

# The “Jiaxing Model” and the “Polder Model”: a comparative study on public participation in environmental governance in Jiaxing and The Hague

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*Kai Wang, International Association on Social Quality, The Hague/Amsterdam,  
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## **Abstract**

This paper presents the results of explorations of local policy dealing with environmental governance in Jiaxing, China and in The Hague, the Netherlands. The exploration focuses on the role of local government, citizens, non-governmental organisations, communities in environmental governance, and the structure of communication between them. The applied frame of comparison is derived from the Social Quality Theory. Two basic tensions and five “worlds” build up the comparative framework. The main applied method of data collection was semi-constructed interviews with key persons who are involved in local environmental issues. Interview respondents were free to express their opinion during the interviews. In total, 24 interviews were conducted and the interviews were recorded (under permission of respondents) for further analysis. In addition, policies, regulations and scientific papers or reports were also inquired. The findings of the explorations in two cities will be compared to illustrate the differences and similarities. From this comparative study, we also find that the communication between diverse societal actors and empowerment of civic groups are key elements in collaborative and participatory environmental governance.

**Key words:** environmental governance, social quality, community, Jiaxing Model, The Hague

## **1. Introduction**

The major purpose of this paper is to present the main findings of explorations of local policy and practice dealing with environmental governance in two selected cities. The exploration focused on the role of local government, citizens, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) in environmental governance. The exploration was part of the research project “EU - China Public

Participation in Environmental Governance Programme”, which was funded by both the European Commission and Chinese authorities. This research project is a response to the global debate on the role of CBOs and local NGOs in sustainable development. The current environmental crisis is one of the global problems in sustainability every single country is confronted with. In the light of the global debate on democracy the role of civic groups in global, regional and local environmental governance has gained lots of attention. The exploration presented in this paper aims to explore the local conditions in two selected cities, namely Jiaxing in China and The Hague in The Netherlands in terms of the performance of local government, CBOs, local NGOs and citizens in environmental governance,. The questions raised in this exploration were: (i) what are the supposed main causes of the environmental problems; (ii) what are the supposed main characteristics of environmental governance; (iii) who are the key-persons and key-institutions playing a role in environmental governance; (iv) what is the structure the people are acting in and the reason for this structure; (v) and how do the key-persons describe environmental governance in their city. By comparing these two cases, this paper would like to contribute to the global discussion on environmental governance in the future (Van der Maesen, 2013/b).

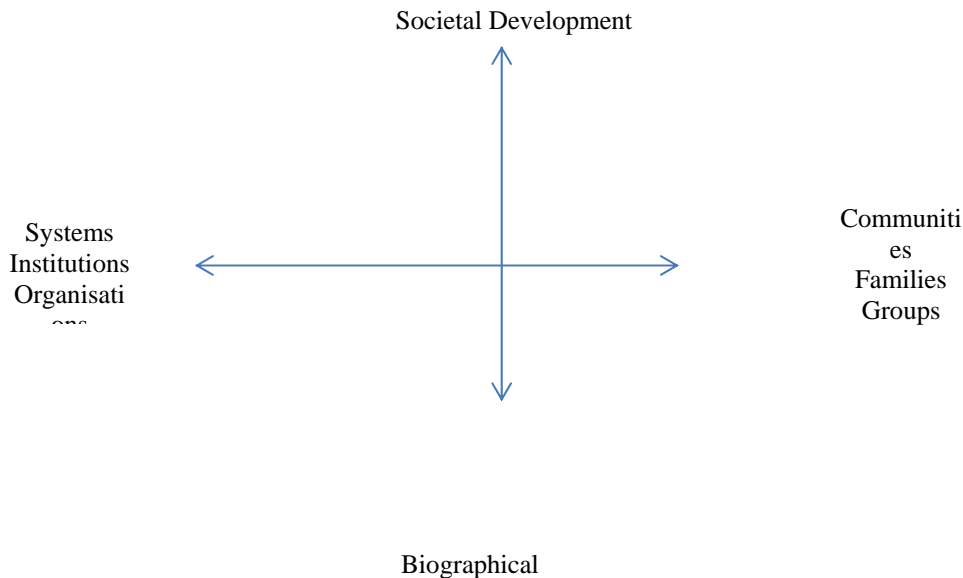
The main applied method of data collection was semi-constructed interviews with key persons who are involved in local environmental issues. Interview respondents were free to express their opinion during the interviews. In total, 24 interviews were conducted and the interviews were recorded (under permission of respondents) for further analysis. In addition, policies, regulations and scientific papers or reports were also inquired.

The content of this paper is divided as follows. The second section introduces the comparing framework for the two case studies. The third and fourth sections present the main findings of exploration in Jiaxing and The Hague respectively, by implementing the comparing framework mentioned previously. Section five discusses the differences and similarities, as well as the possible underlying reasons for this. The last section provides the concluding remarks.

## **2. Comparing framework**

In the European context since the Second World War, much attention has been laid on the role of “state agencies” in urban development (van der Maesen, 2012). However, in contemporary society, the role of non-governmental agencies, private sectors and the like has changed enormously. More attention is required to be paid to agencies despite of “state agencies” and the relationship between these societal actors. Here, the Social Quality Theory is referred to contributing to a conceptual framework for the comparison of Jiaxing and The Hague (urban quarter Laak). In the

Social Quality Theory, two basic tensions are underscored. Figure 2.1 shows both tensions as illustrated by the horizontal and vertical axes. The horizontal axis represents the tension between systems, institutions and organisations on the one side, and communities, families, local networks and groups on the other side. The vertical axis represents the tension between biographical development of individuals and societal development of collective identities. The social quality theory assumes that: people are essentially social beings interacting with each other. These interactions constitute of a diversity of collective identities, in which people can pursue their self-realisation. In other words, a person's self-realisation is enabled through interaction within various collective identities. In this regard, different configurations of interactions can be positioned in the four quadrants divided by the two tensions mentioned before. In terms of horizontal tension, the left pole represents the relationship between individuals and the world of systems and institutions, while the right pole indicates the daily relations between people and societal totalities, such as communities (Van der Maesen et al, 2012).



From a more practical aspect the social quality approach pays attention to the differentiation between multiple actors, their specific responsibilities, possibilities and their interrelationship. It concerns local, regional and national authorities, local (municipal) agencies, local and regional companies, non-for-profit organisations, non-governmental organizations (**NGOs**), community-based organisations (**CBOs**), academic agencies, etc (van der Maesen, 2012). For urban

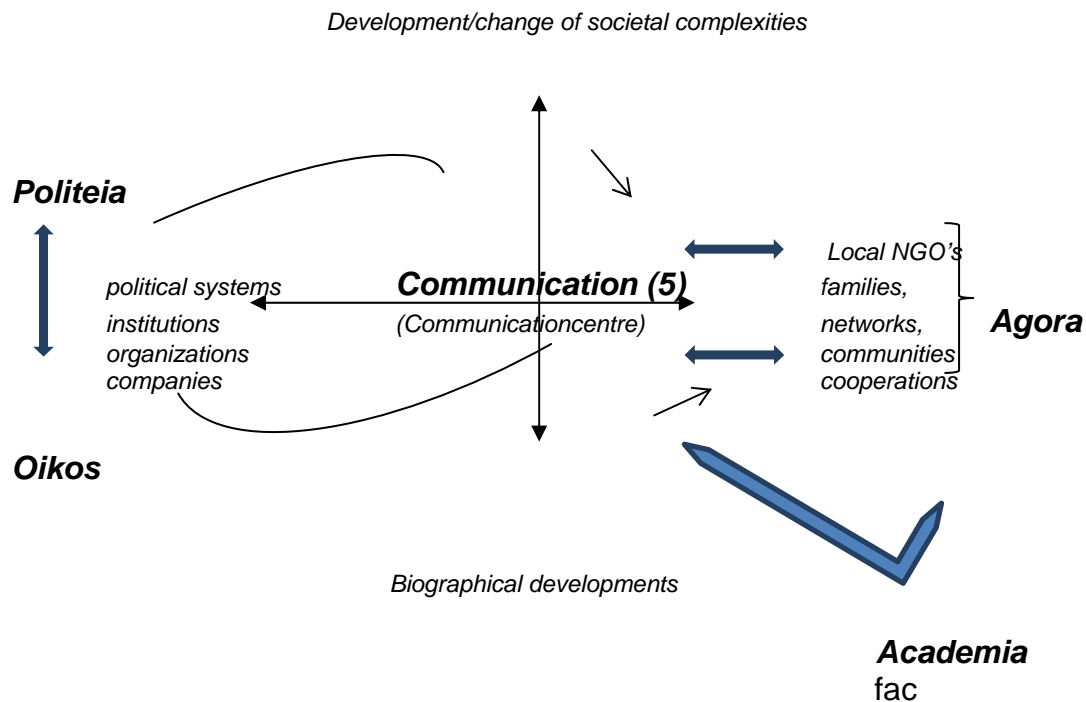
development, including development on environmental issues, a clear differentiation between the actors on the local level is needed.

The International Association on Social Quality (IASQ) participated in the 'demonstration project' of the urban quarter Laak of the Dutch city of The Hague. The IASQ-research concerned the development of a district of the city from the perspective of social quality. In their studies of the urban quarter Laak a distinction was made in five main different "worlds" to explore the differentiation. These are: Politeia, Oikos, Agora, Academia and Communication. "Politeia", "Oikos" and "Agora" are three ancient Greek words. "Politeia" nowadays refers to the system of government, state organisations or form of government. "Oikos" is also an ancient Greek word equivalent to household, house or family. It was the basic unit of Greek city-states. "Oikos" is contemporarily used to describe companies, non-for-profit organisations and institutions. "Agora" was the central spot of ancient Greek city-states, the centre of athletic, artistic and political life of the city. It literally means "gathering place". "Agora" was the place of goods and information exchange in Greek cities where diverse actors of the society can join. "Academia" refers to research and scientific institutes. "Communication" refers to the relationship, informational connections, and the ways of discussion and negotiation (Van der Maesen, 2013/a).

