P5 - Reflection – Lianna van Gils – 4731271

This document is written to reflect on the research that I have done until now, the research that still needs to be done, the feedback that I got from my mentors and how I used this feedback.

1. Effectiveness of approach and understanding how and why

1.1 Content analysis

The content analysis was a useful tool to gain basic insights into finding out what stage the housing associations of Rotterdam are in at this moment. The research is done with almost all the housing associations in Rotterdam, only HEF Wonen is excluded because they are a new association and they don't have reports on the past years and they are in the process of making policy plans for the coming years. I got to know how many of the housing associations are aware, how many are unconsciously adapted and how many are consciously adapted to heat stress. The outcome of the research shows improvement in awareness and adaptation compared to the research done in 2012. It also shows the housing associations of Rotterdam in comparison to each other.

The research does have big constraints which I discovered during the process. Firstly it answers the closed question of whether the housing associations are aware and adapted, but not how aware and adapted they are. Secondly, the fact that housing associations wrote about heat adaptation does not mean that they are adapted to heat. The content analysis is an assessment of the situation on paper, but it might not reflect reality.

All in all, the content analysis was effective in showing the general comparison of the adaptation and awareness on paper between 2012 and now, and between the different housing associations in Rotterdam. The constraints and the emergence of questions introduce possibilities for the next steps in the research: a deeper view of the situation within the housing associations and who is involved in the process.

1.2 Interviews

To get a deeper understanding of the 'why' and 'how' of awareness and adaptation, I decided to conduct in-depth interviews with different stakeholders in the field of adaptation to heat. With the housing associations as the main perspective, I used the Pestel method (Aguilar, 1967) to break down and examine the external forces that affect the process. The interviews were very helpful to learn about barriers that occur in the process of becoming adapted to heat. It also showed me how different stakeholders have different perspectives and even have different opinions on the matter. The different interests of the stakeholders make them prioritize different things, which also gives a lot of opportunities to bring varying knowledge to the table if the stakeholders work together. Normally this might be information that companies don't want to share because of competition, but because of the public character of most organizations, I noticed that they are willing to share and work together.

I had a hard time getting in contact with the stakeholders, but when I got into contact with one person, via-via I got into contact with a lot of others. It might be that the public non-profit organizations have limited resources available to connect the right people to me when I approached them without a contact person. Next to that, it is hard to confirm the findings. This can be done with literature research, but it is clear that in practice, the

organizations are further along than the literature is. A solution is an external confirmation, which I will be doing as the last step of the research.

All in all the in-depth interviews were very effective in giving deeper insights into how organisations work, how they deal with the need for transformations and what are barriers and opportunities in this process.

1.3 Strategy making

By doing a literature search, I tried to find structure in my thesis. Literature on transition management taught me about transition images and transition pathways. The literature was done in a later stage because at the time of the first literature studies, I could not find the right literature that I was looking for. Normally, it would have made more sense to have the literature on this topic first and then start the research, but in this case, I think it confirmed what I was doing. The transition image-making required me to describe the current situation, which is partly done by the content analysis and partly by the interviews, and to find barriers, which I also did with the interviews.

The transition pathway defining was the last step of my research. This is done by describing what changes should happen to overcome the barriers, when this should happen, who should be involved and what long- and short-term goals should be set. This was a perfect opportunity to fuse all the gained knowledge from the content analysis and the interviews into a more practical advise on what should happen to continue and accelerate the transition.

A constraint of setting the third part of my research up like this is that this part is very subjective to my own perspective. I tried to make my perspective as broad as possible, by reading a lot about the topic and interviewing different stakeholders, but the fact remains that the advice could be coloured with experiences and information that I obtained during my study. With this in mind, the final part of the research is presenting my findings at the Groene Huisvesters.

1.4 Presentation Groene Huisvesters

The presentation at Groene Huisvesters' heat happened on the 15th of May, after the green-light presentation. My first plan was to set up an expert session after the interviews where the findings of the interviews could be discussed and the different stakeholders could work together to find opportunities to set up an integral strategy for housing associations of Rotterdam to overcome heat stress. Sadly, it was not possible to get all the stakeholders together within the possible timeframe, so after trying to set up the meeting for multiple dates, I decided to continue with the plan B that I made, write the strategy myself and so I decided to add a feedback loop after I made the strategy.

