain up to 100 persons at the same time.

Of course, over the years companies like Facebook and MSN also introduced places where a ‘many-to-many’ form of contact was introduced, just like WhatsApp (Seufert et al., 2015). Besides technological innovation, the usage of communication apps has also increased (Bervoets et al., 2016). Thus, it is not strange that neighborhood watches started to use platforms like WhatsApp, a platform that is easy to create, maintain and use.

Like normal neighborhood watch groups, WhatsApp neighborhood watch groups conduct surveillance walks, give prevention advise and apprehend suspicious persons or criminals. They are not above the law and are not allowed to use violence (Lub, 2016a; Smith et al., 1997). The groups consist of citizens that live in the neighborhood where the group is active. Unlike normal neighborhood watch groups, the WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch groups use WhatsApp to communicate, plan meetings, alert fellow members and coordinate searches. They can act much faster in case of an emergency, send pictures and can even send videos(Lub, 2016a). If these groups are regulated properly, have clear rules and have a strong leader, they can even assist the police (Lub, 2014, 2016a, 2016b).

Lub (2016a) has conducted some research on who creates WhatsApp neighborhood watch groups in general and found that roughly 70% all the groups are created by citizens themselves. This is due to the fact that community police officers mainly become involved with a group after its creation. His research uses data of more than 400 Dutch neighborhoods and shows that neighborhood watches have a significant effect on the crime rates and feeling of safety. Based on the research already conducted on WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups, three types of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch groups can be identified (Henig, 1984; Kang, 2015; Lub, 2014, 2016a, 2016b; Quekel, 2015; Seufert et al., 2015; Smith et al., 1997).

1. The first type consists of groups created solely by citizens without the help of a community police officer or a 3rd party like the local government. These groups manage themselves, create and uphold their own rules and are rarely in contact with a community police officer or the local government.
2. The second type consists of groups that are formed and/or maintained with the help of a community police officer. They help with creating rules and creating guidelines on how to act in certain situations. These groups are labelled as Groups Affiliated with the community Police officer (GAP).

3. The final and third type consists of groups that are formed and/or maintained with the help of a local municipality. The local municipality provides materials and funds, helps with creating guidelines and rules and can create a platform so other neighborhood watch groups in the city can connect with each other. I label these groups as Groups Affiliated with a local Municipality (GAM).

For this research, only the GAPs and GAMs are important since I want to measure the influence a 3rd party has on the performance of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups. Furthermore, a lot of research has already been conducted concerning WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups without a 3rd party affiliation (Lub, 2014, 2016a, 2016b). This group type is often seen as a nuisance to law enforcement, uses violence and has discriminatory tendencies concerning their members and the people they apprehend (Lub, 2016a; Quekel, 2015).

The purpose of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups in general is to reduce crime rates and increase safety (Lub, 2016a, 2016b). The actions the members and the groups take all must contribute to these goals. For these groups to function well depends on four variables. For this research, the well-functioning of a WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Group is shaped by the following four dependent variables; Hierarchy, Activities, Goals & Rules and Longevity. Paragraph 3.2 will delve deeper into these four dependent variables.

2.2. EXPECTATIONS

Based on the existing theories I propose the following hypotheses concerning the effects the two types of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups have. Figure 1 shows a graphic representation of the proposed hypotheses. The black arrows represent a direct effect while the blue arrows represent an indirect effect of 3rd party affiliation on group longevity. The indirect effect takes place after the effect indicated by the black arrows.

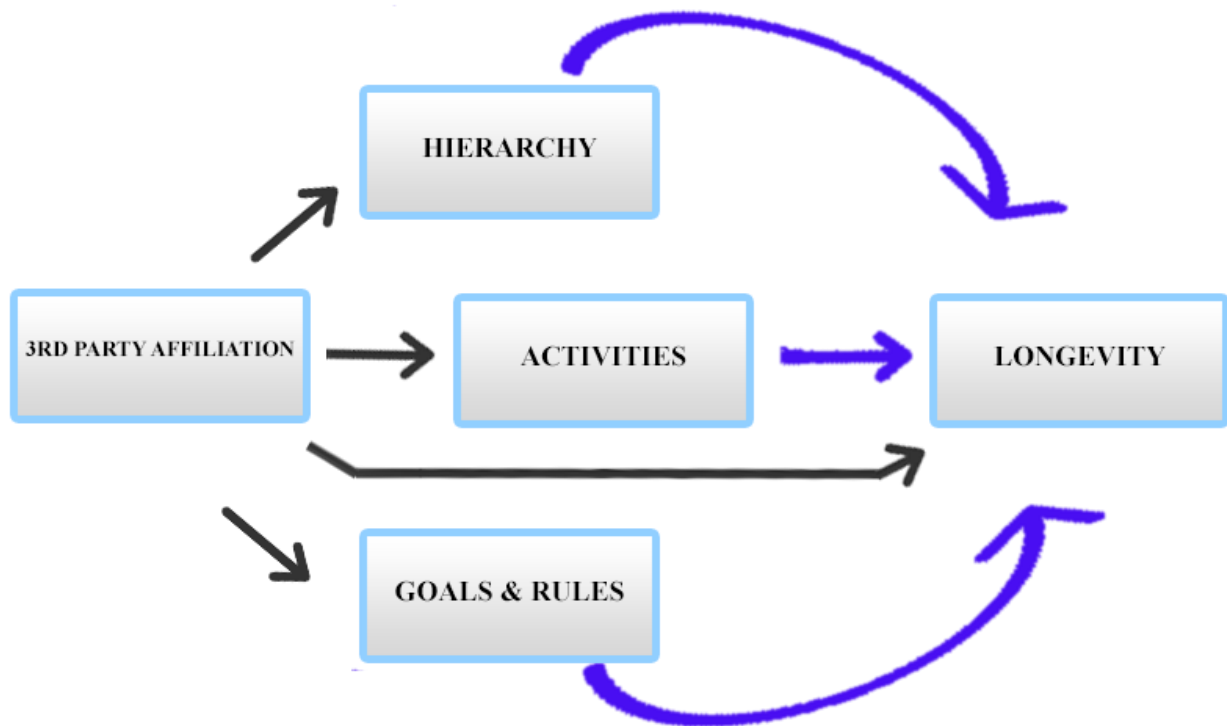


FIGURE 1: EXPECTATION MODEL SHOWING THE (IN)DIRECT EFFECT OF 3RD PARTY AFFILIATION CAN HAVE ON THE DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Groups affiliated with the police (GAPs) will experience more hierarchy than groups affiliated with a local municipality (GAMs).

This expectation is based on the fact that the Dutch National Police is an hierarchical organization (Brodeur, 2010; Palmiotto & Unnithan, 2010; Ratcliffe, 2016). Even though the police tried to become less hierarchical with the community based policing approach, research shows that through the years the police struggled with reducing this hierarchy

(Brodeur, 2010; Palmiotto & Unnithan, 2010). As a result, it is not unthinkable that the GAPS's will have more hierarchy compared to the GAMs. Even though hierarchy can be found in municipalities, it is not present to the same extent as it is the case with the police (Brodeur, 2010; Moody & White, 2003).

There are no differences between GAPs and GAMs concerning the activity type and how frequently activities are conducted.

Both groups enjoy the support of a 3rd party that knows the importance of civic participation and the effect of this participation on the feelings of local safety (Brodeur, 2010; Kearns & Forrest, 2000; Moody & White, 2003). The community police officers conducts during his job many activities that WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups also conduct, so he has a lot of practical information. The local municipality has a lot of practical knowledge concerning the planning and organizing of activities. Therefore, I expect that both GAPs and GAMs will conduct the same type of activities and that they conduct these activities very frequently.

The necessity to enforce the rules is higher in GAMs than with GAPs.

The local municipality is responsible for creating rules. The police is focused on enforcing the law. Because the GAPs know about the difficulties and importance of enforcing the law through their community police officer, I expect it is unnecessary for them to have more as much law enforcing as compared to the GAMs. The GAMs only knows about the importance of creating and having rules, and thus it is not unthinkable that they are encouraged to create rules to stabilize their group. However, creating rules does not mean that people will follow these rules. It is my expectation that GAMs have a higher necessity to enforce rules compared to groups that are not affiliated with the local municipality. This expectation stems from the fact that GAPs are expected to be much more hierarchical, resulting in a self-regulating system (Brodeur, 2010; Palmiotto & Unnithan, 2010). GAMs lack this self-regulating system, which results in the need to enforce the rules much more often.

The influence of the local municipality on hierarchy will have a more positive indirect effect on longevity than the influence of the community police officer.

The Dutch National Police is a well-structured hierarchical organization with a lot of hierarchical layers and roles. This is something that I expect to reflect on the groups they are affiliated with. Because of this hierarchical structure that consists of many layers, I expect them to be much better organized and I expect that activities will be organized more often compared to GAMs. I expect GAMs to be organized more loosely. As a result, it takes longer to organize activities and because it takes longer, fewer activities will take place. However, because GAPs have so many layers, I also expect that the GAPs will be much more inefficiently compared to GAMs, which have fewer hierarchical layers. I expect that this inefficiency will become a negative influence on group longevity.

The influence of the local municipality on activities will have the same indirect effect on longevity as the influence of a community police officer.

This hypothesis stems from the fact that I expect that there are no differences concerning the activity type and how frequently activities are conducted between GAPs and GAMs.

The influence of the local municipality on goals and rules will have a higher positive indirect effect on longevity than the influence of the community police officer.

Whereas the police is responsible for upholding the law, the municipality is responsible for creating them. Municipalities are more experienced with formulating clear and achievable goals and know how to create proper rules. GAMs may obtain some guidance concerning how to create such clear achievable goals and rules. When clear goals and rules are present, people are much more likely to act in accordance with the goals of the group. As a result, such groups will have a higher longevity because members feel more connected (Killen, Hitti, & Mulvey, 2015; Mennecke, Hoffer, & Wynne, 1992; Seufert et al., 2015).

GAMs have a higher longevity compared to GAPs

It is my expectation that groups affiliated with a local municipality have a higher longevity. The local municipality is often present when the groups are created, providing a stable foundation. The community police officer often binds himself to the group after its creation. Bad habits may have formed by the and as such could be difficult to correct..

The next part of this thesis, the methodology part will further elaborate on my research design, my variables, sub questions and means of data collection and data analysis. After the methodology part, the results of my research will be analyzed and the questions posed in this thesis will be answered. I will end this thesis with a conclusion in which I will answer my research question and a discussion part where I will reflect on my research and make some police recommendations.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research focusses on two types of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups throughout the Netherlands. The affiliation of these groups lies either with the local municipality or with a community police officer. The purpose of this research is to find out if one of these third party influences will result in a better functioning. The well-functioning of a group is divided into 4 characteristics. The independent variables will influence these characteristics, affecting how a group functions.

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research meets the requirements set by Robson and McCartan (2015), making it a case study. Robson and McCartan (2015, p. 150) define a case study as “a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence.”. The aim of this research is to access, at one time point, a representation of the population of interest, in this case WhatsApp

Neighborhood Watch Groups. As a result, this research is a cross-sectional case study (Yin, 2013).

The research method of this research is purely qualitative. Most of the data in this research will be collected by attending meetings and by conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews (Yin, 2013). Conversations conducted through phone calls and e-mails are used.

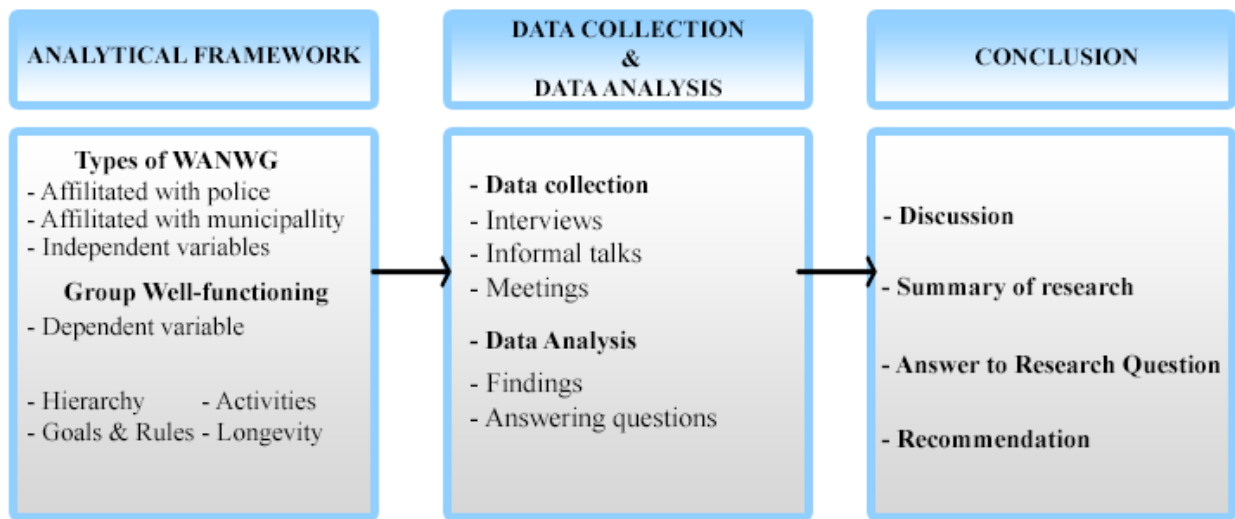


Figure 2: Overview of the structure of this research

Using semi-structured in-depth interviews, I could The inherent flexibility of the method allowed me to respond to unexpected changes without losing adequateness (Yin, 2013). While the interviews were primarily formal in nature, the meetings I attended were very informal. Because these conversation were informal, I could uncover more information and increase the amount of respondents through the snowballing effect (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Penrod, Preston, Cain, & Starks, 2003).In figure 2 you can see an overview of the structure of this research.

3.2. VARIABLES

This research uses two independent variables and one dependent variable as can be seen in *figure 3*. The dependent variable consists of characteristics that give shape to the well -functioning of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch groups. In paragraph 3.2.3 I will elaborate further on these characteristics

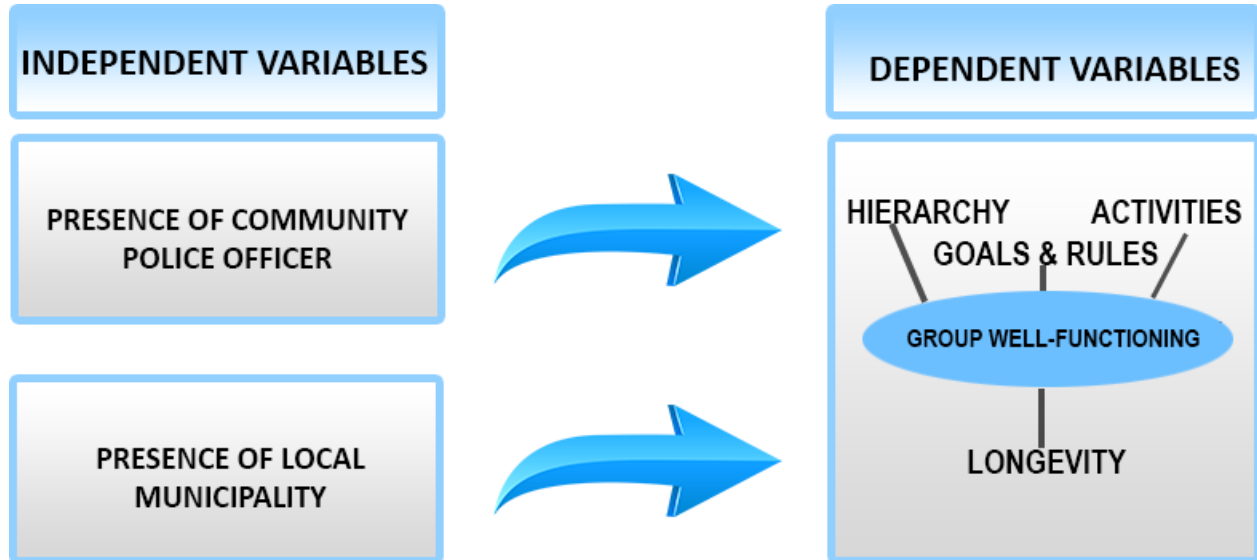


Figure 3 – Independent variables and the dependent variables

3.2.1. INDEPENDENT VARIABLE – PRESENCE OF COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICER

The presence of a community police officer is multifaceted variable. A community police officer is the link between the police and the community. He knows what is going on in the neighborhood, knows the citizens and is most of all an officer of the law (Henig, 1984; Lub, 2016a, 2016b; Smith et al., 1997).

