1 Introduction

§ 1.1 Why planning with self-organised initiatives?

Brazilian planning authorities have faced many criticisms over the last half century. Even Brasília, the new modernist capital, established in 1960, has been heavily criticised in recent decades (Ferreira Nunes & Bandeira, 2004; Fragomeni, Fonseca, & Brandao, 2016; Gehl & Rogers, 2013; Holston, 1993). It is common to associate Brazilian metropolises with violence, chaos and inequality. These negative images are not only imbedded in the popular mind, but are also reflected in well-known research. São Paulo has been framed as the 'City of Walls' (Caldeira, 2000) and Rio de Janeiro has been referred to as part of the 'Planet of Slums' (Davis, 2006). While both cities face challenges that go beyond urban planning, it is fair to assume that planning has been unable to cope with the changes both cities faced in the last half century. The southeast region of Brazil, for example, where the two biggest cities are located, grew from an urbanisation rate of 57% in 1960 to 92.95% in the last census in 2010 (IBGE, 2018). This urban growth did not occur in an orderly fashion. Cities developed without strategic coordination, mainly driven by the economic opportunism of the moment, which resulted in an uneven and disconnected urban patchwork. The result of this opportunity-led development is the well-known fragmentation and inequality represented by the walls and slums described by Caldeira and Davis. In this thesis, fragmentation refers not only to the difference in the spatial characteristics of distinct areas of a city, but also to the lack of connection between those areas: the lack of interdependence. Fragmentation, therefore, involves more than mere diversity within an urban system. The diverse urban patchwork of Brazilian cities is not only based on the spatial disconnection between autonomous areas, but also on the systematic inequality of Brazilian metropolises.

Despite the notorious challenges being faced, there are also interesting positive phenomena occurring in Brazilian urban environments that are worthwhile investigating. The incapacity of public authorities to cope with the rapid changes has also forced citizens to work together to overcome some of these challenges. Civil society in Brazilian metropolises has demonstrated its resilience. While public space in Brazilian cities has often only been created in the left-over space between, for example, infrastructure, informal settlements and gated communities, citizens have mobilised

themselves to improve these spaces. Brazilian metropolises have become a fertile ground for active citizens to start improving their streets, squares and neighbourhoods without waiting for public authorities to step in. Many initiatives emerged in contexts where citizens have had to adapt to unfavourable circumstances. These are known as the bottom-up, grassroots or 'do-it-yourself' practices of urbanism (Kee & Miazzo, 2014; Newman et al., 2008), referring to initiatives in which citizens organise themselves and take the lead to improve the public utility of these left-over unused spaces. These initiatives are not part of traditional urban planning tools; however, they are influencing the way urban planning is being practised in Brazilian fragmented metropolises. Nevertheless, while these self-organised initiatives are actively shaping public space, there is still a lot that needs to be understood about how they work.

In the literature on resilience, ranging, for example, from physics (Haken, 1983; Heylighen, 2008) to urban planning (Eraydın & Taşan-Kok, 2013), self-organisation is mentioned as an important element for a resilient system. Accordingly, the self-organised initiatives in Brazilian metropolises can be seen as a resilient aspect of the city, particularly the capacity of citizens to act when government fails. Resilience is usually related to a specific impact or threat, and claiming that self-organised initiatives increase resilience capacity in general is imprecise without considering the specific context to which the initiatives are responding. Therefore, the research in this field considered whether some of the self-organised initiatives were acting as possible resilient responses to the spatial fragmentation of Brazilian metropolises. Based on the Resilience Thinking in Urban Planning framework (Eraydın & Taşan-Kok, 2013), the analysis focused on developing an understanding of the relationship between self-organised initiatives and fragmentation. There is much to be understood about how such self-organised initiatives operate, influence and are influenced by these fragmented and unequal urban environments. While inequality is a concept that is often examined in socioeconomic terms, unequal urban environments reflect this inequality in spatial terms. Unequal urban environments refer to urban areas where socioeconomic inequality is high. In the case of fragmented Brazilian metropolises, this inequality is verified by the stark contrast between well-off and marginalised communities, which is often symbolised by the coexistence of gated communities (*condomínios*) and informal settlements (*favelas*).