As mentioned before, IASQ has undertaken a study on multiple agencies in the urban quarter Laak by implementing the differentiation of five main "worlds". In the study, the five terms had more specific content.

- **Agora** is the world of communities, families, and networks of citizens (constituted by urban categories of daily life as youth, migrants, women, elderly, handicapped people, adults), in other words the world of the acting subjects (citizens) as local NGO's and CBO's.
- **Politeia (i)** is the world of those policy-makers determining the nature of local governance and **Politeia (ii)** refers to the municipality departments (oriented on urban categories and urban policy areas), operationalising the results of governance.
- **Oikos** is the world of semi-public and private households or organisations, regional or national NGOs and companies (oriented on the manifold of urban policy areas of housing, education, health care, employment, economy, etc).
- **Academia** is the world of scientists, contributing to public and non-public urban policies, analysing consequences of societal trends and their contradictions in the urban space.
- **Communication** is the world of communicative and informational based connections and techniques, supporting the understanding of a comprehensive and possible sustainable urban development (van der Maesen, 2012).

Basically, the five “worlds” can be positioned into the four quadrants divided by the two societal tensions as showed in Figure 2.2.

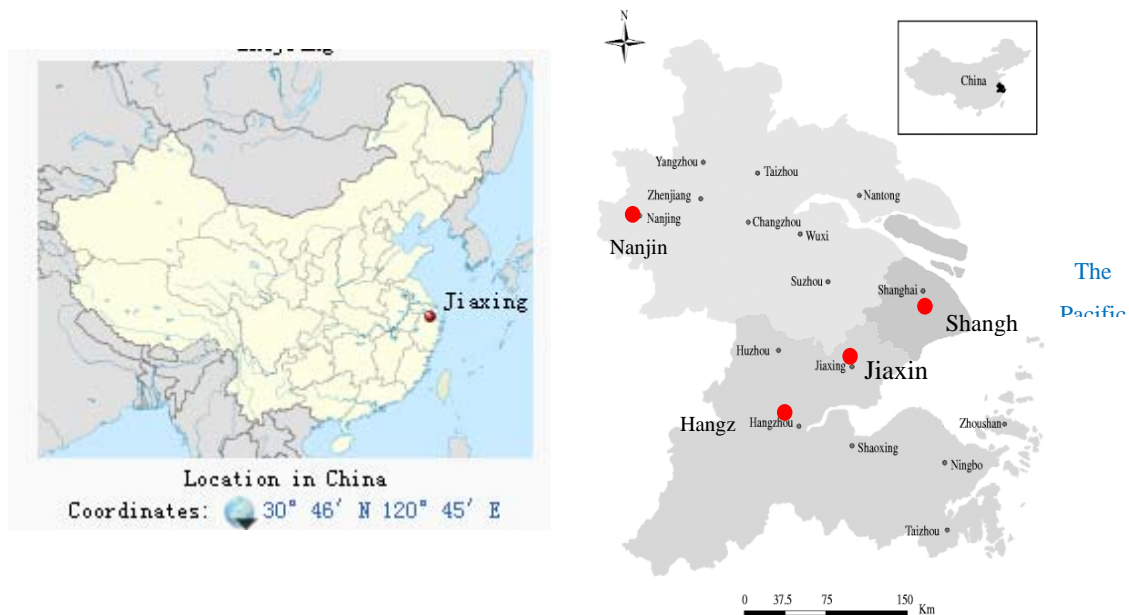


In fact the exploration in this paper was also undertaken in the same district. Therefore, the five “worlds” were used to analyse the roles of different actors in environmental issues. Then the question is whether this method is also applicable in Chinese explorations, i.e. an exploration of the “Jiaxing Model”. IASQ has also joined a research in urban development in Hangzhou, China. The research shows there are five “worlds” in the organisation of urban development as well. These are Party governmental circles (politeia), the intellectual circle (academia), the industry circle (part of oikos), and the media circle (more or less communication) (van der Maesen, 2012). Although there are some differences, the basic logic of the division of “Politeia”, “Agora”, “Oikos”, “Academia” and “Communication” is applicable in Chinese cities. In the practical exploration in Jiaxing, the result shows that actors from the five “worlds” actually involve the local environmental issues. Governmental departments, local NGOs, communities (CBO’s) and individual citizens indeed participate in local environmental protection in the so called “Jiaxing Model”. In this regard, it is appropriate to use the method of making distinctions between “Politeia”, “Agora”, “Oikos”, “Academia” and “Communication” to analyse and compare two case studies in The Hague and Jiaxing. However, during the empirical study, more attention was given to the role of Politeia, Agora, and communication. Enterprises and academia were given less concerns since the main theme of the research project is public participation with more attention on Agora. In the third and fourth sections of this paper, the main findings in Jiaxing and The Hague will be presented respectively, by using the differentiation of five “worlds”.

### 3. The “Jiaxing Model”

#### 3.1 The Jiaxing City and its environmental problems

Jiaxing is one of the eleven municipalities in Zhejiang Province. It locates in the so called “Jiangnan” region, which is the land of milk and honey in China (see figure) By 2010, Jiaxing had a population of 4,501,700, including 1,201,900 living in 3.1). Jiaxing locates in the Yangtze River Delta, which is one of the most developed metropolitan regions in China and even in the world (see figure 3.1). Its urbanised area covers 968 km<sup>2</sup>, while it has 3915 km<sup>2</sup> area in total.



The local environmental problems are air pollution and pollution of water bodies. According to the *Jiaying Environment Report 2012*, the quality of water decreased in 2012 (Jiaying EPB, 2013). In the Chinese water quality standard, grade I presents the best water quality and worse than grade V indicates the water quality is the worst.

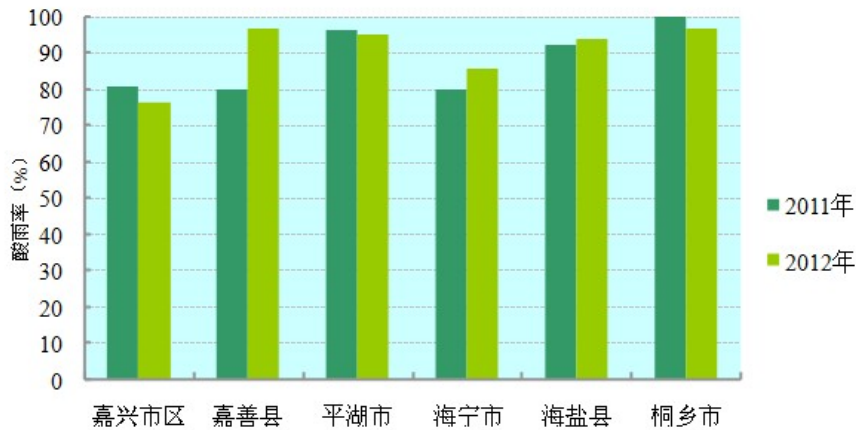


Figure 3.2 Ratio of acid rain (% , y axis) of six districts (x axis) of Jiaying in 2011 (dark green) and 2012 (light green)

Among 67 water monitoring sections, grade IV accounted for 13 (19.4%), grade V accounted for 13 (19.4%) and worse than grade V accounted for 41 (61.2%). Compared with the figures in 2011, grade IV and grade V decreased by 2.5% and 10.3% respectively, while worse than grade V increased by 12.8%.

The air quality in Jiaying is also in trouble. In 2012, the density of PM 10 in the air was  $0.07\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$ , dropped by 16.7% compared with 2011. Acid rain was severe in Jiaying. The ratio of acid rain was really high in 2012 (see figure 3.2). Around some industrial zones, the air quality is worse. According to some interview respondents, they did not open their windows because the smell of the air was bad.

It is outside the scope of this paper to elaborate the environmental data, however the main reasons can be explained here. The most important reason is the industrialisation in Jiaying. Because of the reform and opening policy from 1980s, there was a huge shift and development in Chinese economy, which allowed the hand of market and private-owned enterprises to join the economy. Naturally, with advanced economic and geographic conditions, the east coast provinces took the lead in economic thriving. Industrialisation first began in cities, and then expanded to rural areas. Because of industrialisation in the agricultural sector, much surplus labour forces appeared in rural China. Large amounts of rural residents migrated into cities and others started their own industrial business in rural areas. Because of the cheap price of land and labour force, there emerged a large amount of factories in suburban and rural areas. Economic development has been the unquestioned,



central and primary task of all level of governments from 1980s till now. Pursuing increasing GDP is the main task of the local governments. Moreover, neither governmental authorities nor the public and laws cared about the costs of rural industrialisation for the environment. Consequently, “green mountains and clear water” disappeared in many cities. Jiaying City is not an exception. The environmental deterioration cannot be ignored any longer and came into government’s agenda gradually. Next to industrialisation, the use of chemical fertilisers and other agricultural activities (such as intensive farming) also harm the rural environment.

Nowadays, environmental deterioration is an undeniable problem in some regions in China. Both the government and the public have been aware of the impact of polluted environment on people’s health and local development. Many complaints and appeals were raised by local residents and the Jiaying Environment Protection Bureau (Jiaying EPB) has realised a new form of participatory environmental governance is desired. In this regard, Jiaying EPB, with help from other governmental agencies and the public, has launched a series of activities and measures to enclose the public in local environment protection. The comprehensive name given to these activities is the “Jiaying Model”.

### **3.2 Brief introduction of “Jiaying Model”**

The “Jiaying Model” presents a cluster of diverse innovations and practical measures that improve public participation in local environmental governance in Jiaying City. Those innovations and measures started in 2008 and are still ongoing. Since 2011, they are entitled with the name “Jiaying Model”. The “public” here includes companies/enterprises, non-governmental organisations (NGOs)/civil groups, community-based organisations (CBOs), educational and research sectors, media and individuals are all included as the “public”.

