

# Designing Private Organised Participation by optimising market initiatives

P2 Research proposal – AR3MBE100 Graduation Laboratory

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*Ties de Boer - 4813596*

Supervisors:

*1<sup>st</sup> mr. F.A.M. Hobma*

*2<sup>nd</sup> Dr. ing. G.A. van Bortel*

*Msc Management in the Built Environment*

*Delft University of Technology*



*Graduation organization:*

*VORM Ontwikkeling B.V.*



## Abstract

This research investigates how developers can effectively use "Kijk op de Wijk" (KodW), a market initiative, as a Private Organized Participation (POP) under the Environment and Planning Act (EPA) to enhance citizen involvement in area developments. The EPA offers flexibility to tailor participation processes to local needs, but can result in uncertainties for developers regarding stakeholder engagement strategies, leading to "tick-off" behaviour in participation processes that lack meaningful stakeholder involvement. This study aims to bridge this gap by evaluating the KodW method and its applicability in addressing these challenges. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, including case studies, qualitative interviews with developers and stakeholders, observations and analysis of KodW's integration with BSR lifestyle segmentation.

The primary goals are to provide actionable recommendations for optimizing KodW and to design a structured, effective participation model aligning with EPA requirements and municipal guidelines. Deliverables include an enhanced version of KodW, tailored strategies for stakeholder engagement, and a P5 report with a framework for evaluating participation effectiveness. This study contributes to both academic and practical applications by addressing the legislative responsibilities surrounding participation processes. It aims to enhance collaboration between private developers and municipalities, promote inclusivity, and foster better decision-making, ultimately accelerating development timelines, reducing objections in urban projects and eventually a better plan quality with greater stakeholder support.

*Keywords:* Private Organised Participation, Environment and Planning Act, Kijk op de Wijk, Participation, Method, Participation process

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Problem statement

Recently, it has been increasingly reported in the news that many objections have been raised to new construction projects. One-third of these projects face delays due to objectors (Zonneveld, 2024). Furthermore, 83 percent of municipalities have to deal with these objections. This leads to various problems, including delays and cost overruns for all stakeholders. Designing a participation process for local residents as effectively as possible could potentially reduce the number of opinions and objections (Fokkema & Zandvliet, 2024). This would be beneficial for the speed of project implementation. While preventing objections is a consideration, it is not the primary purpose of organizing participation; this approach also emphasizes improving decision-making quality and fostering societal acceptance. It also plays a critical role in improving the quality of decision-making and fostering greater legitimacy, thereby ensuring broader societal acceptance.

The new Environment and Planning Act (EPA), which took effect on 1 January 2024, requires initiating parties to carry out citizen participation in area developments. This participation is only an obligation in case of an outer physical plan activity (Rijkswaterstaat, 2024). In case the plan falls within the environment plan, participation is not mandatory, but optional. In the case of mandatory participation, the EPA only indicates that it should be carried out and what the results are. In the case of voluntary participation, the EPA only asks in the permit application whether participation has been carried out and, if so, what the results are. No further obligations are imposed here. Chapter 3.1 will explain and discuss the EPA in more detail.

When delving deeper into the participation process, it is noticeable that there are relatively many negative opinions about participation. Expectations in a participation process are often very high, which often results in disappointment with the initiators (Hollanders et al., 2024). This disappointment causes many of these parties to be cautious in engaging in participation. It is often seen as an obstacle to carrying out thorough participation procedures. It is seen as a component that only causes the development process to slow down. Developers benefit from speeding up the development process and also see opportunities in these new participation procedures, but due to unclear interpretations, it can cause problems. These problems result in longer participation processes with a lot of objections from participants. Long participation procedures make developers reluctant to participate and see participation mainly as a problem they would like to tick off as soon as possible.

When faced with uncertainty, developers tend to approach mandatory participation procedures in a minimalistic and simple manner. This means they often fulfil only the basic requirements without engaging meaningfully, potentially leading to outcomes that lack broad support or fail to address the needs and concerns of the stakeholders involved. This "tick-off" behaviour may be the result of mandatory participation, often resulting in a plan that is not widely supported by the involved parties and does not meet their needs (Hollanders et al., 2024).

From an initiator's perspective, the purpose of participation could be to ensure greater support and avoid objections at a later stage, thereby resulting in a higher-quality plan (Rijkswaterstaat, 2024). However, a lack of clarity can create friction between different interests and expectations. Many parties have expressed a desire for more detailed guidance on participation within the framework of the Environment and Planning Act (Bouwhuis & de Gruyter, 2024). Nevertheless, the legislator intentionally refrained from providing detailed regulations on participation in the EPA, recognizing that the form of participation should be adapted to the specific location and size of the project. This deliberate flexibility creates a difference in principles of participation guidance.

The participation process inherently includes the perspective of the participants, which presents specific challenges in the context of area development. Two primary issues may arise in this regard. First, identifying suitable participants who can represent the broader interests of the participation process can be problematic. Engaging potential future residents is particularly challenging when the details of the development are not yet defined. For instance, in cases of area development outside urban regions, the absence of current or nearby residents due to the lack of existing housing complicates efforts to involve stakeholders. Consequently, the absence of a resident population and, more importantly, the absence of representative participants can make participation efforts complex.

The second challenge typically arises in developments where nearby or current residents are already present. In such cases, a vocal subset of participants may dominate the discourse, actively expressing their opinions and attempting to influence the outcomes of participation initiatives to align with their preferences. This dynamic can lead to the overrepresentation of a minority perspective, which may not reflect the broader public sentiment. Conversely, the views of individuals who perceive the proposed developments as acceptable or unproblematic often remain underrepresented or entirely absent from the participation process. This issue underscores the inherent difficulty in determining what constitutes truly representative participation and ensuring that a diversity of perspectives is adequately captured.

To summarize, many public and private entities face significant challenges with objections and cost overruns in area developments. The national government seeks to address these issues through the new Environment and Planning Act by emphasizing participation and assigning private parties responsibility for this process. While developers are granted flexibility to tailor participation to local needs—fostering innovation—this same adaptability can lead to uncertainty about how to engage stakeholders effectively. Often, this results in "tick-off" behaviour, where developers minimally fulfil participation requirements without meaningful engagement. Evaluating private initiatives could mitigate this uncertainty, discourage superficial approaches, and ensure participation processes are both meaningful and productive.

## 1.2 Critical overview and main findings from the literature

This section provides a critical analysis of the current knowledge concerning participation in urban development, with a focus on its implementation under the Environment and Planning Act (EPA). Participation, as explored in academic studies, is a multifaceted concept that can be operationalized through various approaches. While existing literature extensively examines theoretical models and frameworks, it also highlights significant legislative and practical uncertainties faced by developers. These ambiguities emphasize the need for further investigation into how participation processes can be effectively structured. Furthermore, the introduction of the EPA has intensified the relevance of addressing these uncertainties, as its flexible yet undefined mandates necessitate innovative and adaptable solutions. This pressing context underscores the justification for this research.

### 1.2.1 Understanding participation under the EPA

The EPA mandates participation in specific situations and places participation as an essential and central element of area developments, among others. However, the EPA leaves key aspects deliberately undefined, such as the specific form participation should take, who should be involved, and the criteria for sufficiency. This gap in regulatory specificity creates a flexible framework but also generates uncertainty among developers. Municipalities attempt to fill this gap by developing participation guides, which vary in scope and detail, further complicating the process. Developers are also encouraged to propose participation strategies for large-scale developments, which adds an additional layer of complexity.

### 1.2.2 Literature insight on participation

Participation in urban development can take many forms, ranging from basic information dissemination to highly structured and inclusive decision-making processes. Arnstein's ladder of participation (1969) and Fung's participatory frameworks (2006) highlight the importance of power distribution and stakeholder engagement in achieving meaningful participation. The literature highlights a lot of different ways of exercising the participation process. However, practical guidance on how developers can effectively operationalize participation within the EPA framework remains limited to guidance frameworks from the municipality.

Municipalities play a key role in shaping participation practices by offering guidelines, but the diversity of these approaches leads to a fragmented landscape. Some municipalities impose requirements, while others adopt more lenient policies, allowing developers significant autonomy. This variability necessitates a structured yet adaptable participation model that aligns with both local and legislative expectations. The literature contains several examples of participation initiatives but lacks research on concrete and practical examples of participation initiatives by market players, also called Private Organised Participation. Typically, they use a combination of different forms of participation, but there is no participation model that structures these steps.

### 1.2.3 Knowledge Gaps and Research Justification

Despite the extensive body of literature on participation, gaps remain, particularly in the context of privately organized participation under the EPA. Key unanswered questions include how developers can navigate the ambiguity of EPA requirements while ensuring effective stakeholder engagement. Another unresolved issue is the extent to which innovative methods, such as Kijk op de Wijk (KodW), can fulfil the participatory obligations outlined in the EPA. Additionally, the question arises as to how participation strategies can be effectively tailored to different stakeholder groups to enhance inclusivity and effectiveness. Furthermore, the literature reveals a need for research on tangible

examples of Private Organised Participation methods, including Kijk op de Wijk (KodW), to address these gaps.

KodW, developed by VORM, represents a tool for addressing these challenges. Its structured approach integrates gamification and feedback, offering developers a potential means to meet EPA participation requirements. However, its effectiveness in practice remains underexplored. Chapter 3.4 will elaborate on Kijk op de Wijk.

### 1.2.4 Conclusion

This section establishes the foundation for this research by highlighting the deliberate flexibility in participation regulations under the EPA and the corresponding challenges faced by developers. This highlights the necessity for empirical research on examples of Private Organised Participation (POP). KodW serves as an example of a participation tool whose alignment with legislative frameworks and stakeholder expectations necessitates thorough evaluation. Such an analysis is crucial for clarifying the dynamic interplay between the EPA, POPs, and the broader network of stakeholders. This study aims to fill these gaps by providing actionable insights into optimizing participation methods within the framework of the EPA.

### 1.3 Identification of problems that remain to be resolved

Private parties are shaping their participation policies, and developing new methods that better align with contemporary norms and values. Additionally, these companies' participation policies must comply with the new Environment and Planning Act, which came into effect a year ago. As such, there have been significant recent changes, accompanied by various challenges as outlined in chapter 1.1. This presents an opportunity to investigate how private parties are adapting to these changing circumstances and how they have shaped their approaches to align with current expectations.

### 1.4 Societal and Scientific Relevance

End-user involvement in the form of participation is a key pillar in the new Environment and Planning Act (Rijkswaterstaat, 2024). This involvement is reflected in all parties involved. The built environment has a substantial impact on people's lives, influencing their behaviors, relationships, and experiences (Rashidfarokhi & Danivska, 2023). It could suggest that people want to have some level of control to influence their direct environment. The result of this having control is that all parties such as municipalities, initiators, builders, and residents can, should, or want to contribute to their built environment. However, the built environment does not strictly dictate how people should behave socially, the types of relationships they should form, or how they should interact with one another. Instead, it shapes, enables, and limits the possibilities for interaction, both between individuals and between people and their surroundings (Larsen, 2013). As more people become involved, interactions increase, leading to a greater diversity of opinions and perspectives. These perspectives are not always aligned and can also cause conflicts. Managing all these conflicts and opinions can be part of the participation process.

The societal relevance of this research lies in the aspect that a very large number of people are involved in the built environment as explained earlier. This research contributes to further understanding the different parties involved in the participation process and trying to identify and resolve conflicts at an early stage. Given that the end user plays an important role in the new Environment and Planning Act, it has become an inevitable aspect of area development for developers and other parties. Understanding it better and making the participation process more tailored to the end users and those who have an interest in it. The legal obligation from the government is accelerating the need and will to better understand the participation process under the new Environment and Planning Act and eventually create a better participation process for all people involved.

There has been a lot of research on participation over the past decades. The various studies on participation range from political participation to residents' participation. They have also looked at the different forms of participation, as well as the degree of participation described by Arnstein (1969). The scientific relevance of this study is mainly focused on better understanding the people who are involved and trying to categorize it. A large proportion of market players in the Netherlands use these Brand Strategy Research (BSR) lifestyles in their (area) developments, portfolio management, or consultancy. They use these lifestyles to better understand their target groups. However, it is notable to see that relatively little research has been done on these lifestyles. This research partly explores the different lifestyles in more depth and thus contributes to more research on this topic. Chapter 3.3, Will explain the BSR model.

This research aims to deepen the understanding of the relationship between innovative participation methods and the new Environment and Planning Act. Since the Act is relatively recent, limited research has been conducted on it so far. Exploring the participation requirement within the framework of the new Act is particularly valuable, especially in relation to innovative approaches to public involvement

and the potential to advise government agencies on making this process more transparent. By connecting government policy with Privately Organized Participation (POP) methods, this study gains scientific relevance. Analysing new and innovative methods can contribute to a greater understanding of private initiatives within participation processes and contribute to increasing knowledge of new methods.

As participation becomes increasingly important in planning and development contexts, the findings of this study will be progressively relevant. With community engagement becoming a central component of area development practices, the insights derived from this research will serve as a foundation for evolving engagement strategies to remain effective and impactful over time. Making the participation process more efficient and engaging citizens more effectively in (area) developments can lead to greater support for these projects within the local community. Over time, this could potentially reduce objections and formal opinions, thereby accelerating the process and contributing to addressing the housing shortage.

## 2 Research questions

This chapter will first state and explain the main and sub-questions. Then, these questions will be placed in a conceptual framework. This conceptual framework will be explained and show the coherence of the different concepts. Finally, the concepts from this framework will be explained as well as the context of the study. The literature will elaborate on the concepts of the framework. In the context of the study, specific choices will also be explained.

### 2.1 Main and sub-questions

In this research, the main question is:

*“How can developers use Kijk op de Wijk as a Private Organized Participation in area developments under the Environment and Planning Act?”*

The main research question, *“How can developers use Kijk op de Wijk as a Private Organized Participation in area developments under the Environment and Planning Act?”* focuses on the perspective of developers. It investigates how the method Kijk op de Wijk (KodW) can be utilised to guide Private Organized Participation (POP) in area developments. This guidance centers on privately initiated participation within the framework of the new Environment and Planning Act (EPA). Privately organized participation refers to initiatives led by private market actors.

The study situates this participation within the legal framework established by the EPA, which outlines requirements for both mandatory and voluntary participation. Kijk op de Wijk is examined as a central tool for developers to implement POP during area development projects. By focusing on KodW, the research addresses how private initiatives can be aligned with the legal framework and evaluates their effectiveness. The question also explores how private parties can tackle essential challenges, such as identifying the appropriate participants, determining the methods of participation, and setting the timeline for the participatory process. By evaluating Kijk op de Wijk (KodW), insights can be gained into how private initiatives can function as Private Organized Participation (POP). The sub-questions designed to answer the main research question are as follows:

**SQ1:** *What are the characteristics of Kijk op de Wijk in comparison to traditional participation methods?*

**SQ2:** *What are the results of using Kijk op de Wijk in practice?*

**SQ3:** *How does Kijk op de Wijk effectively leverage the different BSR lifestyles?*

**SQ4:** *How can Kijk op de Wijk be improved and optimized?*

Sub-question 1 examines the characteristics of Kijk op de Wijk (KodW) compared to traditional participation methods. In recent years, significant developments have occurred in areas such as legislation, housing shortages, societal norms and values, and perspectives on area development. These shifts have also influenced how participation processes are perceived and implemented. This sub-question explores the specific features of KodW and how they compare to traditional approaches. By analyzing these characteristics, KodW is placed within the broader literary context of participation methods, forming the foundation for the research. This question can also help with identifying areas of improvement, forming the foundation for sub question 4.

Sub-question 2 delves deeper into Kijk op de Wijk, focusing primarily on the outcomes in practice. It examines how KodW performs, with the perspective of the initiators playing a central role. KodW has been implemented a few times recently. The question explores to what extent initiators find this method effective and whether it aligns better with their participation goals. By evaluating experiences

from developers and others involved with KodW processes in practice, insights into the performance will be possible. Additionally, it evaluates how KodW addresses the legal context outlined in the Environment and Planning Act (EPA). It also considers the performance of KodW on municipal guidelines on participation. In this sub-question, the results are defined as the degree to which the participation method meets the goals of the initiators while adhering to the legal framework of the EPA. The evaluation is qualitative in nature, providing insights into how well KodW achieves these objectives. The performances of the objectives will be defined in the form of Key Performance indicators (KPIs) and create the basis for comparison and optimization of the performance of KodW. These KPIs will be defined with the help of sub-question 1, which provides an analysis of the characteristics of Kijk op de Wijk in comparison to traditional participation methods. This comparison helps identify key performance indicators relevant to the unique features and goals of KodW. This question can help identify potential shortcomings of KodW and set the baseline for its performance. This output can serve as input for sub-question 4.

Sub-question 3 focuses on how KodW interacts with participants, recognizing that each participant is unique and experiences participation in their way. This question categorizes participants based on the BSR lifestyle segmentation model. It examines how KodW accommodates different lifestyles and identifies which characteristics of KodW align well with individual preferences or, conversely, may have a counterproductive effect. The investigation aims to determine whether KodW is less suitable for certain lifestyle groups or particularly effective for others. Insights into participant preferences are derived from the BSR lifestyle framework, providing a structured way to analyze how KodW meets or challenges the needs of diverse participants. This can help in defining possible optimization for KodW and these results serve as input for sub-question 4.

Sub-question 4 investigates where KodW can be optimized. While the other sub-questions explore the defining characteristics of KodW compared to traditional methods, this question focuses on identifying potential shortcomings and trying to resolve these. For instance, it may emerge that it does not fully align with municipal visions of participation. Similarly, initiators might perceive KodW as an obstacle to achieving their goals. From the perspective of participants, it is possible that KodW does not adequately address the needs of certain BSR lifestyle profiles. To address these challenges, this sub-question examines the specific key performance indicators of KodW, as defined in the previous sub-questions. It explores these indicators that require improvement and explores potential solutions to enhance its effectiveness for all stakeholders involved. This question uses the results from the other questions to find optimizations. The result of this question is a new version of KodW, which is better able to respond to the needs of the EPA, municipal guidelines, participants' preferences, and initiators' objectives within a participation process.

