

# **RUNNING ON TWO LEGS**

**Which characteristics do projects of participatory democracy need to influence the decisionmaking within representative democracy in Dutch local government?**

**by**

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## PREFACE

With this thesis, my time as an official master student Public Administration at the University of Twente will come to an end, finally. Ever started (to) long ago. Once in the two weeks college in Utrecht at La Vie. Over two years, I completed all my subjects with great pleasure and discipline but one thing remained: writing my thesis. Every year I re-enrolled, but again postponed writing each year as a result of new jobs, elections, private concerns. And now, now it seriously has to be because after all those years my grades will no longer be valid after the 1st of september, so here it is my thesis. The closing piece!

In this preface, I would like to make use of the opportunity to thank various people that supported me during this process.

At first I want to thank my supervisors Dr. M.J.G.A. Boogers and Dr. Pieter-Jan Klok from the University of Twente for their guidance and feedback during this process. They helped and advised me to improve the academic quality of my report. Their expertise and feedback has been a valuable addition to the overall result.

Secondly I want to thank all my colleagues who helped thinking and provided me with usefull advice, literature and empirical evidence. I really enjoyed the discussions we had.

And, last but not least, I want to thank my men: my dear husband and two wonderfull sons. They all encouraged, motivated and helped me during this, not always easy, process of completing my master. Thank you so much for that!

Mirjam Bakker

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## ABSTRACT

Almost all municipalities in the Netherlands use nowadays the knowledge and commitment of citizens. This participation of citizens goes from telling what their opinions are about certain policy making to the most profound variant, the transfer of budgets and responsibilities to citizens. In literature, all these forms of participation are described in detail but a real research of the factors of success and failure within these various projects is lacking. The goal of this research is to get more clarity about these factors. On the basis of ten evaluation studies of Dutch lokal Courts of Auditors involving civic participation in policy development, this study will provide an overview of how certain characteristics can affect the results of the participation.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

We are living in an administrative exciting time: representative democracy is under attack. The vast majority of people are in favour of the idea of democracy, but many citizens are dissatisfied with the way in which democracy is executed and implemented (Tonkens, Trappenburg, Hurenkamp, & Schmidt, 2015). Fewer and fewer people are members of a political party and fewer people will vote in especially local elections. There is talk of a rift between politicians and citizens. There is a lack of interest and involvement of citizens in our contemporary politics. To increase that commitment, and therefore to increase support of policy, most municipalities are engaged in forms of civic participation. These different forms are very diverse, sometimes but not always successful and actually relate to all areas within the municipal policy. It may concern say or think along in shaping policy, to assign budgets to districts or facilitating initiatives already undertaken by residents themselves.

It is undeniable that more and more citizens are in this way committed to their own environment, their own municipality. This available energy is increasingly used by (local) governments. But in the end stage of many decisions on policy, the town council has, according to law, the last word. Representative democracy so remains very important. In that way one can also say that representative and participative democracy more than once are at odds with each other. Citizens get started with their ideas, completely free and often ignorant of the (informal) rules of the city council / politics. At the time when their input has to be formally decided, the council looks at it in their own perspective. as: does this create a precedent, does it conform to laws and regulations, and, for certain politic parties, does it fit into my political agenda / how do I tell this to my voters, then become important. There are, in the worst case, two worlds, those of the meditated citizen and those of the decision-making council. Therefore, there are conflicting logics that are in the subject literature (Siegers, 2016) referred to as living world and system world. Speaking to each other and recognizing that these different logics are there is then a first important step.

The moment these worlds are too far apart, frustration arises. This frustration can play among all actors in this democratic game: civilians-council/politics, civilians-civil servants and civilian-government (vice versa).

It is not true that participatory democracy will replace the representative democracy, they can however reinforce each other. A clear, future-oriented representative democracy is needed to give maximum substance to successful forms of participatory democracy. With regard to participatory democracy, it is important that it is clear what the factors of success and failure are. This is that important because unsuccessful forms of citizen participation may be a reason for people to no longer participate in such projects and therefore confidence in the government and politics (further) decreases.

Although the issue of strengthening representative democracy is also very interesting, this study will focus on participatory democracy, and in specific on which characteristics projects of participatory democracy need to influence the decision making of the council. The results of this study should be that before citizen participation is deployed, it is clear how obstacles can be avoided and how success can be guaranteed.

The main reason for choosing this study for me is the strong relevance of such a research. In scientific literature you will find when participation of citizens can be used but not what the possible problems may be in the process. Given the strong increase in the number of participatory projects/processes, it is important to understand how they can be closed positively. More positive experience with such projects will ensure that these projects are being deployed and civilians

remain enthusiastic. I am sure recommendations or some kind of model(s) on this topic will certainly help local government in modern policymaking.

## 2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overall research question is:

**Which characteristics do projects of participatory democracy need to influence the decision making within representative democracy in Dutch local government?**

This research question is a policy-related, design question. The answer to this question results in a design or proposal of how to design projects of participatory democracy so that they can influence decision making in the process of representative democracy in Dutch local government.

The sub questions are:

1. What is representative democracy and what is participatory democracy in Dutch local government?
2. Looking at results of empirical studies, what are the characteristics within projects of participatory democracy that influence decision making within representative democracy in Dutch local government?
3. Which characteristics do we see in the studied evaluations of participatory democracy?
4. How do the characteristics of the studied evaluations influence the decision making within representative democracy in the projects?
5. Which characteristics can, combining the answers from sub questions 2,3 and 4, be used in projects of participatory democracy in general to influence the process of decision making within representative democracy in Dutch local government? So this will combine theory and practice and will be an analytical generalisation.

ad. 1. This is a theoretical, conceptual question, it defines what we mean when we talk about representative and participatory democracy in Dutch municipalities. To answer this question I will give a definition of the processes of decision making and definitions of representative and participatory democracy and tell (in view of literature) in what extent they are contrary or overlapping.

ad.2. This is a descriptive question, it is empirical and tells about the different characteristics that influence decision making within representative democracy in Dutch local government. The answer I will find in literature and looking at different disclosed cases of participatory democracy.

ad. 3. This is a descriptive question, it is empirical and tells which characteristics are present within representative democracy in Dutch local government. The answer to this question will be given by studying ten evaluation studies of Dutch local courts of auditors involving civic participation in policy development.

ad. 4. This is an explanatory question, it is empirical and tells how characteristics of the studied evaluations, influence decision making within representative democracy in Dutch local government. I will investigate the causality between the defined characteristics of the studied evaluations and the effect they have on the representative democracy.

ad. 5. This is an explanatory question and an analytical generalisation. It tells us how we can enlarge influence of projects of participatory democracy, in general, in the process of decision making within representative democracy in Dutch local government.

The research will take place in Holland, at the level of local government and in specific municipalities. Policymaking of municipalities is of direct influence to the inhabitants, therefore lots of inhabitants want to be and, in reality, are participating in many different types of participatory democracy at this level. That's why I choose for this type of government and not the level of Province or Central State.

Looking at the literature and fast evolution, in especially the last years, of different types of participatory democracy, I will do the empirical research since 2010, so the last 7 years. There are more than enough cases, types and ideas about participatory and representative democracy.

### 3. READING GUIDE

In Chapter 2, the overall research questions and the five sub questions have been introduced and explained. Then, in Chapter 4, the explanation of the methodology of the study follows. Chapter 5 follows the theoretical framework, focusing in particular on the development of participatory democracy in relation to representative democracy. This chapter will answer the sub-research questions 1 and 2. Chapter 6 gives an overview of the evaluations used, following an analysis framework chosen for this purpose. In this chapter, the research questions 3 and 4 are discussed. In chapter 7, theory and empiricism will be combined and an answer will be given to sub research question 5. Then, in chapter 8 and 9, the conclusions and recommendations are followed.



## 4. METHODOLOGY

In order to answer the research question of the study, a qualitative design will be used. Qualitative research is the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships.

### 4.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

At first I will give a theoretical framework about the sub questions 1 and 2 based on studying literature and different disclosed cases of participatory democracy. This research will define a set of characteristics that influence decision making within representative democracy in Dutch local government.

After that I will investigate ten evaluation studies of Dutch local Courts of Auditors involving civic participation in policy development so I can answer subquestions 3 and 4. These evaluations are selected based on availability and comparability. They are found on the site of the Dutch Association of Court of Auditors (8 evaluations) and through research on the internet (2 evaluations). The comparability exist of the kind of civic participation: government interaction with citizens and organizations at an early stage when the decision is still in development. The government still takes the initiative and ultimately also decides. However, the citizen comes into the picture at an early stage.

The research of these ten municipalities and their civic participation (units of analysis) will be qualitative and will be done by studying the evaluation documents (units of observation) regarding citizen participation of the named municipalities. So the design is a secondary analyses of existing data. A disadvantage of secondary analysis is that it could be collected for a purpose that does not fit the needs of this research: most secondary data is collected (for a specific report or database) for a specific research purpose. In this case, this is not the problem because the Courts of Auditors have the same point of view: every municipality in the Netherlands has a Court of Auditors or an Audit Committee. Each Court Of Auditors has an important role in supporting the city council. Of the three tasks of the board - the representative, executive and supervisory task - the auditorium serves as support for the last two.

They investigate the effectiveness (achieved goal), efficiency (through appropriate costs and efforts) and the legitimacy (complies with the policies and regulations) of the board of the municipality. The Court of Auditors is independent. Where possible, recommendations for improvement will be made. Looking at the different evaluations, it becomes clear that all municipalities want to know how they organise participation of citizens, what the effects are and what is needed to make the participation more successful. Comparisational research thus appears very well possible.

This means that the research has been done on the basis of the following process steps:



#### 4.2. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to be able to bundle and analyze the amount and diversity of information, which results from the evaluation researches, an analysis framework has been used. This analysis framework is based on the contours of a plan of approach to interactive policy as described by Pröpper and Steenbeek (Pröpper & Steenbeek, *De aanpak van interactief beleid: elke situatie anders*, 2001). The idea behind designing a particular approach to interactive policy is that in advance to what extent and in what way interactive policy is designed, can be planned. This figure includes both the necessary internal and external orientation and will further be explained in the chapter 5.5.1. *Plan of approach to interactive policy*. The idea is that, using this plan of approach, all relevant characteristics for effective policy of civic participation passed by and have been considered. So an overview can be given by analyzing the next steps, which together reflect the implementation of the used contours of a plan of approach to interactive.

1. Political administrative approach
2. Organization and management of the interactive approach
3. Structure of the substantive policy development
4. Structure of the interaction
5. Political administrative translation of the results

#### 4.3. DEMARCATION

This research is focused on approaching citizen participation from the perspective of the municipality and where it wants to give direction in this policy-making process. It is then about the so-called '2nd generation citizen participation': government interaction with citizens and organizations at an early stage when the decision is still in development. The government still takes the initiative and ultimately also decides. However, the citizen comes into the picture at an early stage. In this case, it is about clearly defined projects with a beginning and end and a political-administrative routing.

#### 4.4. ETHICAL ISSUES

The so-called practical investigation concerns an analysis of secondary data of existing and publicly published evaluations of the relevant accounting rooms. Given this disclosure of data, investigated municipalities can be named.

