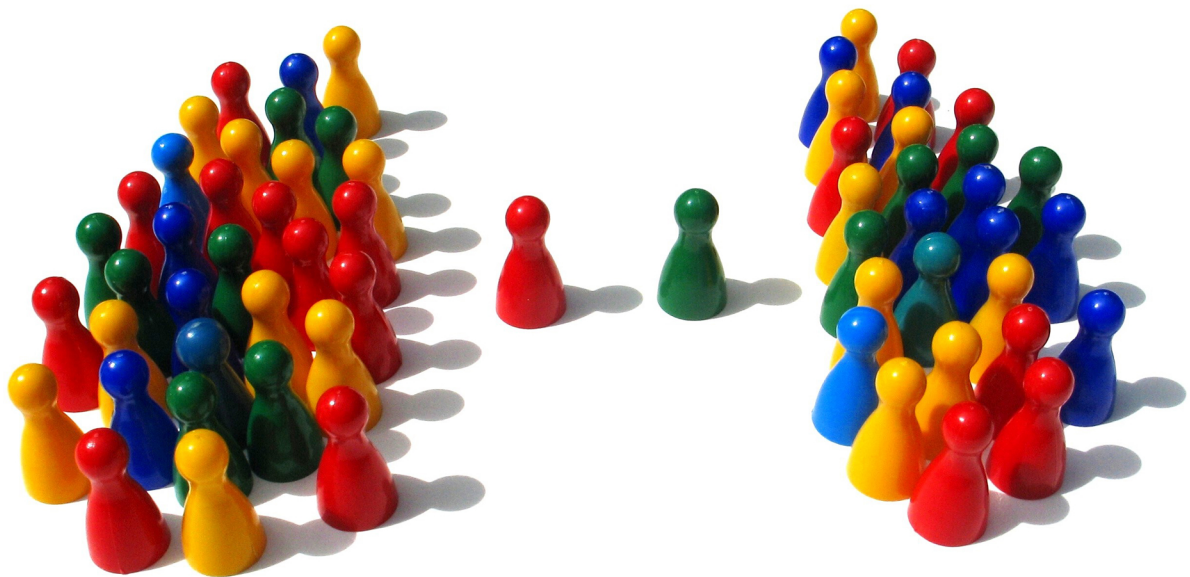**Master Thesis Public Administration**

Representational Roles and Constituency Communication

An analysis of the stakeholder-representatives who took part in the participatory visioning project MijnBorne2030

October 2013

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Abstract

Little is known about the relationship between the representational role orientation of stakeholder-representatives in participatory policymaking and their constituency communication behaviour. This study provides a small contribution to this 'blind spot' in the existing scientific knowledge by taking a closer look at a unique participatory policy process: the participatory visioning project 'MijnBorne2030'. MijnBorne2030 was a project that the municipality of Borne initiated in 2010 for the renewal of its community vision. What made MijnBorne2030 so unique was that the city council delegated the development of the new vision to the social partners. A steering committee was formed for the implementation of the project, composed of representatives from various social organizations and associations (entrepreneurs, housing corporations, district representatives, health care, sports, education, youth and elderly people). The members of this steering committee had a dual responsibility. On the hand they were considered to maintain close contact with their constituents, to determine their priorities and to communicate these to the other representatives in the steering committee. On the other hand they had to develop a shared vision for the future of Borne as a whole.

This study focuses on the stakeholder-representatives who took part in this steering committee during MijnBorne2030. The empirical research examines the influence of their representational role orientations and their valuation of constituency communication on the intensity of their constituency communication during MijnBorne2030. A survey-design was selected as overall research strategy to implement the empirical research. Research data were obtained through an online questionnaire, which was distributed to all representatives who took part in the steering committee during the participatory project. Based on the results of the empirical research it can be concluded that representatives' representational role orientation did have a positive effect on their valuation of constituency communication. Valuation of constituency communication did, in turn, have a positive effect on the intensity of their constituency communication. Role orientation did have an indirect effect on intensity of constituency

communication, which runs via the intermediate variable valuation of representative-constituency communication.

Despite several limitations, this study is an interesting first small step towards a better understanding of the relationship between the representational role orientation of stakeholder-representatives in participatory policymaking and their constituency communication behaviour. By studying the stakeholder-representatives who took part in the steering committee during MijnBorne2030, this research provided a groundwork that can be useful for future research on this topic.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

Representational role orientation is a classic concept from the literature on political representation and refers to the question of how representatives make decisions and respond to the represented.[1] A distinction can be made between 'delegate-style' and 'trustee-style' representatives (Wahlke, Eulau, Buchanan & Ferguson, 1962; Pitkin, 1967; Katz, 2006). The delegate regards him or herself as the direct agent of his or her constituents, doing what the represented want him or her to do, serving as a mouthpiece for their opinions, following their direct instructions. The trustee, on the other hand, acts for the represented by using his or her own judgement to advance their interests, but not necessarily in accordance with their currently expressed opinions (Van Stokkom, 2012). A third category are so called 'politico-style' representatives who sometimes behave as delegates and other times as trustees (Thomassen, 1991). Especially since the publication of 'The Legislative System' (Wahlke et al., 1962) much scientific research has been conducted on the representational role orientations of political representatives (for example: Converse & Pierce, 1986; Esaiasson & Holmberg, 1997; Katz, 1997; Patzelt, 1997; Saalfeld & Müller, 1997; Judge, 1999; Méndez-Lago & Martínez, 2002). Most studies, however, focus on traditional elected legislators. Also, despite the attention given to representational roles, few efforts have been made to measure its predictive capacity (Kuklinski & Elling, 1977; Gross 1987; Van Vonno, 2012)

This study focuses on the representational role orientation and its behavioural consequences in a relatively new group of political representatives: stakeholder-representatives who take part in participatory policymaking. Interesting questions are how these stakeholder-representatives perceive their role as representatives and how this influences their constituency communication behaviour.

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[1] This debate is also known as the 'mandate-independence controversy'.

Representative-constituency communication plays an important role in participatory policymaking (Van Woerkum, 2000; Verbij, Bervaes & Filius, 2000). During a participatory process, stakeholder-representatives often negotiate with each other in order to reach joint decisions. This way, a broad support would be created for certain policies, is the idea. The constituencies are, however, removed from the negotiation context and do often not know if or how their interests are considered during the decision-making. As a result, those who gave input initially often feel betrayed when the final solution does not satisfy their requests (Susskind & Cruishank, 1987; Ancona, Friedman & Kolb, 1993; Carpenter & Kennedy, 2001). This can easily lead to a tension between the views of the constituents and the evolved views of their representatives in the participatory process, which in turn may undermine the support that is ultimately formed. Therefore, it is important that stakeholder-representatives educate their constituencies throughout the course of negotiations. Susskind and Cruishank (1987) state this as follows:

> *During the negotiation phase, make sure that your group and its spokesman stay in close communication. It is extremely important that representatives not get too far ahead of the membership. Education and progress at the table must be matched by a growing understanding of the process on the part of all constituent stakeholders.*

Against the background of this quotation, the question arises how the representational role orientation of stakeholder-representatives affects this constituency communication behaviour: a question that seems neglected in the scientific literature. Nevertheless, a relationship between these variables seems plausible. First (A) it can be expected that delegates attach more importance to constituency communication that trustees because they regard themselves as 'mouthpieces' of their constituents. Therefore they probably find it more important than trustees to accurately identify the views of their constituents and to maintain close contact with them during a political process. Second (B) it can be expected that, if a stakeholder-representative attaches more importance to constituency communication, he or she, in turn, will communicate more intensively with their constituents than a representative who attaches less importance to constituency

communication. So, on the basis of this reasoning, it can be expected that having a delegate style of representation will have an indirect effect on intensity of constituency communication, which runs via the intervening variable valuation of constituency communication. These expectations (A and B) will be tested in this research by taking a closer look at a unique participatory policy process: the participatory visioning project 'MijnBorne2030'.