Together, these sub-questions create a comprehensive framework for answering the main question. It guides developers in understanding the method's distinct advantages, assessing its practical performance, adapting it to diverse participants, and refining it for optimal use in area developments under the Environment and Planning Act.

## 2.2 Conceptual framework

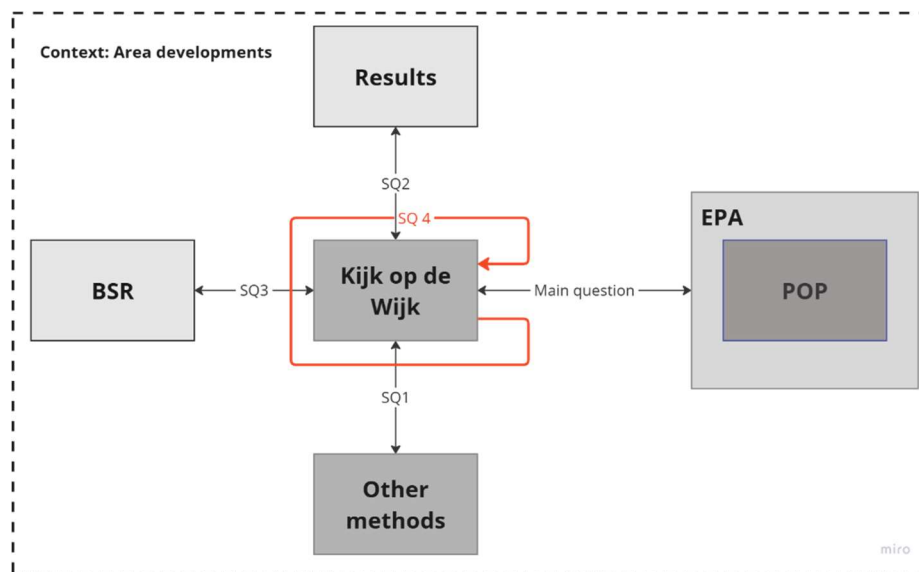


Figure 1 Conceptual framework (Own work)

The conceptual framework (figure 1) incorporates all the essential elements of the study, including the Environment and Planning Act (EPA), BSR lifestyles, Kijk op de Wijk (KodW), and Private Organized Participation (POP). It illustrates how these concepts interrelate and connect with the research questions, providing a structured overview of the study's scope and focus. In the literature review (Chapter 3), these concepts are elaborated upon. It is important to note that the context of this research is focused on area developments from the developers' perspective, as they play a crucial role in implementing participation methods to comply with legal requirements while balancing their project goals and stakeholder expectations. This perspective is explained in detail in section 2.3.

The main research question focuses on the relationship between Kijk op de Wijk and Private Organized Participation (POP). It addresses the role of the developer in meeting the requirements of the Environmental and Planning Act (EPA). Developers are responsible for implementing various participation methods through privately organized participation to comply with the EPA while achieving their own objectives. A developer has specific expectations and must meet them to fulfil project goals.

This framework outlines the connections identified, used, or explored in this study. The relationship between the developer and the outcomes is analysed through the lens of Kijk op de Wijk and other participation methods. By comparing the characteristics of Kijk op de Wijk with traditional methods, the relationship between developers and alternative methods becomes clearer. The relationship between POP and the EPA is already defined and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

## 2.3 Research context

In addition to the previously discussed concepts, two aspects are important for the context of this research, namely that these are area developments and from the perspective of the developer. The context in which this research takes place is area development. Area development projects are typically large-scale, involving many stakeholders. With so many individuals involved, it becomes increasingly relevant to segment target groups and participants to make these groups more manageable. Given the complexity of area developments, participation can also become increasingly complicated. This context also introduces the challenge of identifying the right groups to ensure representative participation.

Furthermore, the research is conducted from the developer's perspective. The developer's perspective is defined as that of a private developer involved in area development who owns one or more land positions. In most cases, the developer is the initiating party for participation processes. In area development projects, municipalities may impose requirements regarding the level of participation that an initiating party must carry out. Since private parties organize participation processes and experience both the benefits and challenges of such participation, they are well-positioned to provide valuable insights into the complexities of participation procedures.

This research also incorporates Kijk op de Wijk, a new participation method developed by VORM, which serves as a foundational element of the study. VORM, a developer and contractor, based in Rotterdam, manages a wide range of projects, from large-scale area developments to smaller construction projects. Kijk op de Wijk is increasingly being utilized by VORM as a participation method and is continuously being refined and developed further. In chapter 3.4, Kijk op de Wijk will be explained further.

## 3 Literature research

This chapter identifies and analyses the main findings from the literature. The concepts covered in this chapter are the basis of the research and establish the foundation for further exploration. First, it delves deeper into the Environment and Planning Act (EPA). The EPA is relatively new and also sets the preconditions for participation. Subsequently, the concept of participation is explained. The definition of participation and what methods are available are defined. Frameworks to assess and categorise participation are also incorporated in the literature review. Furthermore, two private initiatives are examined. The first is the Brand Strategy Research model which delves deeper into the categorisation of citizens. At last, Kijk op de Wijk is briefly explained as a private participation method.

### 3.1 Environment and Planning Act

The Environment and Planning Act, which took effect on 1 January 2024, merges approximately 26 old laws into one. This law deals with the space where people live, work and play. The Environment and Planning Act concerns the physical living environment and the activities that impact it. According to Article 1.2, paragraph 1 (Rijksoverheid, 2024), the physical living environment consists of buildings, infrastructure, water systems, water, soil, air, landscapes, nature, cultural heritage, and world heritage. Given that people live in the physical living environment, it is important that this law is well-organized. There is a balance between utilizing and protecting the physical environment, the Environment and Planning Act helps facilitate this balance.

#### 3.1.1 Focus points of improvements

The premise of this law is to ensure a simplification of the many laws on Housing, infrastructure, environment, nature and water. In revamping the law, the focus is on achieving 4 improvements:

1. Insightful environment law
2. Living environment central
3. Room for local customization
4. Faster decision-making

Making the Environment and Planning Act insightful makes it more predictable and simple. This makes it more obvious for a larger group of stakeholders to use it and avoids problems later on as a result of complexity.

Another principle, the living environment at the centre, emphasizes that everything related to policy, decision-making, and regulation is focused on the interconnectedness of the various components addressed by the Environment and Planning Act. This includes the interrelationship between buildings, infrastructure, the environment, and heritage.

Room for local customization provides opportunities for local governments to shape their immediate environment. Instead of central rules, the Environment and Planning Act stipulates that *“in principle, everything is managed locally unless there is an overarching interest that requires central regulation.”*. The local community has more insight into their immediate surroundings and the extent of its impact. Ultimately, they are the ones who will make the most use of the local environment. Local customization offers opportunities for unique approaches and tailored solutions.

The final principle is faster decision-making. Complex rules and decision-making processes often cause delays in various applications related to matters addressed by the Environment and Planning Act. This new law aims to make these processes quicker and smoother.

### 3.1.2 Core instruments participation

The Environment and Planning Act states in Article 1.3 that there are societal objectives to promote sustainable development, liveability, and the protection and improvement of the living environment. The role of governments, businesses, and citizens is stated in Article 1.6, they have the duty of care to ensure societal goals.

#### Regels over participatie

Instrument	Regels	Wie is verantwoordelijk voor het naleven van de participatieregels?	Waar staat het?
Omgevingsvisie	Motiveringsplicht*	Bevoegd gezag	Omgevingsbesluit (art. 10.7)
Programma	Motiveringsplicht*	Bevoegd gezag	Omgevingsbesluit (art. 10.8)
Omgevingsplan	Het bevoegd gezag geeft bij de kennisgeving van een omgevingsplan aan hoe de participatie wordt vormgegeven.  Motiveringsplicht*	Bevoegd gezag	Omgevingsbesluit (art. 10.2, eerste lid)  Omgevingsbesluit (art. 10.2 tweede lid)
Omgevingsverordening	Motiveringsplicht*	Bevoegd gezag	Omgevingsbesluit (art. 10.3 a)
Waterschapverordening	Motiveringsplicht*	Bevoegd gezag	Omgevingsbesluit (art. 10.3 b)
Projectbesluit	Het bevoegd gezag publiceert uiterlijk bij de start van de verkenning voor het projectbesluit een 'kennisgeving participatie'. In deze kennisgeving staat: - wie worden betrokken, waarover en wanneer - wat de rol is van het bevoegd gezag en de initiatiefnemer - waar meer informatie beschikbaar komt  Bij de verkenning mag iedereen mogelijke oplossingen aandragen voor de beschreven opgave. Degene die dit doet, kan het bevoegd gezag vragen om daarover advies te vragen aan een onafhankelijk deskundige.  Zowel voor de voorkeursbeslissing als voor het projectbesluit geldt een motiveringsplicht. Het bevoegd gezag geeft hierbij aan hoe derden zijn betrokken en wat de resultaten zijn van de verkenning. Daarbij wordt ingegaan op de aangedragen oplossingen en de uitgebrachte adviezen daarover.	Bevoegd gezag  Als een ander dan het bevoegd gezag initiatiefnemer is, kan het participatietraject wel een gezamenlijke actie zijn. Het bevoegd gezag en de initiatiefnemer bepalen samen de rolverdeling, waarbij het bevoegd gezag uiteindelijk beslist. Het bevoegd gezag geeft in de kennisgeving participatie aan wat de rollen zijn van het bevoegd gezag en de initiatiefnemer.	Omgevingswet (art. 5.47, 5.48 en 5.51) en Omgevingsbesluit (art. 5.3 en 5.5)
Omgevingsvergunning	De initiatiefnemer moet aangeven of en zo ja hoe hij aan participatie heeft gedaan, en wat de resultaten daarvan zijn.  Het bevoegd gezag betreft deze informatie bij de integrale belangenafweging.	Initiatiefnemer	Omgevingswet (art. 16.55) Omgevingsregeling (art. 7.4)

\* Het bevoegd gezag geeft bij het besluit aan hoe inwoners, bedrijven, maatschappelijke organisaties en bestuursorganen zijn betrokken bij de voorbereiding en wat de resultaten daarvan zijn. Gemeenten, provincies en waterschappen geven ook aan op welke wijze invulling is gegeven aan het eigen participatiebeleid.

Dit is een uitgave van het  
**Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken  
en Koninkrijksrelaties**  
Postbus 20011 | 2500 EA Den Haag  
www.aandeslagmetdeomgevingswet.nl  
Januari 2021

Figure 2 Participation rules by instrument (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2021)

To ensure these objectives and the duty of care, participation plays an important role in the Environment and Planning Act. Participation is part of the decision-making procedures. The Environment and Planning Act describes how citizens, businesses, social organizations, and other administrative bodies must be involved in environmental decisions (Environment and Planning Act, 2024). Participation aligns with the provision of customization as mentioned in section 3.1.1 *Focus points of improvements*. The law does not prescribe how participation should be structured and deliberately allows room for this flexibility. The Environment and Planning Act describes a participatory

approach as: *‘involving stakeholders (citizens, businesses, social organizations, and administrative bodies) at an early stage in the decision-making process regarding a project or activity.’* (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2021). The rules for participation vary depending on the legal instruments. Figure 2 outlines the legal instruments for which participation must be conducted. This figure illustrates that the obligations vary depending on the legal instrument. As shown, most participation responsibilities lie with the government. However, in the case of an environmental permit, this responsibility shifts to the private party. This research will specifically focus on the environmental permit, as it places the responsibility on the private party.

The seven tools mentioned in Figure 2 can be divided into six core tools. These core instruments are meant to ensure the use and protection of the living environment and all use different rules (Informatiepunt Leefomgeving, 2024b). The six core instruments are the environmental vision, the programme, decentralised rules, general state rules, environmental permit and project decision. Decentralised rules include the instruments Environment Plan, Environment Ordinance and Water Board Ordinance. The instruments mentioned in Figure 2 provide rules for the implementation of participation in the living environment.

#### *Environment vision*

The Environment Vision is an instrument for making a coherent, strategic plan for the living environment. This vision is made by the municipality, province and/or state (the competent authority). In drawing up this vision, there is a duty of justification for the participation from the competent authority (Art. 10.7 Environment Decree). This justification decree states that the environmental vision must state how citizens, companies, civil society organisations and other administrative bodies have been involved in its preparation. The competent authority is allowed to have its own interpretation of the participation process but must indicate how their own policy has been interpreted (Informatiepunt Leefomgeving, 2024a).

#### *Programme*

The programme addresses policies to manage, use, protect and develop the living environment (Informatiepunt Leefomgeving, 2024f). The programme is binding only on the relevant governing body and is a flexible tool for different phases of a policy cycle. An environment vision defines the general strategic policy for the long term. The programme builds on this vision and gives more concrete details such as designating certain areas or working areas. Article 10.8 of the Environment Decree states that the competent authority has a duty of justification in terms of participation to adopt a programme and has the obligation to include it in the adoption decision.

#### *Decentralised instruments*

The decentralised instruments Environment Ordinance (Omgevingsverordering) and Water Board Ordinance (Waterschapverordering) are subject to the same justification obligations as the instruments Environment Vision and Programme. The Environment Ordinance contains provincial rules for the physical living environment, the Water Board Ordinance contains the rules for the water system. When notifying the decentralised instrument Environment Plan (Omgevingsplan), the competent authority must indicate how participation will be shaped and in doing so, it also has a Motivation obligation (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2021).

#### *Project decision*

The project decision is a procedure in which decisions are made on complex projects such as the construction of a road, wind farm or nature reserve and can count as an environmental permit. The competent authority must publish a *“notification participation”* before the start of the exploration.

This must describe, among other things, who will be involved, about what and when (Informatiepunt leefomgeving, 2024g). This also includes an obligation of justification as described earlier.

### *Environmental permit*

The environmental permit is about authorising activities in the physical environment. The competent authority herein grants permission to initiators such as citizens, companies and public authorities for the activity. An example of such an activity could be carrying out a technical construction activity or demolition work. The participation rules for this instrument contain different components and are different from the other instruments. The responsibility for participation here lies with the initiator of the activity. Applicants for an environmental permit (omgevingsvergunning) are required to indicate whether they have engaged in participatory activities. If the applicants have engaged in participatory activities, they should indicate how participation has been done and what the results are. It is not an obligation for the applicant, but voluntary in most applications and is meant to encourage applicants to engage in participation (Barnhoorn & Van Mannekes, 2024).

There are however some exceptions where participation is an obligation. In case of an out-of-plan environment plan activity, which are projects where the plan deviates from the environment plan, the applicant is obliged to carry out a participation process. This obligation only applies if it is a type of project for which the municipal council has indicated that participation is required in the case of an out-of-plan activity. It can therefore vary from one municipality to another whether developers are required to participate in out-of-plan activities. If an applicant fails to carry out participation or does not do so sufficiently, the application may be disregarded by the competent authority. In the case of mandatory participation, the Environment and Planning Act does not set any obligations as to when participation is considered sufficient. The effort for participation must be proportionate to the activity requested. In time, the framework of participation may become clearer through future case law (Barnhoorn & Van Mannekes, 2024).

The essence of participation under the Environment and Planning Act is an obligation of effort rather than an obligation of result. This means that developers are required to make a serious and genuine effort to facilitate participation, ensuring that the procedure is as thorough as possible. However, this does not imply that the outcome must satisfy everyone involved. In this context, the results are considered secondary to the effort put into the participation process.

### 3.1.3 Regulatory principles

In general, three distinct regulatory principles can be identified that apply to the Central Government, Provinces, and Municipalities: the Duty to State Reasons, the Duty to Notify, and the Participation Policy. These principles are mandatory for governmental entities to follow when adopting various instruments (Barnhoorn & Van Mannekes, 2024). The Act on Reinforcement of Participation at the Decentralized Level (*Wet Versterking Participatie op Decentraal Niveau*), effective from 1 January 2025, requires municipalities to adopt a participation ordinance (*participatieverordening*) outlining their participation policies. This requirement fits within the broader framework of the Environment and Planning Act (*Omgevingswet*), which emphasizes the importance of meaningful stakeholder involvement in decision-making. The Act ensures that participation policies are tailored to the specific needs of individual municipalities by regulating them at the decentralized level. Participation policies apply to all areas of municipal governance and are not limited to environmental planning. For instruments such as programs, environmental plans, environmental regulations, and water board regulations, implementation must align with the municipality's participation policy. These policies guide not only environmental planning but also broader decision-making processes, ensuring that residents and stakeholders have a clear and structured role in governance.

To support municipalities in shaping these policies, the Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG) has published a guideline outlining a pathway for initiating participation efforts (Blok et al., 2023). Additionally, a framework for effective participation has been developed collaboratively by the VNG, IPO, UwV, and the national government (VNG et al., 2024). These tools aim to assist governmental entities in developing robust participation policies that align with the goals of the Act. While the Environment and Planning Act requires municipalities to establish a participation policy, it does not prescribe specific methods, the parties to involve, or the duration of participation efforts. This flexibility allows municipalities to design policies that suit their local context. Importantly, these policies are also used to evaluate environmental permit applications. Although the Act does not mandate rigid criteria for participation in permit evaluations, it encourages municipalities to assess the quality and extent of participation conducted by the initiator as part of their decision-making process.

### 3.1.4 Case law

The Environment and Planning Act (EPA) in the Netherlands introduces the duty to participate as a cornerstone of its approach to sustainable and inclusive spatial planning. This duty emphasizes the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes, aiming to enhance transparency, collaboration, and the quality of outcomes. However, the interpretation and application of this duty can raise questions about when and how participation is fulfilled.

Case law can play a crucial role in addressing these uncertainties and providing guidance over time. By examining specific cases, courts can establish benchmarks for what constitutes meaningful and sufficient participation. Case law can provide an interpretation of legal rules (Universiteit Utrecht, 2024). Rulings may for example clarify whether certain groups were given a fair opportunity to participate or whether the efforts made by the initiator were sufficient. These precedents will help both policymakers and initiators navigate the practical implementation of the EPA's participation requirements. Since the EPA is relatively new, there are also relatively few cases. Over time, the accumulation of case law can contribute to a more consistent and predictable interpretation of the duty to participate.