## 5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Introduction:

In this chapter I will provide a theoretical framework, focusing in particular on the development of participatory democracy in relation to representative democracy. This chapter will answer the two first sub-research questions mentioned in chapter 2:

1. What is representative democracy and what is participatory democracy in Dutch local government?
2. Looking at results of empirical studies, what are the characteristics within projects of participatory democracy that influence decision making within representative democracy in Dutch local government?

### Theoretical framework:

Since 1848, we have been living in a democracy in the Netherlands, or to be more specific: a parliamentary, representative government. When Thorbecke wrote the new Constitution in that year, it had the following major changes:

- Introduction of the ministerial responsibility
- Direct elections of the House of Representatives, municipal councils and the Provincial Executive.
- Public meetings of the representative bodies
- The possibility to dissolve the House and to initiate new elections
- Introduction of the right of amendment to the House of Representatives and the right of survey to the Senate

Since then, there have been several revisions to the constitution, but the foundation for our form of democracy was laid at that time. The most important (of all the) collective decisions are taken by the representatives of the population, organized in political parties, who have been voted for by secret ballot, and who can be replaced by other representatives after a fixed period.

Until the 1960s, the system of a formal, representative democracy was accepted and seen as the only form of representation. The Netherlands was characterized by a highly-compartmentalized society, a paternalistic government, and a high degree of political passivity among the population. From the 60s onward, the power of a select group of directors could no longer be taken for granted. Due to increased prosperity, the rise of radio and TV, as well as a higher level of education, citizens believed they had the right to a higher degree of participation in the decision-making process. Consequently, the opportunity for public participation in the decision-making process was anchored as a permanent factor in law and legislation. The birth of the current form citizen participation was a fact, in that here it is purely about involving citizens in already designed policy.

The development of society as described above has been developed further since the 60s. In today's society, citizens are (more) aware, (more) outspoken and (more) critical. Thanks to the Internet and other new (social) media there are numerous different opportunities for gathering knowledge and forming an opinion and (also immediately) expressing it. Following this development, it seems that the need to exert influence, join the discussion over what happens in one's living environment, or even to contribute, has increased even further.

Over 90% of the Dutch population supports the idea of democracy, and more than 70% is happy enough with how democracy functions. However, people are less satisfied with the practical interpretation of democracy, i.e. politics. There is a lot of criticism of the elected politicians, and significant support for more input from citizens and more direct democracy (e.g. referendums on important issues, choosing the mayor). The largest group, however, does not see the need for citizens to have an influence on all legislation, and many opt for the representative democracy over a model where as much as possible is decided by referendum. This seems to indicate that at least some of the Dutch population see direct democracy mainly as an addition to or improvement of the representative democracy instead of an alternative. (De Ridder & Dekker, 2015)

Confidence in democracy remains high; however, confidence in politicians and political parties is under severe pressure. The connection between society and government is made through political parties (Wallage, 2012). Citizens no longer feel represented by these parties and the political representatives. In the traditional representative democracy, political parties competed with each other at election time and maintained extremely divergent ideologies based on compartmentalization so that voters also actually had something to choose between. Political research shows that political differences are less and less relevant. Citizens see less and less difference between political parties. They no longer become a member of a party. In 2015, the number of voters with membership of a party currently in the House of Representatives was 2.5 percent (statistics Documentation Centre, Dutch Political Parties). This percentage is one of the lowest in Western Europe. One of them is only 10% active in their party. Citizens no longer identify with a particular party, but decide at election time who to vote for. Thus, the political parties do their best to draw in the largest possible portion of the electorate, making them less distinctive (Tonkens, Trappenburg, Hurenkamp, & Schmidt, 2015).

Another outcome of this ‘chasm’ between citizens and politics or the so-called democratic fatigue syndrome, as David van Reybrouck calls it in his book “Against elections” is that fewer and fewer people vote. In particular, the turn out for municipal council elections (from 73.23% in 1986 to 54% in 2014) and provincial elections (from 66.32% in 1987 to 47.76% in 2015) has dropped drastically. 1

It can be concluded that fewer and fewer people are members of a political party and even fewer are truly active for their party. The declining turn out for municipal and provincial elections can be added to that. If it is assumed that the connection between society and administration is through political parties, it can be said that the basis of the representativeness of these political parties has, over the years, become very narrow and has helped in the “alienation” of politics.

However, citizens do want to exert influence on their own living environment. Research has shown that more than 70% of inhabitants want to be involved in issues that play out in their own living environment. This desire, complemented by an increasingly higher level of education, the outspoken citizen, and digitalization and social media has led increasingly to citizens wanting to exert direct influence on policy that has the greatest impact on their daily lives, the policy of their municipality. More citizen participation responds to this call. Not just through participation, i.e. commenting on already designed policy, but actual, substantive control over policy complies with this desire.

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<sup>1</sup> (Kiesraad, sd)

The above developments in current society have led to the fact that governments, since the 1970s, have more often involved citizens in decision-making by public administration. A major reason is that acceptance of policies has become increasingly important. Citizens will have a full role in public administration and want certain things organized and handled themselves. Only then we can count on cooperation and legitimization of political decisions. And so arises, in addition to representative democracy, participatory democracy: a form of democracy in which the citizen has a significant influence of policy-making by the government. Decisions here are not only left to elected representatives, as is the case in a parliamentary / representative democracy.

## 5.1. PARTICIPATION LADDER(S)

The way inhabitants are involved in policy, has varying degrees, i.e. Informing; Consulting; Advising; Co-producing; Co-deciding and Self-management. The participation ladder is a useful tool to illustrate the intensity and mutual involvement between inhabitants and management per participation process. There are several participation ladders in circulation (Arnstein, Edelenbos, etc.). In general, the opinion from the literature is that not all rungs of the ladder can be given the title participative democracy or interactive policy-making. The further up the ladder, the more active the policy-making. The dividing line on what counts as interactive policy-making differs per author, but lies in general between advising and co-producing.

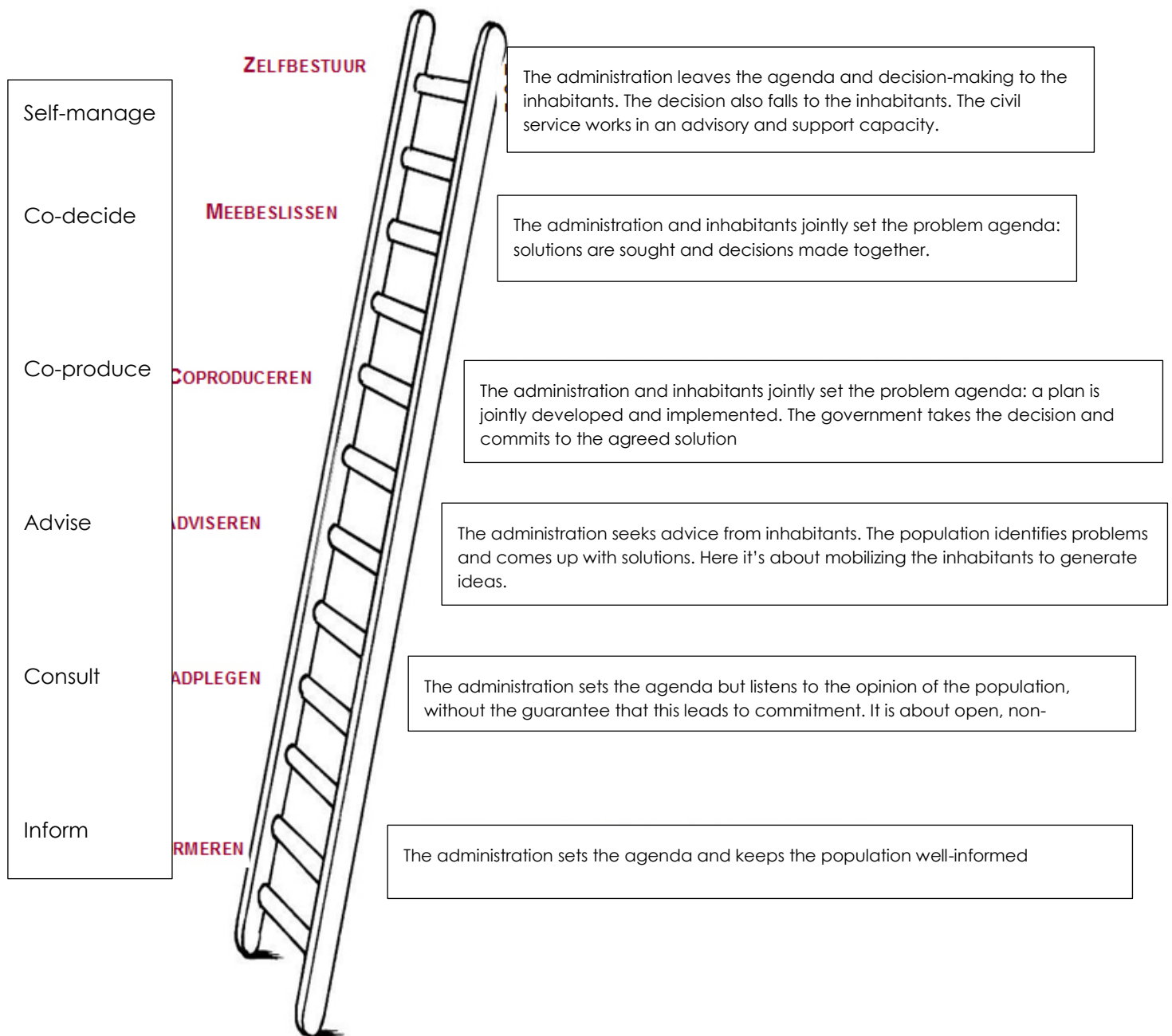


Figure 1: Participationladder (Community Development West Flanders)

Over the years, these “bare” appearances of the participation ladder are elaborated inter alia by desired administration styles (role of the administration). From the lowest rung to the highest: closed authoritarian, open authoritarian, consultative, participative, delegating, collaborative and facilitating style.

Interactive	Facilitating style	The administration provides support but leaves decision-making to the inhabitants.
	Collaborative style	Based on equality, the administration is working with inhabitants to develop policy.
	Delegating style	The administration sets boundary conditions within which inhabitants develop and decide policy.
	Participative style	The administration is developing plans basically by itself, but asks for an open opinion with plenty of room for input and discussion
Involvement	Consultative style	The administration develops policy plans but gives inhabitants the opportunity to express their views on the decisions made
	Open authoritarian style	The administration conducts independent policy and will provide information to disclose the policy.
	Closed authoritarian style	The administration carries out completely independent policy and does not provide information about this.

Figure 2: Participationladder: administration styles (role of the administration)

The most recent elaboration is from Anke Siegers who places ownership in the participation ladder (“ownership steps”). The reason for this is that ownership leads to active participation. This new development is in line with the enormous increase in the number of initiatives that are set up by inhabitants themselves whereby the role of the administration should be a more facilitating one, the so-called DIY democracy, where ownership is widely present. Siegers describes it as follows:

“People want to be in charge and involved in decision-making when it concerns issues that affect them. Only being able to give an opinion, in whatever form, after which others take the decision is no longer enough. The inhabitant of today is too mature for that. Naturally, there are people who will say that not everyone is capable of that. That is also true. People can, however, do this together. A combination of defining the frameworks, sharing objective information and a movement that is deployed in a form of citizens’ summit, for example, brings all the knowledge together. This creates a wisdom of the crowd.