As mentioned in the reflection of the interviews, it is hard to confirm the findings that were done in the interviews, because the literature is often lagging behind the reality. During the presentation, my findings and the strategy were presented. After this, the attendees of the heat sessions had the opportunity to react to my findings. In this way, I will get an extra feedback loop which confirms or criticises my findings.

The presentation went well and 30 people stayed to watch my presentation. The feedback was very positive which confirmed my findings. I presented quite a bit longer than expected. I will try to take that into account while preparing for my P5 presentation. A constraint of getting feedback from people who signed up to join a session about heat is that I only get feedback from the people who are already interested in the heat transition. It might be the case that I missed out on feedback from people who have a more critical few on adding heat adaptation in their policies. This would be something to keep in mind next time I try to confirm my findings similarly. All in all, I think the presentation at the Groene Huisvesters was a good addition to my thesis.

2. Feedback mentors

My mentors, Ad Straub and Zac Taylor, helped me a lot during my research. They gave me practical tips as well as they helped me with knowledge about the topic and doing research.

Firstly they helped me set out a good planning so I would be sure that I could finish the thesis within the given timeframe. I was planning on working together with the different stakeholders during the last part of my research instead of using literature as I like this form of work better. They advised me to set up a plan A where I would be dependent on the different stakeholders being able to help me with the last part of the research, and a plan B where I would be able to continue executing my research even if those stakeholders would not be able to work with me. I made both plans and set deadlines for myself to make sure I would switch to plan B in time. Eventually, I switched to my plan B after not being able to get the stakeholders together in time for the last part of my research but I still included an extra feedback loop from the stakeholders on the advice of one of my mentors.

Secondly, they taught me about confirmation of findings that make a study sturdy. I am trying to validate my findings from the content analysis with the literature, the findings from the interviews with literature research and I tried to interview multiple stakeholders with the same functions.

Thirdly, also a planning tip, they advised me to reach out to people in an early stage and ask the people I got into contact with to suggest new contacts for my study. As I noticed later on, it can be difficult to get in contact with the right people and sometimes those people will not answer as soon as I would have preferred. Especially getting in contact with specific functions within municipalities and housing associations is difficult if you have to reach out to them without knowing anyone from the organization. I followed this advice and my mentors got me in contact with some people they know.

After my P3 presentation, my mentors helped me finding the last supporting literature that I need to put the final puzzle together. I found it very difficult to use the right jargon to find relevant literature and even with all the knowledge that I gathered until my P3 presentation, I did not find the right specific terms. My mentors helped me and that really helped me find that last piece of the puzzle which made the rest of my thesis complete. The timing to find this important piece of literature was very strange, but I was happy to learn that everything I did followed this source's theory. It felt like a confirmation of what I have been doing.

Next to that, they helped me with feedback on a lot of details. This ranges from finding the right external stakeholders to giving feedback on my performed literature research, content analysis and interviews. I always made sure to either write it down or immediately change it in my report to make the best use of their feedback.

3. How did I learn

By doing this thesis, I learned a lot of in-depth information about the transformation to heat-adapted housing. I learned about how organizations work, ranging from public banks to housing associations and municipalities and a lot of practical things.

To start with the practical things I learned, I discovered that it has a great impact on the things you get done when you are dependent on others. It is therefore always important to take into account that the preferred scenario does not work out and have a second scenario planned where I would not be depending on others. Next to that, being assertive in contacting people and making a plan with enough room for doing a second reach-out helps a lot with this problem.

While doing the thesis, I learned a lot about how to do academic research, how to find accurate academic literature and how to connect this to my chosen topic. I had quite a hard time narrowing the topic down because it is such a new topic, but I learned that narrowing the topic down helps with providing academic and trustworthy research.

Lastly, I learned a lot about how housing associations function, I learned about the current status of heat adaptation among housing associations in Rotterdam and what barriers and opportunities there are in the transition to heat-adaptive housing. I learned how to build a strategy for these kinds of transformations and that you can use similar transformations that happened in the past to help form good strategies with as little as possible risk for the housing associations. The know in-depth about what I learned in this thesis, I refer to my thesis paper and my presentation.

References

Aguilar, F. J. (1967). Scanning the business environment.