The fragmentation component is important because conventional planning strategies have struggled to develop social connections in such areas of fragmentation and inequality. The walls that exist in Brazilian cities are not only physical but also social. It is especially difficult to create public spaces that serve and promote interaction between groups with diverse socioeconomic status. Public space is referred to here as open spaces that can be freely accessed by anyone, mainly consisting of public squares and streets. Closed public spaces such as community or commercial centres were not

considered in this thesis as they follow other dynamics of interaction. The successful creation or renewal of public space not only depends on a good physical design or adequate infrastructure, but also on the capacity of the project to tear down these social 'walls' and connect the diverse population physically and socially. It is in this specific aspect that self-organised initiatives emerge as an instrument to enable these social connections. Public spaces in Brazilian metropolises are the physical grounds on which self-organised initiatives carry out their activities. Nevertheless, it is still not clear how they manage to operate in unequal and fragmented environments. Several questions can be posed in this regard: How do self-organised initiatives foster social connections and carry out their work? To what extent do self-organised initiatives develop social connections between extremely diverse groups that are spatially fragmented? To what extent do self-organised initiatives reduce spatial fragmentation and increase resilience by connecting diverse groups? Furthermore, how do planning professionals and institutions interact with them? Does urban planning play a role in self-organised initiatives? How can planning education also involve self-organised initiatives and have a stronger societal impact? These are the initial questions driving this research and which the thesis will address in the following chapters.

§ 1.2 Relevance and Aim

This research adds to the studies on resilience thinking in urban planning by closing the gap between self-organisation and spatial fragmentation. Moreover, despite the vital significance of resilience nowadays, research on this topic is lacking in the Brazilian academic environment, which still mainly focuses on resilience as a reactive strategy in relation to natural disasters. The development of an analysis with a different perspective on Brazilian urban resilience capacity (considering not only physical influences, but also economic, political and above all social influences) is strategic for the future urban development of the country. In addition, resilience approaches have also been criticised for operating as a means of immunising citizens, such that they accept larger doses of inequality and degradation in such environments in the future (Kaika, 2017). In this respect, this thesis also contributes to the development of a different perspective, searching for constructive opportunities to use resilience as a solution to problems of inequality. Resilience thinking also opens space for the development of optimistic scenarios for the future, since it is not only based on the shortfalls of the system but also on the opportunities that they generate.

The debate around self-organised initiatives is also fundamental because these initiatives are commonly present in many Brazilian cities, where public authorities are not able to efficiently respond to local urban challenges. Naturally, it is not reasonable and sustainable to expect that civil society can solve all of its problems alone; however, when necessary transformations do not take place, civil society can create its own solutions. When these solutions emerge systematically, they may become learning practices. Self-organised initiatives are extremely active, and urban planning research should not ignore their influence on contemporary cities in the Global South. After shedding some light on how these initiatives work, especially in fragmented and unequal cities, the research aims to develop a set of policy recommendations to support decision-makers and public authorities to develop a more productive and cooperative approach to working with self-organised initiatives..

Furthermore, this study aims to contribute to planning education as well as contribute to academic research. The use of doctoral research in online education is relatively uncommon; however, there is great potential for using online education as a platform to discuss and disseminate the results of doctoral research. It is vital to offer alternative perspectives in planning education (Roy, 2011), and the research produced by doctoral candidates can contribute to increasing this diversity if distributed openly using online tools. The plan was to contribute in this way by presenting the theories and case studies developed in the research in the Rethink the City MOOC. This course was developed based on the research material, as a tool to connect the researcher with local practitioners in Brazil and to increase the societal impact of the study. This aim is aligned with the idea that it is necessary to develop closer connections between education and practice (Taşan-Kok & Oranje, 2017). Open and online courses offer practitioners possibilities for taking part in projects, as was confirmed by the high number of professionals involved in the Rethink the City MOOC. Additionally, the course served to demonstrate how self-organised initiatives can be used positively in education and planning practice. The course was relevant because it not only created the possibility of learning from the research developed at TU Delft, but also the possibility of learning from the examples and case studies concerning the Global South. As well as offering this opportunity, the Rethink the City MOOC was itself a case study undertaken to investigate how doctoral research can have a strong societal impact through direct association with online planning education.