When this is organized well, it is simply no longer necessary to consider the same topic later in the municipal council, for instance. In fact, a facilitating and frameworking role creates ownership. In addition, the decision taken by the enormous, engaged group (that has made an informed decision after it has weighed up all the pros and cons without having a political interest) by means of organized debate is of better quality than if the decision is taken by multiple smaller group (population) representatives” (Siegers, 2016).

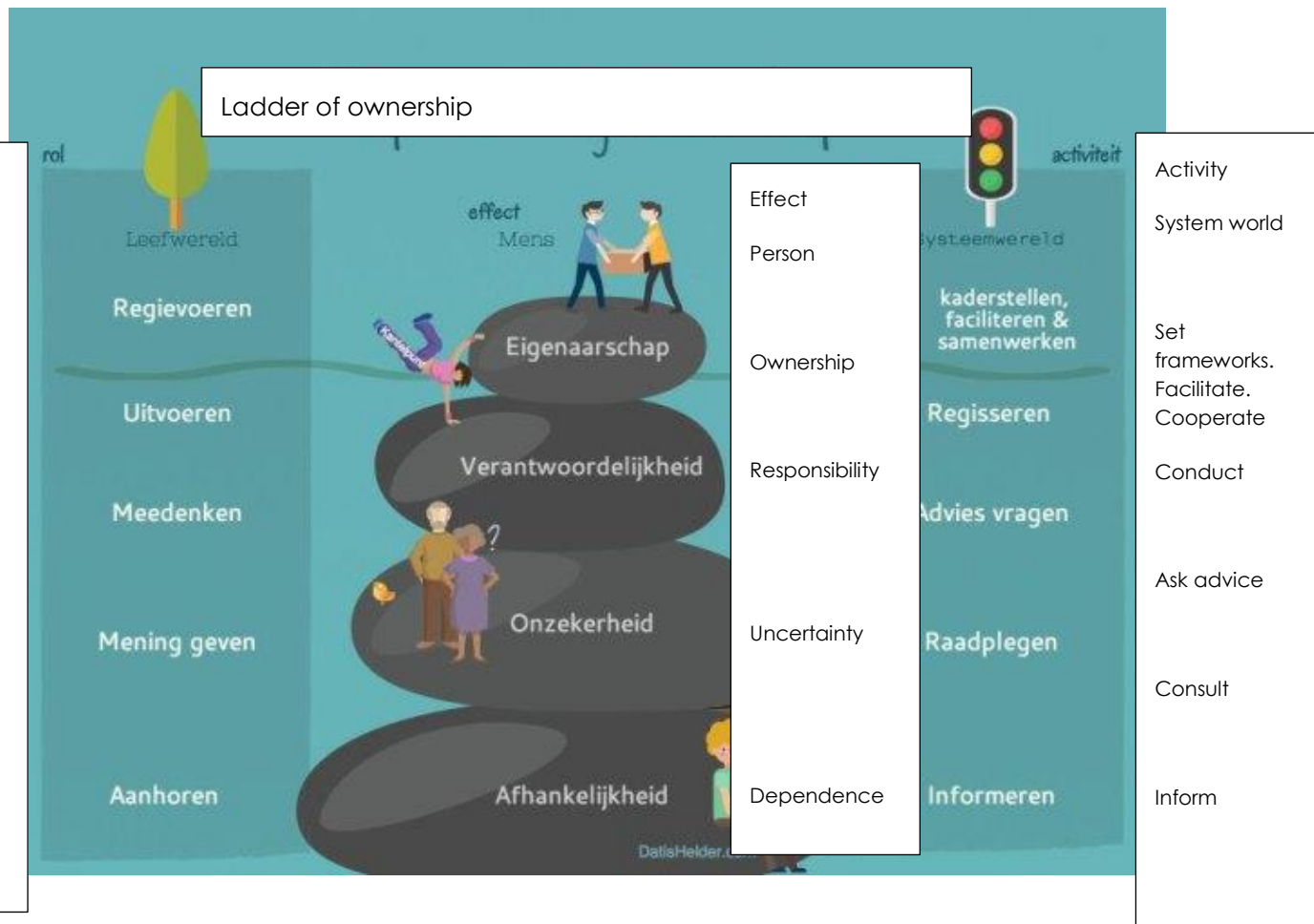


Figure 3: Ladder of ownership

## 5.2. GENERATIONS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The terms interactive policy-making and citizen participation are often mixed up in everyday use. Both terms are used widely and public institutions, such as municipalities, are quick to use them. In policy programmes and coalition agreements, we find these terms used more than once, in some cases as an all-purpose concept: everything we (policy wise) do with inhabitants is quickly labelled citizen participation or interactive policy-making. This is why it is necessary to describe what, at least for this research, is precisely meant by these terms.

Interactive policy-making is a (communicative) form of policy development where, for instance, the central government involves other public authorities, citizens, businesses and organized stakeholders at the earliest possible phase, to jointly develop and implement policies. Citizen participation refers specifically to the participation of citizens in political decision-making and the bringing about of policy (Edelenbos, Domingo, Klok, & Van Tatenhove, 2006).

This citizen participation implies detecting at an early stage and involving individual citizens in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policy (Edelenbos, Domingo, Klok, & Van Tatenhove, 2006). In addition, a feature of citizen participation is that involved citizens are able to influence. This implies multi-lateral communication (a dialogue) and in principle, equality and power equality of all participating parties (Van de Peppel, 2001).

Citizen participation is an all-purpose concept under which all possible forms of participation by citizens, groups and inhabitants can be placed. Clear, successive levels in the citizen participation process can be distinguished: Informing; Consulting; Advising; Co-producing; Co-deciding.

The term 'citizen participation' has undergone an enormous evolution in the past 50 years: we speak of different 'generations'. There is a shift from representative democracy to participative democracy. From a system where the democratically elected are given 'power of attorney' to act, to a democracy that creates room for participation and therefore gives citizens the opportunity to give direction and even to co-decide.

In short, we can distinguish three forms:

- Public participation in democracy ('70s)  
First generation citizen participation: statutory public participation by means of the right to review and appeal that puts the citizen in a position to exert influence on government decisions. The initiative lies with the administration, the citizen may give his opinion. Public participation is about informing and raising awareness about reviews and proposals worked out by the local administration.
- Interactive democracy ('90s).  
Second generation citizen participation: interactive policy-making: government interaction with citizens and organizations at an early stage when the decision is still in development. The government still takes the initiative and ultimately also decides. However, the citizen comes into the picture at an early stage.
- Direct democracy (since 2000)  
Third generation citizen participation: the citizen takes the initiative. The government can respond to this citizen initiative (government participation) and offer support in the realization of this citizen initiative. The government facilitates citizen initiatives that help to orient policy decisions. The agenda of the administration is not a priority. The start and outcome of this process are open. The initiative no longer lies with the municipal council; the citizen determines where and how action must be taken. This form of participation is also known as government participation or third generation participation. With this form of participation, citizens introduce initiatives and the government participates in them, with social support. The associative or DIY democracy is a renewal of the participative democracy, in the sense that citizens exert influence on the policy by 'doing' themselves. Getting healthcare, for instance, is not enforced by the government by means of a referendum or demonstration. For example, the citizen, or more precisely a group of citizens, sets up a healthcare cooperative.

These forms of democracy are not exclusively tied to a certain period. Based on the deployment and the objective of a participation process, each of these three forms can be applicable, and they can even run alongside each other. In other words, these 'generations' complement each other.

### 5.3. REPRESENTATIVE AND PARTICIPATIVE DEMOCRACY

In participatory democracy, citizens influence the government-led policy. This influence is exercised through participation, participation and, to a lesser extent, by petitions, signatures or demonstrations. Do-democracy is a renewal of participatory democracy, in the sense that citizens influence the policy by "doing" themselves.

In addition to participatory democracy, there is also the classical representative democracy of the elected representatives. Locally, residents of a municipality choose new councilors every four years. They represent the interests of the inhabitants and allow for the policy-making and implementation thereof by the College of Mayors and Governors. Recently, there has been more discussion about the gap between citizens and politics. The rise in municipal elections decreases and the question is whether all citizens feel represented by local representatives. Due to more equal relations between government and citizens, the gap that could arise could possibly be bridged.

Participative and representative democracy renews and interferes with each other more and more. To depict these new combinations Movisie (Movisie, 2014) has developed the flywheel of do-democracy. This flywheel refers to the idea that do-democracy has a specific force: civilian power. The line of do-democracy comes into contact with the rages of the (with) thought democracy and representative democracy. The action of each of the three wheels of the flywheel causes interaction, movement and new variations to the classic forms of democracy.

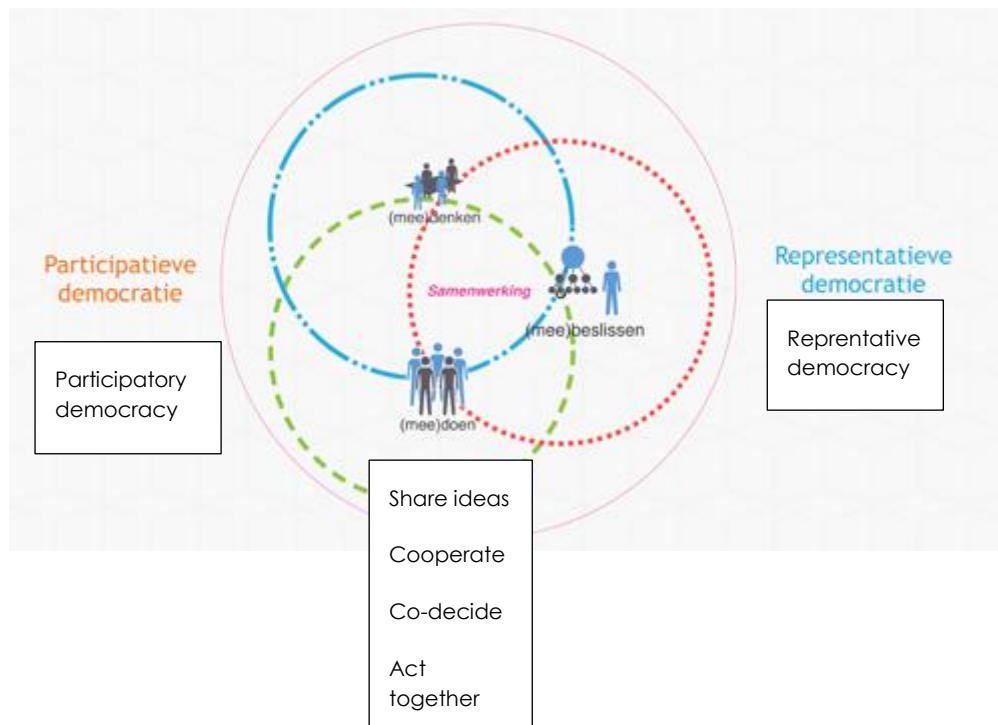


Figure 4: Flywheel DIY democracy: act, think and decide together (Movisie, 2014)

The flywheel makes clear how representative democracy and participatory democracy in Dutch local government are standing next to each other and even complement each other nowadays and gives an answer to **subquestion 1: What is representative democracy and what is participatory democracy in Dutch local government?**

The “conservative” representative democracy is supplemented and strengthened by forms of participatory democracy since the 1970s. At first only by involvement of citizens (policy is almost set, citizens may give their opinion at the end of the process) till now when citizens even take over de policy making in the so-called do-democracy. In this research the influence of participative projects on the representative democracy is central. That’s why the the third generation (direct democracy) will not be included. These do-democracy projects are designed and implemented by the citizens themselves and in that way do not need to go through the representative process of decisionmaking. So for this research there is too little interaction between the participative, do-democracy projects/processes and the administration of the municipality (representative democracy) to draw conclusions for this research.