MijnBorne2030 was a project that the municipality of Borne initiated in 2010 for the renewal of its community vision. The previous community vision was drafted in 2001 and was according to the city council of Borne due for revision. Much of the previous community vision had been realized and moreover: the world around Borne was changed (Gemeente Borne, 2010). Citizens, local civil society organizations and local corporations, the 'societal partners', also had become increasingly important for realizing public goals. Therefore the city council wanted an 'up-to-date map' and a 'calibrated compass'. What made MijnBorne2030 so unique was that the city council delegated the development of the new vision to the social partners. The objective was to create a widely shared vision as a starting point for joint action (Gemeente Borne, 2010). A steering committee was formed for the implementation of the project, composed of representatives from various social organizations and associations (entrepreneurs, housing corporations, district representatives, health care, sports, education, youth and elderly people). The members of this steering committee had a dual responsibility. On the one hand they were considered to maintain close contact with their constituents, to determine their priorities and to communicate these to the other representatives in the steering committee (Denters & Klok, 2012). On the other hand they had to develop a shared vision for the future of Borne as a whole.

The empirical research focuses on the stakeholder-representatives who took part in the steering committee during MijnBorne2030. The research examines the influence of their representational role orientations and their valuation of constituency communication on the intensity of their constituency communication during MijnBorne2030. The aim of the study is to advance an understanding of representational roles and its behavioural consequences in a new area of political representation, and to lay a groundwork for more complete research in the future.

1.2 Research questions

The central research question of this study is:

To what extent did the representational role orientation of the stakeholder-representatives who took part in the steering committee during the participatory visioning project MijnBorne02030 and their valuation of constituency communication affect the intensity of their constituency communication?

The following sub questions are formulated in order to answer the central research question:

1. Who were the stakeholder-representatives who took part in the steering committee during MijnBorne2030 and what was their representational role orientation?

2. How much value did the stakeholder-representatives attach to constituency communication and how intensive was the communication between the representatives and their constituencies during the participatory visioning project?

3. To what extent did representatives' representational role orientation and their valuation of constituency communication affect the intensity of their constituency communication?

1.3 Structure of the report

The report consists of five chapters. This first chapter introduced the problem statement, the research questions and the relevance of the study. Chapter two describes the theoretical context of the study and forms the basis for the empirical research. Chapter three describes and justifies the selected research design. Chapter four presents the results of the empirical research. Finally, chapter five answers the research questions, evaluates the study and discusses its implications.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the theoretical context of the study and forms the basis for the empirical research. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part of the chapter describes the rise of participatory policymaking in Netherlands and the main reasons for and against a participatory approach. The second part discusses the important role of constituency communication during participatory policymaking. The final part of the chapter examines the theoretical relationships between the representational role orientations of stakeholder-representatives, their valuation of constituency communication and the intensity of their constituency communication.

2.2 Participatory policymaking

In recent years participatory policymaking has become quite popular in The Netherlands, especially at the level of local government. After a historically low level in voter turnout at the local elections in 1990, many progressing social developments and trends of innovation in public governance, numerous initiatives for policy renewal have emerged in an attempt to diminish the (perceived) legitimacy gap between local politicians and the electorate at large (Tops, 1999; Edelenbos, 2000; De Graaf, 2007; Boedeltje, 2009). Governments responded with the introduction of several more direct democratic instruments, like local (nonbinding) referenda. But the main initiative, following a broader international trend, was the introduction of participatory policymaking.

Many definitions and descriptions of participatory policymaking can be found in the relevant academic and professional literature. According to De Graaf (2007), participatory policymaking can simply be divided into two elements: policymaking and participatory. Policymaking concerns the analysis of social problems, the exploration of possible solutions and the use of policy instruments which can lead to these solutions. Participatory refers to the way of working (De Graaf, 2007). According to De Graaf, participatory involves interaction between one or more government institution(s) and

external stakeholders concerning the problem, the solution or the policy-instruments. There is always a certain degree of structural or incidental consultation or cooperation between a government institution and external stakeholders. This collaboration is referred to as participatory (De Graaf, 2007). Pröpper and Steenbeek (2001) define participatory policymaking as "a way of pursuing policy in which a government authority involves citizens, societal organizations, business corporations and/or other government authorities to come to the preparation, the determination, the implementation and/or the evaluation of a policy with them in an open interplay and/or cooperation at the earliest stage possible." (Pröpper & Steenbeek, 2001). Edelenbos (2000) refers to participatory policymaking as "the early involvement of individual citizens and other organized stakeholders in public policymaking in order to explore policy problems and develop solutions in an open and fair process of debate that has influence on decision-making." (Edelenbos, 2000).

A general element in these definitions is that governments who initiate participatory policymaking, develop plans in consultation and co-operation with external stakeholders. The definitions make it clear that different types of stakeholders can be involved in such projects, such as individual citizens, societal organizations, business corporations and/or other governmental institutions. The definitions also make it clear that the consultation and collaboration between these stakeholders can take place in various stages of a policy process, but typically for participatory policymaking is that participation takes places in a relatively early stage. The essence of participatory policymaking, however, is that there is an open interaction in the policy development process between the stakeholders that participate. In participatory policymaking, policy is not achieved through a hierarchical way, but in a more horizontal process of interaction, collaboration, discussion and/or negotiation. The difference with more traditional public policy procedures is that parties are truly involved in the development of policy proposals, whereas in traditional opportunities of public comment, citizen and interest group involvement only occurred once the policy proposal had been developed.

Governments can have different reasons for initiating a participatory project. A clear overview of the most cited reasons for participatory policymaking is provided by the 'motive chain of participatory policymaking' by Edelenbos (2000). In this model,

Edelenbos also shows how different reasons for participatory policy development are interlinked. The motive-chain of participatory policymaking is illustrated in figure 2.1.
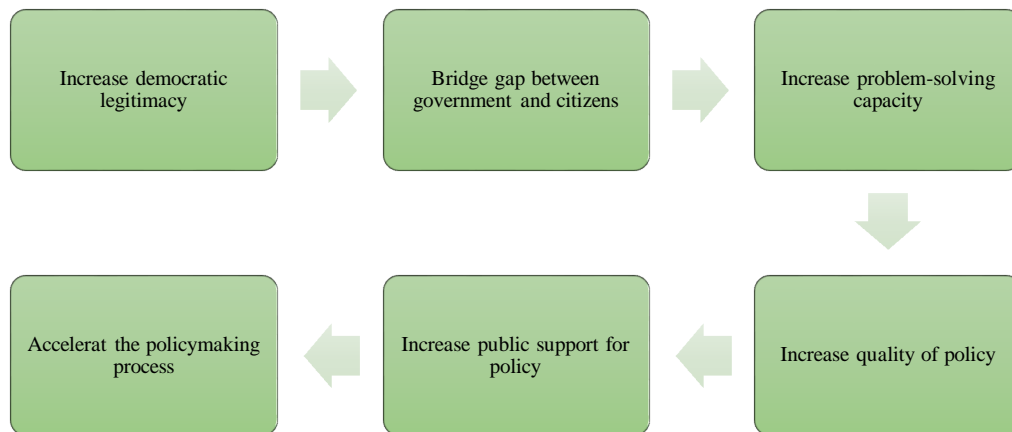

Figure 2.1 - The motive chain of participatory policymaking (Edelenbos, 2000).

The main reason for initiating participatory policymaking is often to increase democratic legitimacy in order to (somewhat) close 'the gap' between those who govern and those who are governed (Edelenbos, 2000). Participatory policymaking is often used to meet the desire for more (direct) democracy in policymaking, the desire of citizens and civil society organizations to exercise direct influence on the process of policy development (Klijn & Koppenjan, 1998; Tops, 1999). With participatory policymaking a form of direct democracy is admitted in a representative system (Edelenbos & Monnikhof, 1998). It is a means to open up this indirect democracy, often to close the perceived gap between government and citizens (Pröpper & Ter Braak, 1996). The poor turnout for local elections and bad opinion polls on the valuation of public administration are reasons for the existence of this gap, which has traditionally been seen as a problem. Some persistent problems which society faces can be attributed to this gap, such as indifference to rule enforcement, abuse of public services and political nonparticipation (Klijn & Koppenjan, 1998). Involving citizens in the process of policy development is seen as one of the possible remedies for these problems.