### 3.1.5 Critical reflection

Participation is central to the Environment and Planning Act to achieve an integrated approach to societal challenges, with the expectation that participation will lead to greater support and improved decision-making (Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeentes (VNG) et al., 2024). The various instruments provide governments with different options to shape their participation policies and allow for tailored solutions. Each competent authority faces its own challenges and can thus develop specific solutions accordingly. Guidance from the central government is provided through guidelines and frameworks, primarily aimed at governmental bodies. For initiators such as developers and other private parties, the situation is more complex, as participation policies vary by municipality. Some municipalities have more extensive regulations on participation, resulting in differences across jurisdictions.

The variations in policies among municipalities present a dual perspective. On the one hand, they facilitate customized solutions tailored to specific needs, while on the other, they introduce elements of uncertainty. Municipalities' expectations regarding participation are clear: They must develop their own policies based on the guidelines and frameworks provided but are not obliged to follow the guidelines provided by the central government and VNG. For initiators, however, there is no uniformity. The participation policies of private parties must therefore be tailored to each municipality, which results in private parties having to establish their own participation methodology differently with each municipality. Private parties employ various forms of participation, which ideally should align with a general foundation as outlined in the guidelines. The flexibility for tailor-made participation in

area developments offers advantages by allowing solutions to be adapted to the unique circumstances of each area development. This ensures that the participation process can effectively address the specific needs of all stakeholders, including residents, developers, and municipalities. By combining the possibility to tailor-made participation with a well-proven participation strategy, this approach not only maintains responsiveness but also enhances the ability to build on successful practices, realising collaboration and achieving meaningful outcomes in the context of diverse area developments.

## 3.2 Participation

Participation plays an important role in the Environment and Planning Act and is defined as *"involving stakeholders (citizens, businesses, social organizations, and administrative bodies) at an early stage in the decision-making process regarding a project or activity."* (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2021). The literature contains extensive discussions on participation, but there is no single, universally accepted definition. Participation is subject to various interpretations and implementations (Oakley, 1991). *"Participation is a loose concept: involved citizens can be few or any, poorly or highly empowered, and their participation can be on-site or online, for short or long periods of time, on high- or low-stake issues, etc."* (Bobbio, 2019).

In policy design literature, public participation is frequently highlighted as one of the procedural instruments available to policymakers during the policy development process (Howlett, 2019). Participation has taken a central role in the Environment and Planning Act. The debate on the importance of participation in developments has been ongoing for some time, and not everyone in this discussion is convinced that participation is beneficial or offers practical advantages (Oakley, 1991). Adding to this discussion is that: *"practice suggests that undoubtedly in many rural development projects participation is stronger in rhetoric than in practical reality"* (Oakley, 1991). According to Oakley, participation is often emphasized in a rhetorical context within development processes. It is frequently idealized as a critical element for achieving successful outcomes; however, the practical mechanisms for its effective implementation are frequently absent.

### 3.2.1 Participation ladder

The foundation of all practical forms of participation is rooted in Sherry Arnstein's "A Ladder of Citizen Participation" and forms the cornerstone for initiators of citizen participation (Gaber, 2020). According to Arnstein (1969): *"citizenship participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future."* According to Arnstein, involving citizens is characterized by the degree of power citizens hold in a project. Through participation, power is shifted towards citizens who are typically excluded from political and economic processes. The extent of this power varies depending on the form of participation. In participatory processes, citizens are deliberately involved in shaping future decisions. There is, however, a difference in the degree of influence and, consequently, the power that citizens can exercise in participation. This is defined in the difference *"empty ritual"* and having *"real power"* where there can only be participation when power is redistributed, otherwise it is only a powerless process (Arnstein, 1969). The degree of power in participation does not necessarily indicate the success of the participation process and pertains only to its effectiveness. When assessing the success of participation, additional factors come into play, such as the backgrounds of the citizens involved. The way the group is organised may also differ, for instance in the form of representatives, associations or organised groups which can influence the outcome (Bobbio, 2019).

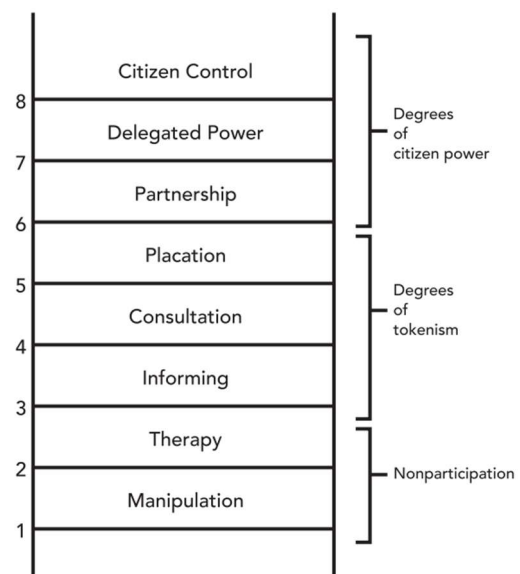


Figure 3 Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969)

Participation is visualized through the Ladder of Citizen Participation, as shown in Figure 3. The ladder is a framework that categorizes the levels of citizen involvement in decision-making processes. The ladder consists of eight levels, organized into three broad categories: *non-participation*, *tokenism*, and *citizen power*. At the lower levels, participation is limited to symbolic actions or "*empty rituals*" where citizens have minimal influence. As one moves up the ladder, the degree of power shifts, transforming in levels where citizens exercise "*real power*" and can actively shape outcomes.

According to Arnstein (1969), the steps of the ladder are as follows:

1. *Manipulation* falls within the category of nonparticipation. Participants are often placed in advisory committees or similar formats to be persuaded by the initiators to accept their plan or idea. In this form, the participants do not have any significant influence.
2. *Therapy* is a form of nonparticipation where the participation takes the form of a therapy session. The focus is on "healing" instead of participating.
3. *Informing* is based on symbolism. It is then mainly about informing citizens about their rights, responsibilities and options. This way is the first step towards participation but is often a one-way flow of information.
4. *Consultation* deals with obtaining information from participants. There is still no guarantee in this form that anything will actually be done with their opinions and therefore it also falls under tokenism.
5. *Placation* uses tokenism but is a small measure of influence. In this form, for example, individuals are placed on boards that are representative of the participants and can thus influence direction.
6. *Partnership* falls into the category where citizens have some degree of power. Through a partnership, both parties share decision-making and planning.
7. *Delegated power* is about negotiations between participants and initiators. In this, participants can gain a dominant view and thus exert real influence.
8. *Citizen control* is the highest step in the ladder. In it, citizens are in control and have the ability to manage programmes and policies. They have the authorisation.

The ladder underscores the significance of participation, emphasizing that meaningful involvement necessitates empowering citizens with the ability to influence decisions. It serves as a valuable framework for assessing participatory processes. The goals of a participation process can vary. These goals can be assessed and categorized using the ladder and related to a specific participation method. Thus, the framework serves as a foundation against which all participation initiatives can be evaluated and categorised.

### 3.2.2 Three-dimensional classification

In the classification of participation, Arnstein's model is one-dimensional which addresses the level of involvement and the weight of influence, but this is not the only dimension of participation (Bobbio, 2019). To design and evaluate a participation, another dimension in addition to Arnstein needs to be considered. The model of Fung (2006) contains three dimensions and are shown in Figure 4, Figure 5 and Figure 6. In Figure 6, the extent of authority and power is relatively similar to the ladder of Arnstein. Figure 5, participant selection methods, reflects the dimensions of participants and in what way the participants are included in the participation. Figure 4, modes of communication and decision, addresses the intensity of a participation. Together these models can form a three-dimensional framework to assess and categorise participation processes. "... participation serves three particularly important democratic values: legitimacy, justice, and the effectiveness of public action. Furthermore, no single participatory design is suited to serving all three values simultaneously; particular designs are

*suited to specific objectives.*” (Fung, 2006, p. 74). According to Fung not all participation designs can serve all these values since it is not a one-dimensional model, but three dimensional, see Figure 7. This figure is a combination of the three separated models of Fung. All participation methods can be placed in such a three-dimensional model and indicate three elements in a participation, the participants, communication and power, or in short who, how and what. A combination of these elements constitutes a participation.

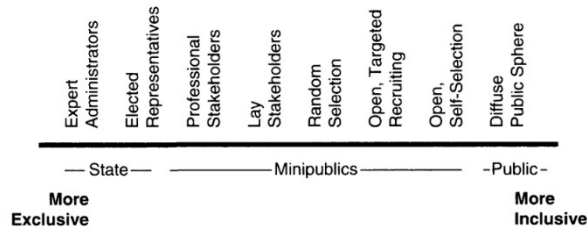


Figure 5 Participant Selection Methods (Fung, 2006)

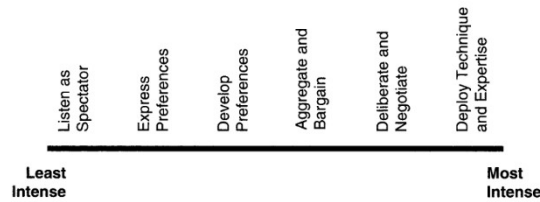


Figure 4 Modes of Communication and Decision (Fung, 2006)

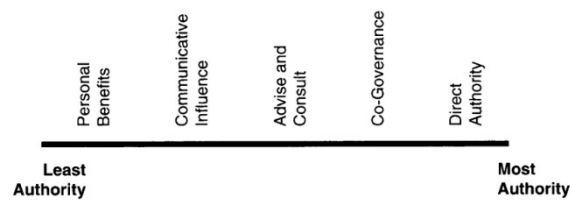


Figure 6 Extent of Authority and Power (Fung, 2006)

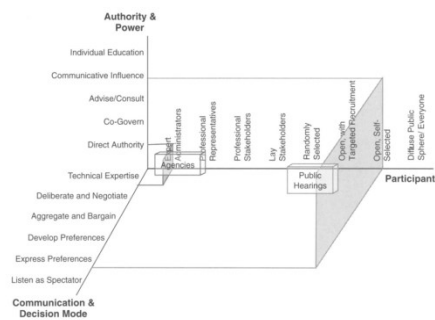


Figure 7 Three-dimensional: Democracy Cube (Fung, 2006)



multiple objectives (Stelzle & Noennig, 2019). When the goal is to receive feedback or provide information, online tools are generally more prevalent. For objectives such as problem-solving, offline methods are more commonly used due to their higher communication effectiveness (Stelzle & Noennig, 2019). As shown in Figure 8, there are numerous methods available, providing opportunities for customization. Higher levels of participation require well-informed participants, necessitating multiple methods to achieve this (Stelzle & Noennig, 2019). In such cases, informing is not the sole objective; methods related to co-designing, for example, also play a role. The higher levels of participation are based on a greater degree of "power" and interests, as previously explained using the frameworks of Arnstein and Fung. According to Stelzle and Noennig (2019) *"online tools or methods for massive co-design are still an unexplored field."* This demonstrates that there is still significant room for development in the field of online participation.

### 3.2.4 Successful participation

When a goal is set, the question naturally arises as to whether it has been successfully achieved. The success of a goal depends on various factors, with both the participant and the initiator playing central roles. Since the initiator must adapt their methods to align with the goals, understanding how participants perceive success is crucial.

For the initiator, the success of participation largely depends on their motives (Verheul et al., 2021). In a legal context, for example, participation is deemed successful from the initiator's perspective if it is approved by the relevant authority. However, this definition of success does not necessarily align with the participant's perspective. Participants evaluate success based on their personal experiences and perceptions, often independent of the objectives set by the municipality or initiator. This divergence means that the degree of success can vary significantly among participants, as some prioritize personal interests while others advocate for collective benefits (Verheul et al., 2021).

Figure 9 illustrates how success is perceived differently by each stakeholder. From the perspective of developers and municipalities, objectives are typically clear, making it easier to assess success. While the government focuses on serving the broader public interest, private initiators present a more complex case. The private initiatives will be explored further in section 3.2.5 of Private Organised Participation (POP).

	Sociaal-communicatieve denkwijze	Financieel-economische denkwijze	Juridisch- planologische denkwijze	Politiek-democratische denkwijze
<b>Private initiatiefnemer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Goede verstandhouding met omgeving en overheid</li> <li>Geen negatieve pers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kostenreductie door voorkomen van vertraging door procedures</li> <li>Planverrijking</li> <li>Beperkte kosten voor aanpassing of compensatie</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verkrijgen van omgevingsvergunning</li> <li>Geen of geen langdurige juridische procedures met opposenten</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voldoende steun in gemeenteraad voor plannen</li> </ul>
<b>Overheid</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participanten hebben belangen en voorkeuren kunnen uitwisselen, behartigen of overeenstemming over kunnen bereiken</li> <li>Duidelijke belangenafweging van initiatiefnemer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participatie en private planvorming leidt tot zo min mogelijk (begeleidings)kosten</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Belangen zijn opgehaald, afgewogen en gemotiveerd</li> <li>Vergunningverlening volgens de regels</li> <li>De rechter heeft een bindende uitspraak kunnen doen in geval van beroep</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Betrokkenheid van pluriforme samenleving</li> <li>Behartiging van uiteenlopende belangen</li> <li>Zorgvuldige afstemming in raad</li> </ul>
<b>Participant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serieuze inbreng mogelijk</li> <li>Overeenstemming over voorkeuren</li> <li>Gevoel van erkenning</li> <li>Heldere terugkoppeling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Geen of beperkte planschade</li> <li>Positieve uitstralings effecten op vastgoed</li> <li>Ruime compensatie</li> <li>Publieke voorziening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Geen kostbare rechtszaken nodig</li> <li>Erkenning van rechter in geval van beroep</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ruimte om te participeren</li> <li>Belangenbehartiging door raadsleden</li> <li>Erkenning in besluitvorming gemeenteraad</li> </ul>

Figure 9 Perception of Success within Participation (Verheul et al., 2021)

The participant's perspective is particularly complex due to the diversity of norms and values among individuals. This highlights the inherent challenges in defining success across different stakeholders. To gain a deeper understanding of participants and their perceptions of participation success, it is essential to explore these groups in greater detail. Tools such as the BSR lifestyles can provide valuable insights into these groups and their dynamics. These lifestyles will be explained later in the chapter.

As mentioned in Chapter 3.1, the entity responsible for conducting participation depends on the legal instrument. In the case of an environmental permit, it is the initiator's responsibility to carry out the participation process, but it is also possible that the initiator carries out voluntary participation without a legal obligation. This initiator can consist of various parties and can be initiated by either private or public parties. Public participation refers to the involvement of the broader public, such as citizens, whereas private participation involves market parties such as developers. The following section delves deeper into private participation initiatives, also known as Privately Organized Participation (POP).

### 3.2.5 Private Organised Participation (POP)

Chapter 3.1 on the Environment and Planning Act (EPA) highlights that the effort for participation comes from the initiator, namely the private parties. The municipality's role is limited to setting the conditions for participation in the form of motivation, but how private parties implement these conditions may vary. In the previous section, participation is explained. But how the private parties deal with the participation and what their goals are in a participation may differ. To gain a deeper understanding of the organisational side of participation, it is important to understand how Privately Organised Participation (POP) works.

Privately Organized Participation (POP) can be driven by various motivations for its execution. For developers, there are five main motivations for organizing participation themselves (Verheul et al., 2021). These are according to Verheul et al. (2021):

- Meeting public frameworks and creating political-administrative support
- Avoiding costly lawsuits and delays
- Obtaining market information and ideas for enhancing plans
- Opportunity to improve the project's and initiator's image
- Connecting ambassadors and co-creators

The motives of private parties are primarily focused on accelerating the process and avoiding delays. This is because private parties often have a profit motive, and the saying "time is money" frequently plays a role. Then there are aspects such as generating ideas and connecting ambassadors to projects. This can help gain more support from participants in a participation process and, in the long run, also help prevent objections.

#### *Roles*

Given that participation plays a significant role in applying for an environmental permit, which is reviewed by the municipality, the relationship between the two is crucial in a privately organized participation process. Achieving effective participation requires good coordination between private and public entities (Verheul et al., 2021). In the lead-up to a participation process, the private party has often already taken many steps, with many more still to be taken. The municipality plays an indispensable role in this process, and a high level of willingness and cooperation between the two is essential for a successful outcome.

The role of private parties in participation and their responsibility in organising fits within the phenomenon of private sector-led urban development. Some Anglo-Saxon countries experienced a new trend where private parties take a leading role in urban development in which they have the responsibility to manage and deliver urban areas and real estate (Heurkens, 2018). This increase in influence and responsibility also impacts their role in participation processes. Participants have certain expectations regarding area developments, and through participation, they aim or are required to express these expectations. However, when issues arise, attention will often turn to the municipality, as they are the ones who issued the permit, even though it was the private party's responsibility to carry out the participation. When participants are engaged in participation processes, it could also lead to disappointment and decreased trust in government when expectations are not fulfilled (Greenwood, 2007).

Not only will the municipality be held accountable, but the developer also share responsibility. They are the ones who must address the different perceptions within the project. When an area development is successful, both parties could potentially benefit. This demonstrates the significant

stakes for both parties as well as their shared responsibility. Over time, as more participation processes are implemented, this mindset among participants might gradually shift.

### 3.3 Understanding Participants

Understanding participants is important for participation processes. To understand these participants, categorisation is used. *“Categorization is a core psychological process that is central to decision making.”* (Hamilton et al., 2010). Different categories of participants can help in understanding how certain groups make choices and what their motivations are. For example, by dividing participants into specific groups, a participation can be better tailored to that specific group and can better reflect their psychological process.

In participatory processes, understanding the participants is a critical component of ensuring meaningful engagement. Within the context of area development, participants represent a highly diverse group, characterized by varied interests and motivations for involvement. This diversity inherently shapes their perceptions and attitudes toward projects initiated by private entities, influencing the dynamics and outcomes of the participation process. Participants who are engaging in participation processes have different perceptions of what participation is and what their purpose is in the participation (Källström & Smith, 2023).