## 5.4. INTENDED EFFECTS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

After explaining the origin of citizen participation and its various forms, I would like to go into the intended effects of the deployment of citizen participation. We will look at the initiatives from the rung of advising/co-producing and higher. Self-management will not be examined since the initiatives concern those set up and implemented by the inhabitants themselves, without clear direction and vision from the administration concerned. The question is therefore: why do (local) administrations want citizen participation? Closing the so-called chasm between citizen and government is often mentioned as the main argument. This argument is of course rather abstract; looking at the literature (Pröpper & Steenbeek, *De aanpak van interactief beleid: elke situatie anders*, 2001), (Edelenbos & Monnikhof, 2001), (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2013) we can identify several more specific effects.

### **Quality**

By working together as a team on planning and formation of policy (and the implementation) the municipality and inhabitants can achieve a higher quality. High quality is when the process leads to a policy that is technically, practically and financially achievable. A policy (plan) that fits within the principles of the municipality, is in line with the opinions and wishes of inhabitants, results in the achievement of the set goals.

### **Alliance**

During a citizen participation process, participants become familiar with how politics and the municipal organization work. Because one participates and therefore gets a look into the municipal kitchen, one realizes that a municipal administration must make choices and in doing so must weigh up the individual, group and community interests. An additional effect is that inhabitants are able to see that not every individual interest can be honoured. Participants in such a process also see that those for and against a particular choice come with arguments they themselves may not have thought of (yet). The participant learns to take a broader view and to weigh up interests. If that happens more often, that same citizen may, in the long run, look at other processes from more perspectives and be more willing and able to think in terms of the big picture. In the long term, this results in:

- More support for the implementation;
- More efficiency in the decision-making;
- Less costs in the realization of this decision-making;
- Faster procedures.

### **Increase trust between citizens and municipality**

The process itself and the role of the municipality as partner (i.e. initiator) in that process are important. Deployment of citizen participation enables the government to present itself as an excellent party to work with. Citizen participation can be deployed as an instrument with which to reinforce and improve the citizens' trust in politics and administration. The argument also applies the other way round! The administration must also learn to trust the knowledge and expertise of its citizens.

### **Support**

If inhabitants of the municipality are involved in planning, have followed the process closely, and know that their opinions and those of co-inhabitants have been considered, they are more likely to support the end result than if there was no involvement. Everyone agrees that participation can lead to acceptance, acceptance leads to support. The increase in support usually leads to fewer objections and complaints about municipal plans or resolutions.

### **Costs in the creation of this decision-making**

Citizen participation may lead to savings on hiring specific (external) expertise and skills. Inhabitants of a municipality with special expertise can contribute their knowledge. This motivates inhabitants to participate and may even, because of a better view of their own living environment, for example, lead to better results.

### **Interaction (increasing knowledge)**

The benefit of citizen participation is that it results in citizens becoming more skilled through active participation in the decision-making process. On the other hand, the municipality (administration and civil servants) gain more insight into what is going on in the towns and where specific expertise is available.

### **Improve the internal organization**

By working from the outside in, the organization is aware of the environment, which affects the quality of products and services.

### **Increase in tasks for local government and the commitment to establish a different relationship between government and citizens**

Municipalities are being given more and more tasks by the State. At the same time, the government expects municipalities to carry them out with fewer resources. In other words, more for less money. Many municipalities spend time thinking about other ways of working to carry out the assigned tasks. At the same time, there is social awareness that the relationship between the government and the citizen needs to be renewed, which is expressed in the tipping concept. Significant efforts are put into a new 'administration philosophy'. The municipality shifts from "caring for" to "caring that". The basis is the strengthening of individual responsibility of citizens. Following that, certain (implementation) tasks that historically were automatically carried out by the municipalities for the citizens are examined to see if the citizens can now deal with them themselves. As mentioned above, this is expressed in the efforts to reach a new 'administration philosophy'.

These different effects described by several authors can be subdivided into the following four blocks of desired effects:

- Content Enrichment
- Improve support, cooperation, understanding of each other.
- Quality of process (reduce time and cost savings)
- Improving the organization.

In this study, all of the above effects are included because they are all of importance to the outcome of the participatory process.



Now that we know what we mean by citizen participation and why we want to apply it, i.e. the intended effects, it is important to know what conditions an effective participation process must meet. This will give an answer to **sub research question 2: Looking at theory, what are the characteristics within projects of participatory democracy that influence decision making within representative democracy in Dutch local government?**

Less attention is given to this in the literature; only the various forms of citizen participation are usually examined.

However something can be found about characteristics that must be present in an effective process of civic participation. Here are some clear and elaborate examples:

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### 5.5.1. PLAN OF APPROACH TO INTERACTIVE POLICY

In 2001, the contours of a plan of approach to interactive policy were described by Pröpper and Steenbeek.

The idea behind designing a particular approach to interactive policy is that in advance of the process, the degree of participation and the process itself becomes well thought out, which will increase the chance of success. This plan of approach includes both the necessary internal and external orientation.

The first part forms the **political administrative approach (politieke en bestuurlijke inkadering)**. This is the strategic consideration of the place of the interactive process in the political and administrative process and the establishment of politicians and directors in relation to this process. This includes: governance (participation ladder), goals and preconditions, connection with the governance policy process and the procedures in place, political-management involvement and commitment and interim information, accountability and / or control.

**Organization and management of the interactive approach (organisatie en management van de interactieve aanpak)** is also an important part of organizational embedding of the organizational process: Who is charged with the organization and management, what is the possible division of tasks and what structure is chosen.

**Structure of the substantive policy development (structurering van de inhoudelijke beleidsontwikkeling)** says something about the way in which internal parties involved in the policy are involved. In order to structure the substantive policy process, a problem solving scheme is generally used. This can be applied in all stages of policy development: policy preparation, determination, implementation, evaluation.

In addition to the substantive thinking process, interactive policy is a social, external process. Together with citizens, the government tries to come up with policies. The interaction with these parties can be pre-prepared and organized. This **structuring of the interaction (structurering van de interactie)** consists of three parts: designing a communication strategy, planning operational communication and formulating rules for interaction between board and participants.

The **substantive policy development** does not stand apart from the **structuring of the interaction**. These two components consistently share information and cooperate in order to get the result.

The result of this process is the **political administrative translation (politiek bestuurlijke vertaling van de resultaten)**, which means an actual translation of the results into the policy and the concrete actions of the board.

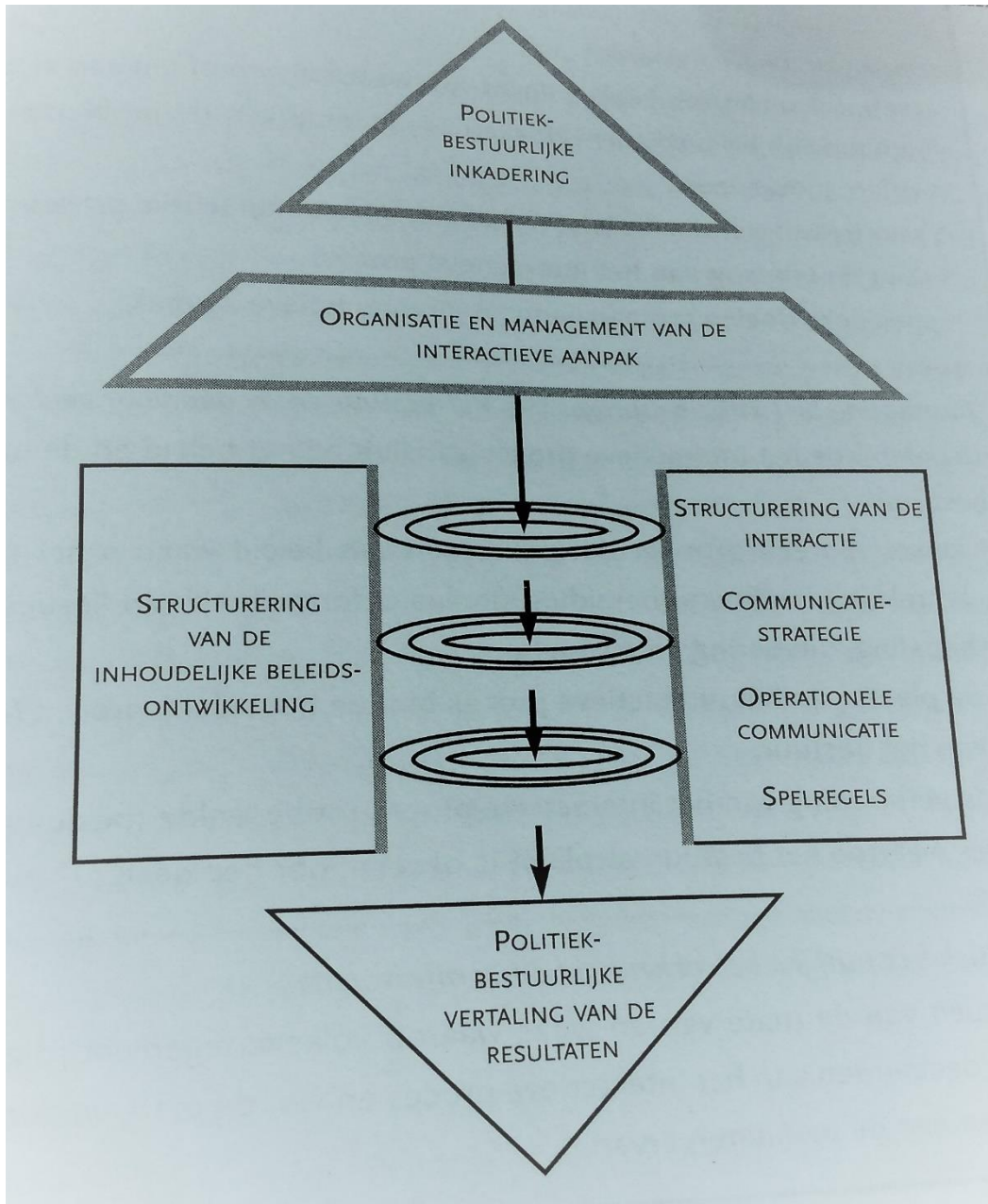


Figure 5 : Contours of a plan of approach to interactive policy ( (Pröpper & Steenbeek, De aanpak van interactief beleid: elke situatie anders, 2001)

With regard to the question of what a good process design would be, Pröpper and Steenbeek suggest that it should realize a match with the policy situation, governance of the governing body and the objective of the interactive process. They indicate that there is no blueprint but at most a number of fist rules can be applied. In the end, their main recommendation is that parties should have deliberately thought about the purpose of the interactive process and its organization process design.