Community police officers either help with creating new groups or help rehabilitate and improve groups that functions poorly. It is at these two moments that a community police officer becomes part of a WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch group (Lub, 2016a, 2016b).

A community police officer's actions in the group are separated into pro-active and reactive actions. He can provide groups with ground rules concerning crime, go with them on patrol walks, persuading neighborhood citizens to join the group, provide the group with equipment and guidance and be very active in the groups WhatsApp chat. Of course, reactive officers only

respond to messages from a group representative and only takes action on his own when he feels that the group is going out of bounds. In the Netherlands, the community police officers are reactive. They do not actively participate in the group and become affiliated with the group after its creation. He or she will provide ground rules like rules on how to act and interact with each other, with possible criminals and with law enforcement. Besides that, he will also provide the group with tips and advice (Lub, 2014, 2016a, 2016b; Van der Land & Van Leeuwen, 2014; van Glabbeek, 2016).

3.2.2. INDEPENDENT VARIABLE – PRESENCE OF LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

The presence of a local municipality is conceptualized differently compared to the community police officer. Where the community police officer communicates directly with the group, the local municipality only communicates through coordinators, which are selected by the groups. Another difference is that the local municipality only supports newly created groups by helping them with creating a foundation based on the rules and guidelines provided by the municipality. The local municipality also provides equipment to the groups like flashlights and are responsible for linking all the groups in the city together in a fully functioning and a city encompassing network. They link the groups through a website, which the municipality created and made available to its citizens.

3.2.3. DEPENDENT VARIABLES – SHAPING THE WELL- FUNCTIONING OF THE GROUP

The purpose of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups in general is to reduce crime rates and increase safety (Lub, 2016a, 2016b). The actions the members and the groups take all must contribute to these goals. The well-functioning of these groups depends on four dependent variables that are influenced by the aforementioned independent variables. For this research, the well-functioning of a WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Group is shaped by the following four variables; Hierarchy, Activities, Goals & Rules and Longevity.

The dependent variable *Hierarchy* is functionally adaptive and enhances a group's chances of survival and success (Halevy, Y. Chou, & D. Galinsky, 2011). Hierarchy makes division of labor much easier, and, as a result, coordination. It also reduces conflict and enhances voluntary

cooperation. These are factors that contribute to a well-functioning Neighborhood Watch Group (Lub, 2016a). However, there are different degrees of hierarchy. Halevy et al. (2011) and Ronay, Greenaway, Anicich, and Galinsky (2012) differentiate between three types of hierarchy. The first type consists of multiple layers due to delegation. Either the leader or the group itself created a situation in which multiple persons are responsible for a variety of tasks. As a result, coordinating becomes much harder since plans have to pass multiple persons before they can approve of it. However, plans do enjoy the support of multiple members because of this. The fact that every plan of action has to pass multiple hierarchical layers can result in an ineffective group that takes a lot of time to take action. The second type concerns hierarchy with one leader that decides everything. Coordinating the group is effortless since the leader can decide everything. He enjoys the support of the majority of the group and has the authority to act how seems fit. The group can act much more effectively, but when multiple plans don't have the planned results, there is only one person to blame. This type of hierarchy is at its best when a capable leader is present. The final hierarchical type is when there is no hierarchy. Everyone is equal and plans and actions are decided upon with democratic manners through a majority vote. This type can be rather tedious since everyone has a say in all the matters. As a result, groups may act rather ineffective (Halevy et al., 2011; Ronay et al., 2012). The ratio of actual members compared to possible members in a neighborhood also determines the well-functioning of the group. A group with a high ratio enjoys the support of the neighborhood, while a low ratio can represent a low amount of support. Thus, when a group has a low ratio, they do not enjoy a lot of support and this affects their well-functioning (Halevy et al., 2011; Ronay et al., 2012).

The second dependent variable is *Activities*. The type and frequency of the *activities* a group conducts and organizes contributes to the well-functioning of a group. There are two types of activities according to (Akkermans & Vollaard, 2015); Lub (2016b); Reactive and Pro-Active. Reactive groups show no initiative and only respond to problems. Instead of preventing crime and unwanted situations from happening, they only act to stop the current situation and want to prevent it from happening again in the short term. Pro-active groups take the initiative; they patrol their own neighborhoods and conduct stakeouts without any reason to do so. They actively keep their neighborhoods safe and do this for the long term. There are groups that organize surveillance walks around the neighborhood, look out for strange activities or persons while others hang up cameras, signs and sensors. However, a neighborhood watch is not primarily

about surveillance. It also focusses on prevention, detection and signaling (Akkermans & Vollaard, 2015; Lub, 2014, 2016a; Van der Land & Van Leeuwen, 2014). The frequency of these activities also contributes to the well-functioning of a group. If a group rarely conducts or organizes activities, they are not functioning properly. The more frequent a group acts, the better (Kang, 2015; Lub, 2016a, 2016b).

The third dependent variable is *Goals & Rules*. The goals and rules of a group determines how and why group acts (Lub, 2016a, 2016b). The goals of the group determine how a group behaves. Without proper goals a group will not exist for long (Lub, 2016a). The Oxford English dictionary defines goals as follows; “the object of a person's ambition or effort; an aim or desired result.” A group needs clear formulated *goals* to operate and these *goals* need to be supported by the members (Lub, 2016a, 2016b; Shin & Ryan, 2014). *Goals* can be created by the group members together or solely by the group leader but a third party can also provide them (Lub, 2014). For goals to be present is one thing, but is also important to find out if the group strives to fulfill these *goals*. If a group does not act in accordance to their goals, people may lose faith and confidence and this will result in the group not functioning well. It will also reduce the longevity of the group (Lub, 2016a, 2016b).

Besides goals, WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch groups also have rules. The Oxford English Dictionary defines *rules* as; “a set of explicit or understood regulations or principles governing conduct or procedure within a particular area of activity.” *Rules* work two ways; People must *abide* them, but sometimes they also need to be *enforced*. Rules are in place to ensure that members behave themselves and do not act out of line or use violence. This kind of behavior is known as “cowboy behavior” (Lub, 2016b). This behavior easily spreads to the rest of the groups, which can result in a big problem for the well-functioning and longevity of the group (Lub, 2016b). Rules can be provided by a third party, created by group members and can be created by the group leader. The fact that there are rules present does not mean that people abide to these rules. Not abiding to the rules will result in the group not functioning well. There are groups that want to prevent this from happening so they appoint a law enforcer that is the group leader himself, is appointed by the group leader, elected by the group itself or is provided by a 3rd party.

Groups can also choose to set an age limit. According to Lub (2016a) and Harrison, Price, Gavin, and Florey (2002) groups set age limits to increase their performance. This limit can be a minimum age, a maximum age or both. Groups chose to set these limits to ensure stability and performance. Too many youths can result in an unruly group while a group with too many elderly can result in an inactive group (Harrison et al., 2002; Lub, 2014, 2016a; Moody & White, 2003).

The final dependent variable, *Longevity, or life expectancy* focusses on if and how long a group can continue to exist if they continue acting the way they are currently doing (Halevy et al., 2011; Lub, 2014, 2016a; Ronay et al., 2012). Longevity is affected by multiple variables. Not only do the independent variables concerning 3rd party affiliation directly affect longevity, they also do it indirectly through the dependent variables Hierarchy, Activities, Goals and Rules and Longevity.

3.3. SUB QUESTIONS

The main question that I will answer in this thesis is; ‘‘ *what ways of organizing make WhatsApp neighborhood watch groups function better or worse?*’’

To answer this question in the best way possible I constructed five sub questions, which all represent the dependent variables that together form group well-functioning as portrayed in paragraph 3.2.

- What influence do the local municipality and the community police officer have on the Hierarchy of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups?
- What influence do local municipality and the community police officer have on the goals and rules of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups?
- What influence do the local municipality and the community police officer have on the activities of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups?
- What are the (in)direct influences of the local municipality and the community police officer on the Longevity of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups?

3.4. DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative research methods were utilized to collect and analyze the data. To answer the research- and sub questions in this research I conduct interviews that I had face to face and participate in meetings. I also had a brief interaction on the phone with a representative of a WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Group affiliated with the police. The people I interviewed have an affiliation with the two types of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups: community police officers and government officials.

Meetings are activities organized to improve the functioning of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups and the interaction between actors that are involved with these groups like the police, the local municipality, researchers and the district attorney's office. During the the meetings, participants will discuss the latest developments, talk about their own experiences and about how they can improve their performance and interactions with others. I did not ask any questions during these meetings. I was there as an observer twhodid not interfere with the meeting itself. After the meetings ended, I conducted some informal talks with the people present. During these meetings and interviews, notes were taken. After the meetings, these notes were distilled into reports.

In table 1 you can see an overview of all the meetings I observed and interviews I conducted. In total, I received information from:

- 8 representatives of groups affiliated with the police through meetings
- 1 representatives of a group affiliated with the police through an interview and a phone call.
- 7 representatives of groups affiliated with a local municipality through meetings
- 5 community police officers through informal talks
- 1 representative of the municipality of Barneveld through an interview

- Date	Location	Specifics	Type
23 rd May, 2017	Kootwijkerbroek	WhatsApp groepen: buurtpreventie en burgerwachten meeting	Meeting
June 28 th , 2017	Oldenzaal	Interview with a community police officer	Interview
June 28 th , 2017	Oldenzaal	Meeting with WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Group	Meeting
July 4 th , 2017	Barneveld	Interview with Team Leader of the Safety, Permits and Monitoring division of the municipality of Barneveld	Interview
July 4 th , 2017	Barneveld	Meeting with 4 representatives of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups Barneveld	Meeting
July 5 th , 2017	Enschede	Interview with representative of a WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Group in Enschede	Interview
July 7 th , 2017	Deventer	Interview with a community police officer in Deventer	Interview

Table 1: Overview of meetings and interviews

The largest meeting I participated in was organized by Het Ontwikkelplein. During this meeting, representatives of the police, the justice department, municipalities and WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups were present. The goal of this meeting was to improve the collaboration between these parties. They tried to achieve this by showing presentations concerning participation and local safety, by starting discussions and by sharing information. During this meeting I acted as an overt observer during the meeting and conducted informal interactions after the meeting

The interviews are semi-structured in nature and consist of open-ended questions. The questions asked in the interview focused on the interaction between members, the 3rd parties are involved with the groups, the community police officers, the local municipality, interaction with other groups, the activities, the activities they undertake, the group dynamics and the presence of rules and rule upholding.

3.5. SAMPLING

The samples in this research were collected through snowball sampling and by approaching people through random sampling during meetings. Snowball sampling is a non-probabilistic form of sampling in which persons initially chosen for the sample are used as informants to locate other persons having necessary characteristics making them eligible for the sample (Penrod et al., 2003, pp. 101-102). The samples were involved in neighborhood watch groups in the Netherlands. Their groups were affiliated with either a community police officer or a local municipality. It did not matter if they were only a member or a group leader. Instead of being a group member, the participant can also be a (community) police officer or a representative of a local municipality.

In total, I spoke with 15 representatives of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups. Nine belonged to groups affiliated with the police while six belonged to groups affiliated with a local municipality. Besides representatives of groups, I also spoke with five community police officers and a representative of the municipality of Barneveld.

3.6. MEASURING

To fully shape the concept of well-functioning, the dependent variables need to have values. These values will be used to ascertain the differences between the results created by the effect of the independent variables, in this case the affiliation of the groups.

3.6.1. HIERARCHY

Hierarchy will be measured on a nominal scale. The amount of hierarchical layers can determine the well-functioning of the group. The independent variables, the affiliation of the group, can affect the amount of hierarchical layers and thus the amount of leaders. Therefore, the focus is on the amount of leaders:

- **Democracy:** There are no leaders, only members. Everyone is equal.
- **Elective dictatorship:** There is one leader, which enjoys the support of the group.
- **Presidency:** There is one leader while there are also other hierarchical roles present.

The ratio of actual members compared to possible members can indicate whether the group enjoys support or not. By comparing the effect the independent variables have on the member ration, it can be determined which group type has a higher ratio and enjoy a higher amount of support. This ratio is measured on a ratio scale with percentages. For example:

- **50%:** 50% of the people in the neighborhood are part of the group
- **70%:** 70% of the people in the neighborhood are part of the group
- **?:** Unknown

3.6.2. ACTIVITIES

The type of activities a group conduct are based on a dichotomous scale. By using a dichotomous value, a clear line is drawn between all the activities a group can conduct.

- **Pro-Active:** The group conducts an activity out of their own initiative, not as a reaction to a certain situation.
- **Reactive:** The group conducts an activity as a reaction to a certain situation.
- **Mixed:** The group conducts both Pro-Active and Reactive activities

Besides activity type, the frequency of conducting activities is also important. The frequency is measured on a nominal scale:

- **Dormant:** No activities are conducted
- **Sleepy:** The group conducts an activity one or twice a month,
- **Probing:** The group conducts an activity one every week.
- **Active:** The group conducts two or more activities every week.

3.6.3. GOALS & RULES

A WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Group can create its own goals, but someone else can also provide the goals. A nominal scale is used to determine who provided the goals

- **Created by the group**
- **Created by the group leader**
- **Provided by a third party**

To measure if the group acts in accordance to their goals, a nominal scale is created:

- **Spiritless:** The goal lost sight of their goals and does not act accordingly.
- **Struggling:** The group strives to accomplish their goals, but cannot fulfill them all.
- **Successful:** The group acts in accordance to all their goals.

