Collaborative governance in the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet

How participatory processes are embedded in the (re)development of Hoogvliet, Rotterdam.

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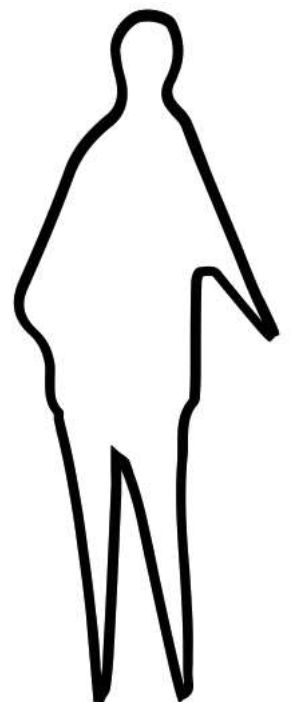Roberto Rocco (2nd supervisor)

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Abstract

Over recent decades, many Western governments, including the Dutch government, have adopted collaborative governance strategies in urban (re)development, emphasizing citizen involvement in the decision-making process. While such participatory approaches can potentially promote justice within cities, they risk several implications. This thesis critically examines how participation is utilized, organized, and perceived in the context of urban (re)development in the Rotterdam neighborhood of Hoogvliet. The guiding research question is: *'What is the role of citizen participation in the neighborhood regeneration strategy for the area of Hoogvliet in Rotterdam, and how can participatory governance be strengthened to support community engagement?'.* To answer this question, a qualitative research approach was used, including an analysis of current participatory policies and practices and semi-structured interviews with three key stakeholder groups: public actors, private actors, and the civil society. The findings indicate that citizen participation is poorly integrated into the urban (re)development process of Hoogvliet, primarily due to two factors. First, existing policies fail to effectively support citizen participation, as their flexibility leaves public and private stakeholders with insufficient guidelines for meaningful engagement. Second, there seems to be lack of trust from the civil society towards the government, which affects the incentive for citizens to engage. To enhance a collaborative planning process where citizens actively take part in the process, it is crucial to address these issues first.

Keywords: citizen participation, participatory governance, urban (re)development, spatial justice

Content

1. Introduction

1.1 Problem Context

Over the last decades, many Western governments have been actively experimenting with new governing strategies and new forms of democracy where decisions are made collectively (Ansell and Gash, 2007; Michels & de Graaf, 2010; Tatenhove, Edelenbos & Klok, 2010; van Gool, 2008). This shift in governance strategy is especially present regarding urban redevelopment projects (Ferilli, Sacco & Blessi, 2016; Savini, 2011). The literature is not consistent in referring to this new governing strategy and interchangeably uses the terms collaborative governance, interactive policies, participatory policies, deliberative governance, and so on. However, these notions all have in common that citizens, interest groups, and private organizations can participate in different stages of the public policy-making process (Tatenhove, Edelenbos & Klok, 2010). From a normative perspective, participation is seen as a requisite for justice within the city (Fainstein, 2010; Harvey, 2012; Healey, 1996; Soja, 2009). The use of such policies is argued to improve the quality of our democracy for several reasons: it contributes to the inclusion of citizens, it stimulates civic skills and virtues, it leads to decisions based on public reasoning and it legitimizes the process and outcome (Michels & de Graaf, 2010).

In the Netherlands, urban redevelopments are traditionally organized top-down, where central governments and local governments alternately set the course (Platform 31, n.d.; Tasan-Kok, 2008). However, similar to other Western countries, the Netherlands is increasingly integrating participatory processes in its urban redevelopment projects due to its observed positive effects. (Teernstra & Pinkster, 2016). As of this year, 2024, participation is no longer solely an aim, but has become obligatory in the Netherlands through the entering of a new law, called the Omgevingswet (The Environment and Planning Act). This law obliges municipalities to involve citizens, companies, and organizations in their plans and projects (Rijksoverheid, n.d.). However, the Dutch municipalities also recognize the need and advantages of including multiple stakeholders in the process. Rotterdam for example, stated in their Environmental vision (Omgevingsvisie), a vision for the coming 30 years, that the city strives to become more inclusive by using participation (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2021).