#### 3.3.1 Participants’ perceptions

There are multiple studies about understanding the participants. The study by Källström & Smith (2023) for example, examines how participants in a participatory process can be categorized based on their levels of engagement, interaction, influence, and empowerment. The participation spectrum is shown in Figure 10 and identifies eight distinct types, each reflecting different perceptions and interpretations of the participatory process. For instance, some participants prioritize *“to be informed”*, while others focus on *“to be consulted”*. These preferences can vary significantly from person to person. However, this classification of participants does not account for their lifestyles or how they prefer to be engaged in ways that align with their way of living.

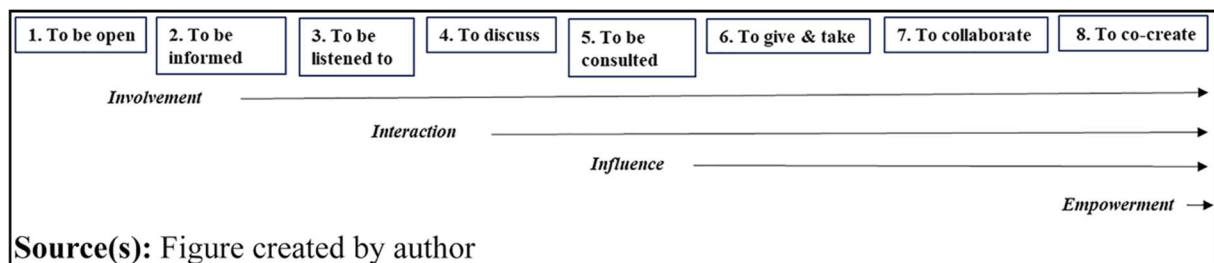


Figure 10 Participation Spectrum (Källström & Smith, 2023)

#### 3.3.2 Brand Strategy Research (BSR)

Many private entities and municipalities use the Brand Strategy Research (BSR) lifestyle model to better understand their target groups. Housing association Ymere for example, is using this model to tailor their approach to the personal preferences of tenants (MarketResponse, 2024). The BSR lifestyles are based on scientific research into the desires and needs of consumers (MarketResponse, 2024). The BSR lifestyles assist in segmentation by utilizing socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education, affluence, and household composition, as well as psychographic characteristics like lifestyle, motivations, and drivers. The focus on psychographic characteristics makes the BSR model distinctive compared to other categorization methods. It recognizes that individuals with similar socio-demographic profiles may make completely different choices, which are better explained by psychographic characteristics (MarketResponse, 2024). Using socio-demographic characteristics, a programmatic outline of target groups can be created. However, addressing the conceptual aspect is

more complex and requires tailoring to the specific target group. The BSR model can assist in this process, making it a suitable tool for various stakeholders.

The sociographic and psychological aspects are represented on two axes in the BSR model. The sociological characteristics range from “ego” to “group”, indicating the extent to which an individual is oriented toward group dynamics or is more individualistic. The more individualistic a person is, the more their choices are influenced by personal impact. Conversely, those on the group-oriented side place greater emphasis on collective interests when making decisions (MarketResponse, 2024). The psychological axis relates to how individuals manage emotions. Some people are more “introvert” and tend to keep their emotions to themselves, while extroverted individuals are more “extravert”. When these two axes are combined, they form Figure 11.

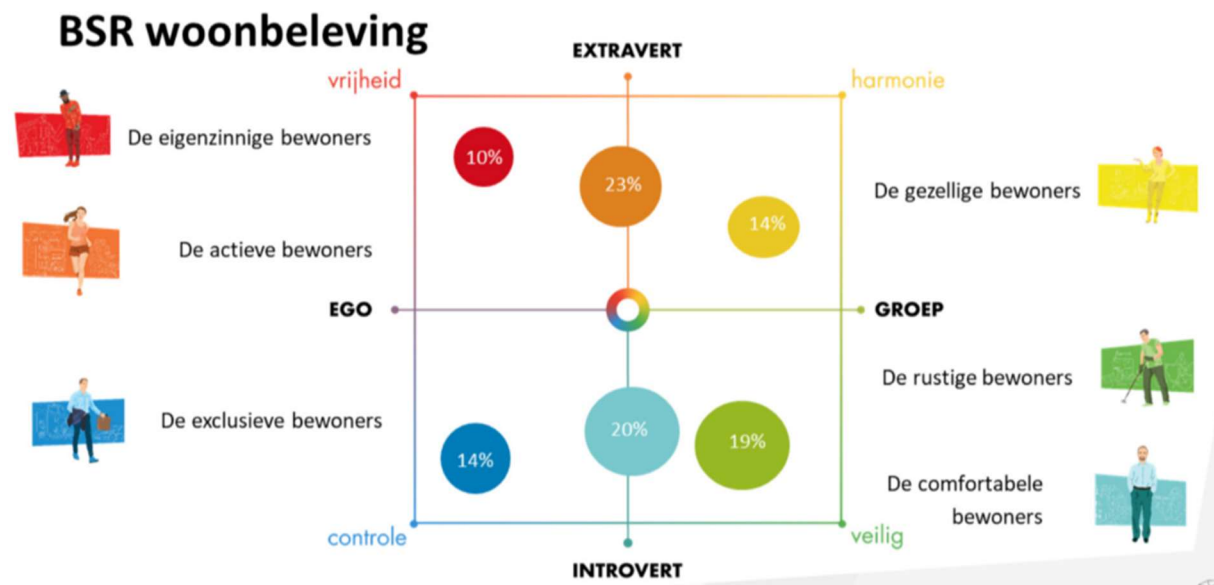


Figure 11 Brand Strategy Model (MarketResponse, 2024)

Individuals can be categorized into four primary color-coded lifestyle types, each representing distinct characteristics. Additionally, there are two sub-colors, orange and aqua, which lie between different primary colors but possess distinct characteristics, making them a separate category. Every individual exhibits traits from all four categories, while one colour typically emerges as dominant. In this framework, an individual is classified based on their dominant colour. The red lifestyle emphasizes personal freedom, the yellow lifestyle prioritizes harmony and social connection, the green lifestyle values security and stability, and the blue lifestyle is centered on control and structure.

The characteristics of the groups can be summarized as follows (MarketResponse, 2024):

- The blue lifestyle is called the exclusive resident and is characterized by being goal-oriented, confident, entrepreneurial, and recognition of achievements.
- The red lifestyle represents the independent-minded resident and is characterized by creativity, adventurousness, intelligence, and thoughtfulness. They are social and show an interest in others however, their own home plays an important role and is primarily for themselves.
- The orange lifestyle represents the active resident and is characterized by spontaneity and a love for socializing. They are often impulsive with strong personalities. Action is very

important to them, and they enjoy engaging in activities. They value liveliness and seek environments that offer ample opportunities for sports and relaxation.

- The green lifestyle represents the calm residents who value anonymity, tranquillity, and privacy. Thoughtfulness is essential to them, and they are not very outgoing. They appreciate having a place where they can retreat and enjoy solitude.
- The yellow lifestyle represents the sociable residents who are spontaneous, helpful, and place great importance on social connectedness. Everyone is welcome, and a strong bond with the neighbourhood is essential to them. They seek a friendly and warm atmosphere.
- The aqua lifestyle represents the comfortable residents who value tranquillity and safety in their neighbourhood. Making balanced decisions and being thoughtful are important to them. They appreciate having their own space but also believe in maintaining a sense of community where neighbours can always rely on each other.

The BSR lifestyles model can thus serve as a categorisation of citizens. Depending on the main colour that a particular person is, there are different preferences for participation and also have their own way of decision-making. It is possible that certain colours respond differently to a specific participation method. This will be explored further in this research.

### 3.4 Kijk op de Wijk (KodW)

An important central element in this research is *Kijk op de Wijk* (KodW), a scientifically-based approach developed by VORM to map neighbourhood liveability with the help of residents. VORM is a Contractor and developer in the Netherlands, focussing on residential (area) development. The goal of *Kijk op de Wijk* is to continuously assess, improve, and monitor the liveability of a neighbourhood. This approach consists of three phases and four steps: *Buurtvisievormer*, *Buurtpeiling*, *Buurtformule*, and finally, *Buurtpanel* (Sedighi, 2024).

#### *Phase 1*

Phase 1 consists of two steps, the *Buurtvisievormer* and *Buurtpeiling*. In the *Buurtvisievormer* step, data is analysed to map out a neighbourhood's qualities and opportunities. This data comes from public data sources such as CBS. All those data sources are matched to certain liveability themes to measure a neighbourhood's performance. Those liveability themes are *Social cohesion*, *Identity*, *Inclusiveness*, *Social security* and *Wellbeing*. This step is conducted by the developer in an online portal.

In *Buurtpeiling*, the public data and results from *Buurtvisievormer* are validated through statements presented to neighbourhood residents via an app. This step yields an overview of performance within a neighbourhood, identifying what could be improved and what is perceived as a strength. This is based on the liveability themes. This step is carried out by the participants. By conducting the *Buurtvisievormer* first, targeted propositions can be presented to residents and local residents. This allows elements that are less relevant to be omitted. This step provides a validated assessment of a neighbourhood's liveability, specified in 5 themes.

#### *Phase 2*

Phase two consists of the *Buurtformule* and is the core of *Kijk op de Wijk*. In *Buurtformule*, solutions are proposed for the issues on specific themes, defined in the *Buurtpeiling* that require improvement. These design solutions are based on proven patterns, which have been examined by ethnographic research. To improve certain themes, a certain set of design tools can be selected in the *Buurtformule* to improve these themes. Examples of these design tools could include benches in public spaces, out of the way parking or tree placement. These design tools can be selected according to the characteristics of a neighbourhood. For instance, certain resources may be missing or already present.

#### *Phase 3*

In phase 3, the final phase, the *Buurtpanel* will be implemented. The *Buurtpanel* uses the design tools selected in the *Buurtformule* as input. Through an interactive game, residents and other stakeholders can indicate their preferences for specific design tools. For example, they have to make a choice between trees on the street with more greenery or more parking spots. The participants have a fictitious budget which they have to work with. Given that they cannot choose everything because of this budget, they have to make choices between, for example, greenery or parking. This can help in setting priorities. The results of this game can be used by the developer to gain insight into residents' desires and implement these preferences in the planning process. The *Buurtformule* step uses gamification to encourage residents to engage in this form of participation. The results are fed into the design process and can then be presented back to the residents during a central meeting.

*Kijk op de Wijk* is thus an approach that involves residents at different times and in different ways in an area development process. KodW is an interesting method to study as it holds multiple steps that utilize different techniques to activate participants. Validating certain findings can provide a reliable and insightful means of participation. This approach also offers the opportunity to reach a wide range of residents, as the *Buurtpeiling* and *Buurtpanel* use online tools.

KodW is a relatively new and innovative way of implementing participation. Phase 1 has been used several times in different tenders and developments. Through the *Buurtvisievormer*, themes were identified where attention needed to be focused. In the process, tender promises were made to implement the follow-up steps of KodW. This involved about 5 projects in which the full phase 1 was implemented. Of these 5 projects, there is one in which phase 3 has been fully implemented as a participation method. Several more projects are planned to implement KodW. Given that KodW is very new, there are opportunities to further expand and improve this method. The study will further explore what stakeholders' experiences of KodW are and how it can be improved. This will be examined in the research at a later stage.

### 3.5 Conclusion

The literature review has provided a foundational understanding of key concepts, frameworks, and methodologies relevant to this research. It explores the Environment and Planning Act (EPA), participation in urban development, private initiatives, the Kijk op de Wijk (KodW) framework, and models like the BSR lifestyles.

The EPA integrates 26 laws into a streamlined framework aimed at simplifying regulations and expediting decision-making. Central to the EPA is stakeholder participation, which is crucial for incorporating diverse perspectives and enhancing decision quality. Participation is mandatory for projects deviating from environment plans, with municipalities setting policies that private parties must adapt to. This creates challenges but also highlights the importance of effective collaboration between developers and municipalities.

Participation methods vary from symbolic involvement to meaningful empowerment. Models such as Arnstein's Ladder and Fung's framework classify these methods and emphasize tailoring approaches to participants' knowledge and engagement levels. The research of Stelzle & Noennig identifies objectives like information sharing, feedback gathering, cooperation, co-design, vision development, conflict resolution, and project optimization. Addressing these objectives requires strategies that reflect stakeholders' diverse needs and preferences.

Private Organized Participation (POP) is driven by objectives such as meeting regulatory requirements, avoiding delays, and leveraging community input to enhance project outcomes. However, poorly managed participation can erode trust, underscoring the need for structured processes. Tools like the BSR lifestyles model categorize participants by sociographic and psychographic traits, enabling more tailored engagement. This inclusivity fosters trust and cooperation, ensuring outcomes align with diverse stakeholder needs.

KodW, developed by VORM, is a participatory methodology that employs tools such as surveys, gamification, and data validation to capture actionable insights. It ensures continuous engagement across project lifecycles, building trust and promoting collaboration. KodW's innovative approach aligns with the complexities of urban development but requires refinement to better navigate regulatory frameworks and ensure inclusivity.

Participation in urban development remains a complex but rewarding process. Aligning regulatory requirements, managing stakeholder expectations, and achieving consistent implementation present ongoing challenges. Yet, opportunities to foster trust, enhance decision-making, and create inclusive spaces underscore the value of participatory frameworks. These insights will guide future research, particularly in refining KodW to address these challenges and enhance its applicability.

## 4 Research Methods

In this chapter, the type of research will first be explained, serving as the foundation for the study and providing context for the subsequent steps. Following this, the research design and associated methods will be elaborated upon. Each research question will be addressed individually, outlining how the research is structured for each. Depending on the sub-question, the relevant cases will also be explained, along with the methods used to collect data from these cases.

Subsequently, the process of case selection will be detailed, highlighting the selection criteria applied to ensure the relevance of the chosen cases. Following the selection criteria, the variables—or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)—examined within the cases and sub-questions will be discussed. Finally, the chapter concludes with an explanation of how data is collected and subsequently analysed.

### 4.1 Type of study

The research adopts an exploratory approach to investigate the new method "Kijk op de Wijk." Given its recent introduction, data on "Kijk op de Wijk" is relatively scarce, providing an opportunity to deepen understanding of the method and identify areas for improvement. The study employs a deductive approach, characterized by testing the validity of a theory. Specifically, it examines whether "Kijk op de Wijk" can be effectively utilized as a privately organized participation method under the Environment and Planning Act (EPA). This research seeks to assess the feasibility of this application and identify the conditions required for its successful implementation.

To achieve these objectives, the study primarily uses a qualitative approach, focusing on "Kijk op de Wijk" and the relationships between its various concepts. As a strategic instrument for participation processes, a qualitative methodology enables a deeper understanding of its mechanisms and potential. While the research includes some quantitative data, this information is analysed to draw and support qualitative conclusions.

Data collection involves a combination of primary and secondary sources. Primary data is gathered through interviews and direct observations, while secondary data is sourced from VORM's databases and other relevant datasets. How the data will be processed, including ethical considerations will be discussed in the Data Management Plan (DMP). The mixed approach ensures a comprehensive analysis, contributing to a nuanced evaluation of "Kijk op de Wijk" and its role in participation under the EPA.

## 4.2 Research design & methods

Depending on the sub-question, different approaches are used to structure the research. The combination of various methods provides diverse data sources, and the outcomes of one sub-question are utilized to address other sub-questions. Sub-question 1 will form the theoretical background of the research. This will be used in further research in sub-questions 2 and 3 that deal with the use of KodW. Finally, sub-question 4 will use the data collected in sub-questions 1, 2 and 3. These questions can help collect improvements and compare performance. Combined, sub-questions 1 to 4 will help answer the main question. See Figure 12 for the research design. The following section delves deeper into the different research methods employed to answer the sub-questions.

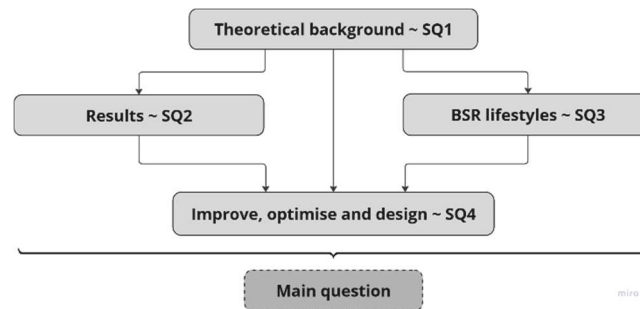


Figure 12 Research Design (Own work)

### 4.2.1 Sub-question 1

Sub-question 1 will be addressed through a combination of a literature and document review, supported by interviews, see Figure 13. To situate "Kijk op de Wijk" (KodW) within the broader context of participation, a comparison will be made with other participation methods.