§ 1.3 Self-organisation and Resilience Thinking

Several authors in the field of urban sociology and planning theory have addressed the relationship between inequality and planning (Bauman, 2011; Caldeira, 2000; Castells, 2002; Fainstein, Gordon, & Harloe, 1992; Harvey, 1996; Maricato, 1996; Rolnik, 2010; Santos & Dias, 1982), especially after the consolidation of the neoliberal economic model in the 1990s. Notwithstanding, further investigations using resilience thinking in planning related to this unequal fragmentation are still lacking. Resilience thinking in planning brings a new perspective to planning theory (Eraydın & Taşan-Kok, 2013), which could deal with complex urban systems such as those present in Brazil. One of the advantages of this approach is its efficacy for understanding, managing and governing complex linked systems consisting of people and nature (Folke et al. 2004). In this sense, resilience thinking provides a different strategy compared to traditional planning practices, as it deals with the challenges faced by complex urban systems, not as problems to be solved but as opportunities to develop new tools to create positive outcomes, such as self-organisation, diversity and interdependence (Eraydın & Taşan-Kok, 2013).

The use of resilience thinking in planning is relatively new and can be addressed from very distinct perspectives. In this study, the concept of urban resilience is developed based on the idea that social and spatial continuity increases the adaptive capacity of the city by creating better opportunities for self-organisation. In Brazil, the issue of resilience is mainly related to the capacity of urban systems to cope with natural disasters. Nevertheless, resilience thinking can also be related to economic, social, cultural, environmental or any other factor associated with urban planning challenges. The present research uses a social perspective to focus on the urban resilience capacity of Brazilian metropolises to cope with fragmentation using self-organised initiatives.

Spatial fragmentation has become a common issue in contemporary complex metropolitan contexts. Disconnected areas have exposed spatial and social voids that diminish the adaptive capacity of a region. Cities with loose spatial and social ties are enormously vulnerable to external disturbances. In an extreme scenario, a completely disconnected system is not capable of establishing minimal communication or mutual relations, and is not able to respond to potential risks. Economic growth and social progress in Brazil, especially in metropolitan areas, have reinforced fragmentation due to strong opportunity-led development. Contemporary Brazilian metropolitan systems have increasingly faced problems associated with extreme spatial fragmentation, including isolation, segregation, spatial deformities and social disintegration. A system with a high adaptive capacity, a fundamental characteristic of a resilient system, will exhibit self-organisation, flexibility, social cohesion and potential for change (Eraydin

& Taşan-Kok, 2013). In this research, self-organisation is analysed as an important aspect to promote resilience thinking in planning.

The governmental response is currently criticised for amplifying spatial fragmentation through inefficient urban policies. It is important to highlight that there is a traditional lack of investment in the development of strategic urban plans in Brazil. A participatory approach is often observed during the creation of master plans; however, they still fail to address distortions. The inclusion of civil society in the creation of a strategic urban plan does not guarantee their efficiency. Moreover, this traditional urban planning, which uses a participatory approach, tends to fail for some fundamental reasons. Firstly, the failure may occur because the urban plan is principally a response to a pre-existing disruption, meaning that such plans are mainly strategies to minimise the impact of the disruption, without the application of long-term resilience thinking. Secondly, these traditional urban interventions create new activities and new planned areas, but with vague connections between new communities and constantly transforming old spaces. Furthermore, these traditional urban planning methods do not tackle the adaptive capacity of the city itself, and thereby maintain the existing level of resilient capacity, perpetuating the same exposure to risks. In addressing these kinds of issues, this research intends to acknowledge the traditional difficulties present in the Brazilian context and focus on planning mechanisms that could be objectively implemented and which would have a direct impact on the adaptive capacity of Brazilian metropolises.