Although this shift towards a more participative decision-making process is a positive transition, participation is no guarantee for inclusion and justice (Savini, 2011), and creating an inclusive public discourse for urban regeneration projects seems to be rather tricky (Ferilli, Sacco & Blessi, 2016). The literature on participatory processes for urban (re)development shows that the unintended outcomes seem to be inevitable, because one way or another, these processes always come with exclusion, expectations, assumptions, and restrictions (Turnhout, Van Bommel & Aarts, 2010). Furthermore, bad organization of such participatory processes is often a reason for failure (Turnhout, Van Bommel & Aarts, 2010), and participation in urban planning can wrongly be applied when it is only used to legitimize ready-made decisions (Arnstein, 1969). Considering these implications, it is important to critically reflect on how participation is used, organized, and experienced regarding urban (re)development, to understand if the believed positive effects are truly being obtained.

Hence, this thesis focuses on the neighborhood Hoogvliet, located in the south west of Rotterdam, where both urban (re)development and participation are part of the local agenda (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2024). More concretely, this thesis will investigate (1) how participation is currently embedded in the urban renewal of Hoogvliet (2), investigate the current implications for public participation in urban regeneration, and (3) give recommendations for future participatory processes regarding urban renewal in Hoogvliet.

1.2 Problem statement

The neighborhood Hoogvliet has been subject to many (large) restructuring projects since in the past (Kleinhans et al., 2014). After these restructurings halted in 2014 as a consequence of the financial crisis in 2008, the municipality of Rotterdam only restarted the developments in 2020 (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.). Although these developments are aimed at improving the area, the residents of Hoogvliet experience a low level of inclusiveness regarding the developments in their neighborhood and indicated to often feel 'caught off guard' regarding the many developments (Wijkraad Hoogvliet, 2023). Residents are worried about the changes in their neighborhood, the demolition of social housing and

replacement with more expensive houses (Stichting Wijkcollectie, n.d.). In light of becoming a more inclusive city, the municipality of Rotterdam has decided to respond by making participation a focus point for Hoogvliet (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2024). In alignment with this aim, a Rotterdam-based knowledge institution, the Veldacademie (VA), is developing a digital map that supports collaboration between formal stakeholders and informal local actors. Despite the efforts to foster inclusivity, the literature on participatory governance has shown that these processes do not exist without implications, which is why it is important to critically reflect how public participation is used in the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet, to understand the exact implications of the current situation and the possibilities for the future. This thesis will conclude by providing recommendations for improving the collaborative governance system in Hoogvliet and briefly address how the VA map can take part in this.

1.3 Digital map Veldacademie
According to previous research of the VA, social networks are the building stones of communities and should therefore be used and (re)enforced when it comes to neighborhood developments. Each neighborhood can be seen as a unique entity that operates in its own way. Unfortunately, these networks often remain invisible for institutions and organizations. This is why the VA wishes to establish a digital map - *Basiskaart Wijkgericht Werken* (base map for district-oriented work) - that shows how a community organizes itself. More concretely, this map gives an overview of the existing social networks in a neighborhood and illustrates how they relate to each other. Such a map will create more transparency and eventually help to guide collaboration between stakeholders that wish to operate on a neighborhood level. (Veldacademie, n.d.)

1.4 Societal and Scientific Relevance
As the importance of participation in urban regeneration projects is growing in Western democracies (Ferilli, Sacco & Blessi, 2016; Savini, 2011), it is important to study how this participation takes place and is organized in the decision-making process. Currently, extensive literature is dedicated to this topic, however, the success of participatory processes in (re)development projects still remains low. On the one hand, such participatory processes are argued to often lead to unintended outcomes, which can result in dissatisfaction of the stakeholders (Turnhout, van Bommerl, Aarts, 2010). On the other hand, participation is sometimes solely used as a way to legitimize decisions of the ones in power like some degrees of participation do (Arnstein, 1969). Due to these implications that seem to be tied to public participation in urban (re)development, more research is needed.

1.5 The case: Hoogvliet
1.5.1 Historic Context
Hoogvliet is a neighborhood in Rotterdam and is situated southwest of the river the Maas closeby the harbor of Rotterdam as can be seen in Figure 1. Originally, Hoogvliet was a small village (Figure 2), until it was annexed by the city of Rotterdam in 1934. Reason for this annexation was the wish of the municipality to expand the harbor and especially the petrochemical industry (Shell) that was located in Pernis, next to Hoogvliet. Accordingly, Rotterdam planned to house the future port workers in Hoogvliet, and therefore needed to build new dwellings. After the Second World War even more houses were built than previously planned, to house the migrant workers that the government attracted in this period. (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2021).