According to the general description provided by the Jiaying EPB, the “Jiaying Model” shows a distinctive character. There are various organisations engaging environmental governance in Jiaying. Specifically, “Jiaying Model” is characterised by its particular organisation, namely Environment Protection Union (EPU, 环境保护联合会). This union consists of three teams and one legal service centre (see figure 3.3). The three teams are:

- Civilian Environment Protection Inspection Team (环境保护市民检查团);
- Professional Environment Protection Service Team (环境保护专家服务团);
- Eco-civilisation Education Team (生态文明宣讲团);

and one legal service centre is:



- Environment Protection Rights Service Centre (环境保护权益维护中心).

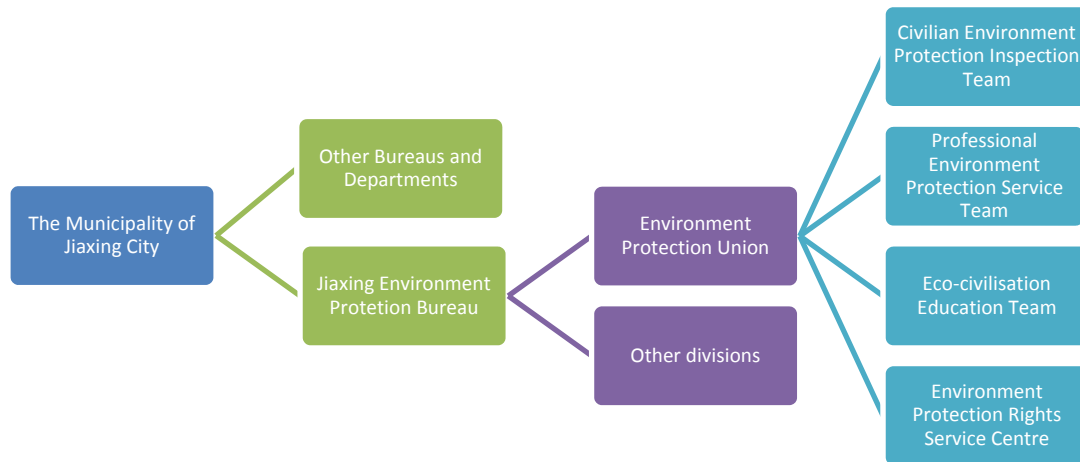


Figure 3.3 Formal structure of Jiaying EPU and its competent authorities

Despite of the diversity in participants, there are various mechanisms to ensure the public participation in environmental governance. The transparency of environmental data, governmental activities and policies is the premise. Then, some regulations were issued to regulate and ensure the behaviour and function of governmental sectors, NGOs, individuals, etc. Furthermore, there are various channels for the appeals and complaints regarding environmental protection. Especially with the rapid development of information and communication technology (ICT), diverse kinds of communication are emerging, such as web-chat, online messages, mobile phone messages, blogs, etc. In addition, hotline 12369 was established in order to receive calls from the public.

From figure 3.3, we can see diverse actors in the “Jiaying Model” who can be grouped into “Politeia”, “Agora”, “Oikos”. In the following text, the main findings of the exploration in Jiaying will be presented respectively.

### 3.3 Role of actors in Jiaying

#### 3.3.1 Politeia: Local government and policies (the EPB)

The responsibility of the government is to ensure economic development, protect the local environment and the development of public participation in environmental governance. In this paper, the government mainly refers to the Jiaying Environment Protection Bureau (EPB). This bureau has taken many measures to ensure environmental protection and public participation. Firstly, the Jiaying EPB implements reporting and disclosure of environmental data and information. Both state and local regulations request this. An air quality index is published on a daily basis; an air quality index in the north part of the city is published weekly. Furthermore, information of factories, inspection work, and Environmental Impacts Assessment (EIA) result are also published. The information can be seen on the official websites of Jiaying EPB.

Secondly, the Jiaying EPB planned, designed and supervised public participation in environmental governance. EPU was designed and initiated by the EPB. It is also responsible for the recruitment of members of the union. Actually, the daily functioning of EPU is under supervision of the Jiaying EPB. After the establishment of the union, Jiaying EPB, the union and team members work collectively to arrange activities. Meanwhile, the Jiaying EPB also provides information, office space, finances and other resources to the union. In addition, the Jiaying EPB also invites the public to project hearings, inspection work, etc. Furthermore, the Jiaying EPB also takes advantage of ICT, such as online blogs, mobile phone messages, etc. The information becomes interactive with the help of ICT. This can improve the efficiency of government's work, but also increase the pressure on the government.

Thirdly, Jiaying EPB has issued several regulations to ensure and regulate public participation. In the newest *Environmental Protection Law of People's Republic of China* (Ministry of Environmental Protection, 2014), article eight regulates "all levels of governments should improve education on environmental protection, encourage civilian organisations and civil groups to implement educational work of environment-related laws, regulations and knowledge." Jiaying EPB also made *The Working Rules of Environment Protection Volunteer Team* and *The Management Measures of Environment Protection Inspections*, guiding the activities of volunteers and protecting their rights.

According the respondent from the Jiaying EPB, the "Jiaying Model" has three major difficulties. Firstly, the public does not have enough awareness of environmental protection. In his response, he mainly referred to the lifestyle of ordinary people. However, the public always complains about the factories and Jiaying EPB, while they are not aware of the fact that they themselves also pollute the local environment.

Secondly, some citizens complain and appeal irrationally. Fake information sometimes is used as evidence, which can cause public anxiety. Thirdly, EPU does not have the capability to join public participation efficiently and scientifically. Lacking interior management, financial, intelligent and citizens' support, it cannot reach full functioning in public participation. During our exploration, representatives from the government also said public participation lacks an efficient mechanism and a legislative framework. There are a few regulations, but they mostly have suggestive but not legal and binding forces.

### **3.3.2 Oikos: enterprises**

Enterprises are the main actors in local environmental governance as well. Two major things that enterprises do: environmental techniques improvement and communication with surrounding communities. Enterprises improve their environmental techniques in order to decrease pollution. According to a representative from a factory, "when there is a conflict between enterprise's economic benefits and surrounding residents' benefits, we give priority to the latter one", "we actively invest much money to improve our environmental techniques". However, both interview respondents from EPU and communities doubt this. They believe the main pushing forces are the regulation or standard requirements and the pressure from governments and the public. With the help of monitoring facilities and public inspection, enterprises have to improve their technologies. The "Jiaying Model provides an arena for public participation, which brings us even more pressure than the government" claimed a representative. Meanwhile, enterprises communicate with surrounding residents. For example, enterprises join community activities. Enterprises realised that communicating with local citizens can build healthy relationships. Information exchange can help to create a better understanding between enterprises and citizens.

In public participation, enterprises find a problem. Enterprises hope they can be treated in a fair way in public participation. A representative said: "The public should have a fair and moderate attitude. NGOs should provide professional service to us and help us to improve our healthy development rather than nagging." Other representatives also agree that the inspection and involvement of the public on enterprises needs to be arranged more scientifically and fair. Professional knowledge and well-organised inspection or service is desired in public participation.

We have to remark that the 'Oikos' (companies, etc) is not the main actor in the structure of the "Jiaying Model". With Figure 2.2 in mind, its effect on environmental issues and the consequences for the Agora are not made explicit. In the presentation of the CEPIT-team, - see section 3.3.4 – the Oikos comes into the footlights as an object of public inspection although not as an active actor in the Jiaying model.

### **3.3.3 Agora: Communities and individuals**

Chinese cities consist of a certain number of communities or neighbourhoods. The daily management of the community is undertaken by the Residents' Committee, whose members are elected by local residents. In most cases, Residents' Committees are not independent from the government. Residents' Committees work for the interests of the residents on the one hand, but should also follow the rules and orders from upper governmental agencies on the other hand. This is also applicable in terms of environmental protection. The responsibilities of Residents' Committee are to increase residents' awareness of environment protection and mobilise them to protect the environment within and around the community. Based on the responsibility, a Residents' Committee carries out two major tasks. First, it organises various educational and entertainment activities for residents. Knowledge of environmental protection is integrated in these activities. In communities, school-year children, collage students and old people are the target groups of community activities. "All of the activities are designed, planned and implemented by the Residents' Committee. We do it from our hearts. We sincerely hope to protect and improve our community environment" said a respondent from communities. Secondly, a Residents' Committee cooperates with neighbouring factories to invite residents to join some activities. Residents are invited to project hearings, EIA hearings, etc. They are even also invited to visit some factories. Some enterprises publicise the EIA results at the gates of the communities, so that residents can see them and express their opinions to Residents' Committee or the enterprises. In general, most are objections. Moreover, stores and shops must have the approval from every resident in the same buildings and Residents' Committee before they start their business.

The Residents' Committee also meets some problems. Firstly, it has limited financial and intellectual support. From the side of the Academia no structural and independent support is given to the representatives of the Agora. Therefore this topic is lacking in our exploration. The Academia appears in the work of the PEPS-team in section 3.3.4 which refers to the contributions of individual scholars. The budget for the Committee comes from local governments but it is usually little and the Residents' Committee is not able to design more varied activities to attract residents. Secondly, it is really hard to mobilise residents to join activities. Thirdly, residents still have insufficient awareness of environment protection. Fourthly, Residents' Committees usually are the first object of residents' appeals and complaints. Some of the complaints occur in violent ways. Residents' Committees have little administrative force and no law-enforcing power. The only thing that Residents' Committees can do is to deliver the appeals and complaints to the upper administrative bodies.

