Beitske Boonstra – City-making and complexity enhancing planning approaches (Postdoctoral research)

Complexity and self-organisation are receiving a growing attention from spatial planners. They make planners sensitive to their limited role in determining spatial transformations, and the potential of unexpected and non-linear developments. However, conceptualisations stay elusive as little attention is paid to translating them into concrete perspectives for planning action. So far, complexity-enhancing and self-organisation sensitive planning practices remain thin on the ground. This research focusses on civic-led, community-based and cooperative forms of urban development and “city-making” across Europe. Such initiatives often start without predefined plans and clear overviews, but rather move gradually, incorporating unexpected opportunities, changed conditional settings and new actor-constellations situationally and step by step. As such, these practices are examples of complexity-enhancing spatial planning. In particular, this research studies the capacities and skills of those involved in city-making, and aims at translating these skills and capacities to a more complexity-enhancing and self-organisation-sensitive planning practice in general.