In the 1950s Hoogvliet was changing at a rapid pace. The area was designed according to the principles of the 'garden city', a popular urbanistic idea at the time, characterized by lots of green, modern buildings and wide open spaces such as the modernistic shopping center (see Figure 3). There were plans to enlarge the city center, build new houses and make Hoogvliet into a vibrant area. Unfortunately, these plans halted after an explosion on the Shell terrain in Pernis in 1968, causing all windows of Hoogvliet to break. This incident raised questions about developing Hoogvliet as a residential area, and eventually resulted in ceasing all developments that were planned for the area. From this point on, the municipality decided to designate the adjoined neighborhood Spijkenisse as the new residential core. (Broekmans, Lankester & Atsoi, 2020)

Hoogvliet was left unfinished, with a center that was only half the size it was supposed to be and an excessive amount of facilities that couldn't be sustained by the residents that were far fewer than anticipated (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2010). From this point, there was no clear vision for Hoogvliet anymore and the social-economic problems started to add up. Since other Dutch cities were dealing with similar problems, the government introduced a new program named 'Grotestedenbeleid' (Big city policy), which took its entry in 1997. The municipality of Rotterdam, together with the Dutch government, made new plans to (re)develop Hoogvliet. The urban regeneration of Hoogvliet is marked as one of the largest urban renewal projects of the Netherlands, with an estimated investment of a billion euros (Kleinhans et al., 2014). These developments included the demolishment of rental housing, the building of new rental housing, and strengthening the urban structure. Furthermore, the renewal was focused on social aspects and the start of interactive policy making. In retrospect, these developments did not solve the socioeconomic problems nor lead to upward social mobility, although residents did develop a higher sense of appreciation for their neighborhood. In 2014, the developments in Hoogvliet were dismantled once again, now because of the effects of the industrial crisis in 2008 and the abolition of the 'Grotestedenbeleid' (Big city policy). (Kleinhans, 2014)

Figure 1
Hoogvliet situated in Rotterdam
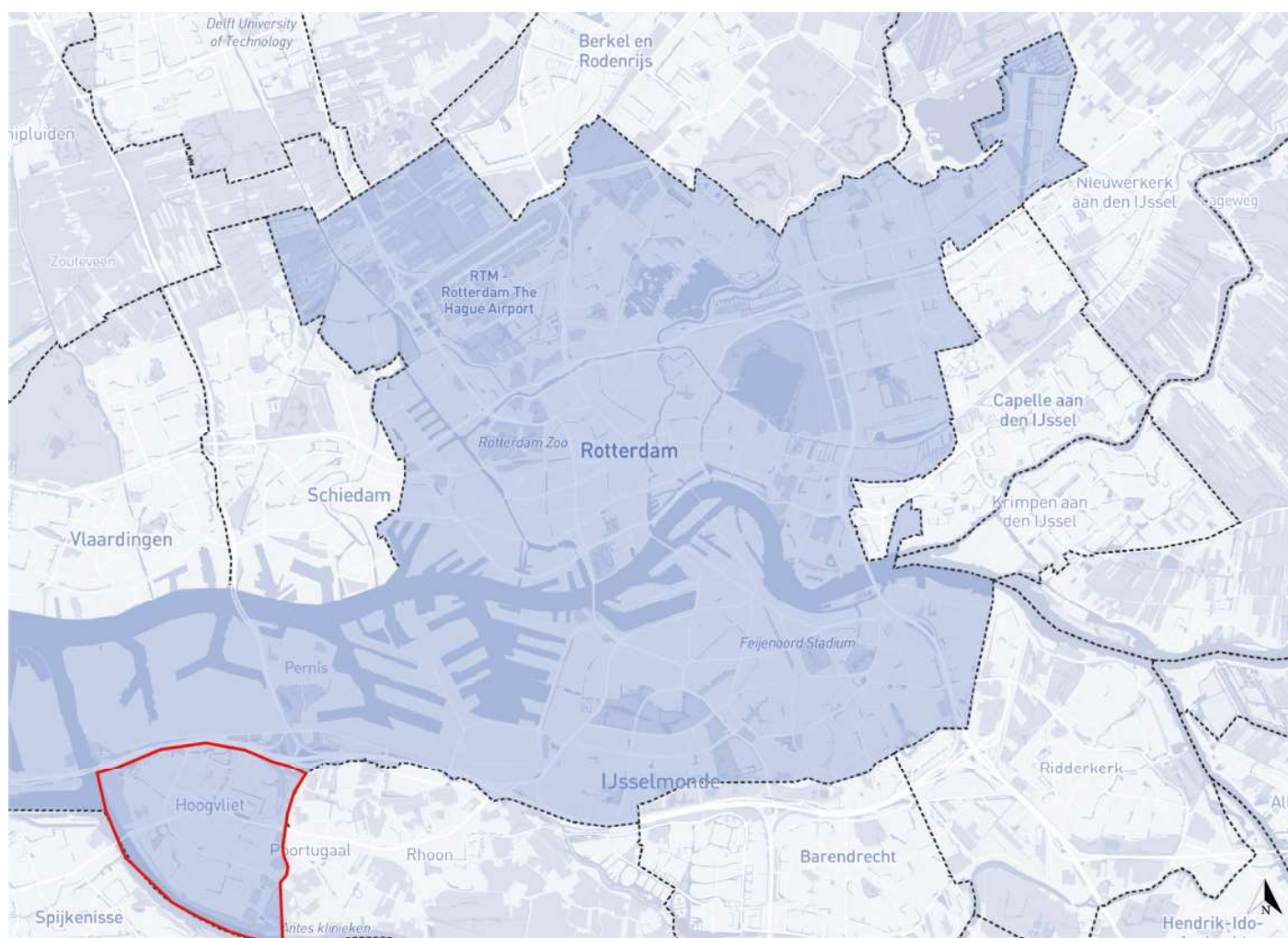
Note. Hoogvliet is situated in the southeast of Rotterdam. Mapbox, n.d. (edited)