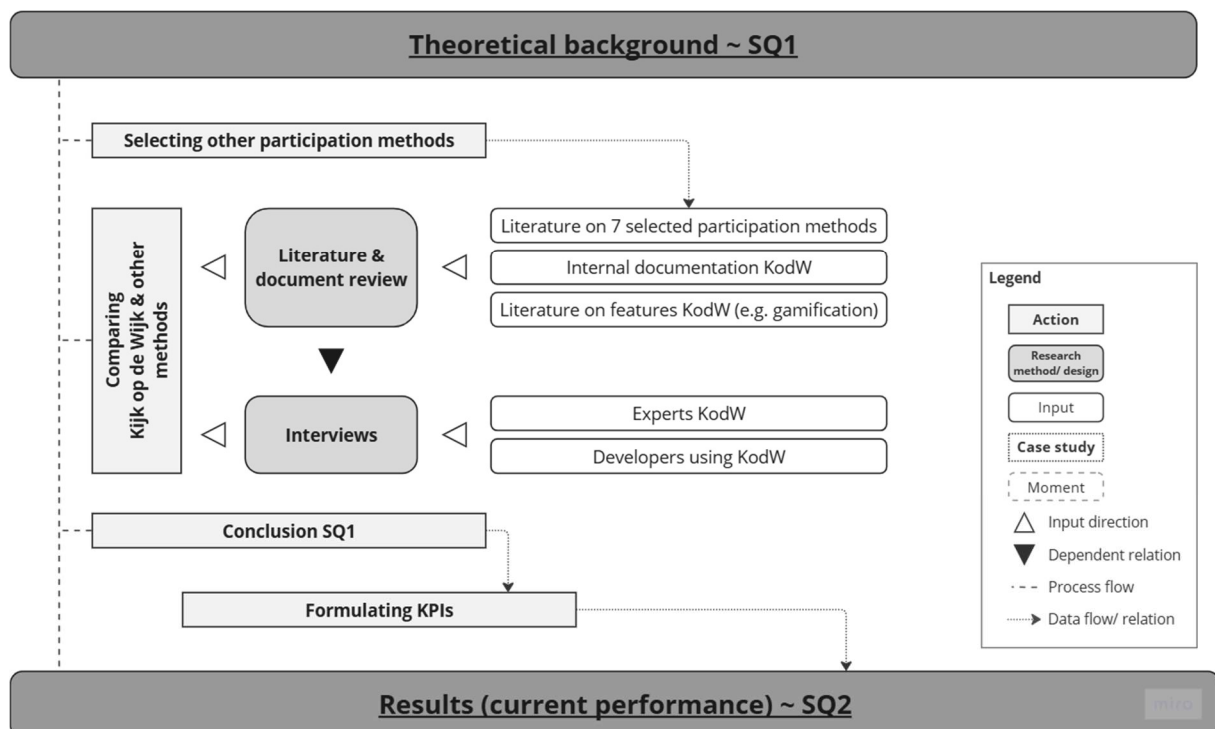


Figure 13 Research design & methods sub-question 1 (Own work)

### *Selecting other participation methods*

The selection of other participation methods focuses on seven distinct forms of participation, each corresponding to one of the seven objectives identified by Stelzle and Noennig (2019), as discussed in Section 3.2.3. These objectives provide a structured framework for analyzing and comparing the selected participation methods.

The decision to compare these seven participation methods with KodW stems from their alignment with varied participation goals, as noted by Stelzle and Noennig (2019). This approach enables a broader contextualization of KodW, emphasizing its unique characteristics and illustrating how it aligns or diverges from these varied objectives. By situating KodW within this comparative framework, the analysis offers deeper insights into its applicability and effectiveness across diverse participatory goals.

### *Document and literature review*

The literature review will examine the typical characteristics of various participation methods, focusing specifically on those that are commonly used or serve as foundational approaches to participation. Relevant literature on these methods will be analysed for this purpose. The primary objective of the literature review of SQ1 is to identify the most common characteristics of these participation methods, as well as their positive and negative aspects. These findings will then be linked to KodW to better understand its characteristics. For instance, it may be found that certain characteristics typical of other participation methods are also key characteristics of KodW. This comparison will contribute to a deeper exploration of KodW's attributes and its position within the broader spectrum of participation approaches.

To understand the characteristics of "Kijk op de Wijk" (KodW), relevant available documents and reports related to KodW will be analysed in the document review. The documents and literature related to Kijk op de Wijk in this sub-question consist, for example, of explanations of the method, aspects such as gamification, the different phases of KodW, the online portal, internal documents and presentations to external parties, among others. All these documents are available through VORM.

To further analyse and explore the features, another literature review will be conducted. The focus is on similar features such as gamification or the different phases of KodW. A link will be established between findings from existing documents and literature. Establishing this link can help in further understanding the method KodW. For example, by looking at gamification theory in the literature, it may be possible to identify patterns perhaps not directly visible. By linking findings from VORM's documentation to external literary sources, typical characteristics can be identified.

### *Interviews*

Additionally, interviews will be conducted with experts from VORM who are knowledgeable about KodW. This combined approach provides a comprehensive definition and is intended as validation of typical characteristics of KodW as defined in the literature and document review. The insights provided by the experts can help in finding new characteristics or identifying areas of improvement. These interviewees have experience in using participation results in developments. So collecting insights for improvement here can also be very valuable for the other research questions. The interviews will therefore focus on the developers' use of KodW and their expectations of the method, such as its perceived benefits, disadvantages and challenges.

This analysis will help identify key characteristics of KodW, which will serve as a foundation for comparison and other sub-questions. The characteristics of KodW will help identify the case variables, also called the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), used for analysing the results of KodW in practice in sub-question 2.

## 4.2.2 Sub-question 2

Sub-question 2 focuses on the results in practice of "Kijk op de Wijk" (KodW). To address this question, case studies are utilized. The case study selection process and case variables (KPIs) are explained in sections 4.3 and 4.4. In this section the different cases are explained, related to the research design to answer sub-question 2. Depending on the case, different research methods are used. Figure 14 illustrates the research design in relation to the methods.

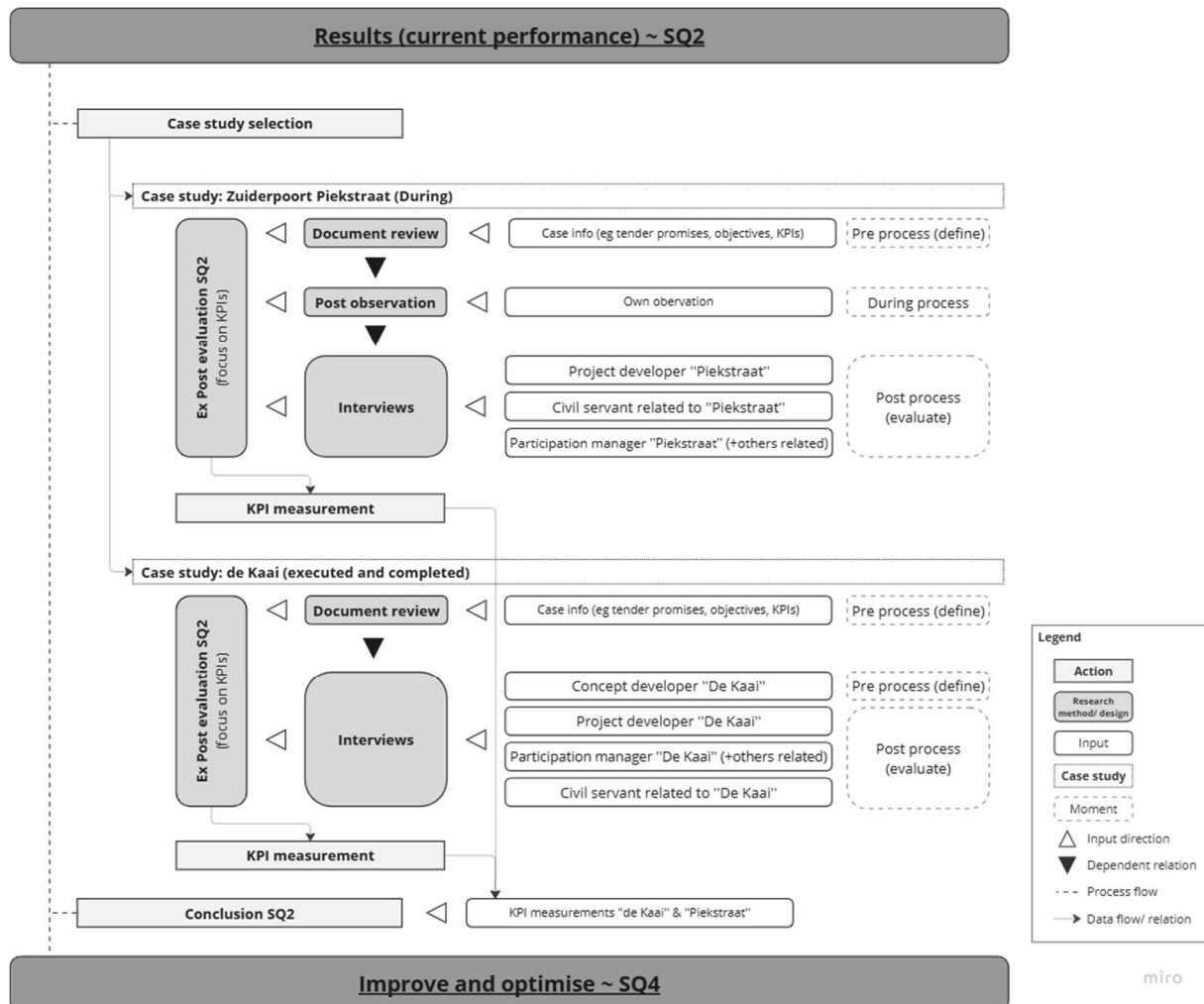


Figure 14 Research design & methods sub-question 2 (Own work)

### De Kaai

The first case is "De Kaai", an urban development project undertaken by VORM, situated at the Nassaukade in Rotterdam. This project aims to revitalize a waterfront area, integrating residential, commercial, and recreational spaces to create a vibrant, multifunctional environment. Designed with a focus on sustainability and community engagement, "De Kaai" embodies a modern approach to urban planning. As a completed project, "De Kaai" aligns with the "after" case criterion – which will be explained in section 4.3 – of this research, offering an opportunity for evaluation. The development has gone through all phases of "Kijk op de Wijk" (KodW) and is thus already completed. The case of "De Kaai" provides an opportunity to reflect on the outcomes of the KodW method, assess its effectiveness in meeting project objectives, and identify areas for improvement. Insights from this case will contribute to a broader understanding of how KodW can be refined to optimize participation processes in future projects.

## Research design

The research design for the "De Kaai" case is structured as an ex-post evaluation, combining a document review and interviews to assess the participation process. The primary focus is on understanding the goals and expectations associated with the project's participatory framework and eventually identifying the results of using KodW in practice. Identifying the results will be done according to the case study variables (KPIs), defined in SQ1.

### *Document Review*

The document review serves to identify both the overarching goals and specific expectations within the participation process of "De Kaai." It focuses on the variables outlined in the subsequent section 4.4, *Case Variables (KPIs)*, providing a targeted approach to the analysis. Among others, the following documents are consulted:

- Project information,
- Participation evaluation forms,
- Kijk op de Wijk data on the Kaai,
- Municipal documents related to the Kaai,
- Tender commitments, and
- Other relevant documents related to the project.

Additionally, the review incorporates literature on the seven goals of participation as defined by Stelzle & Noennig (2019). This literature, also referenced in Sub-question 1, offers a theoretical foundation for understanding participation processes. The objectives of the document review are trying to identify the stated goals and expectations for participation in "De Kaai." And to evaluate the initial expectations and objectives related to the defined variables. The document review will serve as a *pre-process* definition and create the basis for evaluation to benchmark the results at the end.

### *Interviews*

The insights gained from the document review will be complemented by interviews, which will provide further context and validation of the findings. Together, these methods enable an evaluation of the participation process and its outcomes in "De Kaai". The interviews are divided into two parts. The first part consists of interviews with the concept developers and other stakeholders in the tender phase who established the foundational conditions for the participation process. In the interviews with those involved in the tender phase, the findings from the document review will be validated. This part of the research will help in the *pre-process* definition.

The second part consists of interviews with the developers who actually carried out the participation process, civil servants from the municipality and others involved in the participation process of the Kaai. In these interviews, the findings from the earlier interviews and document review will be included to test whether the objectives are achieved. This is necessary to compare the results *pre* and *post process*.

This combined approach ensures a thorough understanding of the project's participation process and its performance. It provides the opportunity to evaluate the results of the participation process and to what extent the goals and expectations of the variables have been achieved. This evaluation will incorporate the KPIs identified in SQ1. These KPIs are the indicators to measure the results of KodW in practice and lay the foundation for further improvements, used in SQ4.

### *Zuiderpoort Piekstraat*

The "Zuiderpoort Piekstraat" project is a transformative urban development of VORM, located along the Piekstraat in Rotterdam. Envisioned as a mixed-use development, the project combines residential spaces with commercial and recreational facilities, while the goal is to reflect the industrial heritage of the area while meeting contemporary sustainability standards. Currently, "Zuiderpoort Piekstraat" is in the development phase, making it a suitable case for the "during" case criterion of this research. The participation process has already completed the first stages of KodW and will start the next participation process in the coming period. The last stage of KodW will be implemented during a residents' meeting. This phase presents an opportunity to observe the practical execution of KodW, providing insights into the dynamics of stakeholder engagement, the alignment of community input with project goals, and real-time observations during the last step of the participation process. The "Zuiderpoort Piekstraat" case offers valuable insights into the application and effectiveness of KodW in a live setting, enabling a deeper understanding of the method's potential to shape urban development projects.

### *Research design*

The research design for the "Zuiderpoort Piekstraat" case used an ex-post evaluation to assess the participation process and the performance of "Kijk op de Wijk". Within this ex-post evaluation, a document review, Post-observation and interviews will be conducted.

#### *Document Review*

The document review focuses on gathering and analysing information specific to the case. This includes documents related to the project, municipal documents outlining expectations for participation in the area and data already collected with Kijk op de Wijk. The objective of this review is to identify the goals and expectations on the KPIs for participation, similar to the approach used in the Kaai case. It seeks to uncover the objectives and expectations associated with the variables defined in the subsequent section 4.4 *Case Variables (KPIs)*. This method in the research is used to define the pre-process and realises the basis for an evaluation to test whether objectives have been achieved.

#### *Post-Observation*

Following the document review, a post-observation phase will take place. This phase involves observing how KodW performs in practice during the ongoing participation process. Observations will focus on the performance of the defined variables (KPIs) and the overall effectiveness of KodW. This step is used to gather data for the evaluation during executing and interaction with participants.

#### *Interviews*

The insights gathered during the post-observation and document review will be evaluated through interviews with the associated developers and civil servants involved in the Piekstraat case. These interviews aim to:

1. Assess the areas where KodW performs well.
2. Understand the results and impacts of using KodW in practice.
3. Identify potential areas for improvement in the KodW methodology.

By combining these methods, the research aims to assess the performance of KodW and to provide an evaluation of KodW's application in the "Zuiderpoort Piekstraat" project. This evaluation will consider the KPIs to compare the results of the different cases. This approach not only evaluates the performance of KodW on those KPIs, but also highlights areas for refinement, contributing valuable insights for enhancing the participation process in future projects and SQ4.

## Conclusion

In the last step, the measurements on the KPIs of both cases are evaluated and analysed. The goal is to compare the results on the KPIs to conclude what the results are of using KodW in practice. By defining the results, it creates opportunities for identifying areas of improvement which can be used as input in SQ4.

### 4.2.3 Sub-question 3

Sub-question 3 focuses on how "Kijk op de Wijk" (KodW) effectively leverages the BSR lifestyle profiles. Certain characteristics of KodW may align more effectively with specific lifestyle traits. For instance, the gamified elements of KodW might appeal strongly to individuals in the "red" lifestyle group who value creativity and adventurousness, while its structured feedback mechanisms could resonate with "blue" individuals who prioritize control and organization. Additionally, introverted individuals might feel more comfortable engaging with KodW through its online tools, while extroverted individuals might prefer more interactive, community-based engagements. This question aims to investigate and validate such aspects to understand how KodW can better cater to diverse lifestyles.

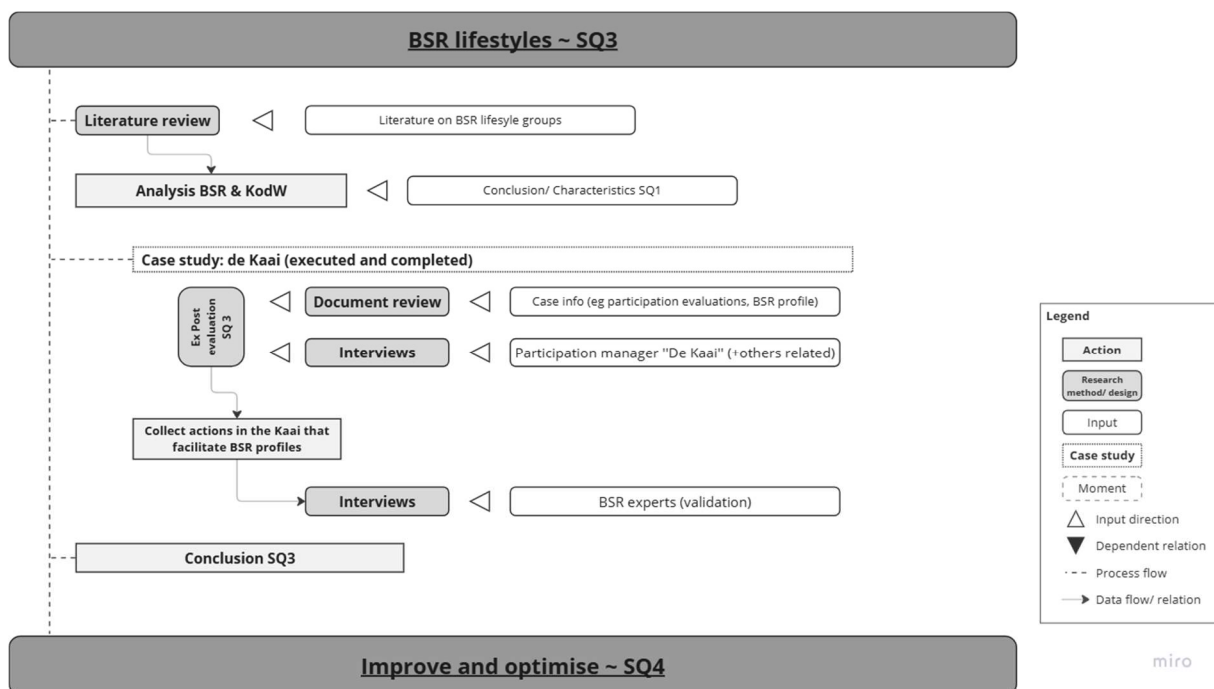


Figure 15 Research design & methods sub-question 3 (Own work)

## Research design

The research design employs various methods, including a literature review to analyse BSR lifestyle profiles, case studies to examine KodW's practical applications, and interviews with experts to validate findings. See Figure 15 for the overview of the research design.