In addition to join environmental governance through EPU or CBOs, citizens in Jiaxing can participate in environmental governance individually. "Naming list",

“apology letter” and “jury system” are also innovative activities in Jiaying which involve ordinary citizens. With a “naming list”, citizens have the right to name polluting enterprises. In the past, this kind of work was only undertaken by the EPB. In Jiaying, if any factory fails to tackle and solve its pollution problem within a definite period, it should sign an “apology letter” to the public through mass media and accept inspection from the society. With the “in jury system”, citizens are invited as “judges” in some decisions of environmental issues, mostly concerning enterprise’s behaviour. Usually, a jury consists of one representative from the enterprise, two environmental experts and two or three citizens. In such innovations, it goes beyond the “right to know” and information disclosure. The public has decisive power to some extent.

Among the citizens, some individuals are motivated in environmental protection, such as Mr. Zhai Zhicai, Mr. Wen Bangwei and Mr. Wan Jiahua. Moreover, which is noteworthy, the initiative and support from some key governmental officials motivated the birth of the “Jiaying Model”. Several interview respondents mentioned the name of Zhang Jian coincidentally. Mr. Zhang Jian, the former director of Jiaying EPB, started the process of the Environment Protection Union. With the weak power of laws and regulations, the personality of governmental leaders has great impacts on local policies.

### 3.3.4 Mixed identity: Jiaying Environment Protection Union

In this section, the Jiaying Environment Protection Union (EPU) and its four teams are mainly referred to. This organisation shows diverse features, so that it cannot simply be put into one of the five “worlds”. The responsibilities of EPU are protecting the local environment, supervising enterprises’ behaviour, educating people, broadcasting environmental protection knowledge and coping with the complaints on internet blog. From a certain point of view, the EPU helps the Jiaying EPB in its daily functions and obligations. Due to limited resources (human resource, financial resource and authorities), but countless environmental problems, it is really difficult for the Jiaying EPB to deal with all of the environmental problems in Jiaying. The responsibilities and activities of four teams are described as follow:

#### **The Civilian Environment Protection Inspection Team (CEPIT-team)**

This team consists of ordinary Jiaying citizens, who have diverse family or educational backgrounds. The recruitment of team members is conducted by the Jiaying EPB. Advertisement was published on the local newspaper *Jiaying Daily* and citizens who are interested to do this voluntary work could submit an application. The team was established in 2008. The main responsibility of the CEPIT is to inspect the behaviour of companies and factories to see whether they have polluting behaviour. The most distinctive activities are “random inspection” (点单式检查) and “flight monitoring” (飞行监测). In “random inspection”, the EPB provides the team around

ten candidate factories or companies. Then, the citizens randomly choose some of them to inspect. This is confidential; the selected factories or companies of the ten candidates are not informed in advance. In “random inspection”, citizens can join the inspection. In such way, ordinary citizens can see the behaviour of factories and companies on the one hand, and supervise the work of the EPB on the other hand. “Flight monitoring” presents inspection work in such a way the team can enter the factories at its will, no matter whether the inspection was planned or not. Except for “random inspection” and “flight monitoring”, the Jiaying EPB also invites the team in so called “special treatment abolishment” (摘帽) decisions. Some factories and enterprises are requested to have special pollution treatment because of their environment-harmful behaviour. These factories and enterprises need to improve their pollution treatment technologies and apply for “special treatment abolishment” if they reach the standard and requirements of regulations. Jiaying EPB invites the team to the assessment work by involving them in hearing and inquiry, on-site inspection and voting. It is determined by the citizens whether the factories and enterprises can stop “special treatment”.

This team could basically be grouped to Agora as it consists of ordinary residents and its concerns very local issues at district or neighbourhood level. Sometimes, those team members conduct activities spontaneously, sometimes the assignments are appointed by Jiaying EPB.

### **Professional Environment Protection Service Team (PEPS-team)**

The PEPS-team consists of professional agents who have special knowledge of, such as environmental science and technology, chemistry or biology. The professional team was founded in 2009. There are around 60 members in this team. They do the voluntary work without any compensation. The service object is mainly enterprise. Experts in the team can provide professional knowledge and suggestions to enterprises. Experts are invited by the enterprises or appointed by the government to go to the factories. The experts can inspect the current techniques and offer suggestions based on their professional knowledge. This team could be seen as part of Academia since its members are professionals in relevant disciplines of environment. We can see that the service object is enterprises and factories.

### **Eco-civilisation Education Team (ECE-team)**

The main work of this ECE-team is to give lectures to government sectors, schools, communities and companies. The themes of these lectures are diverse, including environment protection, ecological knowledge, food safety, etc. The team was founded in 2010 and consists of many motivated people. According to the respondent, there were almost 100 lectures given every year. Those lectures were held in communities, schools, colleges, companies, villages and even some

governmental organisations. Experts give lectures based on their own knowledge and expertise. Sometimes, the Jiaying EPB also provides some material, information or data. Jiaying EPB mostly arranges which agency the team can reach. The content of lectures should also be informed to the Jiaying EPB in advance. This team could also be seen as part of Academia.

### **The Environment Protection Rights Service Centre (EPRS-centre)**

The EPRS-centre consists of several professional lawyers. This centre provides legal aids in environmental issues and conflicts. The beneficiaries can be ordinary citizens and the union itself. Due to the limited time, we did not interview the persons of this service centre.

### **Difficulties and challenges of the EPU**

The Jiaying Environment Protection Union (EPU) also meets some difficulties. Firstly, the financial resource of these groups is not secured. In the report written by the Jiaying EPB, the union gains 200,000 RMB from EPB and an office room. However, according to other interview respondents, the financial support from the EPB is not realised. Due to limited financial resources, some activities cannot be carried out. Voluntary work without any allowance could discourage some member's initiatives. The consequence is that, although there are dozens of name on the member list, the number of highly enthusiastic members whom frequently take part in is less than ten persons.

Secondly, the EPU is too dependent on Jiaying EPB. Currently, the union's main resource of information, devices and facilities is from Jiaying EPB. In other words, the union and its three main teams do not have the capability to run their functions independently. There is a term "government-organised NGOs (GONGOs)" to present such organisations. The Jiaying EPU could be titled as a GONGO. According to almost every interview respondents from the union, this is by no means the desired future of the union. The respondent from the union said: "Since the Jiaying EPB has much more information about the environmental data and enterprises, in most cases, we follow its instructions to run our inspection work. Sometimes, the order from EPB goes directly to EPU's teams, going around EPU. In future, we should be looking for projects actively by ourselves and gain enough support from the society." Capacity-building is the primary challenge in the front of the union and other NGOs in China as well.

Thirdly, the changes of personnel decreased both the quantity and quality of the activities of EPU. This phenomenon reflects a problem, which is that the vitality of the union and its three teams relies too much on some key persons' motivations and efforts. In other words, the group cannot function properly if some key persons are



absent. It can be concluded that it to ensure a capacity-building improvement is a challenge . The last difficulty of the union is the public's weak awareness about environmental protection. Here, the awareness is more related to people's daily lifestyle.

### **3.3.5 Communication**

There are several ways for exchange of information, disagreements and knowledge. Firstly, the Jiaxing EPB invites citizens to some project hearings in order to give information of the planned project to the public and asks for feedbacks from them. Disclosure of a daily-updated air quality index, environmental impacts assessment results, and punishment information has great positive impacts on communication between Jiaxing EPB and the public. Secondly, open inspection work is a way of communication between government, companies and citizens, like "random inspection" and "patrolling inspection". During the inspection work, companies can provide their environmental data to the government and citizens. Meanwhile, some experts and governmental officials can also provide knowledge to ordinary citizens. Thirdly, an online forum and hotline provide the fastest and the most convenient way for communication. Latest information and ? are shared openly on an online forum. Fourthly, organising a round-table meeting is an innovative way of communication in Jiaxing. Representatives from different parties can exchange their opinions and arguments in an equal way. Fifthly, persons from factories and government participate in community activities and provide the latest information on environmental techniques and policies. In China, the media plays an important role in the communication between government and the public. Both parties ask the media to help express their opinions and arguments.

### **3.4 Concluding remarks**

This chapter described the so-called "Jiaxing Model" of environmental governance. The questions can be answered here. In Jiaxing, air pollution and water pollution caused by agricultural activities, industries and domestic pollution are the primary environmental problems. The "Jiaxing Model" involves local citizens and communities in environmental protection activities. Citizens have decisive power in some cases, such as project proposals, punishment decisions on polluting factories. This model also highlights the disclosure of environmental information and data, collaborative negotiation between local government, enterprises and citizens, and a broad channel for citizens to appeal, complain and contribute to local environmental protection. The "Jiaxing Model" has a distinct characteristic, i.e. its structure. This model has a local GONGO called Environment Protection Union, which consists of three action teams and one legal-aid team. Generally speaking, the Environment Protection Union formally acts as a middle man between government, enterprise and the public.

Information, arguments and power distribution go through this union and its teams. However, the “Jiaying Model” is still government-dominant environmental governance, in which local authorities are no doubt the key institutions in environmental protection. Even though the public can influence the development of this model to some extent, the government is always holding the throat of this model from its birth to now. Despite the law requirements, regulations and administrative orders from upper-level authorities, personnel in local government also has an impact on this model of governance. Approvals from Party’s and EPB’s head officials are the preoccupation of the existence of “Jiaying Model”.

The “Jiaying Model” still has some major difficulties. First, the public does not have enough awareness of environmental protection. Secondly, the EPU and CBOs (Agora) do not have the capability to join public participation efficiently and scientifically. Lacking independence, interior management, financial, intelligent support and citizens’ support, the unclear role of the Academia and missing independent forms of communication they cannot reach full functioning in public participation. In this regard, the support from governmental agencies is still essential to those civic groups. That is why Chinese civic groups try collaborating with authorities rather than protesting. Thirdly, public participation in environmental governance lacks efficient mechanisms and a legislative framework. There are a few regulations, but they mostly have suggestive but not legal and binding forces. Fourthly, public participation has not yet prevailed in much broader aspects. Public opinions can be influential in some local or small projects or environmental issues, but not large projects proposed or favoured by governments.