Figure 2
Dorpstraat Hoogvliet

Note. The north side of the main village road. Stadsarchief Rotterdam, 1914

Figure 3
Binnenban Hoogvliet

Note. The shopping passage of Hoogvliet. Stadsarchief Rotterdam, 1962.

1.5.2 Current situation

Currently, Hoogvliet has a surface area of 936 ha, and the population of Hoogvliet counts over 35.885 residents. The population is relatively old compared to other neighborhoods in the city, and more than one third originated from outside Europe. The average income is 27.7 thousand euros which is similar to neighborhoods in the south of Rotterdam, but low in comparison to the Dutch average which is 35.4 a year. (CBS, 2023; CBS, n.d.)

Nowadays, the different urban guises that Hoogvliet took over time are still visible, with its village like characteristics on the one hand (Figure 4), and its postmodern elements on the other hand (Figure 5). The area is characterized by its spaciousness and greenery as a result of the old garden city principles (Broekmans, Lankester & Atsoi, 2020).

Although the city of Rotterdam has expanded over the last decades, the neighborhood is still situated relatively far from the rest of the city. To illustrate, it takes approximately 23 minutes to travel from Hoogvliet to Beurs (the center of Rotterdam) by metro, and 47 minutes by bike (Google maps, n.d.-a). In comparison, it takes 13 minutes to travel from Zuidplein (the south of Rotterdam) to Beurs by metro, and 18 minutes by bike (Google maps, n.d.-b).

Administratively, Hoogvliet has become closer to Rotterdam. Since 2014 the neighborhood is no longer a 'district' (deelgemeente in Dutch) of Rotterdam, but is now part of the city and thus governed by the central municipal government (Historisch Genootschap Hoogvliet, n.d.).

The important events that took place in Hoogvliet are summarized in a timeline in Figure 6.

Figure 4
Village characteristics of Hoogvliet

Note. Dorpsstraat. Own work.

Figure 5

Post-modern characteristics Hoogvliet

Note. Binnenban (top), Fideliolaan (bottom). Own work.

Figure 6
Timeline Hoogvliet

Annexation of Hoogvliet
by the city of Rotterdam
1934

Hoogvliet becomes
district of Rotterdam
1973

1968
Explosion on Shell
terrain in Pernis

Major urban
redevelopment started in
Hoogvliet due to the Big
City Policies
(Grotestedenbeleid)
1997

Redevelopments
Hoogvliet started
2020

2014
• Redevelopments
  halted
• Hoogvliet is no district
  anymore and becomes
  part of Rotterdam
  again

Own work.

2. Research Aim, Questions and Ethics

2.1 Research questions and objective

This thesis tries to comprehend how citizen participation takes place in the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet and investigates which implications hinder a robust collaborative process (with a focus on citizen involvement). To reach the objective, it is key to examine how participation is currently embedded in the organizational structure of the municipality and experienced by its participants to understand the implications of participation. In addition, this thesis aims to provide adjustments that can be made to increase and improve the collaboration with citizens, and overall to reach more spatial justice. This part of the research will take the form of a policy advice section in which the obtained knowledge will be applied to the VA tool, and more specifically how this tool can contribute to robust collaborative governance for the urban regeneration of Hoogvliet.