Besides increasing democratic legitimacy, participatory policymaking would also increase problem-solving capacity and therefore the quality of policies (Edelenbos,

2000). By tapping into knowledge, expertise and creativity of multiple actors, policy problems can be better understood in all its aspects and solutions with high-solving capacity can be invented. In the participatory process, a variety of solutions can be created that reflects the ambiguity and complexity of the problems (Klijn & Koppenjan, 1998). In today's pluralistic society, knowledge, information and preferences are too much scattered across many actors to solve social problems from one perspective. Participatory policymaking provides the ability to use the capacity, expertise and creativity of those involved in order to address issues in a broader and more innovative way (De Bruijn & Ten Heuvelhof, 1998).

Participatory policymaking would also increase public support for policies, which in a later stage of the policy process, results in faster implementation (Edelenbos, 2000). The central idea is that if proposed policy is not supported by (a part of) society, its implementation will be very difficult. Advocates of participatory policymaking point out that citizens and stakeholders possess obstructive power. Involving parties with obstructive power in the development of policy at an early stage reduces the risk of a policy's implementation being impeded by legal proceedings and other tactics employed by those who oppose it. Citizens and stakeholders who participate in participatory processes would recognize (many of) their wishes and interests in the final result of the process. Therefore they would offer less resistance later on (De Graaf, 2007). Participation in participatory policymaking leads to mutual understanding, is the idea. Because delays can be avoided, the policy process can be accelerated. This way the effectiveness of governance increases.

Several authors, however, have reservations about these motives for participatory policymaking. Some, for example, place remarks on the assumption that participatory policymaking policy leads to more democratic legitimacy (Cornips, 2004). In representative democracy, the 'primacy' of political decision-making lies in the hands of elected representatives. Giving non-elected citizens and stakeholders influence in participatory processes would impair this primacy. Participatory policymaking would lead to a displacement of political decision-making and political decisions would be taken by actors without any political mandate and by actors who are not subject to democratic control.

Others place remarks on the assumption that participatory policymaking would increase problem-solving capacity and therefore the quality of policy (Cornips. 2008). Interaction between citizens and stakeholders with differing perceptions and preferences, would inevitably lead to colourless compromises. In addition, doubted is whether citizens have enough expertise to contribute on solutions on issues with a high degree of complexity.

Also the assumption that participatory policymaking would increase public support for policies is not without controversy (Cornips, 2008). Participatory policymaking implies that is listened to the views and preferences of the participating parties. If participants do not sufficiently recognize their input into the final policy outcomes, participatory policymaking can have an adverse effect on the level of support that arises for policy.

Another remark that is often made is that some citizens and stakeholders are better able to express themselves than others, which could lead to a "democracy of the loudmouth" (Cornips, 2008). Finally, participatory processes are typically characterized by the 'selective participation' of a limited group of stakeholders: the 'usual suspects'. Participants in participatory processes are usually highly educated, assertive, white adult men. Women, young people, ethnic minorities and less educated people are often strongly underrepresented in participatory processes (Wille, 2001).

2.4 Constituency communication during participatory policymaking

Proponents of participatory policymaking presume that an accurate translation of constituent inputs into the policy process takes place during a participatory process. This is, however, not always guaranteed because of the complex relationship between constituents and their stakeholder-representatives. During a participatory process, stakeholder-representatives are faced with a number of difficult tasks. "They must attend meetings, gather relevant information, determine what information is missing, read background materials, explain their 'group's' concerns to others, listen to other viewpoints, invent solutions to problems that satisfy all parties' major concerns, and communicate all of this to their stakeholders." (Cluck, 1997). In short, stakeholder-representatives have two fundamental tasks: first of all, they must determine the priorities of their stakeholder group and communicate these to other stakeholder-representatives in the process. Second, they must help construct proposals or solutions that satisfy both the

needs of their stakeholder group as well as others, and explain all of these options to their stakeholder group (Cluck, 1997).

This dual task of stakeholder-representatives during a participatory process (the task to both negotiate and communicate) places them in what is typically called a 'boundary role position' (Aarts & Van Woerkum, 1996; Verbij et al., 2000). A boundary role situation arises when one person, because of his or her position (job, function, role) and its duties, is subject to two (or more) sets of pressures from members of the role set such that compliance with one would make it difficult to comply with the other (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Or in other words: a boundary role situation occurs when two role senders have mutually exclusive or incompatible goals (Putnam and Roloff, 1992). During a participatory process, stakeholder-representatives are situated in a position between their constituency on the one side and the participatory process on the other side.

Start process:

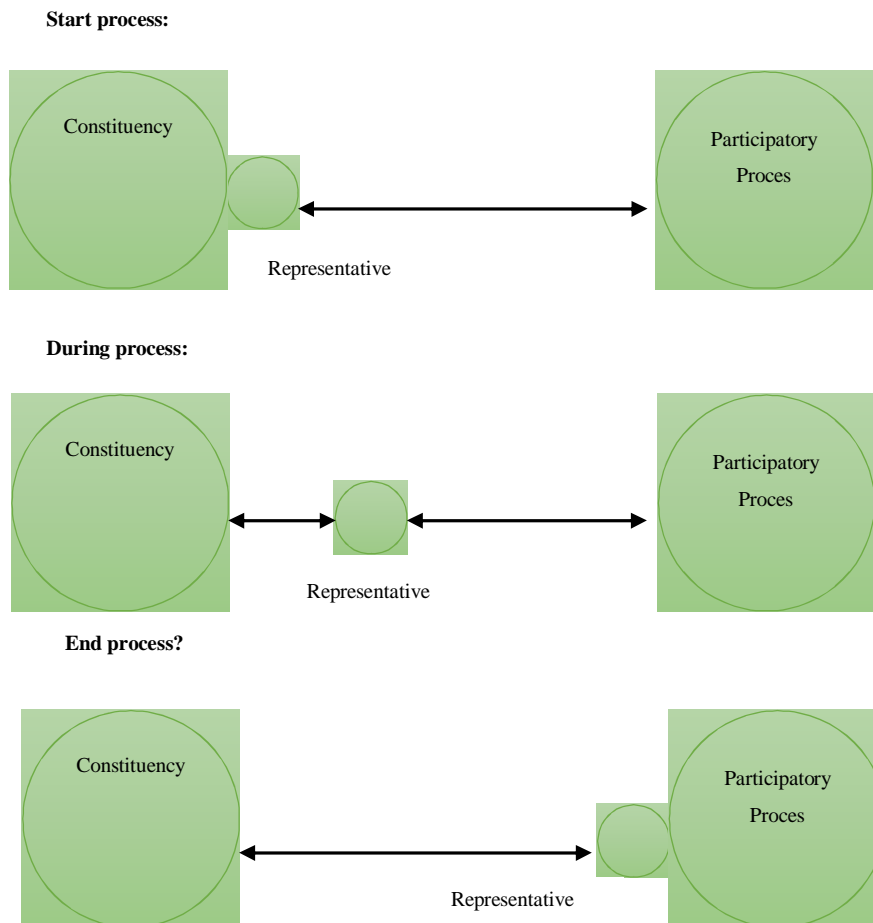
During process:

End process?

Figure 2.2 - The position of stakeholder-representatives: between their constituency and the participatory process (Verbij, 2000).

Figure 2.2 illustrates this boundary role position of stakeholder-representatives who take part in participatory policymaking and shows that this position can make it difficult for them to maintain trust and respect at both ends. That is because they constantly have to deal with a 'circle of distrust'. If stakeholder-representatives are too much focussed on the participatory process, their constituencies become suspicious. Too much control of a constituency on their representative, on the other hand, denies him or her the ability to act in a constructive way in order to reach a proper agreement with the other representatives in the process. Stakeholder-representatives who take part in participatory policymaking therefore constantly have to balance between the participatory process and their constituents and between internal coherence of the result and external acceptance by their constituents (Verbij, et al., 2000). Or in the words of Putnam and Roloff (1992):

Since the representatives job entails inherent dilemmas of dealing simultaneously with individuals inside and outside of the process, the desired outcomes of one situation (e.g. between the representatives and the other representatives) often becomes sources of conflict for the other (e.g. between the representatives and their constituents). The representative therefore must try to balance between these conflicting desires, dealing with or work through mediating factors as low trust of disagreement on bargaining goals with constituents, while simultaneously working with the other representatives who have similar obstacles.