First, a literature review will be conducted focusing on the different BSR lifestyle profiles to understand their characteristics in relation to participation processes. In the literature review, there will be a focus within the BSR styles on their characteristics, for example, the introverted and extroverted aspects of the groups. These findings will then be placed alongside KodW characteristics as defined in SQ1, in an analysis and look at how each BSR group is facilitated in its lifestyle. For example, "yellow" residents may value social contact and community interaction, while KodW relies on online tools. This could

result in these residents either participating less in KodW or engaging more, given their emphasis on public spaces as essential elements. Such findings will be explored in Sub-question 3.

These findings will then be compared to the "De Kaai" case in an ex-post evaluation. The current BSR profile and post-evaluation documents of "De Kaai" will be examined in a document review and analysed in relation to the insights from the literature review. For instance, specific characteristics of the "De Kaai" participants or actions during implementation may reflect unique interactions with KodW's features, offering concrete examples of alignment or misalignment with the BSR profiles. In advance, there will be an interview with the participation manager of the Kaai and others related. In this interview, characteristics of the BSR profiles will be reflected against actions conducted in the participation process of the Kaai. This evaluation will help to find possible new aspects that help to leverage the different lifestyles. Furthermore, it may be possible that the initiators of the participation in the Kaai have taken specific actions or activities in the participation process, to promote participants to engage. These activities can also expose, for example, shortcomings of KodW, given that it was necessary to organise this. These components can be evaluated and possibly included in the standard methodology to better facilitate BSR groups.

At last, there will be an interview with BSR experts. The interview with the BSR experts will validate the findings, ensuring that the findings are both contextually grounded and theoretically sound. The specific actions taken in the Kaai and KodW that facilitate various lifestyles concluded from the literature review and ex-post evaluation, will be presented to the BSR experts. The final outcome will provide insights into how KodW leverages different BSR profiles and will identify potential points of optimization to be addressed in Sub-question 4.

## 4.2.4 Sub-question 4

Sub-question 4 focuses on improving and optimizing the KodW. The basis for these improvements is derived from the other sub-questions, evaluations of existing cases, and the BSR lifestyle profiles. Sub-question 4 primarily employs a design research approach, see Figure 16. The design research process is iterative, incorporating feedback from multiple sources, including individuals, documents, and literature. The integration of research and solution design within a single process ensures that improvements are informed by both theoretical insights and practical applications (Afdeling Buitengewone Zaken, 2022).

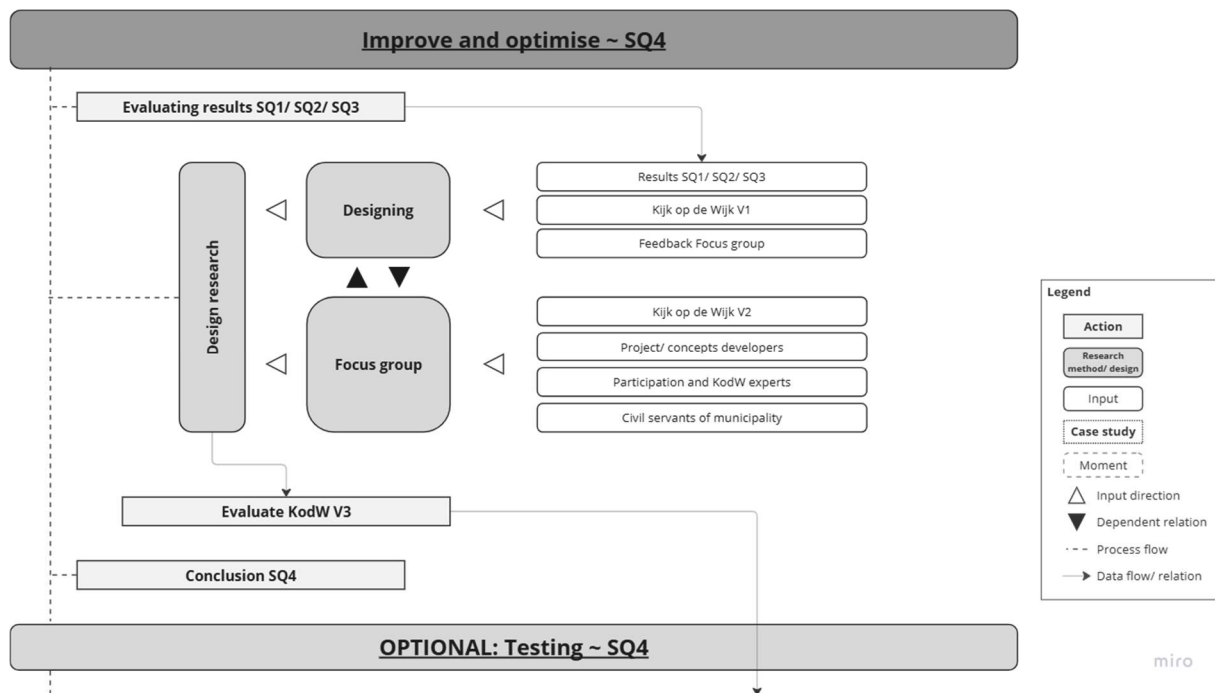


Figure 16 Research design & methods sub-question 4 (Own work)

The research design is shown in Figure 16. The research methods which are used, is a combination of designing and a focus group to test the optimisations. The basis of this sub-question is based on the insights and results from sub-questions one to three. These results are evaluated and implemented in the design process. Also, KodW version 1 is implemented in the design process. By implementing the improvements collected in the other subquestions, an improved version is created, KodW V2. This version is tested in a focus group. The results from the focus group are used to improve V2 further and create KodW V3. This version will be evaluated again, to eventually conclude SQ4, how to improve KodW.

### Focus group

To address Sub-Question 4, a focus group will be used in the design process. The focus group will provide qualitative insights by engaging experts and stakeholders in a structured discussion to validate proposed optimizations, identify potential challenges, and refine the methodology of KodW. Below, the methodology for organizing and executing the focus group is detailed.

#### Purpose of the Focus Group

The focus group aims to gather diverse perspectives from stakeholders and experts to assess and refine the proposed improvements to KodW. It will test the feasibility, effectiveness, and applicability of the enhancements while identifying new opportunities for optimization. The focus will be on integrating

KodW with the EPA and ensuring alignment with BSR lifestyles. The insights gained will be used in the design process to design KodW Version 3.

#### *Focus Group Design*

The focus group will involve six to ten participants, including experts in participation and KodW, project and concept developers, and municipal officials familiar with participatory processes. These participants will provide feedback on the optimizations and help identify further areas for improvement. The participants' practical knowledge of participation ensures that feedback is both relevant and actionable. In the focus group, concrete examples of optimizations will be presented for participants to evaluate, enabling a dynamic and open exchange of ideas where participants can collaboratively evaluate and refine proposed solutions in real time.

The focus group will begin with an introduction outlining the purpose and scope of the session, followed by a presentation of findings from previous sub-questions. The discussion will address the performance and potential of KodW's phases—Buurtvisievormer, Buurtpeiling, Buurtformule, and Buurtpanel—while exploring how KodW can be better tailored to accommodate different BSR lifestyles and initiators experience. Practical challenges related to implementation under the EPA will also be discussed.

Participants will evaluate the proposed optimizations for KodW Version 2, reviewing the suggested improvements in depth. Tools such as digital boards and mock-ups will be used to visually illustrate the proposed changes. Voting cards or ranking systems will facilitate prioritization of improvements, ensuring a structured and participatory decision-making process. The session will conclude with a summary of insights and identification of the next steps for incorporating feedback into the design process.

#### *Data Collection Methods*

Data collection will include session recordings, facilitator notes, and real-time feedback from participants. Audio recordings will be transcribed for detailed qualitative analysis. Observations will capture emerging themes while voting and ranking results will provide quantifiable insights into participant preferences.

#### *Integration of Findings*

The focus group will serve as an integral part of the iterative design process. KodW Version 2 will be tested during the focus group to evaluate its feasibility and effectiveness. Insights obtained will flow back into the design process, leading to refinements and the development of KodW Version 3. This refined version will address the shortcomings identified during the focus group, ensuring that it aligns with stakeholder expectations and practical requirements. KodW Version 3 will then be documented and prepared for further testing in subsequent future projects.

#### *Expected Outcomes*

The focus group is expected to validate the relevance and applicability of the proposed optimizations while generating actionable insights to address remaining gaps. The session will result in a more robust and inclusive KodW tool that aligns with EPA requirements and effectively caters to the diverse needs of stakeholders. This methodological approach ensures that the focus group acts as a critical step in refining KodW, contributing to its evolution as a tool for privately organized participation in area developments.

### Optional: Case study Hof van Maasdam

Project timelines can be very uncertain and volatile, certainty has been built into this research method by making components optional. The optional component of this research question is implementing the Hof van Maasdam case. Depending on the timeline of Hof van Maasdam project, different versions of KodW could be tested in practice. The proposed improvements of these versions could be tested in the case study of "Hof van Maasdam". This involves examining various KPIs, which are detailed in section 4.4.

The "Hof van Maasdam" project, developed by VORM, is a new residential project, currently in the early stages of development. Situated in Park 16Hoven, Rotterdam, the project plans to offer a diverse range of housing options catering to various market segments. A notable aspect of this development is the inclusion of a shared inner courtyard and associated amenities, the design of which will be co-created with residents using KodW. As the KodW process for "Hof van Maasdam" has not yet been completed, this case aligns with the "before" case criterion of this research. The early stage of the project allows for an exploration of stakeholder goals and expectations, as well as the flexibility to propose adjustments to the KodW methodology. This provides an opportunity to shape the participation process proactively and ensure its alignment with project objectives. The "Hof van Maasdam" case is relevant for addressing sub-question 4, which examines ways to enhance the methodology. By studying this case, the research can gain valuable insights into the planning and initial implementation of KodW.

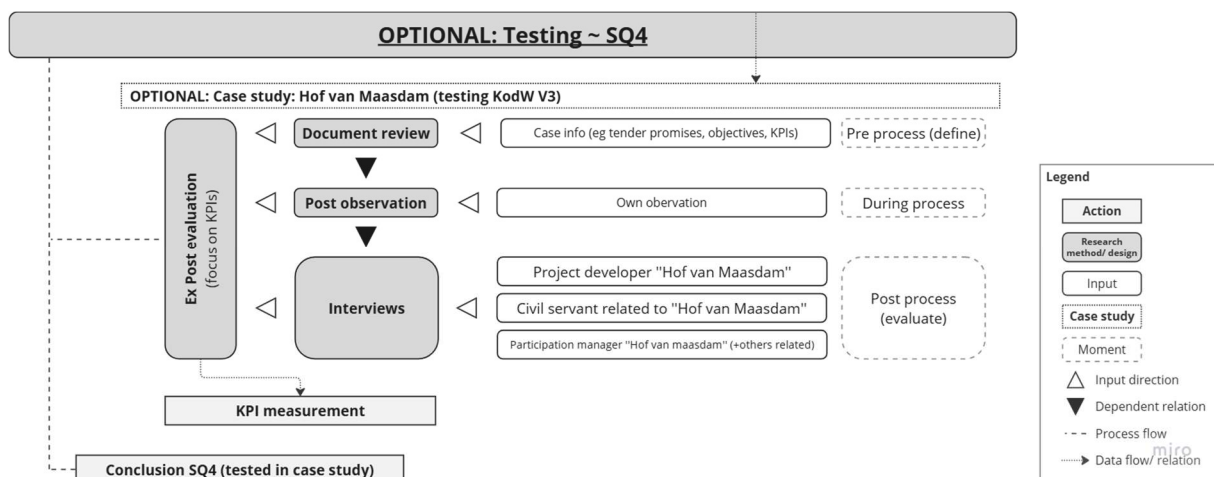


Figure 17 Optional: Research design & methods sub-question 4 (Own work)

#### Research design Hof van Maasdam

The research design for the "Hof van Maasdam" case uses an ex-post evaluation in combination with a document review, interviews and post-observation to evaluate the performance of the refined version of KodW, incorporating improvements based on the designing in SQ4 (see Figure 17).

#### Document Review

The document review serves as the foundation for identifying the goals and expectations associated with the defined variables, which are outlined in the subsequent section 4.4 *Case Variables*. The review will involve analysing project-related documents and other relevant materials detailing the participation process.

#### Interviews

The findings from the document review will be validated and expanded upon through interviews with project developers involved in "Hof van Maasdam." These interviews aim to:

1. Confirm the goals and expectations identified during the document review.
2. Uncover additional insights into the participation process.

#### Post-Observation

This case offers the opportunity to test a refined version of KodW, incorporating improvements derived from KodW V2 or KodW V3. During the implementation phase of KodW in "Hof van Maasdam," post-observation will be conducted to monitor how the revised versions unfold in practice. The observation will focus on the performance of KodW and its alignment with the identified goals and expectations based on the KPIs.

#### Ex Post Evaluation

Following the post-observation phase, an ex-post evaluation will be conducted through interviews with the developers involved in "Hof van Maasdam." These interviews will assess:

1. The effectiveness of the improvements made to KodW.
2. Areas where further refinements might be necessary.

#### Objective

The primary objective of this case is to test the performance of the refined KodW methodology and determine how well it addresses the conclusions drawn from earlier cases and sub-questions. This iterative approach provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of KodW and its potential for future implementation in participation processes.

### 4.3 Case selection

To select cases for the research, the focus is placed on the "Kijk op de Wijk" (KodW) method. KodW consists of various phases in which different actions are carried out. To effectively evaluate the results, it is essential to analyse these phases at different points in the process. These phases are characterized by four distinct components, as outlined in section 3.4. Consequently, the cases are selected based on these components. This results in a selection criterion requiring that the case has either been completed or will go through all the components from start to finish. This criterion ensures the formation of a comprehensive understanding of KodW.

The second selection criterion concerns the timing of the implementation. To gain a thorough understanding of the cases and KodW, it must be possible to evaluate the process before, during, and after its implementation.

- **Before** refers to cases where the KodW process has not yet been completed, leaving room for adjustments. This stage allows the researcher to identify the goals and expectations of the process. Since participation processes in area developments can be lengthy, it is crucial that at least the first component of KodW has already been initiated to ensure that the research timeline can be maintained. This case also gives the opportunity to test improvements for sub-question 4.
- **During** refers to cases where observations can be conducted during the execution of KodW's final component. This allows for insights into the process and, if necessary, provides opportunities for real-time adjustments.
- **After** refers to cases where the entire KodW process has been completed, covering all components. This stage provides the opportunity for reflection and contextualization, as the process has reached its conclusion. It aids in placing the process into perspective.

By adhering to these selection criteria, the research aims to comprehensively evaluate KodW across different stages of its implementation. As KodW is relatively new, there are still only a few cases where KodW has been fully implemented. Several cases are available where parts of KodW have been applied. But based on the selection criteria, 3 cases have been selected that can be used given the time frame and relevance. These are Kaai, Piekstraat and Hof van Maasdam. These cases have already been discussed earlier in the research design of the sub-questions.

## 4.4 Case study variables (KPIs)

The variables examined in the cases are presented in Table 1. Depending on the specific variable, different methods of data collection are employed. The collected data is then evaluated and contextualized. These variables are subject to change if new findings from the literature or interviews emerge that provide additional insights into KodW’s performance and areas for improvement.

The new insights will be the results of Sub question 1. The case variables are primarily designed to facilitate an effective analysis of the cases and ensure the collection of comparable data across different contexts. These variables can also be called qualitative Key Performance Indicators, or KPIs. These KPIs are the first indicative inventory of the KPIs and will be refined and finalised in sub-question 1. The KPIs will create a thematic framework, which can be used in the examination of the different sub-questions. In section 4.5 *data analysis* will be elaborated on the different forms of analysis, an explanation will be provided on how the analysis methods of Sub-question 1 result in the thematic framework, incorporating the KPIs. Additionally, it will be explained how this thematic framework is applied in the other sub-questions to analyse the results and optimizations of KodW.

Case variables			
No.	Name	Data collection	Definition
1	Time	Document Review: Analyze project timelines and schedules. Interviews: Ask initiators and developers if the process adhered to expected timelines. Observation: Note delays or on-schedule activities during KodW implementation.	Comparison of actual versus planned timelines The efficiency of the KodW process in terms of time taken to complete various phases Identification of phases with delays or inefficiencies Stakeholder perceptions of time efficiency
2	Usability	Interviews: Gather feedback from developers on KodW’s ease of implementation. Observation: Assess how seamlessly KodW is executed during sessions.	Clarity of KodW tool The ease of understanding and applying KodW in the participation process Ease of integration into project workflows. Feedback on obstacles encountered during implementation.
3	Municipal participation policy	Document Review: Analyze municipal policies and project compliance documents. Interviews: Discuss with municipal representatives and developers their perspectives on KodW’s alignment with policy.	Degree of compliance with municipal participation standards. The alignment of KodW with municipal requirements and policies on participation. Stakeholder feedback on adherence to policy expectations.
4	Satisfaction	Interviews: Directly ask initiators about their satisfaction with KodW. Document Review: Examine internal reports or feedback from developers	Satisfaction ratings from developers. The level of satisfaction of project initiators (developers) with the KodW process and its outcomes. Identification of factors contributing to or detracting from satisfaction.
5	Data output	Document Review: Analyze data produced during KodW, such as reports or surveys. Interviews: Ask developers how useful and actionable the KodW data was.	Accuracy and reliability of the data. The quality, relevance, and usefulness of the data generated through KodW for decision-making. Stakeholder feedback on the applicability of the data
6	Usefulness	Interviews: Collect insights from developers and stakeholders on KodW’s impact. Observation: Note real-time applications of KodW in resolving participation challenges.	Stakeholder perceptions of KodW’s relevance. The practical value of KodW in addressing participation goals and project needs. Practical examples of KodW contributions to project outcomes.
7	Impact on decision-making	Interviews: Discuss with developers and stakeholders the role of KodW in shaping decisions.	Stakeholder acknowledgment of KodW’s role in the decision-making process. The extent to which KodW influences key decisions in the development process.
8	Flexibility and adaptability	Observation: Observe how KodW adapts to issues during sessions. Interviews: Ask developers and participants about the responsiveness of KodW.	Stakeholder feedback on KodW’s flexibility. The ability of KodW to adjust to specific projects, challenges or changes during the participation process.
9	Meeting the expectations stakeholders	Interviews: Ask developers whether their initial expectations were met. Document Review: Compare project goals with KodW outcomes.	Degree of alignment between expected and actual outcomes. The extent to which KodW fulfills the goals and expectations set by the project initiators. Developer satisfaction with KodW’s performance.