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#### 5.5.2. STANDARDS FRAMEWORK PARTICIPATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Pröpper , Litjens , & Weststeijn (2006), describe a sort of required standards framework, the 'Standards Framework Participative Infrastructure'. With it, they introduce a number of standards for the organization for the interplay between municipal council and citizens, institutions and businesses. These standards form a basic condition for adequate participation. The standards framework consists of five components:

- adequate infrastructure at system or concern level (e.g.: use of a municipality-wide method relating to participation; presence of a contact management system);
- applicable architecture of separate processes (e.g.: clear expectation management; political-administrative anchoring of the participation process);
- the right personal attitude and skills (e.g.: an open attitude; presence of process and communications skills);
- sufficient degree of participation from the community (e.g.: number of citizens willing and able to participate);
- sufficient past results, as social capital for the future. Results are: - the level of responsive administration (involves next to 'good listening' also taking all interests into account and public accountability about the decision taken); - participants' satisfaction; - the achievement of process objectives (e.g. content enrichment, creation of support, individual commitment and responsibility of participants). (Pröpper , Litjens , & Weststeijn , 2006)

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### 5.5.3. NATIONALE OMBUDSMAN: 10 RULES

The Nationale ombudsman conducted an inquiry into citizen participation in 2009 (Nationale Ombudsman, 2009). This research shows that proper citizen participation has three core elements. Firstly, it is necessary for the municipality to make clear choices about the completion of the participation process. Second, management and civil servants should be really interested in the contribution of citizens and be convinced of the added value of citizen participation. Thirdly, the municipality must ensure that citizens are fully informed and remain informed during the participation process. These three core elements have been elaborated by the Nationale Ombudsman into ten rules that provide both the municipality and the citizen with handles for proper civic participation.

#### **Clear choices in advance**

- The municipality motivates whether and how to involve citizens in policy and decision making. Criteria are: does this influence the environment and is there room for participation. The municipality will communicate about this motivation as requested.
- The municipality makes participation a firm part of the political and administrative decision-making process.
- The municipality is very reluctant to limit participation because of the general interest. If the municipality chooses to limit its participation, then it must motivate this choice.
- The municipality decides, before the start of the participation process, what role the citizen receives: - codecision; - coproducing; - advise; - consult - inform
- The municipality ensures a carefully designed participation process. This means that the municipality makes explicit: - what topic is being discussed; - who engages in policy / decision making, so who are the stakeholders; - how they organize the participation process, if possible in consultation with stakeholders; - how they can best reach the citizen, for example by letter, by media or home visits. The way in which they choose depends partly on the role of the citizen in the participation process

#### **Constructive attitude**

- The municipality is sincerely interested in what citizens bring forward and let that mark in word and deed. Citizens can expect a constructive contribution.
- The municipality weighs the contribution of citizens into the final decision and makes it visible.
- The municipality is making an extra effort to actively involve all stakeholders, including those who do not immediately register themselves.

#### **Information**

- The municipality informs the citizen in a timely and complete manner about the subject of participation, their role and the way in which the participation process takes shape.
- The municipality regularly informs citizens about what happens with their contribution during the participation process. The contribution of citizens is recorded in writing. The municipality also informs citizens about long periods of delay, delay or modification of plans or plans of the municipality. The municipality motivates its decision, paying attention to the arguments put forward by citizens

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#### 5.5.4. MORE CONCRETE CONDITIONS

More concrete conditions for success are listed on the Frankwatching website (Frankwatching, 2013), where the digital instruments and communication/publicity conditions are also mentioned:

1. **Involve citizens as early as possible in the process.** If people have the idea that the decision has already been made, you only create opposition. If citizens truly see that participation has an influence, you will find that they really want to contribute.
2. **Formulate a clear goal and outline solid boundaries.** If the message (what does the citizen require?) is not clear, they will not take action. There are always boundaries (e.g.: financial impossibilities or legal limitations). Do not ignore them, but mention them from the outset.
3. **Do not make the process too long** (max. 6 to 8 weeks, or periods of max. 6 to 8 weeks). The combination of physical meetings and digital dialogue/cooperation works excellently. But do not make the period in which you require the cooperation of citizens too long. Attention wanes fast and you have to re-activate them again and again.
4. **Make a mix between online and offline.** In practice, it turns out a large part of the target group will interact on a digital platform, but is less likely to respond to invitations to appear physically at a meeting. Accept that. Some people, do in fact want to meet each other or to connect with each other. In many cases, 1 or two physical meetings in combination with the use of an online cooperation platform works really well.
5. **Take advantage of the social acceptance of social media** (do not use complicated software). People are becoming more and more accustomed to social media. Choose a platform that is extremely simple to use and make it as easy as possible for participants.
6. **Give wide publicity to the existence of the project and the digital platform.** Where are the target groups and how do you reach them? A question that generates a different answer each time. In the above project, leaflets that were handed out by the conveyors and children ultimately worked best. The children took them home and gave them to their parents.
7. **Administrators and politicians ‘must’ also take part.** It always costs some effort, but key figures, such as administrators and politicians (both the civil servants and aldermen and councillors), have a major impact on the degree of (perceived) reliability and the importance of the project. It strongly increases the rate of participation.
8. **Be transparent about the discussion, the outcome and the results.** It is a good balance between achievability and limitations. Say that everyone goes for the maximum, but be honest about the possibilities and impossibilities.
9. **Accept that it does not go without saying and learn from the first projects.** Make sure there is professional guidance, take part and gain experience. This will ensure it can be incorporated in the current working environment more quickly. This is after all a whole new way of creating policy for municipalities (and other government bodies).

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#### 5.5.5. OVERALL

In summary, it can be concluded that citizen participation must be rooted in the processes of a municipal organization, but in addition, the attitude and governance used during the process is at least as important. In recent years, extra attention has been paid to the way of communicating. The advise is to use more modern tools of communication, for example social media.

In this study the factors, described by Pröpper and Steenbeek (Chapter 5.5.1.) in their contours of a plan of approach of interactive policy, are further used and developed. The reason for this particular choice is that this plan of approach is complete. Completely in the sense of attention to all the actors of participatory policy making (officials, councilors, residents/participants) ), all phases of the policy process are mentioned and elaborated and there is both focus on the internal organization and external processes with society. It is more than a list of relevant factors, the added value of this plan is the structural development and the possibility of this as such to be used in participatory processes as a kind of guideline.

The plan of approach outlines the features that should contain effective, successful participatory policies. If this process is fully completed, there is a well-thought-out policy that can reduce the risks of negative results.

## 5.6. AND IF IT DOESN'T WORK?

Irritations of citizens with citizen participation were collected in the National Ombudsman report (2009), which is a summary of the irritations of citizens with citizen participation processes. These are:

- The politicians have already decided
- Involved too late
- Although the municipal citizen participation is organized, input is ignored
- The municipality does not want to talk to its citizens
- The municipality provides no information
- Due to a lack of information, citizens' expectations are unrealistic
- The municipality does not act carefully
- The municipality delivers unclear or incomplete information

The above comments come from the participating citizens. But the internal organization of a municipality is also experiencing the negative consequences of a project's failure of civic participation. Chances are that the council, the college and / or officers become frustrated and do not see salvation in picking up new participatory projects. Or indicate such a turn that the process will be changed so that the influence of the citizens on paper still exists, but in reality it will be decided politically or officially.

## 6. EVALUATION RESEARCHES

In order to answer, **research question 3: Which characteristics do we see in the studied evaluations of participatory democracy?**, 10 evaluations on citizen participation by local Courts of Auditors were analyzed and then the results were compared conform the analytical framework based on the contours of a plan of approach to interactive policy as described by Pröpper and Steenbeek (Pröpper & Steenbeek, *De aanpak van interactief beleid: elke situatie anders*, 2001), for more information look chapter 5.5.1.

This concerns a so-called meta analysis. Evaluations by the institute 'Court of Auditors' or 'Municipal Audit Committee' were chosen, the reason being that these organizations have the same approach: each municipality in the Netherlands has (legally required by the Municipal Law) has a Court of Auditors or a Municipal Audit Committee, and in some situations a Court of Auditors is installed to do research for several municipalities, This has become evident in this analysis: the municipalities Opmeer and Medemblik have the same Court of Auditors just like the municipalities Vlaardingen and Schiedam, in which the research is carried out by the same Court of Auditors.

Each Court of Auditors has an important role in the support of the council. Of the three branches of the council - Representative, Framework and Controls - the Court of Auditors serves as support in the last two.

The Court of Auditors analyzes the effectiveness (has the objective been reached?), the efficiency (by way of appropriate cost and efforts) and the legality (does it satisfy advanced policy of the law and regulations?) of the government of the municipality. This doesn't only have to do with the performance of the board of Mayor and Aldermen, but also the performance of the municipality as a whole. The Court of Auditors is independent. The members are independent in their choice of subject, reports and opinions. The independence of the Court of Auditors is further guaranteed by its authority to obtain all the information it needs for its research from municipal services, institutions and bodies. Wherever possible, recommendations will be given to improve the quality of the establishment and check the implementation of policy.

Members of the Court of Auditors may be external as well as internal (Council members). The Court of Auditors which participate in this research, almost all have a Court of Auditor manned by external members (with the exception of Bedum and Heemstede in which council members have seats).

The research consists of a theoretical part, presenting a research question, research, conclusions and recommendations. With the exception of the research in Houten, research has been done on different participation programmes which have been carried out within the municipality. In Houten the information to answer the central research question has been obtained in a different way, namely from three workshops in which 42 people participated (27 council and commission members, 9 residents and 6 civil servants).



The distribution across the Netherlands is good, except in the eastern part of the country which did not receive sufficient attention. The size of the municipalities ranges from small (Bedum) to middle-size (Schiedam).<sup>2</sup> The reports have all been established in the past five years and can, therefore, be called recent.

**Comparability:**

To see if the selected evaluations are mutually comparable (homogeneous), the central question must be inspected. In many cases it is clearly defined, and in other cases it is the sum of a number of subquestions. It is evident that all of the municipalities would like to know in what way to give substance to civic participation, what the effects are and what is necessary to make the participation (more) successful (the evaluations will all be completed with recommendations for improving the process). Mutual comparison seems to be very well possible.

Below is the central research question listed by municipality.