Communication between the stakeholder-representatives and their constituents, so called 'representative-constituency communication', or 'intra-stakeholder communication' plays a key aspect in this 'shuttling' process. During a participatory process, negotiations between stakeholder-representatives take place in order to reach a joint agreement. This way, a broad support would be created for certain policies. The constituencies are, however, removed from the negotiation context and do often not know if or how their interests are considered during the decision making. Because parties are not privy to the process by which their interests and those of others are evaluated, those who gave input initially often feel betrayed when the final solution does not satisfy their requests. This can lead to a tension between the views of the constituents and the evolved views in the participatory process, which in turn may undermine the support that is ultimately formed. Colosi in 'Negotiation' (1985) describes this problem as follows:

Since negotiators are continually being re-educated through the horizontal negotiations occurring at or near the bargaining table, they are frequently more advanced in their thinking than are their constituents back home. The resulting gap can be a dangerous trap for all concerned. Sometimes the vertical hierarchy will tell a negotiator what should be achieved at the bargaining table, but after several sessions with the other side, the negotiator may come to believe that these goals cannot be reached.

Therefore, it is argued, it is important that stakeholder-representatives educate their constituencies throughout the course of negotiations. If the members of the constituencies are to understand the issues and the options, trust their representatives and the information the representative transmits, and to feel that their concerns are being represented at the table, stakeholder-representatives should stay in close contact with their stakeholder groups throughout the entire participatory process. This argues for frequent communication with those constituents, reporting back about what happened in the negotiations and reporting the interests and concerns of the constituents back to the negotiators at the table. (Susskind & Cruishank, 1987, Ancona, 1993; Van Woerkum, 2000; Carpenter & Kennedy, 2001). Ancona (1993) claims that one cannot overestimate the importance and potential influence of representative-constituency communication, given that representatives who are involved in negotiations can agree only to what their constituents allow. "Therefore members of collaborating groups with competing constituencies must pay an extraordinary amount of attention to representative-constituency communication." (Ancona, 1993).

So, in order for stakeholder-representatives to trust and accept the results of a participatory process, it is important that stakeholder-representatives stay in close contact with their constituents, keep them informed of the developments and take their signals back to the table. "Only then can participatory policymaking be promising and seems ratification of the outcomes possible without problems. Otherwise, the process has to be repeated to a greater or a lesser extend" (Van Woerkum, 2000).

2.5 Representational role orientations and constituency communication

The following section examines the theoretical relationships between the representational role orientations of stakeholder-representatives, their valuation of constituency communication and the intensity of their constituency communication.

The concept of representational roles has emerged in the 1950s and 1960 as an instrument for the empirical analysis of political representation, especially the relationship between citizens and their representatives (Zittel, 2010). Role theory focuses in particular on two

questions: who political representatives represent (their focus of representation) and in what way they aim to represent a given constituency (their style of representation).

In their study 'The Legislative System', Wahlke et al. (1962) further developed role theory and the concept of representational roles. According to these authors, representational roles concern norms of behaviour and suggest the existence of a "[…] coherent set of norms of behaviour which are thought by those involved in the interactions being viewed, to apply to all persons who occupy the position of a legislator." (Wahlke et al. 1962). The authors make a distinction between 'delegate-style' and 'trustee-style' representatives. The delegate regards him or herself as the direct agent of his or her constituents, doing what the represented want him or her to do, serving as a mouthpiece for their opinions, following their direct instructions. The trustee, on the other hand, acts for the represented by using his or her own judgement to advance their interests, but not necessarily in accordance with their currently expressed opinions. Many trace the evolution of this trustee-style to Edmund Burke, who argued it was advisable for representatives to "promote the interests of constituents without consulting their wishes" (Rosenthal 1998). Later, a third category was added in the literature on representational roles: so called 'politico-style' representatives who sometimes behave as delegates and other times as trustees (Thomassen, 1991).

Since the appearance of The Legislative System, much scientific research has been conducted on the representational role orientation of political representatives. Most of this research has classified political representatives according to their representational role orientations (for example: Converse & Pierce, 1986; Esaiasson & Holmberg, 1997; Katz, 1997; Patzelt, 1997; Saalfeld & Müller, 1997; Judge, 1999; Méndez-Lago & Martínez, 2002). Other studies have focused on the identification of variables that may help to explain specific role orientations (for example: Bell & Price, 1969; Davidson, 1969; Cooper & Richardson; 2006). Few attempts have been made to identify behavioural consequences of representational roles (Kuklinski & Elling, 1977; Gross 1987; Van Vonno, 2012).

Although role theory rests upon the assumption that role orientation of political representatives influences their role behaviour, studies that have focused on the behavioural consequences of representational roles have provided inconsistent results.

These studies have mainly investigated representatives' roll-call behaviour: the extent to which political representatives mirror constituency opinion in their roll-call votes. Some studies have suggested that role orientation did not have any implication for role behaviour (Miller & Stokes 1963; Gross, 1978). Other studies yielded results that are contrary to what representational role theory would suggest. Delegates, who are supposed to subordinate their own preferences to those of their constituents were found to be least accurate in predicting constituency behaviour (Hedlund & Friesema, 1972). Trustees who are expected to be less concerned with following constituent opinion and make voting decisions independently of constituency preferences were shown to be more accurate in predicting constituency opinion and were often more representative than those who were classified as delegates (Friesema & Hedlund, 1974; Erikson, Luttberg & Holloway, 1975). Because of these contradictory results, some authors have seriously questioned the usefulness of the concept of role orientation as an analytical instrument (Jewell, 1970; Kuklinski & Elling, 1977; Cavanagh, 1982).

More recent studies, however, suggest that that representational role orientations do have important implications for role behaviour (Cooper & Richardson 2006). Role orientations can be particularly useful in explaining legislative behaviour on salient issues where constituents may have well-established opinions (Kuklinski & Elling 1977; McCrone & Kuklinski 1979). Studlar and McAllister (1996) suggest that representational roles affect both constituency service and vote margins in Australian legislatures, and Searing (1991) shows these roles do a better job of explaining time spent in the district for British Members of Parliament than electoral marginality, party, or distance from home (Cooper & Richardson, 2006).

Little, however, is known about the extent to which the representational role orientations of political representatives also affects their communication behaviour towards their constituents. Some studies that have looked at the wider effects of role orientations show that they do have an impact on some behaviours that are related to constituency communication. For example, Gross (1978) finds that political representatives with more of a delegate style of representation devote greater effort to 'tap constituency opinion'. Cooper and Richardson (2006) demonstrate that legislators with more of a trustee-style of representation hold fewer office hours. Herrick (2011) shows that delegate-orientated

legislators rely more on information from constituents when deciding about pending legislation. These findings suggest that delegates make a greater effort to identify the views of their constituents than trustees and communicate more intensively with their constituents when doing so, which is in line with the framework of role theory.
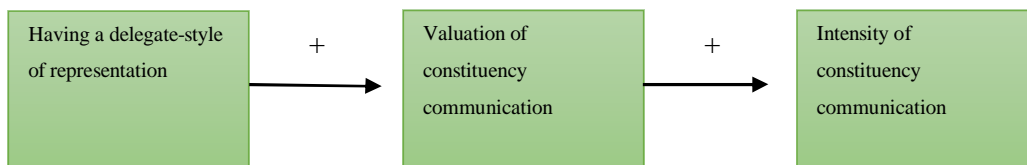

Figure 2.3 – Theoretical relationship between representational role, valuation of constituency communication and intensity of constituency communication

A simple theoretical model is constructed in order to examine the theoretical relationships between representational roles, valuation of constituency communication and intensity of constituency communication which is illustrated in figure 2.3. This theoretical model is based on two theoretical expectations. The first expectation is that having a delegate style of representation will have a positive effect on the importance that representatives attach to constituency communication. This expectation is based on representational role theory, which assumes that delegates make their own views subordinate to those of their constituencies. It is therefore expected that delegates find it more important than trustees to accurately identify the views of their constituents and to maintain close contact with them during a political process. The second expectation is that valuation of constituency communication, in turn, will have a positive effect on intensity of constituency communication. So, in line with role theory, it is expected that representational role orientations influences role behaviour. Expected is that having a delegate style of representation will have an indirect effect on intensity of constituency communication, which runs via the intervening variable valuation of constituency communication. The relationships between representational roles, valuation of constituency communication and intensity of constituency communication during MijnBorne2030 will be investigated on the basis of this theoretical model.