## 4. The “Polder Model” in The Hague

### 4.1 The Hague and the urban quarter Laak

The Kingdom of the Netherlands has a total area of 41,543 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of around 16.77 million (by 2012). It consists of twelve provinces in western Europe and three islands in the Caribbean. The European part of the Netherlands shares borders with Belgium to the south and with Germany to the east; and shares maritime borders with the United Kingdom (see Figure 4.1). The country is a parliamentary democracy organised as a unitary state. The capital city of the

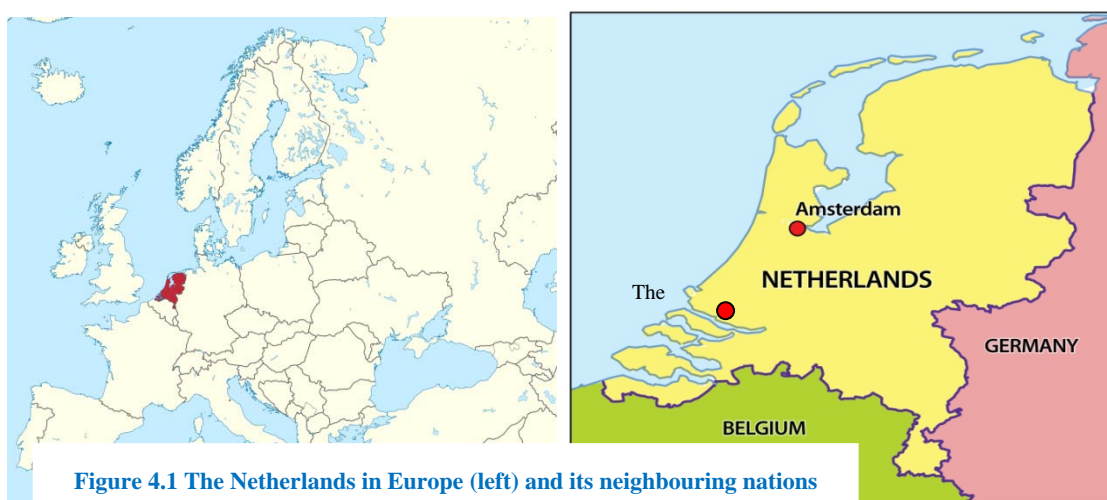


Figure 4.1 The Netherlands in Europe (left) and its neighbouring nations

Netherlands is Amsterdam; however, the seat of government is located in The Hague.

The empirical exploration focused on the urban quarter Laak of the city of The Hague (see Figure 4.2). With a population just over 500,000 inhabitants (as of 1 November 2012) and more than one million inhabitants including the suburbs, it is the third largest city of the Netherlands. Laak is a multi-national and multi-cultural neighbourhood. Migrants like Moroccan, Surinamese, Turkish, Chinese and Polish people live in this neighbourhood. In Laak, you can hear 50 different languages. The Multi-ethnic character increases the complexity of neighbourhood management. Laak used to be a district of The Hague with a high criminal record, but it has become much safer than before.

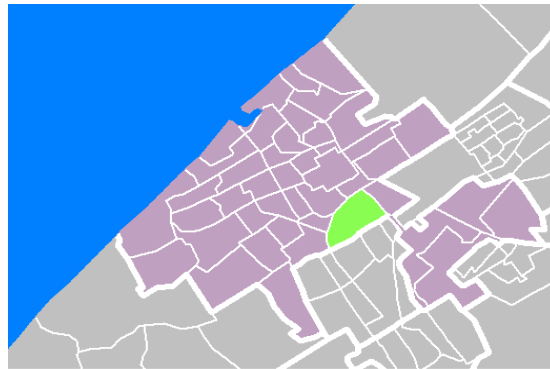


Figure 4.2 The urban quarter Laak (light green) in The Hague

4.2

## Environmental problems in the Netherlands

Industrialised countries experienced many severe environmental problems alongside their industrial and economic development. The Netherlands is not an exception. Dutch people experienced extreme pollutions during the 1960s and 1970s, and at that moment, the public raised plenty of movements against polluting industries. As a result of active movements the national, provincial and local governments started with policy-making (Politeia) for addressing the pollution caused by industries (Oikos) and the lifestyles of citizens (Agora). Notwithstanding this, the Netherlands disposes of a high density of multinational companies, extensive transport systems (Rotterdam is one of the largest seaport in the world) and its intensive agro-industry remains

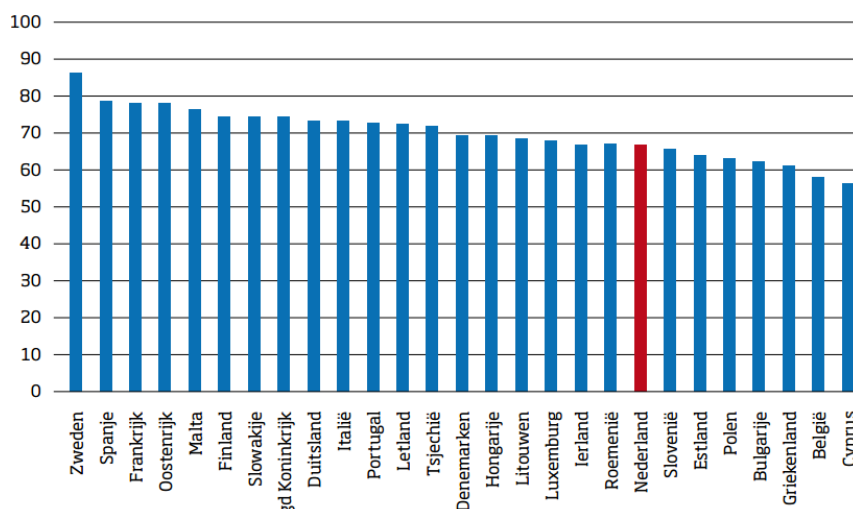


Figure 4.3 Ranking of 27 European countries by the Environmental Performance Index (Natuur en Milieu, 2011)

famous for its windmills and tulips. Important is to realise that the Netherlands has a very high density of its population and, as a consequence of this density and its wealth, a very high density of cars. This resulted into the fact that on the European ladder of important indicators of environment, climate and nature, the Netherlands performs badly.” (translated from Dutch; Natuur en Milieu, 2011). Yale University published an updated ranking of 27 European countries by the Environmental Performance Index. The Netherlands only ranked 20<sup>th</sup> (see Figure 4.3). Combined with the information provided by interview respondents, air quality and water quality are the top two important environmental issues in the Netherlands in general. In addition, energy-saving and climate change adaptation are also important.

Due to intensive traffic and industries, the air is polluted by small particles, NO<sub>x</sub>, CO and O<sub>3</sub>. Traffic and industries are both causing air pollution. Water pollution caused by industry has been well solved in the Netherlands. However, the quality of surface water in the Netherlands is not so good in Europe (Natuur en Milieu, 2011). This is because of non-point source pollution caused by intensive usage of manure and fertiliser and a high concentration of livestock breeding in the Dutch agricultural sector (Natuur en Milieu, 2011). Having a smaller area, the Netherlands produces an extremely high volume of agricultural and horticultural products. This is because of the high efficient usage of land and advanced cultivation technologies. However, the Hague seems to be lucky because there are fewer polluting industries in its territory. The Hague is the City of Justice, which means there is a disproportionately high number of national governmental agencies and international institutes or organisations locating in The Hague. Heavy industries are rare in the city. Currently, the major tasks in terms of environment in The Hague are energy-saving in buildings and discovering renewable energy.

### 4.3 “Polder Model” in Dutch environmental protection

By the 1960s, the Netherlands was one of the most polluted countries in the world. The governments issued many regulations on environmental protection, and meanwhile, the public was also actively involved in the protection movements. The public was very enthusiastic in many fields, including environmental governance. New projects can only start after obtaining a permit from the government. The permit procedure consists of many complicated conditions, which are aiming at guaranteeing an environmental-friendly quality of the potential projects. At that time, the central or local government was dominant in such environmental governance (Driessen et al., 2012). However, some companies did not comply with the conditions in the permit. In some cases, the government did not strictly fulfil its duties, allowing companies to break the rules (Hofman, 1998). In response to this situation, Independent Inspectorates were introduced in environmental governance. Independent Inspectorates were experts or professionals. They might be part of governmental agencies, but they were independent because they acted based upon their own laws; they can act when they think they have to act. Independent Inspectorates can close down factories if they think they do not comply with the conditions in the permits. If there is disagreement between the government and

Independent Inspectorates, they may go to court and the judge will decide. No matter whether Independent Inspectorates joined or not, the companies - so-called target group - were passive acceptor in such mode of environmental governance. The norm of this kind of governance was that: environmental problems can be solved by the governments by setting regulations that regulate technically and quantitatively (Hofman, 1998).

Since the 1980s, there was a great shift in Dutch environmental governance. *"Governance emerges as a concept that acknowledges that the public sector is not the only controlling actor when it comes to the solution of societal problems. Instead, more attention is given to interaction between actors pertaining to the state, the market and civil society. Stakeholder involvement is one of the main characteristics of this shift"* (Driessen et al., 2012). In this exploration we refer to the Politeia, Oikos and Agora (see Figure 2.2) which implies an alternative to the referrals to the 'state, market and civil society' (Van der Maesen, 2013/a). From 1989, the first National Environmental Policy Plan (NEPP) and its successors showed these changes. A so-called "Target Group Policy" was introduced in NEPP-1989: *"[...] New ambitions and the lack of confidence in traditional approaches called for a strategy and style other than the authoritarian style that accompanied the use of direct regulation. The new strategy aims specifically at eliciting private initiative and 'shared responsibility'. Instead of setting technology-forcing standards unilaterally, the approach builds on close collaboration with industry."* (Bressers and De Bruijn, 2005) In the light of NEPP, the principle of environmental governance is dealing with environmental problems through consultation, self-regulation and collaboration among target groups (Hofman, 1998). Despite of Target Group Policy, NEPPs introduced a new instrument to ensure the collaboration between industries and governments. Covenants are voluntary agreements between businesses and governments. Businesses are free to work out their own plans or strategies to reach the long-term goals of sustainability.