To measure how the rules are created or obtained a nominal scale is used:

- **External:** Rules are created and provide by a third party
- **Internal:** Rules are created by the group
- **Forced:** Rules are created by the group leader
- **Absent:** There are no rules present

To measure whether members are abiding to the rules, an ordinal scale is created:

- **Chaos:** Everyone disregards the rules
- **Partial chaos:** Most of the time rules are ignored
- **Neutral:** Sometimes people abide by the rules, sometimes people disregard the rules.
- **Partial Utopia:** Most of the times people abide by the rule
- **Utopia:** Everyone abides by the rules

To measure if rules are enforced a dichotomous scale is created;

- **Yes:** Rules are enforced
- **No:** Rules are not enforced

To measure who enforces rules, a nominal scale is created:

- **Third Party:** A third party is responsible for enforcing the rules
- **Elected enforcer:** An enforcer elected by the group
- **Group leader:** The group leader enforces the rules
- **Appointed by group leader:** The group leader appointed a rule enforcer

Having a minimum and/or maximum age also is an important factor for the well-functioning of groups. Whether a group has such a limit is measured on a dichotomous scale:

- **Yes***
- **No**
- *+, - and ~are used to indicate whether there is a minimum age limit (-), a maximum age limit (+). It is possible to have both a minimum and a maximum age limit (+-).

3.6.4. LONGEVITY

To measure longevity, the following nominal scale is used;

- **Dissolution:** The group will cease to exist in less than a month.
- **Troubled:** The group has a maximum longevity of one year.
- **Long and prosperous:** The group is expected to exist for longer than a year.
- **Unknown:** More information is needed to determine the longevity.

3.7. DATA ANALYSIS

Just like the data collection, the data analysis was also conducted in a qualitative way through an inductive approach. An inductive research approach can be used to (a) condense raw qualitative data, such as notes, interviews and recordings, into a brief, summary format; (b) establish clear links between the evaluation or research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data; and (c) develop a framework of the underlying structure of experiences or processes that are evident in the raw data (Babbie, 2010; Thomas, 2006). The general inductive approach provides an easily used and systematic set of procedures for analyzing qualitative data that can produce reliable and valid findings (Thomas, 2006, p. 237).

After the data collection, the data was compiled in reports and analyzed by establishing links between the goals of my research (the sub questions) and the data. The final step was to create a theory or an expectation based on the experiences and processes that could be found in the data. Through this inductive approach, I answered the sub questions of my research while I could also come to a conclusion and an answer to my research question.

In addition, the research can be conducted everywhere in the Netherlands where Neighborhood Watch Groups are active that are affiliated with either a community police officer or a local municipality without altering the research strategy. However, one should keep in mind that the

sample size is rather small and that my research is based on qualitative research. As a result, I cannot come to a quantitative conclusion, but one supported by qualitative data.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

During my research, besides obtaining information concerning my research questions, I also obtained some background information regarding the community police officers and local municipalities involved with WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups. Before I will analyze the data and answer my research questions, I will first provide the findings related to both of these 3rd parties. This information will provide you with a better understanding of the roles these parties fulfill and the views they have concerning WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups and their interactions with these groups.

4.1. COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICER

I observed a variety of community police officers stationed throughout the Netherlands during the meetings I participated in. These community police officers all have their own views concerning WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch groups. While some see these groups as a hindrance, others see them as an asset that they can use to understand the neighborhood in which they operate. This is in line with the findings of Lub (2016a); (Lub, 2016b) During my observations of these officers I gathered a lot of information concerning their views and was able to create the following list of **pros and cons according to Police officers:**

- Pros:
 - Increases social cohesion in the neighborhood
 - Helps improving the bond between citizens and the police
 - Can 'replace' the police in remote area's
 - Can lighten the workload of the police
 - Stimulates citizens safety initiatives

- Cons
 - Groups disturb crime scenes
 - Vigilante behavior
 - Use of violence

- Can result in anti-police groups
- Creates a work overload for the police
- Police lacks time and resources to get involved properly with the groups

The Community police officers I observed are not actively involved with the groups and show passive behavior. Most of the times they are not even present in the WhatsApp group and indirectly communicate with the group through their leaders. They can provide their group with feedback on how to act in certain situation. However, sometimes the law does not allow them to do so. The police officers mainly provide the groups with rules, hierarchy, guidelines, training and advice on how to act in certain situations. All the officers I have spoken with provide their groups with a presentation concerning the SAAR Principle. The SAAR principle is build up from the following building blocks (Lub, 2016a):

Signaleren (Perceive): Always be alert and perceptive of suspicious situations.

Alarmeren (Alerting): Call the police in case of suspicious situations or criminal behavior

App it: Post about the situation in your WhatsApp group to keep everyone up-to-date

Reageren (Respond): Act accordingly. Always follow the orders of the police.

Some officers provide their groups with training on how to spot suspicious or criminal behavior. By doing so they reduce the amount of false flags and improve the quality of the group (Lub, 2014, 2016b).

What community police officers fear the most are groups without any affiliation to a third party like the police or a municipality. A good example of such groups are the group in Kootwijk and the one in Aalburg (Lub, 2016a; Quekel, 2015). These groups created their own rules and sometimes crossed the line. They discriminated, used violence and sometimes took matters into their own hands. With their helicopters and bulletproof vests, they no longer are simple neighborhood watch group (Lub, 2014, 2016a, 2016b). Some officers even go as far as calling them private police.

4.2. LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

Since Barneveld is one of the few municipalities in The Netherlands that provides a complete network of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups with full coverage, I selected neighborhood watch groups that originate from this municipality for my research. Besides groups from Barneveld, groups from Ede were selected. The municipality of Ede sees the way how Barneveld handles their WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups as a blueprint for how they should handle their groups.

Barneveld has been supporting neighborhood watch groups since 2012 and has accumulated a lot of experience in this area (Appendix B, p. 49, r.8-12). They started with text-message groups that were created in a rural neighborhood. It took a long time for the police to respond so they created a platform that could facilitate swift action from the citizens. The approach soon proved its worth when the number of burglaries went down and crime numbers were reduced. In 2013, the groups started to use WhatsApp, making them more dynamic and effective. The municipality felt that with WhatsApp, a larger amount of people could be reached and more groups could be created (Appendix B, p.11-12). They decided that they wanted to nurture such WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups from scratch so they could ensure a proper and strong foundation. To do so, they created a website on which new groups could sign up. Later, new inhabitants of the neighborhood can use this site to come in contact with their respective neighborhood groups. Besides providing the citizens with a website, the municipality also distributed signs that inform people that a WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Group is active in this area, they purchased flashlights, reflective vests and walky-talkies and they provide the groups with goals and basis ground rules like the SAAR principle. Later on, the municipality noticed that there was a need for training on the matter of civil arrests and spotting criminal activities. Therefore, they provided groups that wanted these trainings with educational means and actual instructors so they could learn how to arrest a person and how to spot suspicious behavior (Appendix B, p.12-13).

The municipality fulfills a very passive role and only communicates with the leaders of the groups, the so-called coordinators. These coordinators are elected democratically and enjoy the support of the group members. When the group does not support their coordinator anymore, they are free to select a new one. The municipality will not interfere in any way. They will only provide guidance, products and education.

As of now, there are no known groups in Barneveld that interact with the community police officer in such a way that he or she is a (passive) participant in the group. The municipality however has expressed a wish for the community police officers to become involved with the groups.

As of now, the municipality of Barneveld has 140 active groups (Appendix B, p.11). This number keeps increasing as new neighborhoods are being build and some groups grow so large that members feel the need to split into a new group. The municipality of Ede sees Barneveld as their role model and they roughly implemented the same system. How many groups there are that are affiliated with the municipality of Ede is currently unknown.

Many data has been collected during the duration of my research. In this part of the thesis, I will analyze this data with the help of the measurement scales mentioned earlier. Using the outcomes of my analysis, I will then answer my research questions.

4.3. ANSWERING THE SUB QUESTIONS

This part of the research provides tables at the end of every sub question. These tables are representations of the data I acquired and show a short summary of the data results. The reports of the collected data can be found in Appendix B. The left column of these tables show the groups that were part of this research while the first and second row indicate the dependent variable and its corresponding part of the variable. In the table you will find the value that corresponds with the results of the group.

WHAT INFLUENCE DO THE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY AND THE COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICER HAVE ON THE HIERARCHY OF WHATSAPP NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH GROUPS?

As I explained earlier, the local municipality helps creating groups with a low amount of hierarchy. Generally, there is only one leader, the coordinator, which serves as the spokesperson for the group. As a result, GAMs only have one hierarchical layer as can be seen in table 2, classifying these groups as an *elective dictatorship*. GAMs can react relatively fast to situations since there is only one person that takes all the decisions. That this single hierarchical layer is supported by both the group members and the neighborhood can be derived from the member

ratio of GAMs. As shown in table 2, GAMs have an average member ratio of 70% and higher, which is rather high. One leader of a GAM even stated that;

“the high membership ratio in the neighborhood is something that really stimulates me to keep being a coordinator. It motivates me to visit members and non-members and ask them for improvements so the group can keep improve itself and can attract new members”. (Appendix B, p.14, r.20)

Even though GAMs have the liberty to create their own hierarchical roles, they tend to give all the responsibilities to the coordinator. However, this does not mean that all coordinators are successful. There are known cases in Barneveld where groups were dissatisfied with their coordinator. The Team Leader of the Safety, Permits and Monitoring division of the municipality of Barneveld said the following about this;

“Sometimes groups are dissatisfied with their leader. They feel that he or she does not do enough or does it wrong. Because we are affiliated to their group, the first thing they do is call the municipality so they can voice their dissatisfaction. However there isn't much we can do about it. We are merely there to provide support and give shape to the group, not to meddle in internal affairs. The only thing we can do is tell them to solve this problem on their own in accordance with the other members of their group. This generally results in the group members appointing a new coordinator that reinvigorates the group.” (Appendix B, p.11, r.21)

GAPs are very hierarchic in structure. Unlike the GAMs, they have for every role a person that can fulfill it, creating more layers since there are more people with a variety of responsibilities. Because GAPs have multiple hierarchical layers they are classified as *Presidencies* This is a proper reflection of the hierarchical structure of the Dutch National Police (Gillis, 2014). Even though most community police officers are passive in their contact with the groups, they do manage to change the hierarchical structure of the organization. One community police officer indicated that *“ a proper hierarchy can make a group operate more effectively.* (Appendix B, p.3, r.5)” However, even though their means are effective, they are not efficient. Just like Halevy et al. (2011); (Ronay et al., 2012) stated, these multiple hierarchical layers result in groups acting very inefficient since multiple actors have to agree on every action or plan. As table 2 shows, the member ratio of GAPs is relatively low compared to GAMs since they have an average ratio of

50%. This indicates that, in general, these groups lack the support of 50% of the neighborhood in which they operate.

In short, the influence of the community police officer and local municipality on WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch groups is that the affiliation with a community police officer generally result in a hierarchy that consist of multiple layers and a quite low member ratio. Table 2 shows this through the stark contrast in leader type and the differences in member ratio. Affiliation with a local municipality generally results in a hierarchy that consists of one layer and quite a high average member ratio. In the case of my research, the result was an average ratio of 70% (Total ratio of all known group ratios divided by the amount of groups). More hierarchical layers could indicate that groups may not operate efficiently while a low member ratio could indicate that the group does not enjoy much support in the neighborhood.

HIERARCHY			
	Affiliation	Leader type	Member ratio
ZUTPHEN 1	Community Police Officer	Presidency	60%
ZUTPHEN 2	Community Police Officer	Presidency	60%
EDE 1	Community Police Officer	Presidency	50%
DEVENTER 1	Community Police Officer	Presidency	50%
DEVENTER 2	Community Police Officer	Presidency	40%
OLDENZAAL 1	Community Police Officer	Presidency	50%
DELDEN 1	Community Police Officer	Presidency	50%
ENSCHEDÉ 1	Community Police Officer	Elective Dictatorship	?
EDE 2	Local Municipality	Elective Dictatorship	60%
EDE 3	Community Police Officer	Presidency	50%
BARNEVELD 1	Local Municipality	Elective Dictatorship	70%
BARNEVELD 2	Local Municipality	Elective Dictatorship	?
BARNEVELD 3	Local Municipality	Elective Dictatorship	70%
BARNEVELD 4	Local Municipality	Elective Dictatorship	80%
BARNEVELD 5	Local Municipality	Elective Dictatorship	70%

TABLE 2: DATA RESULTS CONCERNING HIERARCHY

WHAT INFLUENCE DO THE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY AND THE COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICER HAVE ON THE ACTIVITIES OF WHATSAPP NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH GROUPS?

Both the municipality and the community police officer have the same influence when it concerns the activities their respective groups organize and conduct. However, they do affect the frequency of the activities. As you can see in table 3, both GAPs and GAMs are very reactive with some groups conducting mixed activities. There are three groups that are both pro-active and reactive when it comes to the type of activities and thus perform pro-active and reactive activities. However, my results do not indicate that 3rd party affiliation affects the activity type. The more frequent a group acts, the better (Kang, 2015; Lub, 2016a, 2016b). When I apply this on the GAP and GAM, table 3 shows that there are two GAPs in Deventer that hardly conduct any activities, while the rest of the GAPs and GAMs conduct an activity once every week.

Concluding, as can be seen in table 3, all groups conduct the same type of activities, but differ in frequency. GAMs are more active compared to GAPs.

ACTIVITIES		
	Activity type	Frequency
ZUTPHEN 1	Reactive	Probing
ZUTPHEN 2	Reactive	Probing
EDE 1	Mixed	Probing
DEVENTER 1	Reactive	Sleepy
DEVENTER 2	Reactive	Sleepy
OLDENZAAL 1	Reactive	Probing
DELDEN 1	Reactive	Probing
ENSCHEDÉ 1	Mixed	Probing
EDE 2	Reactive	Probing
EDE 3	Reactive	Probing
BARNEVELD 1	Mixed	Probing
BARNEVELD 2	Reactive	Probing

BARNEVELD 3	Reactive	Probing
BARNEVELD 4	Reactive	Probing
BARNEVELD 5	Reactive	Probing

TABLE 3: DATA RESULTS CONCERNING GROUP ACTIVITIES

WHAT INFLUENCE DO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY AND THE COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICER HAVE ON THE GOALS AND RULES OF WHATSAPP NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH GROUPS?

The community police officer has very tough job when it comes to the goals of their WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups since they have to change existing goals and rules in accordance with the wishes of the group members. The very opposite is the case when we look at the GAMs. The local municipality provide these groups with everything they need to create a solid foundation, from rules and goals to materials and funds. Even though they are allowed to introduce new goals, they must keep the core goals provided by the municipality. As I mentioned before, a group needs clearly formulated *goals* to operate and these *goals* need to be supported by the members (Lub, 2016a, 2016b; Shin & Ryan, 2014). As can be seen in table 4; in the case of GAMs, there is a high chance that the goals of the group are not supported by the members since they have no say in these goals, unlike the GAPS. However, the municipality of Barneveld did proper research concerning these goals and made sure that, in general, these goals are universally applicable. As a result, the goals of GAPS are generally similar to the goals of WAP's, focusing on increasing social cohesion, feelings of safety and reducing crime, and they have the freedom to adjust these goals. The fact that these goals are proper for both group types can be derived from table 4, which shows that, with the exception of two groups, groups have no problems in general to adhere to the goals of their groups. A community police officer in Oldenzaal stated that *“the WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups in Oldenzaal are considered by the police as very useful. The groups makes citizens more willingly to report crime and interact with each other while they also increase the feeling of safety in the neighborhood.”* (appendix B, p.25, r. 10) A great example of groups adhering to their goals.