2.5 Conclusion

In recent years participatory policymaking has become quite popular in The Netherlands, especially at the level of local government. Although the precise approach taken varies from project to project, participatory policymaking normally involves inviting representatives of all interested parties and stakeholder groups at an early stage to provide considered input to the process of policy development. During a participatory process, these stakeholder-representatives are situated in a so called 'boundary role position'. Therefore they constantly have to balance between the participatory process and their stakeholder groups in order to maintain trust and respect at both ends. Representative-constituency communication plays an important role in this 'shuttling process'.

The empirical research focuses on the stakeholder-representatives who took part in the steering committee during MijnBorne2030. The research examines the influence of their representational role orientations and their valuation of constituency communication on the intensity of their constituency communication during MijnBorne2030. Two theoretical expectations are formulated about these relationships, which will form the basis for the empirical research. First, it is expected that having a delegate style of representation is will have a positive effect on valuation of constituency communication. Second, it is expected that valuation of constituency communication, in turn, will have a positive effect on intensity of constituency communication. Expected is that having a delegate style of representation will have an indirect effect on intensity of constituency communication, which runs via the intervening variable valuation of constituency communication.

3. Research design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes and justifies the chosen research design. The chapter is divided into six parts. The first sections addresses the research strategy, the method of data collection and the research population and sample. This is followed by the operationalization of the central research concepts and the methods of data analysis. Finally is reflected on several measures that were taken to ensure the validity and the reliability of the research design.

3.2 Research strategy

This study focuses on the stakeholder-representatives who took part in the steering committee during MijnBorne2030. The empirical research examines the influence of their representational role orientations and their valuation of constituency communication on the intensity of their constituency communication during MijnBorne2030. There are many methods available for collecting the empirical data.

Data collection methods can first be classified into two broad categories, namely observational methods and survey methods (Schreuder Peters, 2005). In observational methods, data collection takes place by an observant: a trained observer. In survey methods, research variables are operationalized into questions and answers. For this study was chosen for the survey method. Main reason for choosing the survey method is that the research focuses on attitudes and perceptions (representational role orientation, valuation of constituency communication). The survey method is the most appropriate method for obtaining this type of information (Baarda & De Goede, 2000). There are also more practical reasons for choosing the survey method. Surveys are suitable for collecting a large amount of data in a relatively short amount of time, at relatively little expense (Schreuder Peters, 2005). Observation, on the other hand, means that only a limited number of cases can be examined. It is more time consuming and more expensive. The research, however, also focusses on behaviour (intensity of constituency

communication) which often can be better studied through observational methods. A risk of asking questions in a survey about behaviour is that respondents often do not know exactly what they are doing or what they have done (Baarda & De Goede, 2000). Nevertheless is chosen to also measure intensity of constituency communication by means of the survey-method. This choice can be defended because the research investigates behaviour in the past which makes it impossible to witness. The survey method was also required for the investigation of the non-behavioural variables.

Survey questionnaires can either be verbally (by phone or face-to-face) or written (by mail or online) (Schreuder Peters, 2005). In the written approach, the questionnaires are usually sent to the interviewees. In the verbal approach, an interview is conducted, usually by the person to be interviewed at home or elsewhere. For this study was chosen for the written approach: research data were obtained through an online questionnaire. First of all because of the low cost and speed. A written survey is less expensive (especially an online survey) and less time consuming than telephone or face-to-face interviews. Another reason why was chosen for the written approach is that it ensured the anonymity of respondents. Generally people feel more anonymous when they answer a written questionnaire, with the result that social desirability plays a less important role than in telephone or face-to-face interviews.

The selected research method, however, also has some disadvantages. Because people are sometimes guided by the circumstances in which they find themselves, survey data are not always reliable (Baarda & De Goede, 2000). Because people are not always aware of (the reasons for) their behaviour, survey data are not always valid (Baarda & De Goede, 2000). Social desirability can also have a negative impact on the validity of survey data (Baarda & De Goede, 2005). Last but not least: written questionnaires have a higher risk of low response than telephone or face-to-face surveys. Section 3.7 of this chapter discusses how is dealt with these and other potential limitations of the research design.

3.3 Method of data collection

The online survey was constructed and distributed with the web application LimeSurvey. LimeSurvey is a web-based interface for the creation and administration of online surveys and was found highly suitable for collecting the empirical data. The online survey

was chosen because of its speed, its low costs and its convenience for the respondents. First, the email addresses of the representatives who took part in the steering committee were gathered via the project manager of MijnBorne2030. Subsequently, an invitation email was sent to the respondents with more information about the research and a link to the online survey. This email also contained a brief instruction and a statement that the answers of the respondents would be processed anonymously into the final report. After completing the survey, respondents could click on a 'send' button after which the data were stored in an online database.

Several measures were taken to increase the response rate. A high non-response may have an adverse effect on the empirical data: if a high non-response is based on chance (randomly distributed among the research units), this means that the accuracy of the empirical results deteriorates because the actual sample is smaller than the original. If a high non-response is not based on change (not randomly distributed among the research units), this may lead to response bias. In order to increase the response rate, all potential respondents received an email from the project manager of MijnBorne2030, a couple weeks prior to the distribution of the online survey. In this email, respondents were provided with more information about the upcoming research and were kindly asked to participate. Another measure that was taken to increase the response rate was a reminder email that was sent two weeks after the distribution of the survey to those who at that time had not yet completed the survey.

3.4 Research population and sample

The units of analysis were those stakeholder-representatives who took part in the steering committee during the participatory project MijnBorne2030. These representatives were the entities that were being analysed in the study. The total number of representatives was 18, including two representatives who have left the steering committee during the participatory project. Given the limited size of the research population, it was decided to approach the entire research population for the empirical research and not to draw a sample. This gives a more reliable view of the situation and also minimizes methodological problems of external validity.

Eventually, of the 18 respondents in the research population, 10 respondents completed the online questionnaire. Besides a response of 10 respondents, this means a non-response of 8 participants. The response rate of the empirical study is thus 55 percent. Although a response rate of 55 percent is not that bad for a mail survey, a response of 10 respondents is rather low given the size of the population. A reason for this relatively large non-participation could be that the survey was distributed during the holiday period.

3.5 Operationalization of research concepts

The three central research concepts in this study are 'representational role orientation', 'valuation of constituency communication' and 'intensity of constituency communication'.

Concept	Survey item
	1. Imagine you would have a different opinion about the future of Borne than the majority of your constituents. What do you think that you should do as a representative?

Table 3.1 – Operationalization of representational role orientation

Representational role orientation was measured with the question: "Imagine you would have a different opinion about the future of Borne than the majority of your constituents. What do you think that you should do as a representative?" (See table 3.1). The response categories for this question consisted of two options: "follow my own views" and "follow the views of my constituents". Respondents who chose the first answer were classified as 'trustees', the respondents who chose the second answer were classified as 'delegates'.

Concept	Survey item
Valuation of constituency communication	1. Can you indicate how important the following tasks were for you? (expressing the views of your constituents in the steering committee)
	2. Can you indicate how important the following tasks were for you (explaining developments in the steering committee to your constituents)?
	3. How important was it for you, as a member of the steering committee, to stay in close contact with your constituents during the participatory project?

Table 3.2 – Operationalization of valuation of constituency communication. Cronbach's Alpha .78 (N=3 items)

Valuation of constituency communication was measured by means of three survey items (See table 3.2). A four-point Likert scale was used as response option for the three items, with the ascending response categories "not important", "not very important", "important", and "very important". For each response category a score was assigned: the higher the score on the scale, the more value respondents attached to constituency communication. For this scale, a factor analysis was carried out which showed that all three items measured the same underlying factor. Also, a reliability analysis was performed to investigate its internal consistency. With a Cronbach's Alpha of .78, the scale turned out reliable.