Municipality	Central questionn
Bedum	To what extent do their participation possibilities and use thereof by citizens lead to <b>effective policy implementation</b> , to what extent are the conditions present to achieve <b>effective participation</b> , and which recommendations can we give to <b>improve</b> these conditions?
Den Helder	This research aims at getting a better up-to-date picture of the <b>effects</b> of the participation policy in the municipality of Den Helder.
Haren	Which conclusions can the municipality of Haren draw from the <b>manner in which</b> civic participation has been shaped in the past 3 years?
Heemstede	What is the <b>effectiveness</b> of the various forms of civic participation in Heemstede, and how was thi s experience seen?
Houten	<b>In what way</b> does the municipality of Houten fulfil the ambitions in terms of citizen/government participation, what are the <b>experiences</b> of those involved with this policy, <b>which conclusions can</b> be drawn from these experiences, and what does this mean for the role of the council?

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<sup>2</sup>Size of the municipalities (> 100.000 inhabitants), middle-sized municipalities (50-100.000 inhabitants), medium-small sized municipalities (20-50.000 inhabitants) and small municipalities (<20.000 inhabitants) (Source: Raadslid.nu)

Medemblik	To what extent are the most important conditions met, and how are the roles between council and board divided to make civic participation in policies and initiatives from society in the municipalities of Medemblik and Opmeer <b>successful</b> ?
Opmeer	To what extent have the most important prerequisites been fulfilled, and what is the division of roles between council and board to make civic participation in policy and initiatives from society in the municipalities of Medemblik and Opmeer <b>a success</b> ?
Schiedam	Has the municipality of Schiedam shaped the policy and conduct of involvement and citizen participation in such a way that it is considered <b>sufficient</b> by the residents?
Vlaardingen	Has the municipality of Vlaardingen shaped the policy and conduct of involvement and citizen participation in such a way that it is considered <b>sufficient</b> by the inhabitants?
Woensdrecht	To what extent has the municipality of Woensdrecht created the prerequisites necessary to enable the town platforms to exercise influence on behalf of the residents for municipal policy and management activities.

**In general:**

The widely-shared opinion of the various studies is that citizen participation is an indispensable development in our society. The fact that decision-making for solving social issues is no longer the exclusive domain of government, is widely accepted and supported, and municipalities want to continue working on this. It is clear that this relatively new way of working is still a quest, which until now has been done by trial and error.

The success of participation programmes depends not only on firm agreements by means of, for example, notifications of intent, checklists, decision trees, etc. But the 'soft' component is just as important. By this, we mean that the style of governance and culture within a municipality must also change, i.e. the behaviour of civil servants, directors and council. This is described as thinking from 'outside to inside', so environment-oriented and solution-oriented.

Policy is no longer written at a desk but in consultation with, and sometimes even by, the residents. Municipalities are all involved in their own way, in which each municipality is in its own developmental stage.

In a number of studies, the difference between citizen involvement (in government) and government participation (facilitation of citizens' initiatives, democracy) is mentioned.

According to researchers, this distinction requires another specific approach. Other studies do not mention this difference but mention, for example the 'participation ladder' where this government interference is made clear. For everyone, therefore, it is clear that citizen participation has many forms, and it is recognized that customization is required.

The various evaluations contain so much information that needs to be chosen for an analysis framework, a point of view that allows the different evaluations to be systematically compared. This analysis framework will be the format that Pröpper and Steenbeek (Chapter 5.5.1.) use in the contours of a plan of approach of interactive policy. The reason for this is that it outlines the features that should contain effective, successful participatory policies. If this process is fully completed, there is a well-thought-out policy that can reduce the risks of negative results.

Successively we will look at the various evaluation studies on the extent of the presence of the following process steps and Pröpper Steenbeek:

1. Political administrative approach
2. Organization and management of the interactive approach
3. Structure of the substantive policy development
4. Structure of the interaction
5. Political administrative translation of the results

## **1 Political administrative approach**

The first part of a plan of action consists of strategic consideration of the place of the interactive process in the political and administrative process and the establishment of political and directors in relation to this process. This strategic consideration should first of all be defined in policy (notes) so that everybody (internal and external) is clear why and how the municipality chooses for civic participation. The reports of the different Courts of Auditors show the following:

The topic of citizen participation is a popular subject in coalition agreements and programmes. However, a strategic description of precise frameworks, assumptions and responsibilities in areas involving civic participation is not always (fully) present or known to anyone (officials, councilors, residents). However, there are certainly municipalities (for example, Schiedam) that have given specific and comprehensive input through, for example, participation frameworks, participation protocol, and tool kit participation. It ensures internal clarity, in particular. In addition, there are municipalities that have written a more general report, for example, where only the principles and added-value of citizen participation have been expressed, but no strict rules or guidelines for the way citizen participation should be put to use. Argumentation to deal with it in this way is based on the fact that there is no added-value in defining formal rules because it could work counterproductively. Setting (too many) rules could evoke more resistance than it would create support (for example, Den Helder). All-in all there is a colourful mix of notes, tool kits, checklists, participation tools, etc.

The overall reaction of the Courts of Auditors therefore is to formalize policy more specifically concerning citizen participation so there is clarification about the frameworks, rules, extent of influence, roles, instruments, responsibilities and communication lines in participation processes. This clarity is important for all involved in the process: civil servants, board, council and involved residents/initiators.

A clear recommendation in all reports is as follows: create clarity for all parties (civil servants, board and participants) in the process of participation. Ensure clear phrasing, division of roles and delimitation of responsibilities.

In a number of municipalities, this means (again) determining whether an update of an existing participation statement or regulation of citizens' initiative, for example. It is therefore obvious that they are widely discussed and supported by council, board and organization.

In 9 studies, it is recommended to, in addition to a general view, simultaneously give a more concrete elaboration by setting a note of principles and instruments for participation, for example, which must then be approved by council. These frameworks should then be widely communicated with all parties involved in the participation process i.e. internal and external (i.e. residents). Communication with residents is important because a fixed and clearly-communicated framework that eliminates the appearance that can be applied at your own discretion or it is chosen to sideline residents when it is suitable.

For councilors, awareness is needed about what is important: the content (political) or the process of initiative. The protection and the surveillance of the general interest - the outcome of careful and democratic consideration of all interests and of all of the advantages and disadvantages - and the consideration underlying it, lies eminently with the council.

The municipality can and must take different positions and roles in the participatory programmes, both in the process (facilitator, director) and in terms of the results (to what extent are the specific interests of the municipality itself served in that process). This calls for officials to act situationally. For this they need a margin of manoeuvre and the council will have to give them this.

Attention and appreciation:

In 4 studies it is argued that good citizen participation is not only due to clear notes and beautiful tool kits, but it is important to have a widespread sense of feeling of the importance of citizen participation. It cannot be and may not be only an exercise on paper. This must be clearly visible from the municipality. Therefore, it is advisable to be present at significant moments to show interest in an initiative and, where possible, to appreciate the energy that (frequently) volunteers put into participation.

Perhaps an unnecessary remark, but during the process of citizen participation, genuine interest and conviction of the added-value of citizens' involvement must be present with civil servants as directors. What is important is that the input is appreciated and that this is also expressed (explicitly named in 3 studies).

## **2 Organization and management of the interactive approach**

Good thinking of interactive policy is ideally located from an organization that is geared towards interactive policy. Both the (political) leadership and the employees of the civil society must reflect on the consequences of interactive governance for their organization.

The conclusion of the Courts of Auditors in 8 studies is that a so-called 'tilting of the organization' is necessary for a good implementation of citizen participation. This must work differently: more from outside to inside. This requires civil servants to differentiate their role and other responsibilities.

This new way of working requires professionalization of the civil service by means of peer-coaching, continuing education/training and refresher courses so that the risks of personal preferences of civil servants can be limited and the efficiency will be increased. This professionalization can also prevent the success of participation tracks from a (number of) civil servants who 'accidentally become involved'. But for the members of the board and the council, this requires a new way of looking at the different stages of policy-making and involving the residents. Also, within these bodies, attention must be paid to this transformation.

Their recommendation is to mainly work towards a common, professional procedure. It involves the following, in particular: working from outside to inside (civil servants, board and council), the interplay between council, board and governmental organization should facilitate and motivate cooperation with parties in society. It is important to secure this method by creating a learning organization: for example, organizing pilots, peer coaching or continuing education, where reflection on the manner of communication/participation in the various phases (before, during and afterwards) takes place.

The council should actively take part. The council has also been given the example of mutually reflecting on the functioning of citizens' initiatives in the local community at least once a year. This can also be done by conversing with the community. It is also recommended to learn from other municipalities and /or consult with other municipalities.

### **3 Structure of the substantive policy development**

In order to structure the policy process, it can be divided into several phases (policy preparation, policy definition, policy implementation and policy evaluation) within which a specific pattern is dissolved to questions. Regarding policy preparation, determination and implementation, this research has already revealed that various products are very diverse in the political management approach. From general strategic assumptions about civic participation to more elaborate schemes that can be used directly in implementing participatory policies.

Talking about policy implementation the Courts of Auditors concludes in 4 studies that although there is a wide range of instruments that can be used for citizen participation, research shows that one often reverts to familiar, more conservative forms. In addition, little use is made of modern techniques.

It is advised to use other, more modern instruments of citizen participation. Per project / process, the goals of the participation could be determined. What the target group looks like and what (modern or classical) (communication) resources should be used can be derived from these goals.

An other conclusion in all studies about the phase of policy evaluation is, is that many studies indicate the lack of or too little attention for a thorough assessment of citizen participation and formulating lessons to further develop participation practice. Individual participation programmes are not systematically evaluated afterwards. Lessons, best-practices and pitfalls are not kept and turned into new ways of working.

In the studies, particular attention was paid to the experience of the participants during the process itself. Sometimes there is a broader view of the support or citizen satisfaction in general during the process itself where the actual effect is difficult to determine and, in particular, statements of involved parties (internally and externally). Other goals that citizen participation may have such as: better / faster decision-making, substantive enrichment, etc., hardly ever explicitly mentioned and certainly not researched. This seems logical because, at the start of most of the programmes, no clear goals have been formulated and operationalised. Targeted evaluation is therefore difficult.

A clear, broad-based recommendation is thus to provide a structures and systematic procedure for evaluating participation processes. Experience is not structurally collected everywhere and is not sufficiently learned from previous experiences.

Information from these evaluation moments could be collected at a central point, for example. In order to be able to evaluate well, (also in the meantime) it is necessary to determine by process / project what the goals of the participation are. A number of Courts of Auditors recommend drawing up a starting-document so the principles of the goals and the principles of the process are clearly formulated. The interests, stakeholders, playing field, rules, roles, information moments to the council, and the elements council wishes to see in the proposal should also be mentioned here. The idea to monitor the process with progress reports is also encouraged.

#### **4 Structure of the interaction**

In addition to a substantive thinking process, citizen participation is a social process also. Together with citizens, the government tries to come up with policies. The interaction with these can be pre-prepared and organized participants. This structure consists of three parts: designing a communication strategy, planning operational communication and drawing up rules for interaction between board and participants.