In the light of climate changes, and the fact that the Netherlands is vulnerable to impacts of climate change, energy issues are related to every environmental policy. In the year of 2013, the Dutch government and diverse sectors from society worked out a new agreement for energy-focused sustainable development. The annex presents a concise summary of the agreement. *"6 September 2013 - The Netherlands has today taken an important step on the way to an environmentally-friendly future. More than forty organisations – including central, regional and local government, employers and unions, nature conservation and environmental organisations, and other civil-society organisations and financial institutions – have endorsed the Energy Agreement for Sustainable Growth. The core feature of the Agreement is a set of broadly supported provisions regarding energy saving, clean technology, and climate policy. Implementing these provisions is intended to result in an affordable and clean energy supply, jobs, and opportunities for the Netherlands in the market for clean technologies."*(SER, 2013). It is remarkable that in this important agreement only the issue of pollution due to energy production is discussed and not all other forms of pollution.

There is a popular term to label Dutch way of cooperation and consensus-building, called "Polder Model". The tradition of cooperation and consensus building in the Netherlands has been evident in various historical situations (Schreuder, 2001). In the Middle Ages, one of the most important features in the Dutch landscape has been the polder, an area of low-lying land reclaimed from a body of water and protected by dikes against flooding. On the dike stood a windmill that pumped the water from the polder into a canal. The system was difficult to build, expensive to maintain and required sufficient manpower and capital at all times. Individual authorities or entities cannot cope with this task independently. With the absence of Catholic Church control and feudal power, small rural communities organized territorial units in polder boards representing water control interests. They established rules and regulations and chose democratically elected officials to govern the areas on a rotating basis (Schreuder, 2001). In such "Polder Model", every party has to contribute to reach the goal and act according to the rules made by them collaboratively. Schreuder (2001) argued the environmental policy in the Netherlands since the 1990s can be presented as "Polder Model" because it requires support from all segments of society. In the next section, our attention will be paid to the specific situation in The Hague and the urban quarter Laak.

## 4.4 Role of actors in The Hague

### 4.4.1 Politeia: local government and policies

In general, four main tasks of The Hague Municipality in environmental governance are: policy-making, permit-granting, advice-providing and finance-supporting. In terms of policy-making, in 2009, the Municipality of The Hague published its framework policy document named *The Hague: Becoming a sustainable city* (in Dutch: *Op weg naar een duurzaam Den Haag*). The document presents the general objectives, achievements and future plans in terms of six main themes: energy, urban design, public space, mobility, international city, sustainable municipal organisation. It is noticeable that in the foreword of this document, the role of the municipality is: *"The municipality has a natural role as coordinator and also oversees actions that surpass the individual's perspective for action. [...] we cannot boost The Hague's sustainability on our own. As a matter of fact, the city in particular - its residents and businesses - will have to take the initiative. That is why the Municipality of The Hague, in its role as coordinator, will focus on facilitating, smart grouping, inspiring and initiating change."*

We can conclude that the Municipality of The Hague prefers to act as a facilitator or coordinator. Those policies or objectives were collaboratively made by government and businesses. As mentioned in the part above, the target groups should be involved or consulted during policy-making. Professionals and businesses are more knowledgeable to the technical aspect and feasibility of those objectives. Moreover, as the foreword states, the municipality cannot achieve those objectives only by its own efforts; the efforts from businesses are indispensable. Therefore, businesses' opinion must be enclosed in policy-making processes. In terms of permit-granting,

the previous text has introduced the responsibility of the government. The world of the Politeia recognizes the necessity of a new role of local government in environmental governance. Instead of the accent on “top-down” based policies, “bottom-up” initiatives are accepted with regard to environmental protection. They are appreciated as essential. Municipal government is giving more freedom, as well as responsibilities to residents (Agora) and businesses (Oikos). A building energy-saving project which will be introduced below was chosen as a representative case during the exploration.

The Hague is a historic city, which has lots of old-fashioned buildings, and modern buildings as well. Energy consumption in buildings for cooling, heating and ventilating is remarkable. The Hague wants to renovate both old and modern buildings to reduce energy consumption. According to an employee of the municipality to conduct some energy-saving projects, in the 1980s, the process of building renovation was top-down. The Municipality told people what to do and how to do it, and in some cases it offered subsidies for this. On the local level at that time, people just waited for the government to do the job. Nowadays the government arranges this in another way. In general, the government helps people by providing professional advice and limited financial support, and people take the initiatives themselves. However, in order to encourage people to renovate their houses, the government invests money to around 70 houses to do the renovation as a form of ‘good practice’; but this is also a top-down based policy. These 70 houses have to open to the public at least three days per year to show the people what the outcome is. In this ‘good practice’, the government not only invests a lot of money, but also provides very detailed instruction.

The Municipality realises the top-down process does not work efficiently nowadays. Top-down processes do not trigger the thinking process of people. They rely on the government but do not think and take responsibility themselves. Nowadays, government tries to help people to take action themselves. The municipality does not want to invest in renovation measures, but in the process to encourage people. Let people think, take initiative and communicate with neighbours. People can do something together; they can share knowledge, information and reduce the costs. However, the outcomes of those projects differ in different places. Some residents are really active, and they encourage their neighbours to join together. It can be a successful societal process, but some projects dropped down due to different reasons.

The Municipality of The Hague is confronted with some problems: first, the decision-making process is really time-consuming. Negotiation, discussion, modification, explanation and even judging in court take much time. However, the long decision-making process is not commonly seen in some “large” projects, of which process is rather top-down. Secondly, as coordinator and facilitator, the municipality cannot make sure the policy objective would be achieved in the end. Although the plan and policies are made collaboratively by the government, businesses and sometimes citizens, the implementation is the responsibility of businesses and citizens. The



municipality has no power to enforce people to do something; businesses and communities have their own plans to achieve agreements with the government. However, whether the outcomes are satisfactory is out of the government's hand. Thirdly, appropriate communication between municipality, businesses and local civil organisations is indispensable, but at the same time, it is difficult. Diverse working styles and working languages make good communication hard to maintain. Good communication is based on transparency and openness, but it is not always easy to some involved actors. Fourthly, the "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) attitude is a global phenomenon. The Netherlands is not an exception. NIMBY can delay the necessary developments from a certain point of view, which is a headache to local governments. Fifthly, municipal governments get fewer and fewer financial support from upper governments, which makes it more difficult to municipalities to invest in local development projects. Sixthly, many enterprises and local civil organisations have worked out their plans and asked the municipality for permits and further information, such as land-use plans, land ownership information and so forth. However, the municipality is not prepared yet to provide this information.

#### **4.4.2 Oikos: the role of the NGOs in the Dutch Society**

In the exploration, we have not interviewed people from specific NGO's. Instead, information from Klink's empirical studies in the Netherlands, and interview respondents from other organisations were quoted to present the role of NGOs in Dutch society. As mentioned above, the National Environmental Policy Plans (NEPP) calls for extensive collaboration and cooperation between governmental agencies, businesses, non-for-profit organizations and institutions (including NGO's). Influenced by this new approach of environmental governance, the Dutch government now ensures – in our terms – a constructive collaboration between the Politeia, Oikos and Agora (see Figure 2.2). This policy will be translated in subsidising and giving grants to numerous NGOs (Klink, 2007). NGOs in the Netherlands are very robust in environmental issues. It is no surprise that more than two million Dutch people are members of NGOs (Klink, 2007).

Two main financial support resources to NGOs are governmental funds and fundraising from the society. The majority of NGOs in the Netherlands receive a substantial amount of funding from the government (Klink, 2007). In terms of knowledge support, Dutch NGOs have close contacts with universities, institutes and international NGOs (Klink, 2007). Furthermore, they have full-time workers, which make them have a stronger capacity in organisation management. The registration process is relatively easy in the Netherlands. Only few paperwork is needed. Since 2007, NGOs must submit reports documenting their activities and contribution to the community (Klink, 2007).

Even though getting considerable funds from the government, Dutch NGOs maintain their independence in general. Some NGOs regularly protest government projects even though they receive government funding. This is because the fund is not politically motivated (Klink, 2007). NGOs are not afraid to try and influence the

government. They use all methods available to them to address issues, including lobbying, awareness activities, protest activities, educational outreach and direct management of protected areas (Klink, 2007). However, it should be stressed that more often than not, NGOs favour collaboration with government rather than engage in acts of protest.

#### 4.4.3 Agora: Communities and individuals

During the empirical explorations, several persons from community-based organisations (CBOs) were interviewed. Most of these CBOs are independent from governmental bodies, but they can get substantial funding from government, and even from the European Union. Here, this paper will introduce the Health, Welfare and Sport Programme (in Dutch: Gezondheid, Welzijn en Sport (GWS programme)) and Cooperation for Micro-economic Activities (its Dutch name is Coöperatief Eigenwijzer).

#### **Health, Welfare and Sport Programme (GWS programme)**

The GWS programme is undertaken by several CBOs in Laak and the municipality of The Hague with strong support by the IASQ. This programme is funded by the European Commission and the Municipality, as well as by participating organizations. It aims to improve the responsible role of residents in changing their daily circumstances in collaboration with these organizations as well at a sustainable urban development of this quarter of the city of The Hague. The previous experience shows that although there are diverse CBOs in Laak, they do not have forms of communication with which to develop a comprehensive vision about the future of the neighbourhood ([van der Maesen, 2010](#)). One of the tasks of GWS programme is to provide a platform to brace local CBOs, residents and professional to join together in discussing the current situation and the future of their neighbourhood. The programme set up a “communication centre”, which locates in a re-used school building, to welcome local people. The school is owned by another CBO, which asked the approval from the municipality to temporarily re-use the old school building for different innovative projects in Laak. The meeting place provides a stage to local people to raise their voice. On the evening of every month's second Wednesday, the communication centre has a meeting that welcomes local residents, professionals, CBOs and representatives from police, political parties or government. The fix-planned meeting is called “Colourful Molenwijk” (in Dutch: Kleurrijk Molenwijk).