Concept	Survey item
Intensity of constituency communication	1. How often have you communicated about MijnBorne2030 with your constituents, during the participatory project?
	2. How often have you communicated about MijnBorne2030 with your constituents, prior to the participatory project?
	3. How often have you communicated about MijnBorne2030 with your constituents, after the participatory project?
	4. How often have you, as a member of the steering committee, explained developments in the steering committee to the members of your constituency?
	5. How often have you, as a member of the steering committee, expressed views from your constituents in the steering committee?

Table 3.3 – Operationalization of intensity of constituency communication. Cronbach's Alpha .88 (N=5 items)

Intensity of constituency communication was measured by means of five survey items (See table 3.3). A four-point Likert scale with the ascending response categories "less often than once a month", "once a month", "several times a month", and "weekly" was used as response option for the first three items. The response categories of survey items four and five were "never", "rarely", "sometimes", and "often". Every response category was given a score: the higher the score on the scale, the higher the intensity of constituency communication. For this scale, a factor analysis was carried out which showed that both items measured the same underlying factor. Also, a reliability analysis was performed to investigate its internal consistency. With a Cronbach's Alpha of .88, the scale turned out reliable.

3.6 Methods of data-analysis

The empirical data was analysed using the software application Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) 19.0. Before a start could be made with a substantive analysis of the data, the data had to be coded in numerical responses and entered in SPSS.

Valuation of constituency communication and intensity of constituency communication were assumed to be measured at an interval level, although they were strictly speaking measured at an ordinal level. But since the variables were rank-ordered and did have almost equal distances between the attributes, they were treated as interval measures for the different statistical methods of data analysis.

Different methods of data analysis were used for the different research questions. Since sub questions one and two concerned describing scores of different variables, univariate analysis were used. Univariate analysis is the simplest form of quantitative analysis and involves the description of a case in terms of a single variable – specifically, the distribution of attributes (Babbie, 2010). In addition, some central tendency and dispersion measures (frequency, the mean and standard deviation) were provided. Since sub question three concerned the relationships between different variables, bivariate and multivariate analysis were used. First, the effect of representational role orientation on valuation of constituency communication was examined by means of a bivariate regression analysis. Regression analysis examines whether there is a linear relationship between one dependent variable and one or more independent variables (predictors). Subsequently, the effect of representational role orientation and valuation of constituency communication on intensity of constituency communication was examined by means of a multiple regression analysis.

Due to the low number of respondents, the number of degrees of freedom in the analysis is very small. Also, the variables are discrete (and sometimes dichotomous) and skewed, so not in accordance with the conditions for regression analysis. Because this study is indented as a basis for further future research, it is decided to still use regression analysis for the analysis of the relationships between the different variables. This research can thus be seen as an exercise ('vingeroefening'). Due to the low number of respondents is decided to disregard the p-values for the decision whether there is a meaningful association. Instead, the strength of correlation is used as a rule of thumb, with $r=0.40$ as critical value (Cohen, 1988).

3.7 Validity and reliability of the research design

Several measures have been taken to ensure the validity and the reliability of the research design. Validity refers to "the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration" (Babbie, 2010). Reliability refers to "that quality of measurement method that suggests that the same data would have been collected each time in repeated observations of the same phenomenon" (Babbie, 2010).

Numerous forms of validity are distinguished in the methodological literature, such as predictive validity, construct validity, ecological validity, content validity, statistical validity, congruent validity and population validity. These can all, however, be considered as variations of the two main types of validity: internal and external validity (Van Thiel, 2007).

Internal validity refers to "inferences about whether observed co-variation between A and B reflects a causal relationship from A to B in the form in which the variables were manipulated or measured". In order to prove causality in a relationship, the variables need to correlate, the cause needs to precede the effect in time and there should be no third variable explaining the relation (Babbie, 2010). The first requirement is met in this research design, since different bivariate and multivariate correlations are calculated. The second assumption of the cause preceding the effect and the third assumption of non-spuriousness, however, cannot be ensured in this design. Yet, the expected relationships between the variables seem plausible based on role theory. Internal validity also refers to the quality of operationalizations (Van Thiel, 2007). In this research, attempted is to ensure the internal validity of the measurements by using a proper operationalization of the concepts under study (see section 3.5). Multiple items are, for example, used for the measurement of the different concepts, and statistical analyses are used to investigate which items were and which weren't reliable (see section 3.5).

External validity of a research refers to the extent to which causal relationships hold over variations in persons, settings, treatments, and outcomes (Shadish, Cook and Campbell, 2002). This type of validity concerns the generalizability of the research. In this study, the case of the participatory project MijnBorne2030 played a central role. Since all representatives who took part in the steering committee during MijnBorne2030 were

involved in the empirical research and there is no biased non response, it can be stated that this research is fairly representative for this particular case. However, generalizations to other similar cases of participatory projects are not intended since each participatory project takes place under other circumstances. These differences make it hard, or even impossible, to make generalizations from the MijnBorne2030-case to other participatory projects.

Reliability refers to whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same objects, yields the same result each time (Babbie, 2010). This is all about the principle of replication: under the same circumstances, does the same measurement leads to the same result? In this study, attempted was to ensure the reliability of the measurements by presenting all respondents the same questions in the same way, and providing them all with a clear instruction (see section 3.3). In addition, attempted was to ensure the reliability of the measurements by countering social desirability. This was done by indicating to all potential respondents that the results of the research would be treated confidentially (see section 3.3). Finally, all research steps were carefully recorded, allowing replication of the empirical research.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter described and justified the chosen research design. A survey design was used as overall research strategy to implement the empirical research. Research data were obtained through an online questionnaire, which was distributed to all representatives who took part in the steering committee during MijnBorne2030. Of the 18 people in this research population, 10 subjects did complete and return the online questionnaire. Several measures were taken to ensure the validity and the reliability of the research design.

4. Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the empirical research. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part of the chapter discusses the results on sub question one. The second part of the chapter addresses the findings on sub question two and the final part of the chapter presents the results on sub question three.

4.2 Results sub question 1

The first sub question was: "who were the stakeholder-representatives who took part in the steering committee during MijnBorne2030 and what was their representational role orientation?" In order to answer this first sub question, several background characteristics of the members of the steering committee were mapped, such as their gender, their age, their highest completed level of education and their employment situation during MijnBorne2030. Members were also questioned about their representational role orientation.

Of the ten respondents who completed and returned the online questionnaire, seven were men and three were women. This is a similar ratio as in the entire research population were twelve men and six women participated in the steering committee during MijnBorne2030. The mean age of the respondents was sixty-four years at the time of MijnBorne2030 (Std. Deviation = 4.59, n=10). The highest level of education completed by the respondents did vary: for one respondent this was scientific education (university), for five respondents this was HBO (e.g. HTS, HEAO, Social Academy, PABO, HAS), and for one respondent this was MBO (e.g. MTS, MEAO, UTS). One respondent cited HAVO / VWO (HBS, MULO-B, Lyceum) as his or her highest completed level of education, and one respondent mentioned VMBO, MAVO (high school). During their membership of the steering committee, five respondents were unemployed, student or retired, three respondents were employed in the public sector, and one respondent was

self-employed. None of the respondents was, during his or her membership of the steering committee, employed in the private sector.
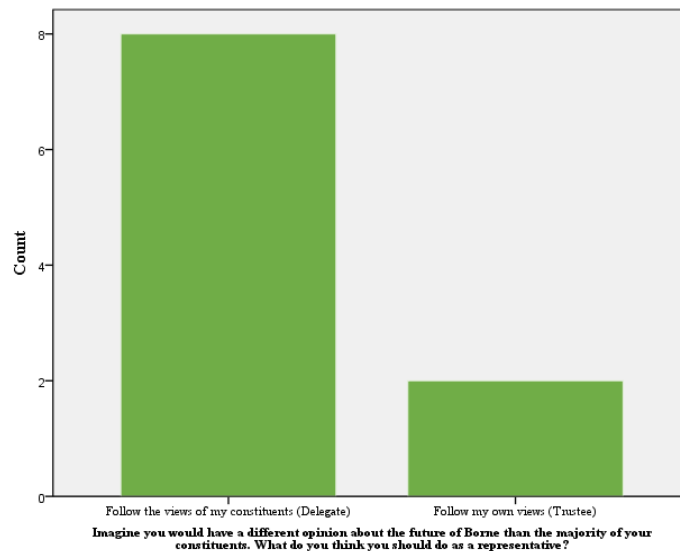

Figure 4.1 - Respondents representational role orientation

Figure 4.1 shows respondents' responses to the question "imagine you would have a different opinion about the future of Borne than the majority of your constituents. What do you think that you should do as a representative?" The bar chart reveals that eight of the ten respondents who completed and returned the online questionnaire replied that they would follow the views of their constituents in such case. These respondents are be classified as 'delegates'. Two respondents answered that they would follow their own views whenever such a situation would arise. These respondents are classified as 'trustees'.