§ 1.4 Brazilian Urban Development and Self-organised Initiatives

Brazil's rate of urbanisation rapidly increased from 44.6% in 1960 to 84.46% in 2010 (IBGE, 2015b). This accelerated urbanisation was also accompanied by a population increase of 270% in the same period (IBGE, 2015a). These changes fundamentally influenced the country's metropolises, and public authorities faced difficulties coping with this urban growth in an orderly manner. Although all metropolitan areas have master plans at the municipal level, they do not guarantee an effective implementation process. Public authorities have simply not been able to cope with such challenging urban changes. As a result, a 'patch-work' form of development has emerged, where different areas are not connected to each other, and where development mainly took place according to market opportunities. This opportunity-led form of development (Taşan-Kok, 2004) is still increasingly expanding in metropolises today. For example, MCMV, the current national social housing programme, perpetuates this logic.

While the government provides finance for those on low incomes to buy a house, the purchasers are required to buy directly from private companies that take a market-oriented perspective, and they mainly provide buildings on cheap land in sub-optimal locations to maximise their profits. This process creates a patchwork urban context that is highly fragmented and which does not conform to a general urban development strategy.

According to Caldeira (2000), the city of São Paulo is an extreme example of spatial disconnection, which creates an inefficient urban system characterised by rigidity and violence. The author refers to São Paulo as the 'city of walls'. In this sense, it is clear that this physical fragmentation has a direct connection to the social structure of the city. In a city with extreme social inequality, walls not only separate spaces but also people.

It is incorrect to believe that Brazilian metropolises have weaker social connections or that they do not rely on social networks. According to the Better Life Index of the OECD, 90.1% of people in Brazil have friends or relatives who they can count on in times of trouble, which is higher than the average of 88.6% from the developed countries of the OECD (OECD, 2017). From gated communities to '*favelas*' (informal settlements), social networks constitute an important factor in overcoming the lack of services that would traditionally be offered by the state, and which range, for example, from garbage collection to public transport. Brazilian metropolises seem to be a fertile ground for these spontaneous, bottom-up and self-organised initiatives relying on social networks. In this context, such initiatives have a significant impact on urban planning.

From a traditional top-down planning perspective, these self-organised initiatives can be seen as an anomaly or as pointing to a failure of an overall planning strategy. Nevertheless, other perspectives are also emerging. These initiatives in which citizens take the lead rather than the government and act in a bottom-up or grassroots manner are also understood as a kind of 'do-it-yourself' urbanism (Kee & Miazzo, 2014; Newman et al., 2008). In many metropolises of the Global South, especially in contexts where public authorities are inefficient, they now constitute an important resource. In Brazil, they are not only more present in urban planning than in the past, but are also increasingly counting on the active participation of urban planners.

§ 1.5 Conceptual Model

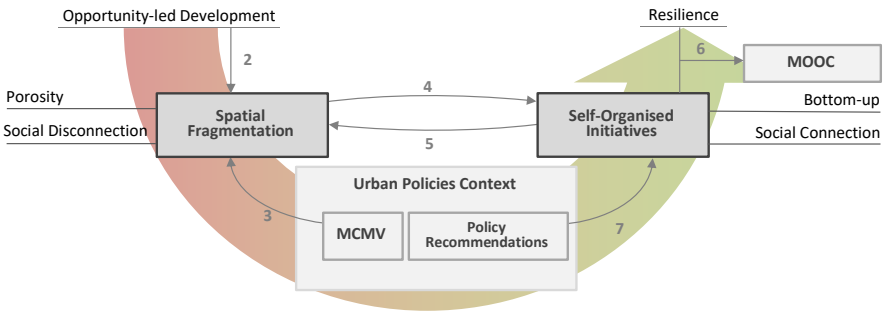

FIGURE 1.1 Main concepts related to Chapters 2-7

The main concepts of this thesis are *spatial fragmentation* and *self-organisation* (Figure 1.1). Self-organised initiatives relate to the capacity of social entities to govern themselves autonomously (Kooiman & van Vliet, 2000). Spatial fragmentation refers to a negative aspect of porosity. With social disconnection, it may lead to the formation of vulnerable nodes in urban space. According to Stavrides (2007), urban porosity is the result of threshold areas and in-between (or unused left-over) spaces that loosen the borders of strict spatial and social structures.