Table 1 Case variables (KPIs) with their data collection, evaluation criteria and definition (Own work)

## 4.4 Data collection

The data collection in the research is dependent on the different research designs. In this section, the different data collections will be discussed. To ensure reliable data collection, each sub-question employs a combination of research methods. Table 2 outlines the various data collection methods corresponding to the research questions and methodologies. Table 2 details the methods used for data collection and the potential insights they provide.

Data Collection	SQ1		SQ2		SQ3		SQ4	
	How	What	How	What	How	What	How	What
Literature review	Database searches, Reference list mining, Citation tracking, Keyword searches, Consultation with experts	Scopus, Google scholar, Web of science, etc			Database searches, Reference list mining, Citation tracking, Keyword searches, Consultation with experts	Scopus, Google scholar, Web of science, etc		
Document review	Organisational Archives, Public records, Project-specific documentation, Management systems, Consultation with experts, Digital tools	VORM data on KodW, 4PS, Kijk op de Wijk Tool, Evaluation documentation, KodW presentations etc.	Organisational Archives, Public records, Project-specific documentation, Management systems, Consultation with experts, Digital Tools	VORM data of de Kaai and Piekstraat, Data from SQ1, Data on the KPIs, Municipal guidelines participation, 4PS, Project sharepoint	Organisational Archives, Public records, Project-specific documentation, Management systems, Consultation with experts	VORM data of de Kaai, Data from SQ1/ SQ2, evaluation documents participation, BSR data de Kaai	Organisational Archives, Public records, Project-specific documentation, Management systems, Consultation with experts	VORM data of Hof van Maasdam, Data from SQ1, SQ2, SQ3
Interview	Semi-structured	KodW experts, developers using KodW	Semi-structured	Project/ concept developer, Participation manager, Civil servant from municipality and others, all related tot the Kaai or Piekstraat	Semi-structured	BSR experts, participation managers de Kaai and other involved	Semi-structured	Project developers Hof van Maasdam, civil servants, participation manager Hof van Maasdam
Observation			Field notes, Behavioral Mapping, Checklists, Stakeholder interactions, Process monitoring	Observations during implementation of KodW in Piekstraat			Field notes, Behavioral Mapping, Checklists, Stakeholder interactions, Process monitoring	Observations during implementation of KodW in Hof van Maasdam
Designing							Input from other questions and focus group	SQ1, SQ2, SQ3 and feedback focus group (Optional: Hof van Maasdam feedback)
Focus Group							Session recordings, facilitator notes, and real-time feedback from participants, observations	Concept developer, Project developers, Participation/ KodW experts, Municipal officials

Table 2 Data collection by research method (Own work)

### Sub-question 1

The first sub-question focuses on understanding the characteristics of KodW and comparing it with other participation methods. To answer this question, a combination of a literature review, document analysis, and interviews is used. The literature review forms the foundation by providing theoretical insights into participation methods, drawing on sources such as academic databases (e.g., Scopus, Web of Science) and expert consultations. This is complemented by a document review of organisational archives and project-specific documentation from VORM, which offers practical information about KodW's application. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with KodW experts provide qualitative insights into the methodology's unique features, strengths, and challenges.

### Sub-question 2

The second sub-question evaluates the results of KodW in practice, focusing on its implementation in real projects such as "De Kaai" and "Piekstraat." A combination of document review, interviews, and observation is employed to address this question. Document analysis involves reviewing data from VORM's archives, public records, and project-specific documentation to assess KodW's outcomes in these projects. Semi-structured interviews with project developers and other stakeholders offer their perspectives on KodW's effectiveness and impact. Observations during KodW sessions in "Piekstraat" allow for real-time data collection on stakeholder interactions, process dynamics, and implementation challenges.

### Sub-question 3

The third sub-question examines how KodW can effectively leverage the BSR lifestyles. The combination of a literature review, document review and interviews will help in collect the data to answer this sub question. The literature review will focus on databases searches and reference list

tracking about the BSR lifestyles. In the document review, data about BSR will be collected as well, but will consist of data from VORM, Market response and the Kaai case. This is mainly collected from organisational archives and management systems. The interviews will be semi-structured to have the opportunity to collect additional data on the BSR profiles. The semi-structured interview gives room for discussion due to the open-ended questions.

#### Sub-question 4

The fourth sub-question focuses on refining and optimizing KodW based on insights from the earlier sub-questions. The combination of design and a focus group creates an iterative process where initial data is gathered from the previous sub-questions, serving as a data source for the design phase. The new design is then presented to the focus group, and data is collected during the session through recordings, observations, and notes to capture participants' feedback on the improved version. These results serve as input for the design process, with the focus group functioning as a method of data collection.

#### *Sub-question 4 optional*

Additionally, there is an optional component: testing the adjustments in a real-world setting, specifically in the "Hof van Maasdam" project. A combination of document review, interviews, and observation is employed to evaluate the updated KodW methodology. Document analysis integrates data from "Hof van Maasdam" with findings from SQ1–SQ3 to identify areas for refinement. Semi-structured interviews with project developers and other stakeholders involved in "Hof van Maasdam" provide feedback on the updated process. Observations during KodW sessions in this project capture real-time implementation data, allowing for an evaluation of the proposed improvements' effectiveness and alignment with stakeholder needs.

By systematically combining these data collection methods, this study ensures a holistic evaluation of KodW across different aspects and cases. The use of literature review and document analysis provides a solid theoretical and practical foundation, while interviews and observations offer rich qualitative data to complement and validate the findings. This approach not only facilitates a comprehensive understanding of KodW but also provides actionable insights for its refinement and optimization.

## 4.5 Data analysis

The data analysis differs across research methods and sub-questions. In Table 3 an overview of the different data analysis methods is shown. Table 3 shows the general analysis methods for each sub-question depending on the research method. Later in this section, the data analysis is described in detail.

Data Analysis Research methods	SQ1		SQ2		SQ3		SQ4	
	How	What	How	What	How	What	How	What
<b>Literature review</b>	Thematic analysis, Comparative analysis	Identify key themes and patterns to create thematic framework (Preliminary KPIs)			Thematic analysis	Identify themes related to lifestyle characteristics. Mapping these characteristics to participation preferences, such as preference for online vs. in-person engagement. Identify overlaps or contradictions in the literature to refine understanding, creating a framework		
<b>Document review</b>	Content Analysis	Extract relevant information about KodW (Updated KPIs)	Framework analysis	Assess KodW's performance by analyzing project documents (e.g., participation reports) against the framework's KPIs.	Framework analysis	Using the thematic framework developed in the Literature Review to examine KodW-related documents from the Kaai case. Assessing alignment between KodW features and the BSR lifestyle traits observed in participants (e.g., gamification's appeal to adventurous "red" profiles)	Gap analysis, Framework analysis	Identify areas where KodW can improve and align more closely with stakeholder expectations and KPIs.
<b>Interview</b>	Thematic analysis with the help of Qualitative Coding transcripts in Atlas.TI	Validate the thematic framework and KPIs by triangulating findings from literature and document reviews with expert insights	Framework analysis with the help of Qualitative Coding transcripts in Atlas.TI	Assess KPIs according to interviewees (according to thematic framework of KPIs), Trying to identify underperformance	Qualitative content analysis and expert validation framework with the help of Qualitative Coding transcripts in Atlas.TI	Explore KodW's alignment with diverse BSR profiles using expert interviews. Code data to refine thematic framework and identify gaps or patterns.	Framework analysis with the help of Qualitative Coding transcripts in Atlas.TI	Use coded feedback to validate the improved KPIs and assess the effectiveness of KodW refinements
<b>Observation</b>			Framework analysis	Assess performance of KPIs during the process. Evaluate KodW's implementation by observing live sessions and assessing performance against the framework's KPIs.			Framework analysis KPIs	Observe the application of KodW refinements in practice, assessing improvements in real-time interactions and alignment with KPIs.
<b>Designing</b>							Iterative gap analysis, Participatory design feedback loops	Conduct gap analysis to identify shortcomings in KodW and use iterative stakeholder feedback to refine the design process.
<b>Focus Group</b>							Framework analysis	Facilitate focus group discussions to validate refinements. Use feedback to refine KodW and align improvements with stakeholder priorities.

Table 3 Data analysis by research method (Own work)

## Sub-question 1

Sub-question 1 investigates the characteristics of KodW in comparison to other participation methods. The foundation for data analysis is established in Sub-question 1. In Figure 18 the data analysis process is shown for sub-question 1.

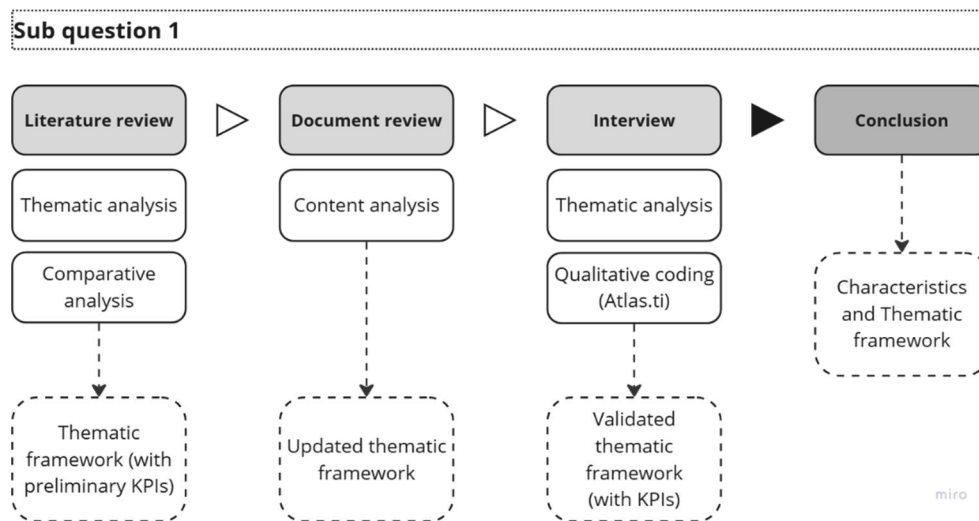


Figure 18 Data analysis sub-question 1 (Own work)

### Literature review

The literature review investigates the key characteristics of various participation methods. A thematic analysis and comparative analysis will be conducted to identify key themes and patterns such as the role of gamification, phases of engagement, and the use of online versus in-person tools. This will help in forming the basis of a thematic framework and forming preliminary KPIs, which connect to the variables from section 4.4.

Validation of findings is achieved through cross-referencing multiple academic sources and participation frameworks. This ensures the identified themes are representative of diverse participation methods and provides a robust foundation for further analysis.

### Document review

The document analysis will focus on KodW, extracting all relevant information to further refine and complement the thematic framework. The review applies framework analysis to extract and categorize relevant information, such as KodW's phased approach (Buurtvisievormer, Buurtpeiling, Buurtformule, and Buurtpanel). These findings are aligned with the thematic framework developed in the literature review to identify unique or shared characteristics between KodW and traditional methods.

### Interviews

Validation occurs through triangulation, where findings from the document review are cross-referenced with insights from the literature and expert interviews. The interviews will be conducted to test its applicability, confirm the identified characteristics of KodW, and gather additional features where applicable. The result of this process will be analysed in a thematic analysis with the help of Atlas.ti coding. This will eventually validate the thematic framework with all KPIs. This framework will serve as the foundation for measuring and analysing the results of KodW in Sub-question 2.

## Sub-question 2

Sub-question 2 employs a multi-phase approach to evaluate KodW’s performance using a combination of document review, interviews, and observations in case studies (see Figure 19). Each method contributes uniquely to understanding KodW’s effectiveness and areas for potential improvement. The framework and KPIs developed in Sub-question 1 provide the foundation for this analysis, ensuring a systematic and structured approach.

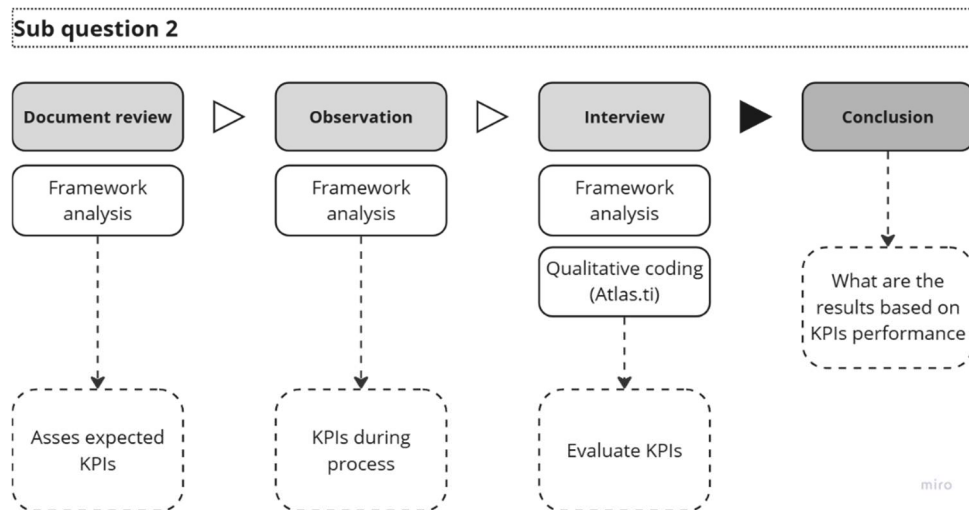


Figure 19 Data analysis sub-question 2 (Own work)

### Document Review

The document review focuses on collecting and analyzing project-specific data from KodW implementations in selected cases, such as "De Kaai" and "Zuiderpoort Piekstraat."

A framework analysis is conducted to examine documents such as participation reports, project objectives, and KodW-specific data. This analysis identifies the performance results of the KPIs outlined in the thematic framework. Key insights from the document review provide an initial evaluation of how well KodW meets objectives like participant satisfaction, inclusivity, and alignment with municipal goals.

### Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with developers, municipal officials, and other stakeholders involved in KodW’s implementation. These interviews provide qualitative insights into KodW’s effectiveness, its strengths, and areas for improvement.

The framework developed in Sub-question 1 is used to structure the interviews, ensuring consistency with prior analyses. Qualitative coding of the interview transcripts is conducted using Atlas.ti. This software facilitates the systematic coding and categorization of data, allowing the identification of patterns, themes, and insights related to KodW’s performance. By aligning interview data with the KPIs, the analysis highlights KodW’s alignment with stakeholder expectations and identifies areas for optimization. Interview findings are cross-referenced with document review results to ensure consistency. The use of Atlas.ti enhances the reliability of coding and supports a transparent analytical process. Divergent findings are explored further to uncover potential areas for improvement or gaps in KodW’s methodology, contributing to a better understanding of its effectiveness.

### Observations

Observations are conducted during the implementation of KodW processes, such as those in the "Zuiderpoort Piekstraat" case. These observations focus on how KodW engages participants in real-time. Post-observation analysis is performed using the thematic framework and KPIs, focusing on both qualitative and quantitative aspects of KodW's performance. Observational data provides real-time validation of document and interview findings. Observations offer an independent perspective on KodW's implementation, enabling comparison with stakeholder interviews and document review results. This ensures a comprehensive understanding of KodW's practical application.

### Sub-question 3

Sub-question 3 investigates how KodW effectively leverages the BSR lifestyle profiles. To answer this question, a structured approach using a literature review, document review, and interviews is employed (see Figure 20). These methods provide insights into KodW's alignment with diverse participant profiles and highlight areas for optimization.

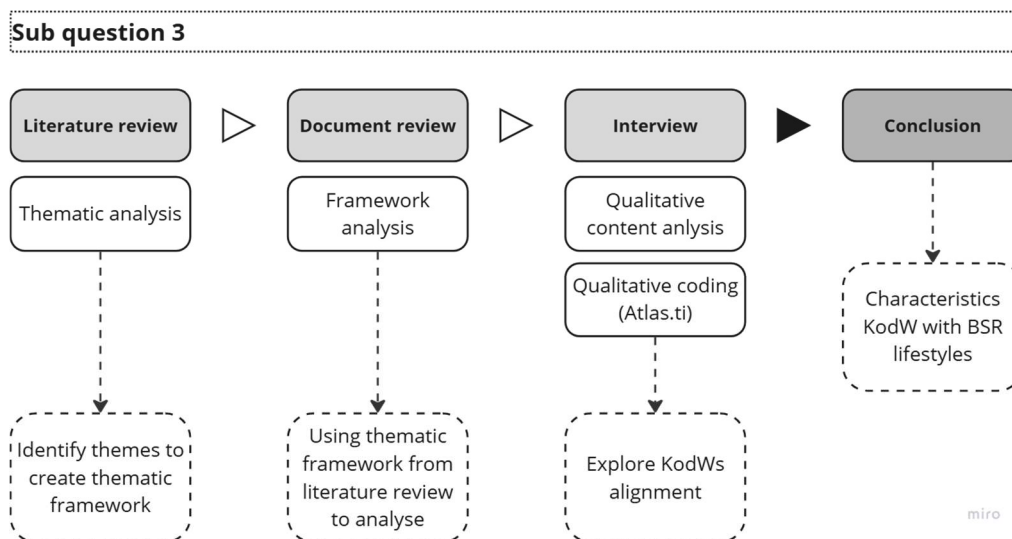


Figure 20 Data analysis sub-question 3 (Own work)

### Literature Review

The literature review focuses on understanding the characteristics of BSR lifestyle profiles and their implications for participation processes. Thematic analysis is used to identify key themes and traits, such as introversion versus extroversion or individual versus group orientation. These insights are mapped to potential participation preferences, such as engagement with gamification or the use of online versus in-person tools. The themes derived from the literature review are structured into a thematic framework. This framework serves as the basis for analyzing KodW's features in relation to BSR lifestyle profiles and provides a comparative reference for findings from the document review and interviews.