4.3 Results sub question 2

The second sub question of this study was: "how much value did the stakeholder-representatives attach to constituency communication and how intensive was the communication between the representatives and their constituencies during the participatory visioning project?" In order to answer this second sub question, members of the steering committee were questioned about their valuation of constituency communication and about the intensity of their constituency communication during MijnBorne2030.
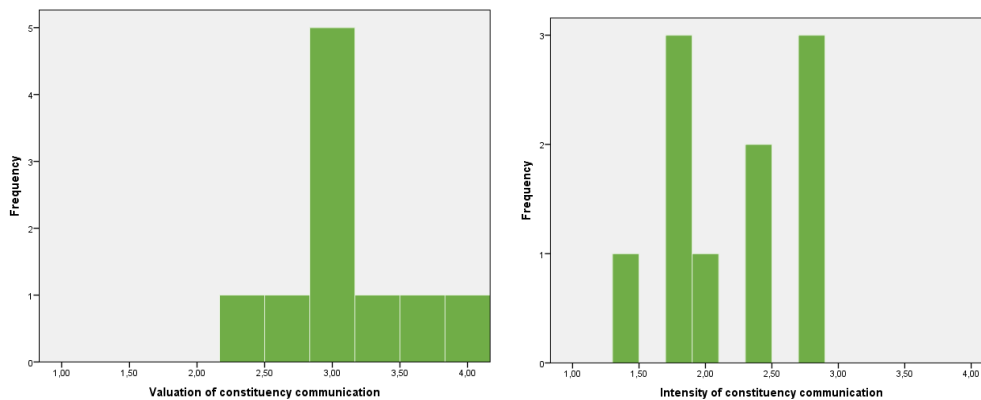
Figure 4.2 - Distribution of scores on the valuation of constituency-scale and on the intensity of constituency communication-scale

Figure 4.2 on the left shows the distribution of respondents' scores on the valuation of constituency communication-scale. The histogram reveals a distribution that is unimodal and symmetric. The mean score on the scale is 3.10 (Std. Deviation = 0.47, n=10). This indicates that respondents, on average, valued constituency communication as 'important'. (1="not important", 2="not very important", 3="important", and 4="very important"). On the right, the distribution of respondents' scores on the intensity of constituency communication-scale is shown. The histogram reveals a distribution that is bimodal and skewed to the left. The mean score on the scale is 2.20 (Std. Deviation = 0.51, n=10). This indicates that constituency communication, on average, occurred 'once a month'. (1="less often than once a month", 2="once a month", 3="several times a month", and 4="weekly").

4.4 Results sub question 3

The third sub question was: "to what extent did representatives' representational role orientation and their valuation of constituency communication affect the intensity of their constituency communication?" In order to answer this third sub question two regression analyses were used to examine the relationships between representational role orientation, valuation of constituency communication and intensity of constituency communication. First, the effect of representational role orientation on valuation of constituency communication was examined by means of a bivariate regression analysis. On the basis of the theoretical framework it was expected that having a delegate style of

representation would have a positive effect on valuation of constituency communication. The valuation of constituency communication-scale was used as the dependent variable in the regression model. Representational role orientation was used as the independent variable, and was recoded into a dummy variable with the value 0 for 'non-delegate style of representation' and 1 for 'delegate style of representation'. This was decided because representational role orientation was a categorical variable which had to be recoded into a dummy variable before it could be included in a regression model (Nijdam, 2003).

Model	R	R Square	B	Beta	Sig.
1. Delegate style of representation	0.67	0.45	0.75	0.67	0.03

Table 4.1 - Regression of valuation of constituency communication on having a delegate style of representation

Table 4.1 shows the SPSS-output of the bivariate regression. The bivariate correlation coefficient (R) reveals that the strength of the association between delegate style of representation and valuation of constituency communication is 'strong' (Cohen, 1988). The determination coefficient (R Square) 0.45 exposes that 45 percent of the variability in valuation of constituency communication is accounted for by having a delegate style of representation. The beta-coefficient 0.75 indicates that having a delegate style of representation did have a direct positive effect on valuation of constituency communication, which is consistent with the theoretical expectation. Respondents raise 0.75 units on the valuation of constituency communication-scale when they have a delegate style of representation. The results suggest that stakeholder-representatives in the steering committee with more of a delegate-style of representation did attach more importance to constituency communication than stakeholder-representatives with more of a trustee-style of representation.

Subsequently, the effect of representational role orientation and valuation of constituency communication on intensity of constituency communication was examined by means of a multiple regression analysis. On the basis of the theoretical framework it was expected that valuation of constituency would have a direct positive direct effect on intensity of constituency communication. The intensity of constituency communication-scale was used as the dependent variable in the regression model. The valuation of constituency communication-scale was used as the first independent variable. Representational role

orientation was used as the second independent variable and was, again, recoded into a dummy variable with the value 0 for 'non-delegate style of representation' and 1 for 'delegate style of representation'.

Model	R	R Square	B	Beta	Sig.
1.	0.49	0.25			0.38
Valuation of constituency communication			0.56	0.52	0.28
Delegate style of representation			0.04	0.03	0.94

Table 4.2 - Regression of intensity of constituency communication on valuation of constituency communication and having a delegate style of representation

Table 4.2 shows the SPSS-output of the multiple regression. The determination coefficient (R Square) 0.25 reveals that 25 percent of the variability in intensity of constituency communication can be accounted for with this multiple regression model. The beta-coefficient 0.56 indicates that valuation of constituency communication, when controlled for having a delegate style of representation, did have a direct positive effect on intensity of constituency communication, which is consistent with the theoretical expectation. On average, an increase of 1 unit on the valuation constituency communication-scale is associated with an increase of 0.56 units on the intensity of constituency communication-scale. The results suggest that stakeholder-representatives who attach more value to constituency communication, also communicated more intensively with their constituents. The beta-coefficient 0.04 indicates that having a delegate style of representation did not have a direct effect on intensity of constituency communication, when controlled for valuation of constituency communication. On average, respondents raise 0.04 units on the intensity of constituency communication-scale when they have a delegate style of representation.

0.04

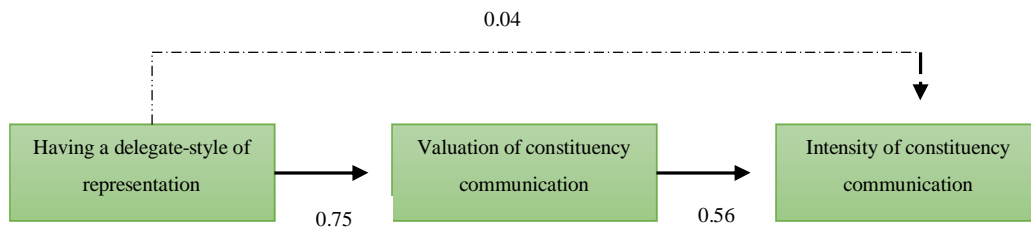| Having a delegate-style of representation | Valuation of constituency communication | Intensity of constituency communication |

0.75   0.56

Figure 4.3 - Indirect effect of having a delegate style of representation on intensity of constituency communication

Figure 4.3 demonstrates that having a delegate style of representation, as expected, did have an indirect effect on intensity of constituency communication which runs via the intermediate variable valuation of constituency communication. The beta-coefficients in this figure are taken from the results presented in table 4.1 and table 4.2. First, having a delegate style of representation did have a positive direct effect on valuation of constituency communication (beta-coefficient = 0.75). Second, in combination with the direct effect of valuation of constituency communication on intensity of constituency communication (beta-coefficient = 0.56) this establishes an indirect effect which is equal to 0.42. This indirect effect is considerably larger than the direct effect of having a delegate style of representation on intensity of constituency communication, which is equal to 0.04.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the results of the empirical research. First, several background characteristics of the members of the steering committee were mapped, such as their gender, their age, their highest completed level of education and their employment situation during MijnBorne2030. Members were also questioned about their representational role orientation, their valuation of constituency communication and the intensity of their constituency communication during MijnBorne2030. Subsequently, two regression analyses were used to examine the relationship between their representational role orientations, their valuation of constituency communication and the intensity of their constituency communication. The results suggest that stakeholder-representatives in the steering committee with more of a delegate-style of representation did attach more importance to constituency communication than stakeholder-representatives with more of a trustee-style of representation, which is in line with the

theoretical expectation. As expected, stakeholder-representatives who attach more value to constituency communication, also communicated more intensively with their constituents. Having a delegate style of representation did have an indirect effect on intensity of constituency communication which runs via the intermediate variable valuation of constituency communication.