#### **The Cooperation for Micro-economic Activities**

The Cooperation for Micro-economic Activities is a cooperation organisation in Laak and a new type of neighbourhood business. It helps small businesses, in which people can contribute their knowledge, money and other potentials to help the development of the neighbourhood. Urban farming in the school garden is one of their initiatives. Why take urban farming as an example here? The ideology of urban farming can be concluded briefly as: urban farming can grow local, fresh, organic,

and cheap food, mainly vegetables and fruits, to the urban residents, especially who are poor or have disadvantaged food accessibility. Due to a direct or shorter distance between production and consumption place, urban farming can remarkably reduce energy-consumption and emission during food transportation. The school garden is owned by the Cooperation for Micro-economic Activities. The school occupies around 1,400m<sup>2</sup> of land, including a 700m<sup>2</sup> garden.

With the help of the Cooperation for Micro-economic Activities, Elemam operates the school garden. In 2005, he moved to The Hague and joined some cooperative projects to help people without job and small businessmen. In 2008, he was appointed by the Cooperation for Micro-economic Activities to undertake the urban farming project in the school garden. As an individual, Elemam did not have enough money to start the project; therefore he asked the municipality for some subsidies. The Cooperation for Micro-economic Activities helped Elemam to write a proposal to the municipality. Although Elemam received a subsidy from the municipality, it was difficult to get it started. Elemam said that from a certain point of view advertising is more important than cultivation. The school garden organises an open-day to invite people to the garden to do whatever they want and sell food to them. Elemam asks them when they think his food is delicious and cheap, to please tell their neighbours. It is called "mouth-to-mouth" promotion. Nowadays, many people come to visit his garden and buy some food even though there is a big supermarket nearby. In addition to business, Elemam has another motivation to run this school garden. He wants to make this garden as one of the meeting places for local residents where they can meet and talk with each other. Laak is a multi-ethnic neighbourhood. In the garden, people from different ethnic groups can have conversations during purchase or bargain and get to know each other. The school garden has an open-day each season (except in winters). During the open-day, children cook meals and invite the elderly to share the food with them. Each open-day has a specific topic, so that children and old people can talk with each other. Elemam is proud that his garden has the potential to improve the social cohesion of his neighbourhood.

## **Quartier Laak**

Quartier Laak is one CBOs founded in 2012. Quartier Laak was established for the purpose of preserving, beautifying and socio-economic strengthening Laakkwartier. Quartier Laak realises its goals by initiating and executing various projects, which are accessible to all residents and businesses in Laakkwartier. Quartier Laak employs a total of three workers. Jurienne Hollaar is one of them. In the interview, he expressed his understanding of "public participation". "Participation" itself is not enough; however, "contribution" is rather indispensable. At neighbourhood level, it is undeniable that residents have the right to participate in neighbourhood management. Meanwhile, they also have the obligation to contribute to neighbourhood management. Jurienne's understanding is incorporated in Quartier Laak's working strategy. Quartier Laak is trying to provide a large number of activities in the urban quarter Laak supposed to benefit the district. However, they are not for

free. People should devote their time, knowledge, skills and even passion to their neighbourhoods. Local businessmen probably are required to offer their products for free or at reduced prices, and even offer investments. The strategy of Quartier Laak is called "value-creating-network". Within this area, Quartier Laak encourages people who live and work in Laak to leverage each other's knowledge, expertise, products and services.

## **Individuals**

It is undeniable that some community individuals have certain power to influence the local decisions, such as lawyers, doctors, politicians and council members. They can provide meaningful knowledge, information and advice on behalf of communities in negotiation with other agencies, such as the government. Moreover, the community can ask politicians living in the same community to lobby in political discussions. It is good news if a community has some influential professionals or politicians.

Next to people who have political influence, some persons from academia are also motivated in urban environmental issues. Tycho Vermeulen is part of the scientific staff at Wageningen University. He is engaged in several urban farming projects in The Hague. As a scientific person, he can provide some concept meaning and explain why urban farming is important to cities to civil servants, businessmen or citizens. Although he has this expertise, Tycho Vermeulen acts more on the business aspect. He is active in networking, fundraising, lobby and communication with people from different agencies. Tycho underscores the importance of "good communication" and "inter-dependence" between project participants. He believes "good communication" should be based on "inter-dependence" and "openness". In other words, project participants join the project because they can benefit from others and they can share information transparently. Jurienne Hollaar highlighted the importance of some "initiators" in a neighbourhood. In some cases, if the local residents' rights, such as safety or health, are threatened, they might call the police or form a group to oppose to the threats-maker or government. By doing so, some people with certain knowledge and skills are necessary in such cases. They have to prepare something, like arguments and paper-works. In other cases, residents in a neighbourhood might be passive in neighbourhood development; depending on the social status of this neighbourhood. If the residents are more passive, then the "initiators" are more important because they can inspire people and trigger some changes in the neighbourhood. These "initiators" can do something tangible, as showcases, to other local people, and other people might follow them. Jurienne Hollaar himself is one of the "initiators". He works in Quartier Laak and he is motivated to take part in many activities in Laak.

Although the Agora in the Netherlands is robust, it experienced some difficulties as well. Firstly, like the municipality finds it difficult to communicate with representatives of the Agora, these representatives find it hard to communicate with the municipality as well. Lots of energy and time is spent in endless hearings and negotiations, which remarkably decreases the enthusiasm of CBOs and individual citizens. Furthermore,

insufficient communication also exists between different CBOs. CBOs are active in community's issues, but they seem to work separately and are not willing to communicate or share information with their peer organisations. Secondly, it is hard to mobilise residents to join neighbourhood management. However, it seems to depend on the profile of the neighbourhood. In some neighbourhoods, people there are not active in neighbourhood development. On the contrary, some people are more creative and sometimes it is them who take the initiative. Thirdly, lack of money is always a problem. Financial support from governmental agencies and enterprises is the major source. Fundraising is also an approach. However, it is getting more difficult to obtain sufficient financial support nowadays.

#### 4.4.4 Communication

Dutch provincial and local governments also hold project hearings open to the public. In some cases, there are endless hearings and discussions. For example, a provincial government proposed a highway construction connecting A44 and A4 has been under negotiation with local communities for more than ten years. Some experts on behalf of local communities prepare data and they sometimes find the government provides fake information. Secondly, the municipality of The Hague holds a so-called "sustainable breakfast". The municipality thinks it is important to bring people together and let them talk to each other. People will develop their new ideas during talking. This takes place around three times per year; and people come from the whole city of The Hague. The municipality used to organise the meeting. Two years ago the municipality stopped this, it just lets people talk about their goals and exchange experience. The municipality withdraws to the background. The municipality does not talk about its goals or policies, it just provides some information or advice along the people's request. This can be called as from "public participation" to "government participation". Thirdly, communities are free and independent to arrange activities to improve communication within communities. For example, the above-mentioned "Colourful Molenwijk", a regular community meeting, invites representatives from the police, CBOs, political parties, and a college. People are free to express their opinions in terms of community management and development. Sometimes, representatives from the municipality and political parties are also invited.

#### 4.5 Concluding remarks

At the national level, energy issues, air pollution, soil pollution and water pollution are the main environmental issues in the Netherlands. In a broader view, possibly extreme weather and rising water level caused by climate change also threaten the safety of the nation. Air pollution is mainly caused by polluting industries and traffic. In harbour areas, shipping is a major pollution source. However, The Hague seems to be lucky because there is fewer polluting industries and shipping in its territory. Currently, the major tasks in terms of environment in The Hague are energy-saving in

buildings and discovering renewable energy. The municipality spends lots of money and energy to promote energy-saving in new and old buildings.

Unlike Jiaying, The Hague does not have a specific “model” in environmental governance. Based on the findings in scientific papers and interviews, we can conclude that the environmental governance in the Netherlands is shifting from a “top-down” process to “bottom-up” process, following the original political culture of taking responsibility by residents/citizens for their own daily circumstances. Experiencing the environmental problems in the 1960s and 70s, and disadvantages of regulation-oriented governance, the Dutch environmental governance shifted to consultation processes. In consultation, the “target group”, i.e. businesses, have more freedom to influence environmental policies. The policies were made collaboratively by governments and businesses. Meanwhile, environmental NGOs were thriving in this country that made their position and role more powerful in environmental governance. Nowadays, the role of government has shifted from decision-maker to coordinator or facilitator. The local government (Politeia) invests money and time to encourage business (Oikos) and the residents of its urban quarters (Agora) to take responsibility and initiatives. The Oikos and the Agora's relatively are more free to make their own plans. However, their plans should be in the same line with the general visions and objectives given by the municipality. The residents of the quarter Laak (Agora) become more active and motivated in local environmental issues even though they face a lot of difficulties and challenges. Since the government is less willing to appoint its civil servants to involve in local neighbourhood management due to insufficient local knowledge and financial shortage, it provides both necessity and opportunity to local residents to join their neighbourhood development. CBOs and local NGOs are crucial to local development. They have a high but not absolute independence to manage their duties and activities in neighbourhood development. They also meet some difficulties, such as financial shortage, ineffective and inappropriate communication, insufficient support from local residents, etc. Their own capacity-building is a difficult but a must-do issue.