The Courts of Auditors recognises the need for good communication, in 5 studies attention is being paid to this topic. They are also convinced of the fact that it is important that participants are fully informed throughout the entire participation process. Clear and regular communication is essential, it is about setting the rules of the game. For the purpose of managing expectations, it is necessary to indicate to the participants at the start of a participation programme the weight their input will have on decision-making. This weight of their input has been established in the political administrative approach (strategic decision) or the process of substantive policy development (operational decision). During a programme, it must be made clear to all of those involved and in a timely and sufficient manner, if there is, for example, a change in (the extent of) influence possibilities in the participation process. At the back much can be gained from the feedback. Participant input should be as visible as possible during the feedback. There is also a need for text and explanation for suggestions which aren't adopted.

The evaluations show that drafting and the pre-thinking about rules for interaction are not commonplace. In 9 studies it is shown that the local government is starting with participation without thorough and deliberate goals, preconditions, role distribution, rules and working methods. Or with an incomplete set of these factors. In a correct process these factors are determined in the political administrative approach and/or the substantive policy development. Because it tells something about the content of the policy. Reason why it is mentioned here (interaction), is the importance of good communication about these rules, if not this leads to misunderstandings along the way. These may be the reason why some programmes are a disappointment in the participants' eyes. The municipality must set clear frameworks, not create false hope, and be consistent from previous decision-making. Circumstances can change but this again creates careful and transparent consideration and communication. And that ultimately determines the reliability of the government.

At the (desired) start of the participation, it is indicated that the advantages of participative processes must be weighed against the disadvantages. Participation is in itself a means and not an end. This consideration is made in the political administrative approach and/or the substantive policy development. For policy purposes, the consideration must be clear and public, described in an initiation document, for example. In this way, the municipality is given a view of the consideration and of the implementation and feedback of the residents. In addition, it is of utmost importance to be clear about which meaning the input of the participants has and the (degree of) influence they have on the final decision-making process (which level of the participation ladder). And that there is clarity and consistency in the process that is being used is also of utmost importance. These things must be done at the beginning. It shows the need for transparent and good interaction.

This research has been based on various participation programmes of different sizes and with various degrees of government and citizen intervention. It has been found that participants have varying thoughts about the space they receive and the extent to which they feel supported by the municipality. In some cases, the participants' input is not done justice, there is insufficient insight into all relevant interests, or there is question of a decline in mutual trust and understanding. What

is also evident is that the participants involved are particularly satisfied in the first steps of the participation programme. With completion and follow-up of programmes, participants' satisfaction diminished somewhat. Although they are aware that their role is often not more than advising, they do not always understand the choices the municipality makes in decision-making. In addition, clear feedback is not always given on the degree in which ideas and insights in programmes are accepted. Another example is the,very formal attitude of the municipal organization in the recording the legal agreements in light of the initiatives, as experienced by the participants. (Vlaardingen).

In this process of communication and clear rules the council will be given an evident role, this comes back in 5 studies, it must make the playing field clear ahead of time. For them, it is especially important to ensure that all interests are visible at the front and remain so in the future. Where choices and decisions must be made, the council must make a transparent and insightful consideration for all parties involved. An important recommendation is that a distinction is made between the common interest of council for a good process and a differentiated position when it comes to political consideration.

The own political consideration works best if there is an underlying careful process. If interested parties advise the council that they do not feel adequately heard, a process-approach is appropriate: first determine if they and their interests are adequately included in the process and then possibly make a substantive consideration. The council should only deal with the front and back of the course on the plan and implementation, respectively. Of course, they need to be timely and sufficiently-informed to carry out these tasks properly.

The council should play an important role here, namely feedback to citizens and policy organization. The focus of the council is to see that the outcomes of civilian participation have either gained a place in the policy, either being linked to the citizens. She can also enter the neighborhood to hear from citizens how they experience the process and the results. In this way councilors can also hear the sound of people who do not come to the town hall.

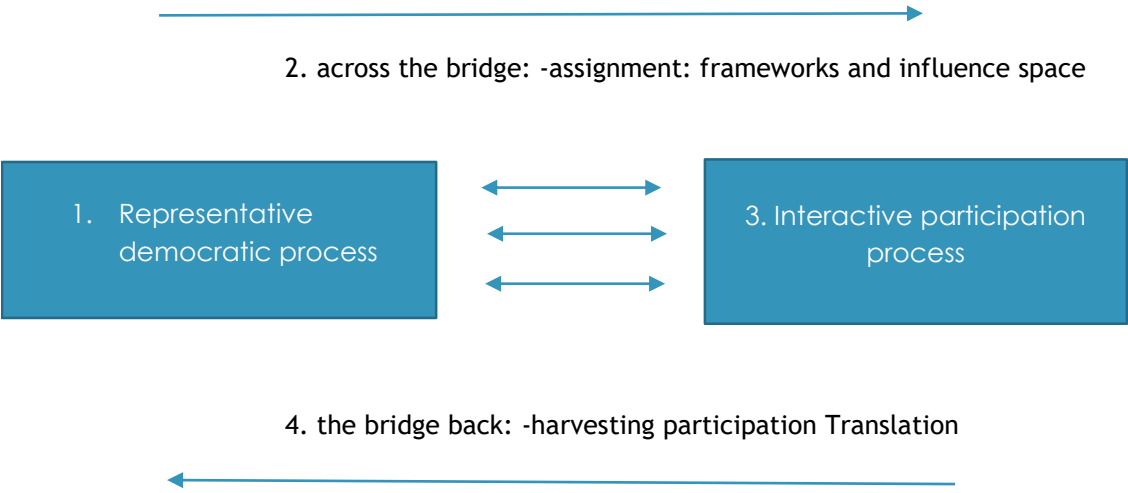


Figure 6: The interaction between representative and participatory democracy (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2010)



### ***The link between substantive policy development, political administrative approach and interaction:***

Pröpper and Steenbeek indicate that **the substantive policy development and interaction** in an interactive process must be coordinated and linked to political administrative approaches to the process. The question is what type of interaction is needed on the subject matter or, conversely, what form of interaction makes the substantive policy development possible. Looking at the cases above, **the political administrative approach** (strategic decision) can also be linked at the structure of interaction. Decisions at this strategic level must also be communicated, which will improve the interaction between all participants of the process.

## **5 Political administrative translation of results**

The external interaction gets a real translation into the policy and the concrete actions of the board. This factual translation is no longer covered by the plan of action, but it applies to announcements indicating how the results of the interactive process are dealt with.

### **Conclusion:**

Looking at **the third research question: which characteristics do we see in the studied evaluations of participatory democracy?** we can tell that there are differences in many ways. The Courts of Auditors focus in particular on what is missing or what to improve. It is clear that there are many different shapes with regard the step **Political administrative approach**. There is a large variety of frameworks, rules, extent of influence, roles, instruments, responsibilities and communication lines in participation processes. These forms of policy should be formalized more so there is clarification about it. This clarity is important for all involved in the process: civil servants, board, council and involved residents/initiators. If there is uncertainty in the process, this can lead to frustration. Participants take part in the process but if during the process it turns out that it does not meet expectations, this can lead to frustration and can discourage people.

Looking at the step **Organization and management of the interactive approach** the conclusion of the Courts of Auditors is that a so-called 'tilting of the organization' is necessary for a good implementation of citizen participation. This must work differently: more from outside to inside. Both the (political) leadership and the employees of the civil society must reflect on the consequences of interactive governance for their organization. This requires civil servants to differentiate their role and other responsibilities. This new way of working requires professionalization and working towards a common, professional procedure for all internal parties.

The importance of being able to look from the outside to the inside is great, an intrinsic added value must be felt with regard to citizen participation and this should be made possible. If this is absent, there is a danger that participants will not feel taken seriously and will stop the process before or never take part again. If the internal procedures are not correct, this can lead to delay or loss of quality in this process. The idea may also be that such processes are arbitrary, a hobby of a single official. This can lead to frustration with both the internal organization and the external participants.

What can we tell about the step **Structure of the substantive policy development**? All studies indicate explicitly the lack of or too little attention for a thorough assessment of citizen participation and formulating lessons to further develop participation practice. Individual participation programmes are not systematically evaluated afterwards. The importance of evaluation is that processes can be formulated more sharply and that the process as a whole can be improved after each evaluation. The results of citizen participation can thus improve. What is essential here then, is to be recorded in the previously defined policy, objectives with regard to the expected results of participation, so they can be tested later. These are now missing, making it unclear what the actual results of the policy are. Often words are called "enthusiasm" and "appreciation" of the participants, but what they create and what this is worth is unclear.

Talking about policy implementation the Courts of Auditors concludes that although there is a wide range of instruments that can be used for citizen participation, research shows that one often reverts to familiar, more conservative forms. It's important to get along with your time, thus increasing your reach: this can work positively on the number of participants and on a better image.

**Structure of the interaction:** the Courts of Auditors recognises the need for good communication. They are also convinced of the fact that it is important that participants are fully informed throughout the entire participation process. Clear and regular communication is essential. The evaluations show that drafting and the pre-thinking about rules for interaction are not commonplace. In a number of cases, the local government is starting with participation without thorough and deliberate goals, preconditions, role distribution, rules and working methods. This leads to misunderstandings and frustration along the way.

At least the **Political administrative translation of the results**. The council should play an important role here, namely feedback to citizens and policy organization if not there may be uncertainty about, for example, not including proposals given by the participants in the policy. As a result, people lose confidence in politics and there is a chance that they will keep themselves from participating processes in the future. This increases the gap between citizens and politics. Practice has shown that a good explanation often works well, participants accept this also if the outcome is different from what they expected.

The above summary of especially missing features and their effect can not really answer the research question 4 : *How do the characteristics of the studied evaluations influence the decision making within representative democracy in the projects?* What I would like to know is what works, so what makes a positive contribution to effective civic participation policy. As indicated, this is a loss that almost all evaluations emerged: no clear goals regarding the desired effects and so no possibility for proper evaluation

Moreover, no municipality is now evaluating, so there is also an absolute necessity to know more about the effects of the policy. The reports mention "appreciation" and "enthusiasm", but what is this precisely and why it originated is unclear.

This means for my main research question:

**Which characteristics do projects of participatory democracy need to influence the decision making within representative democracy in Dutch local government?**

that no clear insight can be obtained in this research on the necessary characteristic that influence representative decision making. What is well known is the desired effects of participatory democracy and a plan of approach that will enable successful completion of participatory projects. With success, I mean in this research: the desired effects are achieved. It is a general approach and tells which step (s) of the plan of approach should be given special attention in order to achieve these effects. So in order to make successful policy. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

## 7. CHARACTERISTICS AND INFLUENCE ON DECISION MAKING

Now all information is collected, theoretical and empirical, **the research question 5 which characteristics can, combining the answers from sub questions 2,3 and 4, be used in projects of participatory democracy in general to influence the process of decision making within representative democracy in Dutch local government?** can be answered.

As already stated, there is little to no research on the impact characteristics have on the goals of participatory policy. What is widely seen are process oriented plans that contribute to overall success of the civic participation process/interactive policy. Now it can not be made clear what the causal link between the particular (process) characteristics and the achievement of the goals is, for example, does more civic participation, provide more support for the policy? However a second best analysis can be made. This is done by initially determining what the desired effects are through the use of participatory democracy on representative democracy. These effects are thus pursued, but it is unclear which makes it exactly possible. However, due to the clear plan of approaching interactive policy (Pröpper & Steenbeek, De aanpak van interactief beleid: elke situatie anders, 2001) that is available, it can be indicated where emphasis should be placed on the design of a participative process, if a particular effect is desired. It remains a process approach, but in combination with the desired effects it will help to reach the desired results.