When it concerns the creation of rules, it becomes apparent that a community police officer, just like the local municipality, provide the most basic ground rules to the group like the SAAR

principle and rules concerning how to interact with each other in- and outside the chat. With the exception of one group in Ede, all group rules are created and provided by an external party as can be seen in table 4. Both group types are provided with the SAAR principle, a set of rules that indicate how a person should act in a criminal or suspicious situation. That the SAAR principle is very successful and easy to apply. The community police officer in Oldenzaal stated that *“The SAAR principle is very important for the functioning of the group. Because of that, I show new groups a presentation concerning the SAAR principle and how it must be applied”* (Appendix B, p.25, r.23). Team Leader of the Safety, Permits and Monitoring division of the municipality of Barneveld feels that *“The SAAR principle helped the groups in being accepted by the police. The SAAR principle forces groups to act in such a way that members remain safe and do not disturb the crime scene, while they can report everything to the police at the same time”* (Appendix B, p.13, r.9).

The fact that rules are present does not mean that everybody abides by those rules. Rules are in place to ensure that members behave themselves and do not act out of line or use violence. This kind of behavior is known as *“cowboy behavior”* (Lub, 2016b). As you can see in table 4, a big difference concerning the abiding of rules between GAPs and GAMs become clear. Table 4 clearly shows that GAPs are having some issues with members not abiding by the rules of the group. This is in sharp contrast to the GAMs where in the majority of the time people abide by the rules that are present in the group. The fact that the GAPs have some issues with abiding by the rules may be a result of who enforces these rules. The literature by Brodeur (2010) and Lub (2016a) indicates that GAP would be largely self-regulatory and almost without the need of a rule enforcer. Our research indicates that there is in fact a person present that enforces rules and that person is either appointed by the leader of the group, or elected by the members of the group. GAMs give this role to the group leader. The representative of a group in Deventer that does not perform well when it comes to abiding by the rules stated that; *“... this group is situated in a trailer park. In such parks, people have their own sense of community and their own set of rules. It can be seen as a completely different culture and this culture tends to clash with values of the police. This is clearly reflected in the way they abide to the rules of the group that were created with the help of a community police officer.”* (Appendix B, p.8, r.27) As a result, GAMs can be considered much more stable when it comes to abiding by the group rules, but whether this can be contributed to solely the presence of a law enforcer needs to be further investigated.

All groups, with the exception of the two GAP in Deventer, have regulations concerning the age of group members. In all these cases there were no rules concerning a maximum age. However, all groups did have a minimum age of 18. The reason for this minimum age limit is that the groups want to have a certain level of maturity. They do not want a maximum age limit because they want the group to be accessible for all neighbors. The groups in Deventer do not have an age limit since they feel that everyone should contribute to the neighborhood, young and old.

Summarizing, the first apparent difference due to 3rd party affiliation is the creation of goals. Table 4 shows that the influence of the community police officer results in groups that have goals created by the group itself. GAMs have goals created by their 3rd party; the local municipality. The second difference is goal adherence. Table 4 shows that two GAPs are struggling with adhering to the goals while the GAMs experience no problems at all. Table 4 also shows that, with the exception of one GAP, all rules are created externally. When it comes to abiding to the rules, table 4 shows that the influence of a community police officer results in groups that experience some trouble with abiding to the rules. The influence of the local municipality on abiding rules very positive. GAMs experience no problems with rule abiding whatsoever. Another big difference that could be contributed to the type of third party the group is affiliated with, is the selection of a rule enforcer. Table 4 shows that GAPs have a rule enforcer that is either elected or appointed. GAMs attribute the role of rule enforcer to their group leader. When it concerns age limits, table 4 shows that two GAPs have no age limit. The other GAPs and all the GAMs have a minimum age limit.

GOALS & RULES						
	Goal creation	Goal adherence	Rule creation	Rule abiding	Rule enforcing	Rules concerning age
ZUTPHEN 1	Group	Successful	External	NEUTRAL	Elected	Yes, -
ZUTPHEN 2	Group	Successful	External	NEUTRAL	Elected	Yes, -
EDE 1	Group	Successful	Internal	NEUTRAL	Appointed	Yes, -
DEVENTER 1	Group	Struggling	External	Spiritless	Appointed	No
DEVENTER 2	Group	Successful	External	NEUTRAL	Elected	No

OLDENZAAL 1	Group	Successful	External	NEUTRAL	Elected	Yes, -
DELDEN 1	Group	Successful	External	NEUTRAL	Elected	Yes, -
ENSCHEDÉ 1	Group	Struggling	External	Partial Utopia	Group Leader	Yes, -
EDE 2	3 rd Party	Successful	External	Partial Utopia	Group Leader	Yes, -
EDE 3	Group	Successful	External	Partial Utopia	Appointed	Yes, -
BARNEVELD 1	3 rd Party	Successful	External	Partial Utopia	Group Leader	Yes, -
BARNEVELD 2	3 rd Party	Successful	External	Partial Utopia	Group Leader	Yes, -
BARNEVELD 3	3 rd Party	Successful	External	Partial Utopia	Group Leader	Yes, -
BARNEVELD 4	3 rd Party	Successful	External	Partial Utopia	Group Leader	Yes, -
BARNEVELD 5	3 rd Party	Successful	External	Partial Utopia	Group Leader	Yes, -

TABLE 4: DATA RESULTS CONCERNING GOALS & RULES

WHAT ARE THE (IN)DIRECT INFLUENCES OF THE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY AND THE COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICER ON THE LONGEVITY OF WHATSAPP NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH GROUPS?

Local municipalities and Community Police Officers have very large direct and indirect influence on groups when it comes to longevity. However, it is very hard to compare these influences with each other. The core reason for this is that groups mostly seek out community police officers to ask for advice since their groups is slowly falling apart. These groups are already in a worrisome

state. They feel that they do not have proper goals or cannot achieve these goals and are more of a hindrance than a help (Lub, 2014, 2016b).

GAMs receive a lot of support in the form of funds, products like walky-talkies and flashlights, a website and training. Because of this support, members of GAMs feel that they are taken very seriously by their municipality. A coordinator of a GAM even went as far to state that ‘*without the funds and products provided by the local municipality, many groups would not even conduct activities. Now that they have flashlights, Walky-Talkies and reflective jackets, they feel much safer. Without this help, these groups would not be so successful!*’ (Appendix B, p.12, r.29).

GAPs do not enjoy such support. They do not receive funds and products but they do get tips and training, however, this does of course not compare with the help that GAMs receive.

According to Mennecke et al. (1992) the longevity of the group depends on the members orientation concerning authority. A group needs authority and rules to function properly. Groups also need commonly shared goals. Without it, they will lack the drive and ambition to function properly (Mennecke et al., 1992).

By adopting a hierarchical structure from the community police officer, they prolonged the longevity of their group since the community police officer introduced them to authority, rules and proper goals. When you look at GAMs, you will notice that the municipality was present since the creation of the group. They introduced a system with one hierarchical layer that resulted in groups that could react very efficiently to developments. This stands in sharp contrast to GAPs, which act effective but not very efficient due to all the hierarchical layers that are present. Because of this inefficiency, the longevity of a group may be reduced since members may feel that their actions do not have the intended effect. The opposite is the case with the GAMs since they only have one hierarchical layer that must consist of a capable leader (Halevy et al., 2011; Ronay et al., 2012).

As I explained earlier, reactive activities and not conducting activities frequently will lower the longevity of the group. As can be seen in table 3, in general, both the GAMs and GAPs are reactive while activities take place once every week. This results in a lower longevity according to (Kang, 2015); Lub (2016a); (Lub, 2016b). However, my research also indicates that 3rd party affiliation also affects the quality of the activities, which can lead to an increase in longevity.

However, more research is needed to further analyze the affect of the quality of the activities on the longevity of a WhatsApp Neighborhood watch.

By providing rules, goals and guidelines from the start, the municipality helped creating a firm foundation and ensured a high longevity. The presence of supported goals and clear rules concerning how to interact with each other, like the SAAR principle, influences the survivability of groups according to (Akkermans & Vollaard, 2015). Without proper rules and goals, people lose their trust in the group. Their ambition and drive will also decline, resulting in members leaving (Mennecke et al., 1992). This can also be seen in my data results with the groups in Deventer as you can see in table 2 and 4. Their member ratio has become very low, they do not act in accordance to their goals, members violate the group rules and their longevity and as such, their longevity was deemed very low. To reign in their members, groups use rule enforcers. These enforcers make sure that people abide by the rules of the group, which in turn should increase the longevity and reduce real breaking (Lub, 2016a). The rule enforcer of the GAMs is the group leader, while the rule enforcer of the GAPs is either appointed by the group leader or elected by the group members. This may contribute to the fact that GAPs have some issues with members breaking the law while GAMs do not have such problems. Both the GAMs and GAPs have in general the same minimum age limit of 18 years to ensure a certain degree of maturity in the group while they do not have a maximum age limit. Because these groups ensure a certain degree of maturity through a minimum age requirement in their groups, they increase the group's longevity (Lub, 2014, 2016a; Seufert et al., 2015; van Glabbeek, 2016). In table 5 you can see the longevity of the groups that participated in this research. As you can see, the GAMs experience less problems and have more stability in general, resulting in more groups with a high longevity while there some GAPs that have low longevity. Most alarming are the groups in Deventer. Their longevity is so low that I expect that it is a matter of time before they cease to exist.

LONGEVITY	
ZUTPHEN 1	Long and Prosperous
ZUTPHEN 2	Long and Prosperous
EDE 1	Long and Prosperous
DEVENTER 1	Dissolution
DEVENTER 2	Troubled

OLDENZAAL 1	Long and Prosperous
DELDEN 1	Long and Prosperous
ENSCHEDÉ 1	Unknown
EDE 2	Long and Prosperous
EDE 3	Long and Prosperous
BARNEVELD 1	Long and Prosperous
BARNEVELD 2	Long and Prosperous
BARNEVELD 3	Long and Prosperous
BARNEVELD 4	Long and Prosperous
BARNEVELD 5	Long and Prosperous

TABLE 5: LONGEVITY OF THE GROUPS

5. CONCLUSION

What ways of organizing make WhatsApp neighborhood watch groups function better or worse?

This question is what keeps many WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups, community police officers, local municipalities and me busy. To answer this question I first had to determine what makes a group function/perform well. After thoroughly analyzing the research already conducted on WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups it became clear that it depended on the hierarchy of the group, the activities the groups conducted, the goals and rules of the group and the longevity of the group. I created sub questions to better understand the matter at hand so I could properly formulate an answer to my research question. I conducted interviews and attended meetings with a municipality employee, community police officers, WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Group representatives and group members.

When it concerns hierarchy, GAPs can be seen as a *presidency* while GAMs can be seen as an *elected dictatorship*. The community police officer brings over his hierarchical views of how organizations should be to neighborhood watch group while local municipality kept it rather simple with one hierarchical layer; The coordinator. Groups affiliated with community police officers also tend to have a lower actual member/possible member ratio which can indicate that the group does not enjoy much support in the neighborhood. This finding is in line with my expectation that Groups affiliated with the police (GAPs) will experience more hierarchy than groups affiliated with a local municipality (GAMs).

Concerning the matter of goals and rules, this research shows that the goals and rules of GAMs are always provided by the municipality. Groups can add goals and rules on their own discretion. GAPs do it the other way around. First, they created their own rules and goals. After the community police officer becomes affiliated, he provides the group with guidance. As a result, the goals and rules of the group are reformed. Nonetheless, this research shows that reshaping a group is a rather tough job. After reshaping the goals and rules, GAPs still experience some issues with members not abiding by the rules and adhering to the goals. This finding concerning rule abiding does not match with my expectations. Where I expected that GAMs would have more issues with their members abiding by the rules of the group compared to GAPs, the results show that is actually the other way around. As you could see in table 4, all GAMs were classified as partial utopias where GAPs were neutral and in one case spiritless. Another finding is that GAPs have a rule enforcer either selected by the group or appointed by their leader while groups affiliated with local municipalities tend to give the responsibility of rule enforcer to their group leader. This difference may be the reason that GAPs have issues with members not following the rules and adhering to the groups goals, but more research is needed to confirm this suspicion.

The activities conducted by both of the groups were classed as reactive. According to my research, the community police officer and the local municipality do not directly influence the activities the groups. When I look at how frequently activities are organized, I see that groups affiliated with a local municipality conduct activities more often. Both group types show that their affiliated can influence the quality of the activities the groups conduct. 3rd party affiliation also has an effect on the quality of the activities of the groups. Both 3rd parties have this influence in their own way. These findings do not correspond with my expectation that there would be no differences between GAPs and GAMs concerning the activity type and how frequently activities are conducted since GAM's conduct activities more frequent than GAPs.

The final aspect, longevity, is indirectly strongly influenced by both the local municipality and the community police officer. They do this through the hierarchy, activities and the goals & rules of the groups. All these factors affect the longevity of the group so it is very important for the 3rd parties to focus on what kind of affect they have so groups can improve. Without proper goals and rules, groups do not function well. Without hierarchy, groups would plunge into chaos, but too many hierarchical layers will result in inefficient groups. Because they affect how frequently

activities take place and how high the quality of these activities can be, the activities can have a higher impact while the group gains more trust. When we look at the indirect effect the groups have on longevity through activities, we see that conducting activities more frequently will result in a higher longevity. I expected that both the local municipality and the community police officer would have the same indirect effect on longevity. However, because GAMs conduct activities more frequently, this expectation turned out to be false. By providing the groups with certain goals, groups will conduct specific activities to achieve these goals. When we look at the indirect effect of goals and rules I expected that the local municipality would have a higher positive indirect effect on longevity through goals and rules. This expectation turns out to be true. My results show that GAPs experience more issues concerning goals adherence and law abiding. This negatively affects the longevity of the group and shows that the local municipality provide a more positive in-direct influence on longevity through goals and rules. GAMs also tend to have a higher longevity compared to GAPs, which is also in line with my expectations.

The functioning of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups and whether they survive depends on the hierarchy of the group, the activities the group conducts the goals and rules the group has and the longevity the group enjoys. The 3rd parties that are affiliated with a WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch determine the impact these variables have on the well-functioning of the group. My research shows that the influence of the local municipality makes WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch groups function even better compared to when they are influenced by a community police officer. Tables 2 through 4 show The GAMs have clear goals from the start and do not struggle with fulfilling these goals. They have a strong foundation and clear rules. Besides that, through the support of the local municipality in the form of products, education and a website they have a higher longevity. The fact that they have a higher average membership ratio compared to GAPs, 70% vs. 51.20%, can attest to this. This does not mean that groups with a community police officer are doomed to fail. These groups need more attention since they did not receive proper help since their creation. If community police officers start nurturing groups from the start, the results of this research could be completely different.

6. DISCUSSION

This research is one of the first steps in understanding the different organizational types of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups that affiliate themselves to 3rd parties like local municipalities and community police officers. I wanted to uncover the story behind the groups, the 3rd parties they were affiliated to and the effect this affiliation has on the well-functioning of the group.