In the light of less control from governments and more responsibilities of the Oikos and the Agora, *uncertainty* seems to be the primary difficulty in Dutch environmental governance. Neither representatives of the Politeia, nor of the Oikos and the Agora are sure about the outcomes in the near and far future. And also in this case the position of the Academia is unclear as well. There are no orchestrated actions from this side to support for example representatives of the Agora. Whether the sustainability objectives could be achieved is out the hands of any single actor. Given this uncertainty, communication between different actors is extremely important. All interview respondents support this view. Communication in both vertical direction, that is, between different levels of the Politeia, Oikos and Agora; and horizontal direction, that is, between peer organisations in the Politeia, Oikos and Agora, are important in contemporary society. Due to its feature, the Hague is a multi-ethnic city. Language sometimes is an obstacle in effective communication. It is crucial that good communication should be based on openness, transparency, respect and equality. From a more practical point of view, “inter-dependence” is also essential.

## 5. Comparison

### **Environmental concerns**

Both Jiaxing and The Hague face environmental problems. The environmental problems in Jiaxing are pollutions that can directly impact on residents' health, such as air pollution, soil pollution and water pollution. Industrialisation without appropriate environmental concerns is the main cause of environmental problems in Jiaxing. It needs the attention from local governments and even regional and national government, as well as from the public. Nevertheless, both the government and the public did not give sufficient attention to environmental pollution in the last century. Regulations and laws that regulate industry's pollution behaviour proved to be weak. However, the legislative system became aware of the problem. In April 2014, China passed its strongest environmental protection law, which sets more strict regulations on pollution behaviours and requests disclosure of environmental data and more powerful public participation. In the specific situation of Jiaxing, urban planning failure is one of the reasons of conflicts between residents and industries. The industrial zone in the north part of the city was planned more than ten years ago. At that time, the built-up areas of Jiaxing city were far away from this planned industrial zone. However, unpredictably rapid urban expansion brought the residential areas adjacent to the built industrial zone, which caused direct conflicts between factories and communities.

In The Hague, the air pollution and water pollution still exists, but the problem is less severe than in other Dutch cities since The Hague does not have much heavy industry in its territory. Looking at the results, we find that the local government is more concerned with energy-saving. As an international city which has many international governmental, non-governmental, environmental organisations, The Hague tries its best to be CO<sub>2</sub> neutral city by 2040. Moreover, since a large proportion of the Netherlands is under the sea level, sea level rising is a disastrous threat to this country. Nowadays, extra energy consumption means extra emission of greenhouse gas, which causes global warming and a rising sea level. Therefore, the Hague cares much about its energy-saving strategies. In addition, some less advanced heating facilities and relatively colder climate, Dutch cities face difficulties in energy-saving in household and office buildings.

### **Rationale of public participation**

Deterioration of local environment, appeals from the public and interior change in local government are the three reasons of the birth of the "Jiaxing Model". The first



two reasons have been explained before. Interior change in the Jiaxing government, especially its Environment Protection Bureau (EPB), was the pulling force of the “Jiaxing Model”. Firstly, as a respondent said, Jiaxing government has full attention to the probity of its civil servants. The corruption level is low in Jiaxing. It is not common to incorporate public participation and supervision in local management while the local government is corrupted. Nevertheless, due to its probity, Jiaxing government (Jiaxing EPB) is not afraid of incorporating the public in its management and governance. It is becoming a “sunlight government” by disclosing environmental data to incorporate the public. Furthermore, Jiaxing EPB is not able to cope with environment problems only by its own any longer. It realises that to allow the public participate in some inspection work could be a good idea to share the burden of the bureau, and it is also a good way to soften the intensive relations between the public.

In terms of the Dutch situation, severe pollution in the 1960s and 70s questioned the governmental institution in environment protection. The local Politeia realised to incorporate representatives of the Oikos and the Agora in environmental issues. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, energy crisis and global warming became the primary environmental concerns of the Netherlands. Meanwhile, with the decentralisation of governmental systems and less support from provincial and national government, municipal government finds it is getting incapable to tackle all local environmental issues. More responsibilities are distributed to companies, NGOs and communities. On the other hand, the acknowledgment of the traditional strong position of inhabitants (rural and urban) in Dutch society required a redefinition of the position of the Politeia (national, provincial and local) concerning environmental protection. And as explained above and also according to many respondents, the collaborative working style is the nature of Dutch society, which can be explained by the term “Polder Model”.

### **Role of Politeia, Oikos and Agora**

Consensus can be assumed about the fact that the “Jiaxing Model” is an example of public participation in environmental governance under the government’s lead. Regulations and laws, both national and local, request the involvement of the public and ensure the leading role of the government. Jiaxing EPB is the initiator and leader of the “Jiaxing Model”. It organises, plans and supervises most of the work of the Jiaxing EPU. However, in some certain cases, the Jiaxing EPB acts as coordinator, such as in “random inspection” and “flight monitoring” (see above). Furthermore, local government (including EPB) is the leader and finance provider of the Jiaxing EPU and community management, permit and punishment issuer of industries. Jiaxing EPU is a government-organised non-governmental organisation (GONGO). In most cases, it helps Jiaxing EPB rather than takes part in protesting. Residents’ Committees in China are not completely independent either. The Residents’ Committee hardly tries to arrange environmental protection activities, it mostly

engages in educational activities, but it finds it is incapable to protect the local environment due to limited political and financial power. In Jiaxing, there is no clue of active community-based organisations (CBOs) except for the Residents' Committee. However, it is noticeable that there are many motivated person in local environment protection. They are enthusiastic in activities organised by the Jiaxing EPB and EPU. In general, as some respondents said, most of citizens in Jiaxing do not realise their responsibilities in local environment protection. Polluting factories and local government are always to be blamed. It is difficult to local communities to be autonomous, which has both subjective and objective reasons.

In The Hague, the municipality operates rather as a coordinator or facilitator. The Municipality paves the way for communities and citizens to realise their own responsibilities and to work out their own plans and measures to protect the local environment. The municipality helps to provide useful information and limited funds while it does not have a decisive power in community management. In some meetings, the municipality position is more towards the background, such as the "sustainable breakfast". Unlike China, the Netherlands has powerful NGOs. The government and the public are the fund providers of Dutch NGOs. However, although some Dutch NGOs may receive funding from the government, they are politically independent, and not afraid of protesting against government. But more often than not, they try to cooperate with government. In The Hague, CBOs and Residents' Committee has more independent power in community management. They usually are initiating many inspiring activities. They take responsibility to make their own neighbourhoods more beautiful and improve local development, instead of relying on governmental measures. This is different from the Chinese situation. From the exploration in the urban quarter Laak, we found that local CBOs and some active initiators do not care too much whether the initiatives are small or large; they believe in the "butterfly effect", which means tiny changes can bring huge changes in the future. Moreover, despite educational activities, CBOs in Laak prefer regular communication between different local organisations and residents. Similar to the Chinese situation, there are some motivated activists, but it is still hard to mobilise local residents to join actively.

## **6. Conclusions**

This paper presents the main findings of two empirical studies on public participation in environmental governance in Jiaxing and The Hague. Although the findings cannot represent the whole situation in Chinese and Dutch society, they still can provide some interesting conclusions of comparison. In the studies, we can see some key differences and similarities. Firstly, environmental issues are a key concern of both Jiaxing and The Hague even though their specific concerns are different. Jiaxing cares more about air and water pollution while the Hague is more concerned with

energy-saving and climate change. Secondly, public participation in Jiaxing is governmental-led, while local government of The Hague plays more a role as a coordinator. Public participation in Jiaxing does not have a long history and practical experience. From a certain point of view, government's control can avoid some unexpected or harmful consequences caused by selfish interests or offensive behaviour in the name of "the public". In The Hague, more freedom and responsibilities are given to business, non-for-profit organisations, CBO's and NGO's. Although the municipality still makes the principal policies and has the authority to issue permits, the outcomes are out of its hands. Governments in both cities find it difficult to communicate with the public properly since environment-focused communication requests some specific knowledge and sometimes, communication and political skills. Thirdly, local NGO's in Jiaxing are governmental-organised, hence the term GONGO. GONGO's are not independent and they need political and financial support from the local government. On the contrary, Dutch NGOs enjoy more freedom and independence. Although they get substantial financial support from the government, the fund is politically-free. However, both in China and the Netherlands, NGOs (or GONGOs) prefer to cooperate with governments rather than to protest. Fourthly, both Chinese and Dutch communities are active in local environmental issues. They both have motivated and active individuals in community and they both find it hard to motivate and mobilise local residents to involve in community activities. Unlike Chinese communities who pay attention on educational activities, Dutch communities care more about the local economic, environmental and social development and communication between local organisations and individuals. Like its NGOs, Dutch communities have more freedom to manage their own issues.

In both cases the role of the Academia is quite unclear. Many knowledge institutes in the Netherlands are more related with national operating NGO's. In the case of Jiaxing they are more related to the Politeia. On local level, the Agora's are not really supported in order to enhance their position compared to the Oikos and the Politeia. In both cases, ideas about the role of 'independent forms of communication' (supported by the Academia in an orchestrated way) is lacking. The rather ideological based interpretation of the triangle "state, market and civil society' also prevents a clear development of this role of communication (Van der Maesen, 2013/a).

Notwithstanding this, we also find in this comparative exploration that communication between diverse societal actors for enhancing their empowerment (of such as professional knowledge, negotiation skills, argumentation skills, etc.) are key elements in collaborative and participatory environmental governance. From a certain point of view, especially the "Jiaxing Model" may deliver, as a result of its structural approach, points of departure for elaborating the necessary forms of communication. The Dutch "Polder Model" is less structural and prevents orchestrated forms of

communication. Socio-political, socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-environmental dimensions play an essential role and their configurations differ essentially between China and the Netherlands. This might be the reason why the two cities reach different forms of environmental governance. Empowerment that enables civic groups to effectively and powerfully join environmental governance also plays a key role in governance. Definitely, more empirical studies and scientific research is needed to tackle these two topics. We are honoured if our studies could provide the starting point for more valuable research in the future.

## Notes

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