Chapter 5.4 describes the following intended effects:

- **Quality**

By working together as a team on planning and formation of policy (and the implementation) the municipality and inhabitants can achieve a higher quality.

- **Alliance**

During a citizen participation process, participants become familiar with how politics and the municipal organization work. This results in:

- More support for the implementation;
- More efficiency in the decision-making;
- Less costs in the realization of this decision-making;
- Faster procedures.

- **Increase trust between citizens and municipality**

The process itself and the role of the municipality as partner (i.e. initiator) in that process are important. Citizen participation can be deployed as an instrument with which to reinforce and improve the citizens' trust in politics and administration.

- **Support**

If inhabitants of the municipality are involved in planning, have followed the process closely, and know that their opinions and those of co-inhabitants have been considered, they are more likely to support the end result than if there was no involvement.

- **Increase in tasks for local government and the commitment to establish a different relationship between government and citizens.**

Municipalities are being given more and more tasks by the State. At the same time, the government expects municipalities to carry them out with fewer resources. The municipality shifts from “caring for” to “caring that”. The basis is the strengthening of individual responsibility of citizens. Following that, certain (implementation) tasks that historically were automatically carried out by the municipalities for the citizens are examined to see if the citizens can now deal with them themselves.

- **Costs in the creation of this decision-making**

Citizen participation may lead to savings on hiring specific (external) expertise and skills. Inhabitants of a municipality with special expertise can contribute their knowledge. This motivates inhabitants to participate and may even, because of a better view of their own living environment, for example, lead to better results.

- **Interaction (increasing knowledge)**

The benefit of citizen participation is that it results in citizens becoming more skilled through active participation in the decision-making process. On the other hand, the municipality (administration and civil servants) gain more insight into what is going on in the towns and where specific expertise is available.

- **Improve the internal organization.**

By working from the outside in, the organization is aware of the environment, which affects the quality of products and services

These different effects can be subdivided into the following four blocks of desired effects:

- Content Enrichment
- Improve support, cooperation, understanding of each other.
- Quality of process (reduce time and cost savings)
- Improving the organization.

**Which step (s) of the contours of a plan of approach of interactive policy should be given special attention in order to achieve these effects?**

The government can learn from the contributions of participants, so that the contents of the policy will be **improved or enriched**. The substantive enrichment is greater as the throughput in the policy process is greater. It is important that the process is well-supervised and a good choice is made in the participants. Good ideas must be collected and redeemed in policy, there must be no compromise because of representativeness leading to average and less surprising creative solutions. Important steps: structuring the substantive policy development (especially the policy and policy implementation) and structuring the interaction (selection and role of the participants).

Interactive policies can lead to **more support and understanding** for the policy (and policymakers) and can lead to better viability. When people review their opinion, they will support it earlier. This is especially evident when participants see that their input has also had real results. Understanding for each other also provides support. The feasibility can be increased if interactive policies provide a better thought-out policy. The bottlenecks are eliminated in advance by the participants. If there is no clarity, citizen participation can also lead to expectations that can not be met, which causes participants to get frustrated and less support for the policy. Important steps: Structure of policy development (clarity about Roles) and structuring the interaction (operational communication).

An effect of citizen participation may be that **policy processes are shorter**, because the proposals are more worn, which subsequently results in less resistance or procedures. However, in general, interactive policy is seen as a time investment. Important in monitoring this intended effect is a clear procedure and planning (structuring the substantive policy development, in particular policy implementation planning and organization) but the communication (structuring of the interaction) remains important because the required support level is also necessary. As far as **cost savings** are concerned, this may mean that special specializations are requested from the participants, so the municipality does not have to rent it anymore. In particular, structuring of the interaction (selection of participants) can be looked at. The cost aspect is also linked to the support of the policy, which causes less people to object to the backside. Therefore one has to look at the structuring of the interaction (operational communication) as it concerns the creation of support.

Interactive policies can improve **internal organization**. Compartmentalisation and inadequate coordination between official services can be revealed because participants are not guided by frames and structures in contact with the municipality. Civic participation also calls for a different way of working, thinking from outside to inside, so culture change must take place. Looking at the step which should be considered in particular, would be the political administrative approach (political management involvement and commitment) and organization and management.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that in addition to representative democracy there is a very strong growth of participatory processes. In particular, the local government is keen in this area. This is obvious because this layer of government is the closest to the people and has the most impact on the immediate environment of the citizens. Representative and participatory democracy can co-exist alongside each other and can reinforce each other. However, under the condition that they both move with the times and that participatory processes are carried out properly and carefully. If the latter does not happen, there is a chance that "noise on the line" will arise and the policy itself will even turn to the government because participants do not feel heard. This causes frustration and completely disapproval of the government. And the gap that should be filled with this policy is actually increased.

As regards the projects of civilian participation in the municipalities investigated, it can be said that much is happening and that the municipalities also all recognize the importance of civic participation. The way, however, differs. The general conclusion that can be drawn is that most municipalities have not drawn up a clear set of agreements explicitly stipulating roles, tasks and responsibilities of the various authorities in the municipalities. For all parties: board, managers, councilors and residents, this clarity is important. In this way, it is clear to everyone in what is chosen within the municipality. In addition, it is important that the organization is organized in such a way that implementation of civic participation is possible. Officials must have enough space and tools. Of importance here is the culture: thinking from the outside in. And the intrinsic feeling that citizen participation is necessary and contributes to better policies. This also applies to the college and the board. Communication, in practice, seems to be a difficult point. Both internal and external communication must be clear and transparent. Everyone must well informed, both internally and externally. And, lastly, I would like to mention the lack of evaluation. In the investigations of the audit room, this was discussed almost explicitly in all researches. It is important that more projects are evaluated so that one can learn from the ongoing processes. Success and failure factors can be appointed. It is also important that these conclusions are being shared between municipalities so that there can be learned from and the quality of citizen participation will increase.

My final conclusion is that there is a lack of research and thus information about the influence that citizen participation would have on the desired effects sec. So there is still an undisputed field of research.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the following recommendations can be made:

- Keep up with all kinds of civic participation
- Beforehand, think carefully about civic participation, is or isn't it an added value for the development of the policy. Civic participation is a means not an end in itself.
- Ensure that the organization is organized in such a way that cultural change can take place
- Make decisions -made in the processes: Political administrative approach and Structure of the substantive policy development (strategic and operational level)- clear and transparent so that all parties involved in this area know what they can expect.
- In particular, make clear what the tasks, roles and responsibilities are for all actors (both at strategic and operational level).
- Communicate on all steps taken (strategic and operational), both internally and externally.
- Learn! Evaluate the processes. Evaluation is an important factor in determining the success and failure factors of the processes. Evaluation not only needs to be done at the end of the process but also interim evaluation is useful. Also find other communities and learn from each other.
- Investigate what en how characteristics of citizen participation influence the desired effects.



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## APPENDICES

*The following evaluations with respect to citizen participation have been examined:*

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Province</b>	<b>Population (as of 1-1- 2017)</b>	<b>Date of Report</b>
Bedum	Groningen	10.479	November 2015
Den Helder	Noord-Holland	56.020	March 2014
Haren	Groningen	19.570	April 2016
Heemstede	Noord-Holland	26.936	November 2016
Houten	Utrecht	49.300	October 2016
Medemblik	Noord-Holland	44.058	January 2017
Opmeer	Noord-Holland	11.420	December 2016
Schiedam	Zuid-Holland	77.838	April 2015
Vlaardingen	Zuid-Holland	71.999	April 2015
Woensdrecht	Noord-Brabant	21.837	September 2012

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Link</b>
Bedum	<a href="file:///C:/Users/startklaar/Downloads/Burgerparticipatie%20in%20Bedum%20deel%201%20definitief%20(2).pdf">file:///C:/Users/startklaar/Downloads/Burgerparticipatie%20in%20Bedum%20deel%201%20definitief%20(2).pdf</a> and <a href="file:///C:/Users/startklaar/Downloads/Burgerparticipatie%20in%20Bedum%20deel%201%20definitief%20conclusies%20en%20aanbevelingen%20(1).pdf">file:///C:/Users/startklaar/Downloads/Burgerparticipatie%20in%20Bedum%20deel%201%20definitief%20conclusies%20en%20aanbevelingen%20(1).pdf</a>
Den Helder	<a href="https://www.denhelder.nl/data/publicatie-website/ XA8906170151AFE8DC182B8509033905/Rapport%20-%20Burgerparticipatie%20en%20Wijkgericht%20Werken%20(2014).pdf?_dc=1454405172276&amp;_dc=1454405172291">https://www.denhelder.nl/data/publicatie-website/ XA8906170151AFE8DC182B8509033905/Rapport%20-%20Burgerparticipatie%20en%20Wijkgericht%20Werken%20(2014).pdf?_dc=1454405172276&amp;_dc=1454405172291</a>
Haren	<a href="file:///C:/Users/startklaar/Downloads/20160912%20%20Rekenkamer%20rapport%20burgerparticipatie%20(3).pdf">file:///C:/Users/startklaar/Downloads/20160912%20%20Rekenkamer%20rapport%20burgerparticipatie%20(3).pdf</a>
Heemstede	<a href="https://www.heemstede.nl/fileadmin/files/heemstede/documenten/Politiek_en_organisatie/Rekenkamercomissie/Burgers_aan_zet_in_Heemstede/161103.def_Rapport_RKC_Heemstede_Burgers_aan_zet.pdf">https://www.heemstede.nl/fileadmin/files/heemstede/documenten/Politiek_en_organisatie/Rekenkamercomissie/Burgers_aan_zet_in_Heemstede/161103.def_Rapport_RKC_Heemstede_Burgers_aan_zet.pdf</a>
Houten	<a href="file:///C:/Users/startklaar/Downloads/Participatie_in_gemeente_Houten-verslag-20161021-def.pdf">file:///C:/Users/startklaar/Downloads/Participatie_in_gemeente_Houten-verslag-20161021-def.pdf</a> and <a href="file:///C:/Users/startklaar/Downloads/Participatie_in_gemeente_Houten-Ontwikkelagenda-20161021-def%20(1).pdf">file:///C:/Users/startklaar/Downloads/Participatie_in_gemeente_Houten-Ontwikkelagenda-20161021-def%20(1).pdf</a>
Medemblik	<a href="https://www.nvrr.nl/download/?id=74911">https://www.nvrr.nl/download/?id=74911</a>
Opmeer	<a href="https://www.nvrr.nl/download/?id=74920">https://www.nvrr.nl/download/?id=74920</a>
Schiedam	<a href="https://www.nvrr.nl/download/?id=56117">https://www.nvrr.nl/download/?id=56117</a>
Vlaardingen	<a href="https://www.nvrr.nl/download/?id=56125">https://www.nvrr.nl/download/?id=56125</a>
Woensdrecht	<a href="https://www.nvrr.nl/download/?id=54008">https://www.nvrr.nl/download/?id=54008</a>