6.1. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

This research tells a qualitative story and as such is not focused on pure numbers. The fact that it can show the different views and opinions of multiple actors is this research's greatest strength, but also its weakness. Even though I could answer the questions I posed in this thesis, more quantitative research is needed to further confirm my results. When I look at my samples, I see that I had a limited pool concerning the groups affiliated with a municipality. This affects the generalizability of my research concerning other WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups in the Netherlands that are affiliated to a local municipality or a community police officer. The problem is that there are only a small amount of municipalities that fully support WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups and provide a network that fully covers the municipality. This made it hard for me to find suitable groups for my research.

6.2. FUTURE RESEARCH

For this research I utilized the works of Lub (2014), (Akkermans & Vollaard, 2015; Kang, 2015); Seufert et al. (2015); (van der Land, 2014). These works have in common that they all focus on WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups that have no affiliation to a third party at all, or are affiliated with a community police officer or local municipality. They also focus on one of the dependent variables that I utilized in my research that together shaped the concept of group well-functioning. The next step would be to further work out the concept of group well-functioning and focus more on confounding variables. With the time and resources that were available to me, it was impossible to shape this concept with confounding variables and other possible dependent variables. When the concept is complete, quantitative research should be used to determine which variables matter the most. It will also become possible to see which type of group actually results in a better functioning group; those affiliated with the municipality or those with the community

police officer. Furthermore, it will also become possible to deeper investigate the role of activities and longevity, which in the end, could not be fully developed in this thesis.

Another thing that I would like to see incorporated into future research are groups without an affiliation to a third party. These groups operate on their own without any help. The WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Group in Kootwijk is an example of such a group. This group sustains itself with funds from local entrepreneurs and (small) business owners that want to keep their neighborhood safe. As a result, this group can be mistaken for a private police organization. The fact that they have their own van with tracking equipment and two helicopters can attest to this view. Because this group acts on its own in their own community, they also developed their own set of rules. Sometimes they even resort to the use of violence. I find it very interesting to find out what place this kind of group would take in the spectrum of group well-functioning.

6.3. POLICY CHANGE

To improve the functioning of the WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch groups I would propose a collaboration between the Dutch National Police and the local municipalities. The national police is struggling with WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups. Officers do not have time for these groups in their already busy schedule and groups expect that their community police officer is available 24/7. On the other hand, local municipalities are showing increasing interest WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups with Barneveld as the front-runner. In my conversations with a representative of the municipality of Barneveld it became clear that really want the community police officer to become involved with their WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups. Because the community police officers already have a busy schedule, I would relocate their role in WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch groups to the special investigators of the municipality. These special investigators could be trained by the Dutch National Police but belong to the local municipality. My proposal would be to incorporate the special investigation office in this project. They could replace the community police officer while they can also take over some of the community police officers tasks. However, this plan does come with implications for both the local municipality and the Dutch National Police. This plan costs a lot of money and the first question that arises is “who is going to pay for it?”. The municipalities in the Netherlands are experiencing a decentralization, which has cut their budget short, while the Dutch National Police

has been through a rough budget cut which makes it impossible to implement my plan in the current financial situation. Another question is whether the citizens themselves are going to approve of this plan. A special prosecutor is not a community police officer and as such does not enjoy the same amount of support. Besides that, a community police officer is more attached to the neighborhood due to his job and knows a lot more about its issues and inhabitants. This is not the case for the special investigator, which is active in the whole municipality and has other tasks, which do not include helping the citizens. Nonetheless, I believe that the government, citizens, the local municipalities and the Dutch National Police will see the importance and positive implications of this plan just like they saw the importance of WhatsApp Neighborhood Watch Groups a few years ago.

Interview/question scheme

- Which factors influence the well-functioning of forms of cooperation between citizens and local government in public safety?

1.1. Are you currently having contact with the local municipality?

If yes – Question 1.2. -

If No – Why not? - Did the local municipality help with establishing the group?

- If yes: Question 4

- If No: Question 3

1.2. How did you get in contact with the local municipality?

1.3. Is there a contact person present so you can easily communicate with the municipality?

1.4. Does the local municipality provide the group with funds and or products?

1.5. Does the local municipality provide you with help in managing the group?

1.6. Does the local municipality connect your group with other groups?

1.7. Did the local municipality help you with getting in contact with a community police officer?

1.8. Does the local municipality give the group feedback so they can perform better?

1.9. Does the group feel like the local municipality is taking them seriously? Explain.

1.10. Does the interaction with the local municipality increase the trust in the municipality?

1.11. Does the group have a voice when it comes to safety police changes?

- What influence do community police officers have on WANWGs?

2.1. Is the group currently involved with a community police officer?

If Yes – Question 2.2.

If No – Why not?

2.2. Did the community police officer help with establishing the group?

- 2.3. Is the community police officer an active or a passive member? Does he help with group management? How does the group contact the community police officer?
 - 2.4. Does the community police officer provide the group with guidelines or rules?
 - 2.5. Do the members of the group appreciate the presence of the community police officer? Is the group in contact / connected to other groups in the city?
 - 2.6. Does the community police officer provide the group with feedback?
 - 2.7. Does the group feel that the community police officer takes them seriously?
 - 2.8. Does the presence of the community police officer increase the feeling of safety? Does the contact with a community police officer increase the trust in the police?
 - 2.9. What is the current membership ratio? (Members/Possible members) * 100
- What impact does the presence (and upholding) of rules have on the functioning and survival of the group?
 - 3.1 Are there rules present?
 - If Yes – 3.2
 - If No – Why not? You can continue to question 4.1.
 - 3.2. How were the rules created? At the beginning or over time? – Do the members abide to the rules? If not; Response?
 - 3.3. Is there someone who upholds the rules Does the presence of rules increase the effectivity of the group? –
 - 3.4. Do these rules increase the members' satisfaction? –The following questions are for when rules were implemented over time;
 - 3.5. Why were rules introduced? – What were the results when rules were implemented?
 - 3.6. Did these rules influence the in-out flux of members?
 - 3.7. Did the rules increase the satisfaction of the group members? Did these rules influence how the police sees the group?
 - What are the activities the groups conduct?
 - 4.1. Does the group do surveillance rounds?
 - 4.2. Does the group organize meetings?
 - 4.3. Does the group give prevention advice?

4.4. Are there other activities the group conducts?

4.5 Would you describe the activities as reactive or pro-active? How do the police look upon the groups?

5.1. How does the police respond to members of the group on a crime scene?

5.2. Is the group considered a nuisance?

5.3. Are there guidelines how to deal with these groups?

Which differences can be found when it comes to the rules of engagement in the groups?
(democratic, leader top down)

- The Hierarchy in the group

6.1. Is there a hierarchy in the group?

6.2. How did this hierarchy come into existence? In addition, are there other roles?

6.3. How do new members join the group?

6.4. How are authorities alerted?

6.5. Is there face-to-face contact between the group and the community police officer or the municipality?

Which differences can be found concerning the number of group members

7.1. Is there a max – min age limit?

- If Yes/No – WHY? –

7.2. Is there a member limit?

- If Yes/No – WHY? –

- The goals of the group

8.1. Does the group have clear goals?

- If yes/no – Why/why not?

8.2. What are the goals of the group?

8.3 Where these goals provided by someone, or created by the group?

8.4 Does the group act in accordance to these goals?

1 ‘‘Report of ontwikkelplein buurtpreventie en burgerwachten’’ – 23-05-2017

2 **Kootwijkerbroek**

3
4 15.30: The first people arrived at the place of the meeting, Het Kulturhus in Kootwijkerbroek.
5 Before the meeting you had to select three different topics that were to be discussed. The topic I
6 selected was ‘‘The Do’s and Don’ts in a proper coöperation’’. At the entrance you received the
7 name badges and also your group number.

8
9 15.40: I got into contact with Mr. Klein, a team leader for the safety, permits and monitoring
10 department in the municipality of Barneveld. He and his colleagues are responsible for managing
11 the coordinators of all the WhatsApp neighborhood watch groups in Barneveld. He told me that
12 Barneveld is one of the few municipalities that has a full coverage concerning WhatsApp
13 Neighborhood watch groups and even provides aid to groups in the form of funds and products.
14 After that he introduced me to a community police officer that is active in Barneveld.

15
16 16.00: The meeting started with an introduction to the subjects: prevention, community police
17 officers, neighborhood watches and WhatsApp. In this introduction, I learned that a
18 representative of the justice department, the mayor of Kootwijkerbroek and a representative of
19 the most notorious and famous group of the Netherlands, the WhatsApp Neighborhood watch
20 group of Kootwijkerbroek were present.

21
22 16.10: After the small introduction, the representative of the WhatsApp neighborhood watch
23 group of Kootwijkerbroek held a monologue. In this monologue, he talked about the progress his
24 group made, the setbacks they had to face, their encounters with the police and how they dealt
25 with the media. He also talked about some ground rules to establish ‘‘a good group’’. A short
26 summary of the monologue:

27

- 1 • From an unorganized group to a stable well-functioning group
- 2 - Learning process through feedback they did not ask for
- 3 - Creation of rules
- 4 - Self-realization that something has to change in the way they conduct business
- 5 • Reason to create the group
- 6 - Police took a lot of time to respond and appear at the scene
- 7 - Increasing the feeling of safety
- 8 - They felt that the police could not solve the problems in an optimal way
- 9 • Rules concerning group members
- 10 - Existing members must unanimously decide whether someone can join
- 11 - Maximum amount of members is 25. They live in a rural area that is widespread. Not
- 12 many people live there. Therefore, the amount of members is low.
- 13 - When a member leaves a new member can join
- 14 - Not too much members in the same area
- 15 - Minimum age of 25, maximum age of 55. Healthy, strong but also wise people are
- 16 needed. Young people are to jumpy and can become a risk, old people are fragile and
- 17 can become a risk to themselves.
- 18 - No women
- 19 - The amount of members only fluctuate when people move, hardly no one leaves the
- 20 group voluntarily
- 21 • Guidelines on how to act in certain situations
- 22 - Created after (police) complaints
- 23 - Only the designated members can contact the police
- 24 - When there is a problem, not everyone should appear at the scene
- 25 - If you go to a (crime) scene, do not enter the premises
- 26 - If you do have to enter the premises, do not contaminate the crime scene
- 27 • Group activities
- 28 - The group conducts patrols
- 29 - The group organizes meetings concerning crime prevention

- 1 - The group responds to alarm messages
- 2 - The group utilizes a helicopter when searching for (suspicious) persons
- 3 - The group detains suspicious persons or suspects on their own
- 4 - Searching for lost persons
- 5 • Group hierarchy
- 6 - There are 2 group leaders
- 7 - There are 4 persons that have a phone that can be contacted in case of an emergency
- 8 - The group leaders arrange everything in coordination with the emergency phone
- 9 holders
- 10 - The emergency phone holders are the only one that may contact the police
- 11 • Group rules
- 12 - Not following the guidelines may result in a group ban
- 13 - Do not speak to the media without consulting the group
- 14 - Do not act carelessly, always act in pairs or wait for back-up
- 15 - If there is an officer of the law present you should always follow his commands
- 16 • Goal of the group
- 17 - Increasing the feeling of safety
- 18 - Reducing the amount of crime
- 19 - Activating local citizens to prevent crime

20

21 He also spoke about the fact that it is hard to co-exist with the police. The police sees

22 them as a nuisance instead of an asset. However, he feels that this stance is becoming less

23 apparent. This is mostly because the group had a meeting with the local municipality, the

24 justice department and the police concerning their actions. They were offered help and

25 training so they would be less of a nuisance. After a lot of training concerning how to do a

26 civilian arrest and how to respond to certain situations they became much more accepted.

27 There was even a situation where somebody hid in a cornfield. The police did not have

28 the work force to sweep the field or conduct a stakeout. The neighborhood watch group

29 conducted a sweep and stakeout of their own. After 10(!) hours, the perpetrator was found

30 and arrested.

1 The media is also an actor which the group does not like. Sometimes, they write great
2 stories concerning the effectivity of the group, other times they write about bad things. In
3 some stories, they are saints and in others they are portraided as a group that over-reacts and
4 goes to far. Examples of this are driving somebody of the road because he acted
5 suspicious, racist behavior or the story about the group's helicopter.

6
7 16.30: after the monologue I talked to four community police officers that are active in Zutphen
8 but also Barneveld and Ede. During the monologue it became apparent that they do not share the
9 same views as the representative of the Kootwijker group. The following is a short summary of
10 their views concerning this matter:

- 11
- 12 • The group really shows racists behavior. They target people from eastern Europe, north-
13 africa and the middle east.
 - 14 • The group does not respect women. Women are not allowed to participate in the group
15 and female community police officers are having a hard time to become accepted by the
16 group.
 - 17 • The group breaks a lot of rules. They sometimes arrest people only based on a hunch. In
18 the past they even contaminated crime scenes
 - 19 • The officer all agree that the response time of the police takes too long and that the group
20 can be considered as a great first responder. However, sometimes members of the group
21 linger to long and become a nuisance to the police.
 - 22 • After the intervention, the group started to behave much better. Even though they still
23 show some racist behavior concerning ethnicity and gender, they do follow the guidelines.
24 Only one person calls the police, nobody contaminates crime scene's anymore, they
25 collaborate much better with the police and they don't arrest people anymore on the basis
26 of a hunch.
 - 27 • They believe the intervention helped, they still feel that the group is going beyond their
28 goals. As an example they name the usage of bulletproof vests and the usage of the
29 helicopter. They feel that by using these products they crossing a line they should not

1 cross. The officers feel that this group should stick to their surveillances and prevention
2 meetings.

- 3 • Groups that actively seek help of the police are viewed much better.
- 4 • Officer is mainly present to guide the group, not to actively participate
- 5 • Officer gives feedback on how to act
- 6 • Officer provides groups with information on how to receive proper training.
- 7 • *‘a proper hierarchy can make a group operate more effectively’*

8 16.45: Round 1 - The groups come together and talk about their chosen subject. In my group
9 there are three representatives of WhatsApp Neighborhood watch groups, a representative of the
10 police dispatch chamber, three community police officers, mister Klein and a public prosecutor.