Another important concept that will be discussed in this study is *opportunity-led development*, which, among other things, reflects a shift in planning regimes from the control of urban development to enabling piecemeal development that is encouraged due to the financial benefits it brings to municipal governments. Such opportunity-led development leads to fragmentation in cities within a system where private interests overtake public interests (Taşan-Kok, 2004). Another important term is *resilience*, considered as 'the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganise while undergoing change (...) to retain (...) the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks' (Walker et al., 2004; see also Wardekker et al., 2010). A resilient system has the ability to survive, adapt and transform itself (Ludwig et al., 1997). *Social connection* in this study refers to meaningful and constructive encounters between diverse groups. This concept is closely connected to the theoretical debate in sociology and development studies related to social cohesion. However, social connection is more specific and relates directly to meaningful and constructive encounters, while social cohesion has a broader definition and refers to distinct social dimensions, such as wellbeing, a sense of belonging, the

fight against marginalisation, the building of trust and upward mobility (OECD, 2012). Although there is a direct relationship between social cohesion and social connection, this research will focus on the concept of social connection, since it provides a more focused theoretical basis for the investigation. In addition to the concepts discussed, MCMV is the abbreviation for the social housing programme of the Brazilian federal government called Minha Casa, Minha Vida, which is used as a case study to examine how federal urban policies may affect fragmentation. Finally, MOOC stands for Massive Open Online Course, a platform on which some of the results have been published. As well as the definitions presented here, the concepts will be further developed below in relation to the specific context analysed.

§ 1.6 Methods, Fieldwork and Case Study of Societal Impact

The thesis uses mixed methods and takes a critical realistic approach, where the observation of reality is the central strategy in developing an understanding and providing recommendations for action (Price & Martin, 2018). Nevertheless, conducting the research based at TU Delft, a long way from the reality being studied, had its particular challenges. The fieldwork had to be well prepared in advance, since the time in Brazil was limited and the financial costs of a second trip were too high. The preparation for the fieldwork took six months, while the fieldwork in Brazil extended over two months, from the beginning of July until the end of August 2016. The fieldwork took place in Brasília, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. It generated the opportunity for field observations and to conduct in-depth interviews. In total, 12 self-organised initiatives were part of the research, and 28 in-depth interviews with experts, public servants and members of self-organised initiatives were conducted. Due to time constraints, three additional in-depth interviews were conducted via videoconference. The fieldwork primarily generated the data for Chapters 4 and 5.

While Chapters 4 and 5 are based on qualitative methods, Chapters 2 and 3 use quantitative methods; however, each chapter has its own particular focus. Data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) were utilised in Chapter 2 to develop the macro analysis around the concept of porosity with the aim of developing a comparative porosity index, which is related to the spatial fragmentation of Brazilian metropolises. Chapter 3 also used quantitative methods, which mainly served to create maps supporting the analysis of the spatial fragmentation generated by the MCMV social housing programme. Chapter 3 also used data from IBGE, along with additional

data on urban wellbeing from the Observatory of the Metropolises, as well as some data about travel times available from Google.

Furthermore, the thesis used the Rethink the City MOOC as a case study on how research can generate societal impact through online education in urban planning. The MOOC was initially considered a method of connecting the researcher with local stakeholders in Brazil. One self-organised initiative participated in the MOOC by presenting their work. However, in addition to expanding the network generated through the fieldwork, the course was found to be an effective method of generating societal impact even beyond the Brazilian metropolitan context. Chapter 6 elaborates on the MOOC case study, revealing its challenges and its potential for societal impact.