### Document Review

The document review examines case-specific materials, such as participation reports, BSR profiling outputs, and KodW-related documentation from projects like "De Kaai." This analysis identifies how KodW's design and implementation align with or diverge from the preferences and traits of different BSR lifestyle groups. Framework analysis is applied to these documents using the thematic framework

developed in the literature review. This approach helps uncover patterns and trends that reveal KodW’s strengths and potential gaps in addressing participant diversity.

### Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with stakeholders, including BSR experts. These interviews explore how KodW’s features resonate with diverse lifestyle groups and gather expert validation of findings from the literature and document reviews. Qualitative content analysis is conducted using Atlas.ti to systematically code and categorize interview transcripts. The framework from the literature review is used to structure coding, enabling a detailed analysis of KodW’s interaction with different BSR profiles. Insights from the interviews are cross-referenced with document and literature review findings. The use of Atlas.ti ensures transparency and reliability in coding and analysis. Expert feedback is incorporated to refine the thematic framework and validate conclusions.

### Sub-question 4

Sub-question 4 focuses on improving KodW by designing and refining proposed optimizations. The design process and focus group serve as the primary mechanisms for analysing and validating these refinements (see Figure 21).

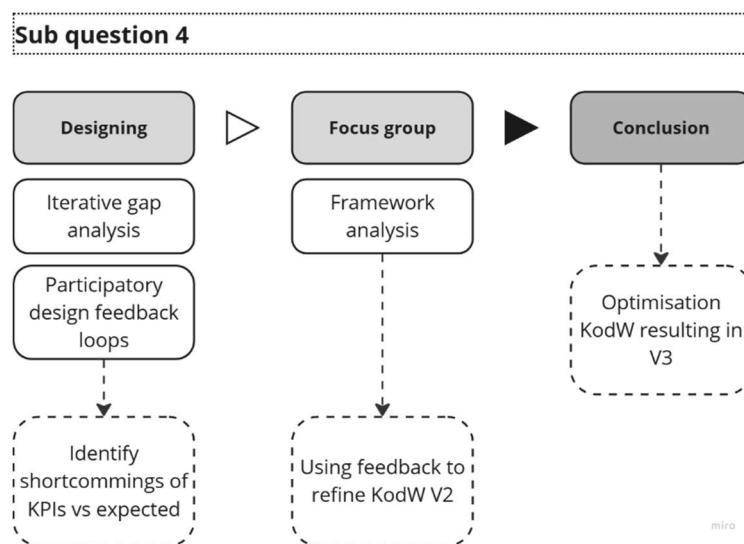


Figure 21 Data analysis sub-question 4 (Own work)

### Designing

The design process uses iterative gap analysis to identify and address shortcomings in KodW. Data from earlier sub-questions, including document reviews, interviews, and observations, is compared against KPIs and stakeholder expectations to highlight gaps and identify possible improvements. These gaps inform targeted improvements to KodW.

Participatory design feedback loops ensure that stakeholder input is integrated directly into the refinement process. New versions of KodW are presented to stakeholders in the focus group, their feedback is systematically analyzed to guide iterative changes. This process ensures that refinements are aligned with stakeholder needs and practical goals.

### Focus Group

The focus group validates the proposed improvements to KodW. Using thematic frameworks developed in earlier sub-questions, the session gathers insights from municipal representatives, developers, and participation experts. Discussions are recorded and transcribed, and the data is analyzed to identify patterns, consensus areas, and further refinement opportunities. This structured approach ensures that feedback is actionable and aligns with other sub-questions analysis approaches.

### Optional: Hof van Maasdam Testing

The Hof van Maasdam case is optionally used to test KodW Version 2 or Version 3, depending on the timeline and progress of the project. It applies a similar approach as in the Zuiderpoort Piekstraat case. The analysis involves a combination of document review, observation, and interviews, all conducted using a framework analysis (see Figure 22).

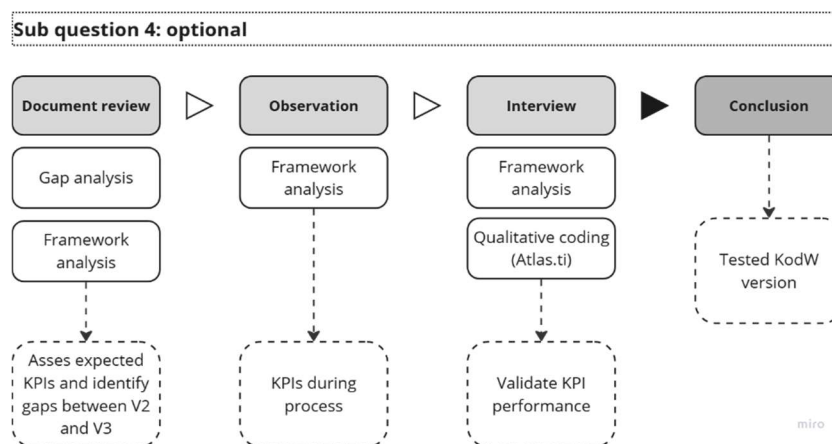


Figure 22 Optional: Data analysis sub-question 4 (Own work)

The document review examines project-specific data, participation reports, and KodW-related materials to assess the expected performance of KPIs within the case. Observations focus on the live implementation of KodW, analyzing participant engagement, decision-making processes, and alignment with project goals. These observations are evaluated using the thematic framework to provide real-time insights into KodW’s effectiveness.

Interviews with stakeholders, including developers and participants, are conducted to validate findings from the document review and observations. Using Atlas.ti for qualitative coding, these interviews are systematically analyzed to identify patterns and refine the understanding of KodW’s performance.

The insights from this testing process contribute to validating the refinements made to KodW and identifying further opportunities for optimization. This iterative approach ensures that KodW is thoroughly tested in a real-world context and adjusted to meet stakeholder expectations effectively.

## 5 Research Output

### 5.1 Goals & objectives

The primary objective of this research is to develop actionable, evidence-based recommendations that enable project developers to more effectively tailor privately organized participation processes (POPs) to the requirements of the Environment and Planning Act (EPA). The aim is to ensure representative and functional participation by aligning and improving innovative participation methods to the requirements of the EPA by evaluating them. This study seeks to support the design of inclusive and responsive community engagement practices that enhance meaningful involvement in area developments.

This objective can be achieved by critically evaluating participation strategies and identifying the key issues that should be addressed. Another goal is to accelerate the development process for project developers and reduce the risk of objections at later stages. By improving the understanding and tailoring of participation processes, delays and uncertainties experienced by developers can be mitigated. These challenges often create a negative attitude toward participation processes, and the research aims to transform this perception into a more positive one and eventually improve development plans with insights from participants.

To achieve these goals, this study will analyse existing and new participation methods, critically evaluating their processes to ensure alignment with EPA requirements. By examining how different resident groups engage with various participation methods, the research aims to enhance decision-making in area development, making it more informed and inclusive.

A final objective is to clarify residents' expectations within the participation processes. This includes avoiding unnecessary promises to residents and municipalities by selecting appropriate approaches tailored to different residents. Furthermore, the research aims to provide guidance on innovative participation methods, tailoring these approaches to specific situations, and assessing the effectiveness of new methods such as "Kijk op de Wijk."

### 5.2 Deliverables

The final product of this research will be a research report accompanied by some recommendations for developers on how to approach the participation process as stipulated in the EPA, an improved version of Kijk op de Wijk and focus points to interact and improve privately organised participation processes. It will also provide recommendations on how to engage with various BSR lifestyles in relation to the participation methods. Additionally, the P5 presentation will be part of the deliverables. The final report will include an abstract, problem statement, relevance, research questions, literature review, results, analysis, discussion, conclusion, limitations, and recommendations. Interviews, results from *Kijk op de Wijk*, and case studies will be included in the appendix. All results will be presented in a session where academics, students, and other interested parties can gain insight into the research and ask questions about it afterwards. Also, a short document will be provided, which will contain advice and management tools to manage participation in the Environment and Planning Act.

### 5.3 Dissemination and Audiences

This research will be published in the TU Delft repository, consisting of the final report, the P5 presentation slides, and the accompanying appendix. A brief summary will also be made available through the appendix. Additionally, a document will be created to provide recommendations and focus points for developers, municipalities, and housing corporations on how to handle a private organised

participation in relation to the EPA. This document will be shared with VORM along with a presentation of the recommendations. This presentation will be a distilled version of the P5 presentation.

The final report will be intended for TU Delft staff, students, academics, and other interested parties. This research can also serve as a reference for consultants, developers, municipalities, policymakers, and housing corporations interested in accelerating or gaining more insight into the private organised participation process.

## 6 Personal study targets

In this research, several personal goals have been set. The idea behind these goals is to stay motivated and focused throughout the project. The first goal is to establish clear deadlines. These deadlines help ensure a structured process and contribute to motivation by providing opportunities to reach milestones. This creates a sense of progress, which can be valuable in research, where progress is not always immediately visible.

Another personal goal is to independently conduct academic research. Delving deeply into a specific topic over an extended period is not always a given in the master's program, as courses are often limited to 10 weeks. Now there is an opportunity to focus on a topic for several months. The goal is to independently manage the planning and ensure a high-quality research outcome.

The final personal goal relates to the content of the research. This goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the participation process and to streamline the process from the idea and planning phase to the actual implementation phase. The aim is to assist developers in gaining more control over participation efforts and to ensure that participants in an area development perceive the process as more constructive, effective, and representative.

## 7 Research plan

### Research Planning

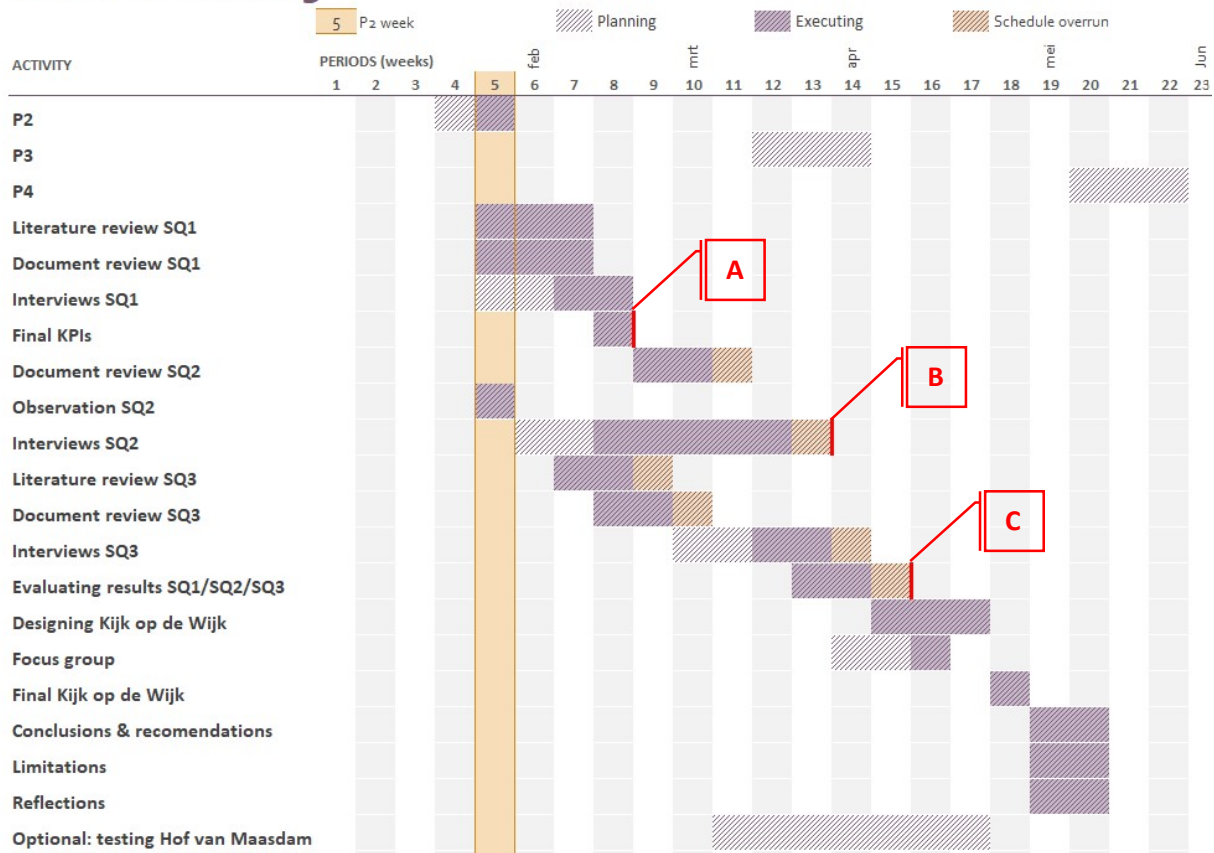


Figure 23 Research planning in weeks (Own work)

Figure 23 outlines the research plan, detailing the primary tasks and milestones leading up to formal presentations at P2, P3, and P4. The planning begins with the start of P2 and concludes at P4, marking the provisional endpoint. The plan prioritizes interdependencies between tasks, ensuring efficient execution and timely completion of deliverables.

### 7.1 Main tasks & milestones

The research begins with a comprehensive literature review and document analysis to establish a theoretical foundation. This phase is crucial for identifying key characteristics of participation methods, including "Kijk op de Wijk" (KodW), and developing the thematic framework and KPIs. This phase ends at point A in Figure 23. This is a hard deadline since the next phases of the research depend on it. The insights gained from this phase will guide the design of the interviews and subsequent steps. Additional time has been allocated to account for unforeseen aspects requiring further exploration.

Following the literature and document review of SQ1, interview planning commences. Since scheduling interviews can be time-intensive, several weeks have been allocated to ensure sufficient preparation and flexibility. Early interviews focus on completed cases, such as "De Kaai," where the KodW process has concluded. For ongoing cases, such as "Piekstraat" and "Hof van Maasdam," interviews are scheduled after observations to enable reflection on the KodW process. These interviews will validate findings from the literature and document reviews while providing new insights. The end of the interviews will be at point B in Figure 23. This milestone is important since a lot of data for the design process is based on the interviews. To start the design process, the interviews have to be completed.

Observations play a key role in capturing real-time performance data for KodW. The first observation, focusing on the "Piekstraat" case, is scheduled early in the research timeline. Since the Piekstraat observation is relatively early, the predefined KPIs from section 4.4 are used during the observation. Observational data will contribute to the evaluation of KodW's performance and provide context for interviews and data analysis. Observing the "Hof van Maasdam" case is optional. The participation process is planned for March, with contingency time included in case of delays in the project. Depending on the specific date, this process can be incorporated into the research at a later stage.

Based on the findings from sub questions 1,2 and 3, an improved version of KodW will be developed. Evaluating these results ends at point C of Figure 23 and is a key milestone for the progress of the research. The design of Kodw overlaps with the focus groups, since the focus group is giving feedback to the design process.

Recommendations and refinements will be directly informed by the identified gaps and areas for improvement. The new version of KodW will be optionally tested in the "Hof van Maasdam" case, providing practical validation of the proposed improvements.

As the data collection, analysis phases and designing are near completion, the research will shift towards finalizing conclusions and recommendations. These recommendations will be particularly relevant for the development of KodW. The concluding phase will also include reflections on the research process, a discussion of limitations, and the preparation of the final report for P4. The timeline allows flexibility in this phase, with adjustments based on the progress of earlier tasks.

## 7.2 Interdependencies between tasks and milestones

The research plan accounts for interdependencies between tasks. For example, the literature and document review directly inform interview design, while observations contribute to validating findings during interviews. The iterative nature of data analysis ensures that insights from each phase are integrated into subsequent steps. Contingency has been built into various phases. The "Hof van Maasdam" case is optional, only when project the timeline allows it. The scheduling of interviews has incorporated contingency time to account for potential delays.

By structuring the research around these key phases and milestones, the plan ensures a clear and efficient workflow, while the flexibility to adapt to unforeseen challenges enhances the overall reliability of the process. This comprehensive approach will lead to actionable recommendations for refining and optimizing "Kijk op de Wijk."

## 8 Reflection

Reflecting on my process through the AR3MBE100 Graduation Lab, I experienced challenges and growth. The course provided a structured framework to begin the graduation process, though the early stages were exploratory and marked by uncertainty. With a wide range of directions to consider, the time between presenting themes and making a decision felt short. My limited initial knowledge further complicated the decision-making process, which was driven more by personal interests than informed understanding. In hindsight, having more knowledge before making a choice would have been beneficial. During this phase, I felt a lack of guidance in determining the most appropriate direction to pursue.

Once I selected the lab, the structure and guidance improved significantly, offering a clearer sense of direction. This clarity allowed me to focus on shaping my research path. Support from VORM and the Gradlab sessions was valuable, particularly when selecting supervisors. Determining the right supervisor for specific expertise can be challenging, but the coordinators provided assistance in this regard.

After selecting supervisors, my process became more content-driven. The P1 presentation arrived quickly, serving as an effective motivator for my research focus. Deadlines (P1/P2) during this phase were instrumental in structuring my progress and establishing milestones. These moments of assessment and feedback provided clarity and reassurance, helping align my research goals.

Following P1, I entered an iterative phase of refining my study. This process often felt slow, and I struggled at times to recognize clear progress. The volume of information and uncertainty about the right direction added to the challenge. I sometimes became fixated on specific details, losing sight of the broader picture. Engaging in discussions with fellow students helped me realign my focus and regain clarity.

The weeks leading up to P2 were particularly intense due to the high workload and uncertainty surrounding research methodology. These final weeks required multiple rounds of refinement, rewriting, and improvement in the research design. Although this period was stressful, it ultimately pushed me to critically evaluate my approach and make thoughtful decisions. The P2 deadline proved to be an effective milestone, driving progress and providing a clear point for reflection and refinement.

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