11 I will give a short summary of the conversations that took place in this group.

- 12 • The three representatives of the neighborhood watch groups all belong to different groups
- 13 • Two representatives belong to groups in Zutphen, one belonged to a group in Ede.
- 14 • These groups will now be known as **ZUTPHEN 1**, **ZUTHPEN 2** and **EDE 1**.
- 15 • They all belonged to groups that were managed with the help of a 3rd party, the police

16

17 Group Hierarchy:

- 18 • 1 group leader, one deputy leader in case the leader is absent
- 19 • Multiple roles present. Selected persons contact the police in case of emergency, Selected
20 persons are allowed to contact the community police officers, selected persons are
21 responsible for creating activities.
- 22 • Roughly 60% of the people in the neighborhood participate in the groups in Zutphen, the
23 group in Ede estimates it is around 50%
- 24 • Minimum age is 23-25 years in general. They only want serious people in their group and
25 they feel that people that are too young are not serious enough. The maximum age does not
26 matter

27

28 GOALS & RULES

- 29 • The goals of the groups are the same: Reducing crime, increasing the feeling of safety
- 30 • Goals are created by the group

- 1 • The reason for starting the group is also the same: They feel that the police does not live
2 up to their expectations. Response time is too slow, crime solving is non-existent and they
3 feel that as a citizen they are not taken seriously.
- 4 • They act according to their goals. Crime ratings show that their efforts are successful.
5 According to the veiligheidsmonitor publications people also feel much more safe. This
6 counts for both the **ZUTPHEN** groups and the **EDE 1** group
- 7 • Before intervention by community police officer there were not many rules, except for
8 **Ede 1**, which had clear rules implemented from the start
- 9 • By implementing clear rules after consulting the community police officer the groups
10 **ZUTPHEN 1** and **ZUTPHEN 2** became much more stable. Guidelines were created on
11 how to act and a hierarchy was established.
- 12 • There is a person selected that must uphold the rules and confront rule breakers
- 13 • People that do not follow these rules are removed from the group.
- 14 • The amount of members in the group fluctuated a lot before rules and guidelines were
15 introduced. After the introduction the amount of members remained stable
- 16 • After implementing rules and creating guidelines, the communication with the police and
17 the municipality improved. They now follow the orders of the police. The group can act
18 more effectively and efficiently when it comes to improving the safety in their
19 neighborhood and people feel safer because of that.
- 20 • After implementing rules, or in the case of EDE 1 after creating rules, there were no
21 signals that indicate that people totally follow the rules or break the rules. The situation is
22 quite neutral.
- 23 • Even though the situation concerning following the rules is neutral, there is an enforcer
24 present in all three groups so that people will follow the rules and can be punished if
25 needed. There is no record present of how many times this happens. In **EDE 1** this
26 enforcer is appointed by the group leader, in **ZUTPHEN 1 and ZUTPHEN 2** this
27 enforcer is selected by the group.

28
29 **ACTIVITIES:**

- 30
- 31 • There are cases known where they conducted a civilian arrest

- 1 • Most of time they observe known criminal spots and take part in patrols and searches.
- 2 • Only reactive activities in **ZUTPHEN 1 and 2**, there are no cases known where the group
- 3 organized activities on their own initiative without a cause.
- 4 • **EDE 1** has done some pro-active activities like meetings concerning house security and
- 5 awareness. Rest of the activities are reactive.
- 6 • In general the group conducts an activity one time a week
- 7 • Community police officer

8

9 **LONGEVITY:**

10 Based on the ratio of members, the stability of the group, how the groups respond to threats , the

11 frequency of activities, the way they act according to their goals and how people abide to the

12 rules, these groups have a rather long longevity and will certainly exist longer than a year.

13

14

15 The three community police officers are active in the same city as the neighborhood

16 watch groups; Zutphen and Ede. They confirm the stance of their colleges that I talked to

17 before. Groups without proper guidelines and rules are more of a nuisance. They need

18 proper training and help to become a helping hand to the police. They also feel that the

19 groups tend to show racist behavior. After these groups went looking for help, they feel

20 that these groups improved and that their stance regarding these groups starting to change.

21 They all believe that these kind of groups can contribute to the local safety in their

22 neighborhood, but before that can happen these groups need to learn some fundamental

23 information and skills concerning crime, prevention, surveillance and arrests.

24

25 • The result of the group conversation was a list of do's and don'ts when it comes to

26 cooperation between the police and neighborhood watch groups.

27

28 • For groups:

29 - Follow the command of the police officer

30 - Treat the officer and other civilians with respect

- 1 - Do not use violence
- 2 - Do not enter crime scenes
- 3 - ALWAYS call the police in case of an emergency
- 4
- 5 • For the police
- 6 - Treat the group members with respect, not contempt
- 7 - Do not be negative, provide them with useful information on how to improve
- 8 - Provide feedback concerning cases. Let the groups know they did well.
- 9 - Try to visit members of the group every now and then

10

11 18.00: Break time.

12

13 18.15: Round 2- group members get the opportunity to switch with members of the other two
14 groups. In this round, people could share their own experiences.

15

16 I had the opportunity to listen to representatives of 7 groups. These groups were active in
17 Deventer, Oldenzaal, Delden, Barneveld and Ede. Two groups originate from Deventer, one
18 group from Delden, two from Ede and one came from Barneveld and one from Oldenzaal. There
19 were also 3 community police officers present of which one is active in Deventer and the other
20 two in Oldenzaal and one in Delden.

21

22 The groups from Barneveld and Ede are created and maintained with the help of a 3rd party.

- 23 - The groups from Barneveld and Ede are affiliated with their local municipalities.
- 24 - Barneveld is one of the few cities in the Netherlands that has a network of WhatsApp
25 Neighborhood watch groups that cover the whole city.
- 26 - The municipality of Ede sees Barneveld as their rolemodel.
- 27 - These groups will now be known as **EDE 2** and **BARNEVELD 1**

28

1 HIERARCHY:

- 2 • The groups have a hierarchy in which the coordinator of the group is the leader
- 3 • There are no other roles like (sub) leaders or persons who distribute tasks.
- 4 • The coordinator reports to the local municipality
- 5 • The local municipality is not directly involved and does not interfere with internal group
- 6 affairs. They are only present in case groups need guidance or materials.
- 7 • The group members must support this coordinator
- 8 • The group members listen to the coordinator
- 9 • The coordinator decides who substitutes him or her when absent
- 10 • Coordinators make sure people act according to the rules
- 11 • When someone does not comply to the rules, the coordinator takes action
- 12 • Min. 15 - Max. 150 members. WhatsApp supports up to 150 people in a group.
- 13 • Only inhabitants of the pre-determined streets can join the group.
- 14 • The inhabitants of the street decide through a majority vote to which group they belong.
- 15 • Minimum age of 18, no maximum age.
- 16 • Groups are stable, people only leave the group when they move out of the street.
- 17 • In general, 60% of the people in the street join the group in Ede, 70% join the group in
- 18 Barneveld

20 GOALS & RULES

- 21 • The goals of the groups are improving social cohesion and increasing local safety.
- 22 • Groups can also introduce goals of their own but do not do that very often
- 23 • The primary goals are provided by the municipality.
- 24 • The municipality provides rules and guidelines on how to act in the group chat, how to act
- 25 in dangerous situations, how to respond to group alerts and how to communicate with the
- 26 police.
- 27 • Groups act according to their goals, social cohesion has improved and local safety has
- 28 been increased since they started.
- 29 • The coordinator enforces the rules

- There are no records on how many times he had to do that, however he mentions that most of the time people abide to the rules. Most of the interventions concern app activity.

ACTIVITIES

- The activities in **EDE 2** are REACTIVE.
- They do surveillance walks and do stake-outs when vandalism has already taken place a few times or when a few burglaries have already happened
- They conduct activities around 3 to 4 times a month
- The activities in **BARNEVELD 1** are both reactive and pro-active
- Because the municipality provides the group with products and funds they can organize activities more easily.
- The activities they do consist of surveillance walks (With or without a cause), searches for missing persons and crime prevention advice (With or without a cause)
- They conduct activities once a week'

LONGEVITY

- The group acts according to their goals and they also realize their goals
- Strong foundation because of affiliation with municipality since start
- Utilize proper guidelines and rules on how to act
- Mixed activities and frequent activities
- Strong and respected hierarchy
- Minimum age of 18 makes the groups more serious.
- Groups are considered to exist longer than a year.

The other five groups have in common that they are created and/or maintained with the help of a community police officer. The groups in Deventer are all created with the help of a community police officer. Even though this officer is not active in the group, he acts behind the scenes and gives the group tips on how to handle situations and provides the group with feedback.

1 The groups in Deventer, Delden and Oldenzaal are now known as **DEVENTER 1**,
2 **DEVENTER 2, DELDEN 1 Ede 3** and **OLDENZAAL 1** and have the following characteristics:

3 **HIERARCHY:**

- 4 • Affiliated with a community police officer after creation.
- 5 • The groups have maximum amount of member policy of 50.
- 6 • Everyone can join the group as long as they live in the neighborhood.
- 7 • Maximum of two persons per household
- 8 • Minimum age is 18 years in general. The maximum age does not matter.
- 9 • For Deventer 1 and 2 there are no age limitations set. They feel that everyone can
10 contribute to their neighborhood, young and old.
- 11 • Community Police officer became affiliated because the group requested them to do so
- 12 • Roughly 50% of the possible members are in the group for **Deventer 1, Delden 1, Ede 3**
13 and **Oldenzaal 1. Deventer 2** has a lower ratio of 40%
- 14 • Only the assigned persons contact the police, there are ‘leaders’ present that coordinate
15 the group in case of a search and a person is appointed to organize the activities

16
17 **GOALS & RULES**

- 18 • The goals of the groups are the same: Reducing crime, increasing the feeling of safety and
19 supporting the police in their jobs.
- 20 • All the groups except for **DEVENTER 1** act in accordance to their goals. **DEVENTER 1**
21 sometimes still hinder police officers.
- 22 • With the help of the community police officer, clear rules and guidelines are created.
23 Officer introduced them to the SAAR principle
- 24 • Rules/Guidelines were created to improve group coordination and assist police better.
- 25 • Rules and guidelines on how act in certain situations were implemented so that the police
26 can do their jobs properly
- 27 • Goals are created by the group, rules after the community police officer became affiliated.
- 28 • The reason for starting the group is also the same: They feel that the police sometimes
29 does not live up to their expectations. The groups are in urban areas and they feel that
30 instead of bothering the police for minor matters, they can solve it on their own.

- 1 • People that do not follow these rules are punished
- 2 • The rule enforcer is selected by the group in **Deventer 2, DELDEN 1 and**
- 3 **OLDENZAAL 1**
- 4 • The rule enforcer is appointed by the group leader in **DEVENTER 1 and EDE 3.**
- 5 • All the groups except for **DEVENTER 1** have no big issues with enforcing the rules. In
- 6 these groups there were some instances in which the rules were broken but this is often
- 7 resolved quickly.
- 8 • In **DEVENTER 1** there are a lot of problems with following the rules.
- 9 • Representative indicates that this is because this group is situated in a trailer park, people
- 10 tend to abide to their own rules, ignoring external ones.
- 11 • **DEVENTER 2, OLDENZAAL 1 AND DELDEN 1** do not have much information
- 12 available, the representatives states that it's a neutral situation where no big outliers
- 13 appear. **EDE 3** state that they have no problems whatsoever with their group concerning
- 14 rules, sometimes someone breaks a rule but this is not a big issue.

15

16 ACTIVITIES

17

- 18 • They rarely conduct civilian arrests
- 19 • The groups are reactive in nature and mostly focus on prevention
- 20 • Most of time they just observe while walking their dogs. They hardly conduct any patrols.
- 21 • They do not visit crime scenes in general.
- 22 • They respond to requests of the community police officer. A good example is when a
- 23 person is missing.
- 24 • Generally they do an activity once a month.
- 25 • The groups from **DEVENTER (1&2)** hardly conduct any activities, sometimes not even
- 26 once a month. When they do, these activities are reactive.

27

28 LONGEVITY

29

- 1 • The amount of members is stable. People only leave the group when they move. The
2 groups in **DEVENTER 1 AND 2** experience a lot of trouble the amount of members.
- 3 • The groups are accepted by the police since they do not hinder the police in their jobs.
4 They actually pursue their goals and contribute to the local safety. **DEVENTER 1** and **2**
5 do not meet this standard yet but officers are willing to support them so they can improve.
- 6 • Groups have strong and diverse hierarchical roles which improves stability
- 7 • **DEVENTER 1 and DEVENTER 2** experience a lot of trouble with members not acting
8 in line with the goals and rules of the group.
- 9 • Only reactive activities, no initiative of the groups.
- 10 • Rules on how to act in WhatsApp were created after the community police officer became
11 affiliated. This was implemented to prevent chat flooding. People who felt the group lost
12 its focus and did not properly used WhatsApp left the group. By utilizing clear rules, the
13 amount of members became stable.
- 14 • Before the community police officer was part of the group, they only had one goal:
15 Keeping the neighborhood safe. After the community police officer became part of the
16 group they gained a new goal: Properly assisting the police.
- 17 • All groups, except **DEVENTER 1** and **DEVENTER 2** are expected to live for longer
18 than a year. **DEVENTER 1** is expected to cease existence in less than a month while
19 **DEVENTER 2** needs a lot of improvement to survive this year.

20

21 The community police officers of Delden and Deventer had the same things to say about the
22 groups active in their city that were affiliated with a community police officer.

- 23 - Because of the affiliation with community police officer they have proper
24 understanding on how to act.
- 25 - The groups are seen as a mechanism that actually contributes to the safety in the
26 neighborhood since they are the eyes and ears of the police and do not act in a rash
27 manner
- 28 - The groups contribute to increase in safety feeling through proper prevention
29 information

1 - The groups actually reduce crime. By properly informing the police and through their
2 prevention information spreading they increased the probability of catching criminals
3 while they also helped in deterring criminals.
4
5

6 19.15: We are given the opportunity to view some presentations concerning civilian participation,
7 an interview with the mayor of Kootwijkerbroek and were given a full summary of the meeting.
8

9 20.00: The meeting ended. I made some connections with community police officers and local
10 government officials and even made three appointments, one with mister Klein from Barneveld
11 and two with community police officers. One of them is active in Oldenzaal and the other one in
12 Deventer.
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Report Dirk Klein and 4 coördinators, Barneveld, 04-07-2017

13:00 – Arrived at the town hall of Barneveld. Was welcomed by Dirk Klein.

13:05 – Dirk Klein gives a presentation about the project the municipality of Barneveld started concerning WhatsApp neighborhood Watches.

General info:

- Project initially started in 2012 as text message group in Garderen
- Garderen has not a lot of inhabitants but is rather large. It is a rural area and the police has a slow response time.
- Group members send each other text messages concerning suspicious persons or situations.
- This proved to be very successful and even resulted in solving a lot of burglaries.
- The group asks the municipality of Barneveld to help them. They want to be more effective in identifying criminals and suspicious situations. The municipality offers them help but no concrete plans were made.
- 2013; The group starts using WhatsApp, the municipality of Barneveld recognizes the positive influence of the group and the usefulness of WhatsApp and starts helping the group.
- The municipality nurtures all new groups from scratch. By doing so they feel that they create a solid foundation for the group that will result in proper behavior and good contact with law enforcement.
- Proper nurture will result in groups with a long longevity
- Currently there are 140 groups
- Municipality actively monitors the groups
- Sometimes groups are dissatisfied with their leader: They feel that he or she does not do enough or does it wrong. Because we are affiliated to their group, the first thing they do is calling the municipality so they can voice their dissatisfaction. However, we have nothing to do with that situation. We are merely there to provide support and giving shape to the group, not to meddle in internal affairs. The only thing we can do is tell them to solve this

1 problem on their own in accordance with the other member of their groups. This generally
2 results in the group members appointing a new coordinator that reinvigorates the group.