The different methods used were the result of the initial strategy to develop a more comprehensive perspective on the theory and spatial implications of the fragmentation of Brazilian metropolises, before focusing on the operation of self-organised initiatives in the fragmented environments under study. This resulted in the development of a mixed methods analysis, where quantitative methods were applied and then followed by qualitative methods. Each chapter has its own methodology, which will be explained in more depth in each chapter.

§ 1.7 Research Question, Sub-questions and Structure

This thesis studies self-organised initiatives as a constructive factor for regenerating spatially fragmented cities that exhibit strong social inequalities. From this perspective, the capacity of planning strategies to work with self-organised initiatives within fragmented and unequal cities constitutes a vital challenge, especially in contexts where opportunity-led development is commonly observed, such as in Brazil. The thesis addresses the ways in which urban planning can promote self-organised initiatives in order to stimulate social connections and increase resilience capacity to counteract spatial fragmentation. On this basis, the thesis addresses the following question: *To what extent can resilience towards spatial fragmentation be enhanced by self-organised initiatives?* The dichotomy between fragmentation and self-organisation is the main focus of this study, as shown in Figure 1.1. The thesis sheds some light on how these two elements interact with each other using cases studies from Belém, Brasília, Manaus, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Each chapter of the thesis and its respective relationship to the concepts are indicated in Figure 1.1.

In Chapter 2, the thesis aims to provide an understanding of the spatial fragmentation of Brazilian metropolises. It investigates the notion of spatial discontinuity and develops the metaphor of porosity, considered as one aspect of the spatial fragmentation of Brazilian metropolises. These empty spaces left over from development can work as a double-edged sword, both fragmenting areas and providing empty space, which makes it important to understand how they relate to the fragmentation of Brazilian metropolises and affect the resilience of communities. This chapter will answer the following question: *Do spatial discontinuities create opportunities for resilience?*

Chapter 3 develops on the notion of fragmentation by attempting to understand how public policies contribute to increase spatial fragmentation in Brazilian metropolises. This chapter uses the MCMV social housing programme in the metropolises of Manaus and Belém as a case study for how urban policies can affect fragmentation. *The chapter investigates the extent to which the MCMV programme is reinforcing existing spatial fragmentation in both cities.* We observed how a policy designed at the federal level can impact fragmentation at the municipal level.

Chapter 4 investigates the impact that spatial fragmentation has on self-organised initiatives. The study focuses on the case of São Paulo and uses a qualitative approach to understand how the fragmentation of the largest metropolis of Brazil is influencing the manner in which self-organised initiatives operate. The main question here is: *To what extent does spatial fragmentation influence self-organised initiatives?*

In Chapter 5 the relationship discussed in Chapter 4 is inverted, with the aim being to understand how self-organised initiatives are influencing fragmentation – more precisely attempting to understand how these self-organised initiatives are transforming these fragmented contexts in the city of São Paulo. Additionally, the active participation of urban planners in these self-organised initiatives was observed, which created the opportunity to explore the role of planners and planning in relation to these initiatives. The main question of this chapter is: *To what extent can self-organised initiatives promote social connection in the public spaces of highly fragmented and unequal urban contexts?*

Chapter 6 focuses on the capacity of the research to exert societal impact as an educational tool. The aim is to analyse the potential impact of presenting the research in an online planning education platform. An online environment is an efficient tool to spread the word about research results; however, this does not necessarily translate into engagement with a broader audience. Just as theses can end up forgotten on a library shelf, they can also be forgotten on the internet. The exposure of the research in this online educational environment attempts to facilitate the outreach of the work to

a broader audience. The chapter analyses the case of the Rethink the City MOOC, where the research was presented, along with the work of one self-organised initiative in São Paulo. The MOOC serves as an example of how online education is not only changing planning education, but also how research can increase its societal impact. The main question here is: *How is this new learning experience being developed, delivered and impacting planning education?*

The final chapter of the thesis presents the main findings of each chapter, develops some policy recommendations on how planning institutions can work with self-organised initiatives in a more productive way, and points to some avenues for future research.

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