5. Conclusions and discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter revisits the research questions and offers conclusions based on the findings. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part of the chapter looks back on the study and answers the formulated research questions. The second part of the chapter highlights some important limitations of the study. The final part of the chapter provides several suggestions for further future research and concludes with a short overall conclusion.

5.2 Main conclusions

Central research question of this study was: "To what extent did the representational role orientation of the stakeholder-representatives who took part in the steering committee during the participatory visioning project MijnBorne02030 and their valuation of constituency communication affect the intensity of their constituency communication?" This question has emerged from the desire to investigate role orientations and its behavioural consequences in a relatively new group of political representatives: stakeholder-representatives who take part in participatory policymaking. In political science, much scientific research has been conducted on the representational role orientations of political representatives. Most studies, however, focus on traditional elected legislators. Also, despite the attention given to representational roles, few efforts have been made to measure its predictive capacity. The aim of the study was to advance an understanding of the relationship between representational role orientations, valuation of representative-constituency communication and intensity of constituency communication, and to provide a groundwork for more complete research in the future.

Three sub questions were formulated in order to answer the central research question of the study. A survey-design was selected as overall research strategy to answer these three sub questions. Research data were obtained through an online questionnaire, which was distributed to all representatives who took part in the steering committee during the

participatory project MijnBorne2030. Given the limited size of the research population, it was decided to approach the entire research population for the empirical research and not to draw a sample.

The first sub question was: "who were the stakeholder-representatives who took part in the steering committee during MijnBorne2030 and what was their representational role orientation?" In order to answer this first sub question, several background characteristics of the members of the steering committee were mapped, such as their gender, their age, their highest completed level of education and their employment situation during MijnBorne2030. Members were also questioned about their representational role orientation. Based on the results of the empirical research it can be concluded that the members who took part in the steering committee during MijnBorne2030 consisted mainly of (relatively highly educated) men, with an average age of 64 years. The vast majority of these members can be classified as delegates, only a small minority positioned themselves as trustees. This result deviates from previous findings about role orientations of elected legislators in the Netherlands (Daalder & Rusk, 1972; Andeweg & Thomassen, 2006; Thomassen & Esaiasson, 2006). These earlier studies suggest that political representatives in the Netherlands are more likely to have a trustee-style of representation.

The second sub question of this study was: "how much value did the stakeholder-representatives attach to constituency communication and how intensive was the communication between the representatives and their constituencies during the participatory visioning project?" In order to answer this second sub question, members of the steering committee were questioned about their valuation of constituency communication and about the intensity of their constituency communication during MijnBorne2030. Based on the results of the empirical research it can be concluded that the members experienced constituency communication as important. The members of the committee, on average, communicated once a month with their constituents about MijnBorne2030. These data and the data on the representative role orientations of the stakeholder-representatives are particularly interesting for the third sub question.

The third sub question was: "to what extent did representatives' representational role orientation and their valuation of constituency communication affect the intensity of their

constituency communication?" In order to answer this third sub question, a theoretical model was constructed on the basis of which the relationships between the different variables were examined. This theoretical model was based on two theoretical expectations. The first expectation was that having a delegate style of representation would have a positive effect on the importance that a representatives attaches to constituency communication. The second expectation was that valuation of constituency communication, in turn, would have a positive effect on intensity of constituency communication.

Two regression analyses were used in order to test these theoretical expectations against the data of MijnBorne2030. First, the effect of representational role orientation on valuation of constituency communication was examined by means of a bivariate regression analysis. Based on the results of this first regression analysis it can be concluded that having a delegate style of representation indeed did have a direct positive effect on valuation of constituency communication. The findings suggest that stakeholder-representatives in the steering committee with more of a delegate-style of representation did attach more importance to constituency communication than stakeholder-representatives with more of a trustee-style of representation, which is in line with the theoretical expectation. Subsequently, the effect of representational role orientation and valuation of constituency communication on intensity of constituency communication was examined by means of a multiple regression analysis. Based on the results of this second regression analysis it can be concluded that valuation of constituency communication did have a direct positive effect on intensity of constituency communication, when controlled for having a delegate style of representation. The findings suggest that stakeholder-representatives in the steering committee who attach more value to constituency communication, also communicated more intensively with their constituents than stakeholder-representatives who attach less value to constituency communication, which is also in line with the theoretical expectation. When controlled for valuation of constituency communication, having a delegate style of representation did not have a direct effect on intensity of constituency communication. Having a delegate style of representation, as expected, did have an indirect effect on intensity of constituency communication which runs via the intermediate variable valuation of constituency communication.

5.3 Limitations of the study

This study, however, has some important limitations that affect the significance of these findings.

A first limitation of this study is obviously the small number of respondents. With a response of 10 it is more difficult to find significant relationships between variables than with a higher response. Because this study was indented as a basis for further future research, it was decided to still use regression analysis for the analysis of the relationships between the different variables (see section 3.6). Due to the low number of respondents, the results of these analyses must, however, be interpreted with extreme caution.

A second limitation of the study concerns the internal validity of the research. With the chosen research design, it remains difficult to speak in terms of causal relationships between the variable under investigation. By using regression analyses the first condition for causality has been investigated: correlation between the variables. The other two conditions for causality (time order and non-spuriousness), however, are not tested in the current research, which limits the significance of the results. The expected relationships between the variables, nonetheless, seem plausible on the basis of the theoretical framework (see section 2.5).

A third limitation of the study is the usage of self-reports for the operationalization of the variable 'intensity of constituency communication'. Self-reported data contain several potential sources of bias like selective memory, telescoping (recalling events that occurred at one time as if they occurred at another time) and social desirability. Behaviour like 'intensity of constituency communication' can usually be better studied through observational methods. This limitation, however, could not be overcome, given that the variable measured behaviour in the past which made observation impossible.

5.4 Suggestions for future research

Based on the research, several suggestions can be made for further future research.

To date, scientific research on representational roles and role theory has mainly focussed on traditional elected legislators. Future research could focus more on new types of political representatives that have emerged in the recent years. Citizens, for example, are increasingly taking in the position of political representatives (Van Stokkum, 2012). The political debate is more and more shifting from the traditional political arenas to society. Interesting questions would be to what extent classical role theory holds true for these new group of political representatives. Perhaps there a difference between how traditional elected and modern non-elected representatives perceive their role as representatives, with all its consequences.

In the case of stakeholder-representatives who take part in participatory policymaking, it would be interesting to further examine the consequences of representational roles for constituency communication behaviour. Representative-constituency communication plays an important role in participatory policymaking. Little empirical knowledge, however, exists about the relationship between representational roles and constituency communication behaviour. This study provides a basis that can be useful for future research on this topic. It would be interesting to repeat this study in the future on a larger scale: among more stakeholder-representatives and more participatory projects.

5.5 Overall conclusion

This chapter revisited the research questions and offered conclusions based on the findings. The chapter also discussed several important limitations that affect the significance of these results. Despite its limitations, this study still is an interesting first small step towards a better understanding of representational roles and its behavioural consequences in a new group of political representatives: stakeholder-representatives in participatory policymaking. This area still is a 'blind spot' in the existing scientific research. By studying the stakeholder-representatives who took part in the steering committee during the participatory visioning project MijnBorne2030, this research provided a groundwork that can be useful for future research on this topic.

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