3
4
5 **The municipality provided:**

- 6 - The municipality launches a website where people can register themselves. Through the
7 website new groups are created and people can join existing groups.
- 8 - The municipality provides the group with letters that the groups can send to people in
9 their streets. These letters serve as an invitation to the group while it also serves as a way
10 to make people acquainted with the group.
- 11 - Municipality places road signs that indicate that WhatsApp groups are active in the
12 neighborhood.
- 13 - Municipality organizes meetings between the police and groups so the groups can learn
14 how to act in certain situations. It also serves as a way to become acquainted with each other
15 and learn from each other. Mutual respect is created here.
- 16 - Organizes two meetings a year for the coordinators, the community police officer and the
17 municipality where they will reflect on the past six months.
- 18 - The municipalities brings the coordinators of all the groups in Barneveld together. They
19 created a network of groups that covers the whole area of Barneveld.
- 20 - The municipality provides rules and guidelines to all the groups. These guidelines
21 concern interaction inside the group app, how to spot criminals and suspicious situations,
22 how to act in certain situations (civil arrest), that violence is NEVER allowed unless you
23 need to defend yourself and how the police is contacted.
- 24 - The municipality provided the core goals of the group: Increasing social cohesion and
25 improving the local safety
- 26 - Every three months, the municipality provides ALL the groups with the crime ratings.
- 27 - The municipality purchased several reflection vests, flashlights and walky-talkies. The
28 groups can ask for the products when needed.
- 29 - The municipality provides the groups with training sessions concerning their own safety,
30 dangerous situations, surveillance walks and crime prevention.

- 1 - Through the coordinators, the members can have some influence in the local safety
2 policy.

3 **Groups conduct the following activities:**

- 4 - They provide each other with prevention advice. They do this through meetings that are
5 organized with the help of the local municipality.
- 6 - All groups conduct surveillance walks, frequency differs. Once a week in general.
- 7 - When a person is missing, groups will go search for missing persons
- 8 - Respond to alarm messages posted in the group chat.
- 9 - The fact that the municipality provides the groups with vests, training sessions, walky-
10 talkies and flashlights improves the effectivity of the activities. Groups even conduct
11 more activities compared to before.
- 12 - Without proper guidance of a coordinator or the absence of a leader resulted in less
13 conducted activities.

14

15 **Goals:**

- 16 - Municipality provided the groups with goals: Improving social cohesion, increasing local
17 safety.
- 18 - Goals are communicated to the members from the start
- 19 - Groups are free to add new goals
- 20 - According to coordinators the unofficial #3 goal is assisting law enforcement, making the
21 job of a police officer easier. (Was created after the meetings with the police and training
22 sessions.)
- 23 - Coördinators make sure goals are achieved and provide constant reminders to group
24 members

25

26 **Rules:**

- 27 - The municipality provides rules and guidelines on how to act in the group chat, how to act
28 in dangerous situations, how to respond to group alerts and how to communicate with the
29 police.

- 1 - All 140 groups act according to the same rule set
- 2 - The SAAR Principle is the most important rule set a group has. It focusses on how to act
- 3 in suspicious situations and ensures that people can help the police very effectively.
- 4 - By using the SAAR principle, groups became much more accepted by the police since it
- 5 forces the groups to act in such a way that they do not interfere in dangerous situations or
- 6 disturb crime scenes while they can inform the police at the same time.
- 7 - Coordinators are responsible for the groups
- 8 - Coordinators make sure people act according to the rules
- 9 - Coordinators are allowed to ‘‘Punish’’ rule breakers

10 **Members and Hierarchy:**

- 11 - Min. 15 - Max. 150 members (Maximum amount of people that WhatsApp supports in a
- 12 chat).
- 13 - When a group is created, it is also determined which streets belongs to which group.
- 14 - Only inhabitants of the pre-determined streets can join the group.
- 15 - Minimum age of 18
- 16 - Every group has a coordinator. Coordinators are responsible for their groups. The
- 17 coordinators also form their own group, which report directly to the municipality.

18

19 **Contribution to official local safety care:**

- 20 - Crime ratings went down after the implementation of this program
- 21 - Due to meetings focusing on prevention less houses were victims of burglary
- 22 - Due to surveillance patrols, more vandals are apprehended and less cases of vandalism are
- 23 reported.
- 24 - Through the coordinators, groups can influence the local safety policy.
- 25 - Because the groups are visibly present, inhabitants feel much safer compared to before.
- 26 - (Community) Police officers see these groups as something positive instead of a nuisance
- 27 or a hindrance. The officers ascribe this to the fact that the groups are well regulated, have
- 28 proper and clear rules, are well trained and know how to assist the police in a variety of
- 29 situations.

30 13:50: The meeting with Dirk Klein comes to an end.

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14:15: I arrived at the place where I had an appointment with four coordinators of the WhatsApp groups that are active in Barneveld. Groups will be known as **BARNEVELD 2, BARNEVELD 3, BARNEVELD 4** and **BARNEVELD 5**

General info

- Almost no problems with groups disbanding. Groups are very stable due to proper support and rules. This also something the municipality wanted to achieve.
- Groups that disband do so because they do not support their coordinator because he or she is to inactive.
- Activities are very reactive

Members and Hierarchy:

- WhatsApp allows a maximum of 150 members in the chat group. The Municipality wants at least 15 members in a group.
- There is only one coordinator, which is chosen by the majority of the group and also acts as their leader.
- No other roles are present
- Local municipality has no sway over the group and does not interfere in internal group affairs.
- The ratio of members in the groups are as follows: **BARNEVELD 2 – UNKNOWN, BARNEVELD 3 – 70%, Barneveld 4 – 80% and Barneveld 5 – 70%.**
- One coordinator states that; “the high membership ratio in the neighborhood is something that really stimulates me to keep being a coordinator. It motivates me to visit members and non-members and ask them for improvements so the group can keep improve itself and can attract new members.”
- Sometimes, a group has too many members and cover too much streets. In these cases either an extra group is created or the group gets split-up and a new group is created.
- Only inhabitants of the pre-determined streets can join the group.
- Minimum age of 18, no maximum age.

- 1 - Sometimes they allow younger persons in the group. In general they spend much more
2 time on the streets so they also see a lot more. We feel it increases their sense of
3 responsibility and also creates a sense of belonging. Persons that are underage are not
4 allowed to undertake physical actions, they can only report issues in the app.
5

6 **GOALS & RULES**

- 7 - In general, the groups have two standard goals provided by the municipality. These goals
8 are Improving social cohesion and increasing local safety. However, there are some
9 groups, about 40% which have introduced new goals. These are improving assistance to
10 law enforcement and improving the relationship between law enforcement and citizen.

- 11 - Coordinator finds it marvelous that even though the municipality supplied these goals,
12 these goals are in line with the feelings of the groups.

13 The coordinators are responsible for communicating the core goals to the members.

- 14 - New goals are introduced by the means of a majority vote.

- 15 - The unofficial #3 goal is assisting law enforcement, making the job of a police officer
16 easier. (Was created after the meetings with the police and training sessions.)

- 17 - Conversations between the coordinators and the police show that police officers have a
18 much better view of groups which have these police orientated goals.

- 19 - Coördinators make sure goals are achieved and provide constant reminders to group
20 members.

- 21
22 - When a group starts, the municipality provides rules and guidelines. These rules and
23 guidelines focus on how to act in the group chat, how to act in dangerous situations, how
24 to respond to group alerts and how to communicate with the police.

- 25 - All 140 groups act according to the same rule set. This makes it easier to coordinate
26 between groups.

- 27 - Violence is NOT allowed.

- 28 - Coordinators are responsible for the groups and its actions.

- 29 - Coordinators make sure people act according to the rules

- 30 - Coordinators are allowed to ‘‘Punish’’ rule breakers

- 1 - The groups act in accordance to their goals. Social Cohesion has visibly increased and
2 local safety has been increased since crime ratings have plummeted.
- 3 - People actually abide to the rules of the group. Coordinators attribute this to the fact that
4 they had the support from the municipality since the start. This makes it so that people
5 feel that this a serious group that exists for the sake of the community. Sometimes people
6 break the internal rules like on how to communicate in the group app. However this is not
7 seen as something significant.
- 8 - The coordinators serve as the bridge between groups and municipality. It gives feedback
9 to both the municipality and the groups.
- 10 - The coordinators mention that in the past there were groups with coordinators that were
11 not very active. This resulted in small power struggles. The municipality can not do
12 anything about this. The group has to solve this problem on their own. If the group fails to
13 solve it, they will lose the support of the municipality.

14 -

15

16 **Group activities:**

- 17 - The groups are very reactive and respond to the current situation
- 18 - When crime goes up, groups conduct more surveillance patrols
- 19 - When the amount of vandalism goes up, groups conduct surveillance walks that focus on
20 a specific area (Area with a lot of vandalism).
- 21 - In general, groups conduct a surveillance walk once every week. The groups that conduct
22 these walks are not very large, mostly 6 to 8 people. The coordinators know of four
23 groups that conduct surveillance walks 4 times a week on a rotation basis. These groups
24 faced a large burglary spree and as a response they started to do surveillance walks
25 frequently.
- 26 - Once every year, representatives of some groups come together and create a prevention
27 program. This program is based on training and info received from the police. The
28 program is presented to all the groups which, in turn, introduce it in their neighborhoods.
- 29 - Group members respond to alarm messages in the group chat. This can be about a missing
30 person or a suspicious person. Responding to these alerts is not compulsory.

1 - Without the help of the municipality, a lot of groups would not conduct the activities. The
2 fact that the municipality provided products is a good example. A lot of groups would not
3 conduct surveillance walks without them.

4

5 LONGEVITY

- 6 - Strongly supported by municipality
- 7 - Universal feeling in groups that their work matters and is respected
- 8 - Very reactive in activities, but the frequency is high and a lot of people show up to
9 participate.
- 10 - Respected by the police
- 11 - Manage to realize their goals and follow their own internal rules
- 12 - High ratio concerning possible and actual members.
- 13 - Even though there are not much hierarchical layers, the hierarchy is strong and respected.
- 14 - Member ratio for Barneveld 2 is unknown
- 15 - The longevity for all groups, except Barneveld 2 which is unknown due to missing data,
16 is considered to be longer than a year.

17

18 **Contribution to official local safety care:**

- 19 - Every few months we receive a crime report from the municipality. The reports show us
20 that crime rates keep decreasing while a relatively larger number of criminals is
21 apprehended. Talks with the police show that the groups are a main cause for this
22 increase.
- 23 - The prevention meetings are also important. People became aware of the safety issues in
24 their houses and started improving their safety by taking measures.
- 25 - Due to surveillance patrols, more vandals are apprehended and less cases of vandalism are
26 reported.
- 27 - Through the coordinators, groups can influence the local safety policy. The local
28 municipality and the coordinators meet every 6 months. In this meeting they discuss the
29 past half year. During these meetings they talk about what should be done about certain
30 situations and how policy changes can address that. The groups are thus indirectly

1 involved in this process. One coordinator even states that he asks his groups on what he
2 should mention during these meetings and which improvements they would like to see.
3 - Because the groups are visibly present, inhabitants feel much safer compared to before.
4 The street signs provided by the local municipality also have a lot of influences
5 concerning this matter.
6 - The groups are well regulated. The rules provided by the local municipality are clear and
7 easy to uphold. The coordinators for all the groups are doing a proper job and this can be
8 seen in the way how the police view the groups in Barneveld. Due to proper training the
9 members know how to act and how to assist a police officer. Instead of being a hindrance
10 or a nuisance, the members are actually useful! The police has faith in the groups and take
11 calls from them very serious. Another side effect is that community police officer of the
12 neighborhood feels related to neighborhood and has a much better relationship with the
13 citizens.

14

15 15:30: The conversation comes to an end. One coordinator shows me some pictures he has
16 collected over the years. The pictures show situations in which his group was active like
17 surveillance walks but also a collective search involving a missing person.

18 15:45 The meeting ends.

19

20 The information provided by Dirk Klein is in line with what the coordinators tell me. The
21 coordinators helped me understand the situation a little bit better by going more in-depth and by
22 telling some good examples of the situations they encountered.

23

1 **QUESTIONS USED FOR THE ENSCHEDE 1 GROUP**

- 2 • Which factors influence the well-functioning of forms of cooperation between citizens
3 and local government in public safety?

4 1.12. Are you currently having contact with the local municipality?

5 If yes – Question 1.2. -

6 If No – Why not? - **When we asked our local municipality, they referred us to**
7 **www.WABP.nl. We are listed on that site so neighbors can find us, but we do not**
8 **receive any kind of help.**

9 1.13. Did the local municipality help with establishing the group?

10 - If yes: Question 4

11 - If No: Question 3

12 1.14. How did you get in contact with the local municipality? – **We contacted them**
13 **ourselves**

14 1.15. Is there a contact person present so you can easily communicate with the
15 municipality?- no

16 1.16. Does the local municipality provide the group with funds and or products? - **No**

17 1.17. Does the local municipality provide you with help in managing the group? - **No**

18 1.18. Does the local municipality connect your group with other groups? - **No**

19 1.19. Did the local municipality help you with getting in contact with a community
20 police officer? - **No**

21 1.20. Does the local municipality give the group feedback so they can perform better? -
22 **No**

23 1.21. Does the group feel like the local municipality is taking them seriously? Explain. –
24 **No, when we asked for info or support, they simply referred us to someone else.**
25 **They took nu interest in us or in our cause.**

26 1.22. Does the interaction with the local municipality increase the trust in the
27 municipality? – **No communication**

28 1.23. Does the group have a voice when it comes to safety police changes? - **No**

29

- 1 • What influence do community police officers have on WANWGs?
- 2 2.10. Is the group currently involved with a community police officer?
- 3 If Yes – Question 2.2. - **Yes**
- 4 If No – Why not?
- 5 2.11. Did the community police officer help with establishing the group? - **No**
- 6 2.12. Is the community police officer an active or a passive member? Does he help with
- 7 group management? – **He can be considered a passive member. He acts only when**
- 8 **the group provides him with information. After that, he will look into it. When**
- 9 **he is done, he will provide the group with feedback. Sometimes he tells us how to**
- 10 **act in dangerous situations**
- 11 2.13. How does the group contact the community police officer? – **The group leader**
- 12 **has his contact info.**
- 13 2.14. Does the community police officer provide the group with guidelines or rules? –
- 14 **Yes, we had some rules of our own, but he told us about the SAAR principle and**
- 15 **showed us a presentation. We learned how**
- 16 2.15. Do the members of the group appreciate the presence of the community police
- 17 officer? – **Yes, they appreciate the fact that he makes himself available to the**
- 18 **group. He takes our messages very seriously and even provided feedback and**
- 19 **help.**
- 20 2.16. Is the group in contact / connected to other groups in the city? - **No**
- 21 2.17. Does the community police officer provide the group with feedback? - **Yes**
- 22 2.18. Does the group feel that the community police officer takes them seriously? –
- 23 **Yes, he takes the time to help us and sometimes asks our opinion on what he**
- 24 **should do different.**
- 25 **2.19.** Does the presence of the community police officer increase the feeling of safety? –
- 26 **Yes, because he takes us seriously we feel that something is actually done to**
- 27 **improve the safety in our neighborhood. His presence makes us feel more safe**
- 28 **since we now have someone who we can rely on.**
- 29 **2.20.** Does the contact with a community police officer increase the trust in the police? –
- 30 **Yes, it showed my group members that a police officer is also a person. He does**

1 **not only write tickets but also helps citizens and does his best to keep the**
2 **neighborhood safe.**

3 **2.21.** What is the current membership ratio? (Members/Possible members) * 100
4 **60%**

- 5 • What impact does the presence (and upholding) of rules have on the functioning and
6 survival of the group?

7 3.1 Are there rules present?