Based on the problem statement and the research aim, the main research question of this thesis is as follows:

'What is the role of citizen participation in the neighborhood regeneration strategy for the area of Hoogvliet in Rotterdam, and how can participatory governance be strengthened to support community engagement?'

The corresponding sub-research questions are as follows:

1. What are the current participatory policies and practices for the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet?
2. What factors hinder citizen participation for the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet?
3. What are the possibilities for improving the participatory governance process for the urban (re) development of Hoogvliet, and how can the VA tool contribute to this goal?

2.2 Report structure

To answer the proposed research questions, this thesis investigates what is currently being organized regarding citizen involvement in the urban regeneration process in Hoogvliet, conducts several semi-structured interviews with the private, public and civil society, and analyzes policy documents of the municipality of Rotterdam.

The structure of this thesis is as follows. In the next chapter this thesis presents the theoretical framework, which gives an overview of the main concepts that are related to this thesis and how they are related to each other. Thereafter, the fourth chapter describes the methodology that was used to conduct this research by precisely describing which methods were used and how the data will be analyzed. The results that follow from the conducted research are presented in chapter five and discussed and compared to the existing literature in chapter six. The most important conclusions are summarized in chapter seven, and lastly chapter eight discusses the policy advice.

2.3 Ethical dimensions

To come to ethically responsible outcomes, there are several ethical dilemmas which must be taken into account throughout this research.

Since the turn of the century, urban regeneration has been used in the Netherlands, and in other Western countries, to improve the livability and to stimulate upward social mobility by creating socially and economically diverse neighborhoods (Kleinhans, 2014; Kleinhans, 2012). However, according to Uitermark et al. (2007) this is a false premise, as this urban regeneration, or in other words state-led gentrification, is used by state actors to gain control over disadvantaged neighborhoods by reducing the concentrations that pose a problem for them. Furthermore, research has shown that urban regeneration, or place-based developments, rarely results in upwar social mobility among residents (Kleinhans, 2012; Kleinhans, 2014; Uitermark, 2007; van Ham et al., n.d.). In the case of Hoog-

vliet, prior urban regeneration projects also did not foster the socioeconomic positions of the residents (Kleinhans, 2014). Furthermore, Kleinhans (2012) argues that urban regeneration inevitably involves the displacement of existing residents. The latter of implications and consequences related to urban regeneration, pose an ethical dilemma in this thesis, since this thesis 'assumes' urban regeneration is needed for Hoogvliet.

Furthermore, the use of a 'tool' in research, like the one VA is developing for Hoogvliet, also poses an ethical dilemma. Firstly, such tools are good at simplifying information in order to reduce complexity and see similarities and differentiation (Reale, 2014), however, this means the qualitative data that the VA is trying to map, i.e. social networks, becomes quantitative. Secondly, such tools are based on open data which can threaten the privacy of the involved stakeholders (Truell, 2003). Lastly, when tools rely on different information sources like residents, it raises concerns regarding the completeness and accuracy of the information (Reale, 2014).

3. Theoretical framework

This chapter gives an in-depth overview of the three key concepts that are central to this thesis. The first section will elaborate on the concept of spatial justice. The second section provides an overview of the relevant literature for participatory governance, including different degrees of citizen involvement and the requirements for a successful collaborative governance process. The third section discusses urban regeneration in the Dutch context. Lastly, it discusses how these three theoretical concepts relate to each other.

3.1 Theoretical framework
3.1 Spatial justice

The concept of *spatial justice* is used to refer to *social justice in urban spaces* (Rocco, 2023). A concrete definition is given by Soja (2009, p. 9), who defines spatial justice as: 'the fair and equitable distribution in the space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them'. Spatial justice is fundamental for human dignity and fairness in society (Soja, 2009), and citizens have the right to shape their own environment (Harvey, 2003). This section will elaborate on spatial justice by discussing how the concept evolved through time and what it entails.