8 If Yes – 3.2 **YES**

9 If No – Why not? You can continue to question 4.1.

10 3.8. How were the rules created? At the beginning or over time? – **At the beginning we had**
11 **some of our own rules. These rules focused on how to interact with each other and what**
12 **you should and should not do in the group app. The community police officer showed us**
13 **there was more to it. He opened our eyes when it came to identifying suspicious people**
14 **and how to act in dangerous situations. The SAAR principle he introduced us to is one**
15 **of the core rules of our group now.**

16 3.9. Do the members abide to the rules? If not; Response? – **Yes, the rules have a low threshold**
17 **and through mutual respect people will abide to the rules.**

18 3.10. Is there someone who upholds the rules? – **Most of the time members correct each**
19 **other. When a conflict arises the group leader will start upholding it.**

20 3.11. Does the presence of rules increase the effectivity of the group? – **Yes, especially the**
21 **SAAR principle improved the effectivity of the group.**

22 3.12. Do these rules increase the members satisfaction? – **Yes, without rules there is no**
23 **order. Because of the implemented rules we work much more efficiently and work to**
24 **our goals. This improves the members' satisfaction**

25 The following questions are for when rules were implemented over time;

26 3.13. Why were rules introduced? – **The community police officer noticed that we were not**
27 **functioning optimally. He suggested some guidelines and rules to use like the SAAR**
28 **principle which made the group more effective. Sometimes we also run into some**

1 **problems and we created rules to make sure these problems would not arise in the**
2 **future.**

3 **3.14. What were the results when rules were implemented? – The community police officer**
4 **found it much more easier to work with our group. Besides that we became much more**
5 **effective in signaling and stopping crime or suspicious situations. Less people left the**
6 **group.**

7 **3.15. Did these rules influence the in-out flux of members? – Yes. Before we had proper**
8 **rules we had people joining and leaving the group on a frequent basis. Messages were**
9 **posted in the app which did not have our goals in mind like advertisements for products**
10 **or questions. Through these rules all the conversations in the rules**

11 **3.16. Did the rules increase the satisfaction of the group members? – Yes, the best example of**
12 **this is that the amount of group members remain stable. The rules ensure goals are**
13 **realized. It also provide members guidance in case of internal problems.**

14 3.17. Did these rules influence how the police sees the group? – Yes – The community police
15 officer indicated that our group is no longer a hindrance. By using the SAAR principle we
16 can actually assist the police! We get a lot of positive feedback and other police officers take
17 us more seriously when they know that we belong to this group.

18
19 • What are the activities the groups conduct?

20 4.1. Does the group do surveillance rounds? – **Yes, but not a lot. There is not much crime**
21 **in our neighborhood. Our biggest problem is vandalism. We conduct surveillance**
22 **rounds once every two weeks, but only when we have 3 or 4 members that want to do it**
23 **and that is not always the case.**

24 4.2. Does the group organize meetings? – **Yes! We learned a lot from our community**
25 **police officer. He even introduced us to companies that provide training and**
26 **information concerning crime prevention. We utilize this information by conducting**
27 **meetings in our own neighborhood focusing on crime prevention, making our streets**
28 **and houses safer.**

29 4.3. Does the group give prevention advice? **Yes, see above.**

30 4.4. Are there other activities the group conducts? – **Not really. Sometimes the police asks**

1 **us to look out for suspicious persons and we respond to that call through surveillance**
2 **walks. Besides surveillance walks and prevention meetings we do nothing.**

3 **4.5** Would you describe the activities as reactive or pro-active? – **I would say both! We**
4 **respond to actual circumstances but also take the initiative sometimes.**

- 5 • How do the police look upon the groups?

6 5.1. How does the police respond to members of the group on a crime scene? – **Before**
7 **we acted according to the SAAR principle, the police found us a nuisance. When our**
8 **community police officer introduced us to the SAAR principle we get much better**
9 **response. Ofcourse, a lot of officers think we should not interfere in their business,**
10 **but they do understand that we only have the best intentions.**

11 5.2. Is the group considered a nuisance? – **At the beginning, Yes. After SAAR? No.**

12 5.3. Are there guidelines how to deal with these groups? – **Yes, the police even has a**
13 **powerpoint presentation that they show new groups. The police beliefs that you need**
14 **to inform these groups early about SAAR so they can form a strong foundation.**
15 **Having a strong foundation will result in a group with proper goals, rules and**
16 **guidelines. These groups will not become a nuisance and can even assist the police.**

- 17 • Which differences can be found when it comes to the rules of engagement in the groups?
18 (democratic, leader top down)

19 6.1. Is there a hierarchy in the group? – **Yes, our group has a leader who is responsible for the**
20 **actions of the group. He is the spokesperson for the group but is also the one who contacts**
21 **the police and the community police officer. When the leader is absent he selects a member**
22 **who can replace him. If the group leader moves, a new leader is selected through a majority**
23 **vote.**

24 6.2. How did this hierarchy come into existance? And are there other roles?– **The group leader**
25 **started the group and the members were not opposed to him leading the group. There are**
26 **no other roles present, the leader decides what is done and how. The group can provide**
27 **some input but the leader has to final say.**

28 6.3. How do new members join the group? – **They can just contact the group leader or**
29 **members. As long as they live in the neighborhood they can join the group.**

1 6.4. How are authorities alerted? – **According to the SAAR principle, the persons who signals**
2 **crime alerts the police. He or she then posts about his encounter in the app.**

3 6.5. Is there face-to-face contact between the group and the community police officer or the
4 municipality? – **Only with the community police officer, but not very frequently. We only**
5 **meet face-to-face**

6 • Which differences can be found with regards to the number of group members

7 7.1. Is there a max – min age limit?

8 - If Yes/No – WHY? – **Yes, together with the community police officer we decided**
9 **that the minimum age is 18. There is no maximum age.**

10 7.2. Is there a member limit?

11 - If Yes/No – WHY? – **WhatsApp can allow up to 150 members in a group. This is**
12 **also the maximum amount of persons allowed.**

13 • The goals of the group

14 8.1. Does the group have clear goals?

15 - If yes/no – Why/why not? – **Yes, we have three goals: 1. Reducing the crime in our**
16 **neighborhood. 2. Improving the feelings of safety in the neighborhood. 3. Assisting the**
17 **police as well as possible.**

18 8.2. What are the goals of the group? – **See above.**

19 **8.3** Where these goals provided by someone, or created by the group? – **These goals were**
20 **created by the group.**

21 8.4 Does the group act in accordance to these goals? – **Not always, there are issues known**
22 **where we actually hindered the police in their work in spite of our good intentions.**

23

24

1 **Questions asked to the community police officer Deventer, Rivierenwijk.**

2 Nederland krijgt steeds meer burgerwachten. Met de opkomst van WhatsApp is het alleen maar
3 makkelijker geworden om een burgerwacht te beginnen. Deze burgerwachten komen zowel
4 positief als negatief in het nieuws.

5

6 1. Wat is uw eigen mening met betrekking tot deze buurtwachten?

7

8 Volgens mij moet je een onderscheid maken tussen burger/buurtwachten(zoals in
9 Kootwijkerbroek) en een WhatsAppgroep. De Kootwijkerbroekgroep is al een paar keer
10 negatief in het nieuws geweest. Zij zouden buitenproportioneel geweld hebben
11 gebruikt. De WhatsApp groepen , de groepen die een instructie hebben gehad, gaan
12 volgens het Saar principe te werk. Signaleren-Alarmeren-Appen-Reageren. De eerste
13 drie spreken voor zich en de laatste is door aanspreken erger voorkomen.

14

15 2. Hoe denken uw collega's in het algemeen over deze burgerwachten?

16 Een burgerwacht zoals in Kootwijkerbroek zal worden toegejuicht op het "platte land".
17 Tot een zekere hoogte. De politie daar heeft te maken met langere aanrijtijden en dan zijn
18 extra ogen en handen welkom. Maar, alleen de politie heeft de wettelijke
19 bevoegdheid om geweld toe te passen. Een burger zal moeten terugvallen op noodweer
20 of noodweer exces in extreme gevallen. Verder mag een burger wel aanhouden op
21 heterdaad en mag daarbij alleen het geweld proportioneel beantwoorden. (De politie
22 overigens ook) De WhatsApp groepen worden als zeer bruikbaar ervaren. Zij zorgen
23 voor een hogere meldingsbereidheid en een verhoogde veiligheidsgevoel.

24 3. Bent u zelf, buiten werktijd, ook te vinden een buurtwacht WhatsApp groep in uw eigen
25 wijk?

26 Neen. In mijn buurt is geen WhatsApp groep wegens gebrek aan slachtoffers van
27 inbraken e.d.

28

1 4. Vind u dat de nationale politie meer betrokken moet zijn met dit soort groepen en dus
2 deze groepen moet gaan ondersteunen? Of vind u dit meer een taak van de gemeente?

3
4 Doorgaand op de WhatsApp groepen is het zo dat het oprichten, onderhouden van een
5 dergelijke groep het feestje van de groep zelf. De groep bepaalt hoe en welke signalen aan
6 elkaar worden doorgegeven. Diverse wijkagenten geven PowerPointpresentaties aan de
7 groepen. De gemeente Haaksbergen heeft zich verplicht in het faciliteren van de
8 groepen. Denk aan b.v. Bordjes in de straten en het organiseren van vergaderingen van de
9 beheerders van alle WhatsApp groepen.

10

11 De volgende vragen zijn van toepassing als u te maken heeft met Burgerwachten/groepen.

12

13 5. Heeft u in de wijk waarin u actief bent ook dergelijke groepen? En als u van deze groepen
14 op de hoogte bent, zoekt u dan ook contact? Of zoeken de groepen contact met u?

15 Zoals hierboven al vermeld is een WhatsApp groep van de buurt zelf. Het initiatief komt
16 meestal van 1 of meerdere bewoners van de buurt. Zij zorgen dat er zoveel mogelijk
17 burens lid worden. Sommige Wijkagenten zullen zelf ook deelnemen in een dergelijke
18 groep. Ik doe dat niet. Ik vind dat een buurt zelf de situatie moeten inschatten of het
19 waard is om aan de politie te melden. Door een presentatie te geven stuur ik daar wel in.
20 In principe meldt men de verdachte situatie aan de politie. De wijkagent is namelijk niet
21 24/7 in dienst. De beheerder van de groep heeft wel contact met mij of de daarvoor
22 verantwoordelijke gemeenteambtenaar. Anders om kunnen wij via een WhatsApp groep
23 wel een buurtonderzoek doen als er bijvoorbeeld toch een woninginbraak heeft
24 plaatsgevonden. Haaksbergen(en

25

26 6. In hoeverre dragen deze groepen naar uw mening bij aan de veiligheid (Of het
27 veiligheidsgevoel) in de wijk?

28 De WhatsApp groepen worden als zeer bruikbaar ervaren. Zij zorgen voor een hogere
29 meldingsbereidheid en een verhoogde veiligheidsgevoel.

1

2 7. Belemmeren of helpen dit soort groepen u in uw dagelijks werk?

3

4 De WhatsApp groepen in Haaksbergen helpen ons in ons dagelijks werk. Ze belemmeren
5 niet. De deelnemers van de groepen melden veel in tijden van verhoogde aantal
6 incidenten. In rustige tijden zakt de alertheid ook weg.

7

1 **Community police officer Oldenzaal, Albert Steenkamp**

2 Nederland krijgt steeds meer burgerwachten. Met de opkomst van WhatsApp is het alleen maar
3 makkelijker geworden om een burgerwacht te beginnen. Deze burgerwachten komen zowel
4 positief als negatief in het nieuws.

5 1. Wat is uw eigen mening met betrekking tot deze buurtwachten?
6

7 Ik ben louter positief. Soms moet je de groepen corrigeren in hun doen en laten, maar als
8 ze eenmaal goed lopen kunnen ze echt positief bijdragen aan mijn werk en de veiligheid
9 in de wijk.
10

11 2. Hoe denken uw collega's in het algemeen over deze burgerwachten?

12 Die zijn erg verdeeld. Een slecht voorbeeld is natuurlijk de buurtwacht in Kootwijk.
13 Natuurlijk zijn niet alle groepen zo maar deze groep zorgt er wel voor dat veel groepen in
14 een kwaad daglicht komen te staan. Het is dan ook van belang om al vroeg bij een groep
15 betrokken te zijn zodat ze zich goed kunnen ontwikkelen. Er zijn natuurlijk ook collegas
16 die denken zoals ik. Echter hebben veel collega's gewoon geen tijd om contact met zo'n
17 groep te onderhouden. In Oldenzaal worden de groepen gezien als vrij nuttig. Door de
18 aanwezigheid van deze groepen doen mensen vaak sneller een melding van een criminele
19 situatie en staan mensen ook meer in contact met elkaar. Daarnaast zorgen ze ook voor
20 een verhoogd veiligheidsgevoel in de wijk.

21 3. Bent u zelf, buiten werktijd, ook te vinden een buurtwacht WhatsApp groep in uw eigen
22 wijk?

23 Ja, maar ik zit niet in de groepschat. Dat laat ik aan mijn vrouw over.

24 4.

25 Vind u dat de nationale politie meer betrokken moet zijn met dit soort groepen en dus
26 deze groepen moet gaan ondersteunen? Of vind u dit meer een taak van de gemeente?
27

1 Ik vind het een taak voor beiden. De Nationale Politie heeft net als de gemeente een beperkt
2 budget. Samen kunnen ze veel meer bereiken dan alleen. Daarnaast hebben beide organisaties
3 hun goede en slechte kanten. De burger kan hier alleen maar van profiteren.

4 5. Heeft u in de wijk waarin u actief bent ook dergelijke groepen? En als u van deze groepen
5 op de hoogte bent, zoekt u dan ook contact? Of zoeken de groepen contact met u?
6 Het initiatief komt van de groep zelf. Ik ga geen tijd steken in het werven van leden of het
7 opstellen van regels. Vanuit de Nationale politie hebben we een powerpoint gekregen
8 waarin de basis regels vermeld staan. Het SAAR beginsel is onderdeel van deze basis
9 regels. Het SAAR beginsel is heel belangrijk voor een correct functioneren van de groep.
10 Daarom laat ik nieuwe groepen altijd de presentatie zien aangaande het SAAR beginsel
11 en hoe het SAAR beginsel moet worden toegepast. Die gaaf ik dan ook graag de groepen.
12 Ik vind het verder niet mijn taak om mij bezig te houden met de groep. Dat is meer iets
13 voor de gemeente of een Boa.

14
15 6. In hoeverre dragen deze groepen naar uw mening bij aan de veiligheid (Of het
16 veiligheidsgevoel) in de wijk?
17 Ze zorgen soms ervoor dat buurt onveilig lijkt terwijl ze eigenlijk zorgen voor een daling
18 in het criminaliteitscijfer. Het zichtbaar actief zijn in de wijk kan namelijk twee kanten
19 opwerken. Het schrikt criminelen af, maar geeft ook het signaal dat er iets mis is in de wij

20 7. Belemmeren of helpen dit soort groepen u in uw dagelijks werk?

21
22 Tot nu toe is het één keer voorgekomen dat ze een plaats delict blokeerden. Na een
23 stevige reprimande is dit niet meer voorgekomen.

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