In the 1990s countries in Western Europe seemed to be convinced that the urban planning process should facilitate communicative collaboration (Voogd, 1997). The British urban planner Patsy Healey described this change as the 'communicative turn in planning' (1996), in which she stresses the importance of communication in the urban planning process. Through communication with different stakeholders, urban planners can create solutions that are more in line with the needs of these diverse sets of stakeholders which eventually results in more just outcomes. Healeys argument finds its roots in the communicative (action) theory of Habermas, which asserts that the decision-making process needs to include communication between citizens and authorities.
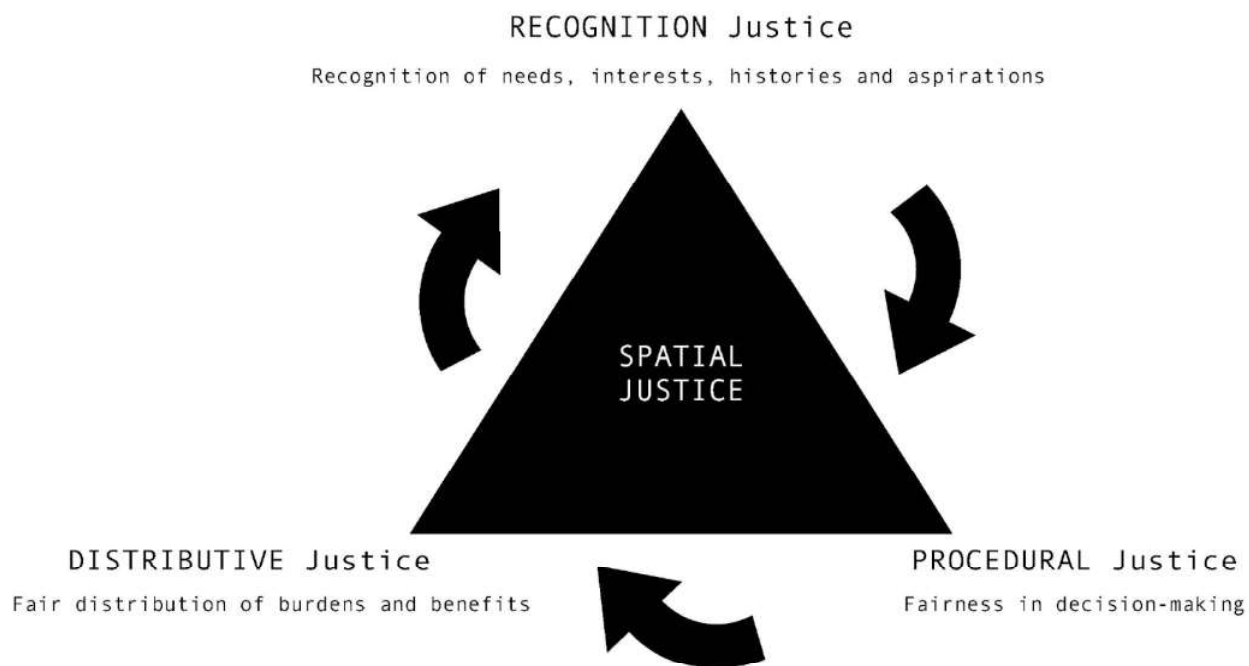
Susan Fainstein (2010) further elaborates the concept of spatial justice, by distinguishing three components that determine justice within the city: diversity, democracy, and equity. Diversity here, does not only refer to demographic diversity (ethnicity, culture, age e.g.) but also to diversity in land use. Next, the decision-making process should be inclusive and participatory so that it can reflect the wants and needs of all citizens, therefore she pleads for democracy and participatory planning processes. Lastly, she argues that equity should be at the heart of the just city, other than that equality refers to treating everyone the same, equity is about individual needs. In her book 'The Just City' (2010), Fainstein argues that equity can help to address and overcome inequalities that are inevitable in the city. Earlier, David Harvey also pointed out that equal treatment is no guarantee for equal outcomes (2003). He criticized the egalitarian view, and stated that 'there is nothing more unequal than the equal treatment of unequals'. Fainstein (2014) admits that the three components that constitute for justice; equity, democracy and diversity, may be in conflict with each other, but proposes we can start to see them as broadly applicable norms.

Both Harvey and Fainstein (2010; 2014) attribute injustice within the city to neoliberalist policies, as they benefit the privileged groups and displace the marginalized groups. Instead, we should aim for a 'public sphere of democratic participation', which requires us to roll back from privatization (Harvey, 2003).

Altogether, it is generally believed that we should aim for justice within the city through communication with different stakeholders and raising the voice of citizens and marginalized groups in specific. However, the concept of spatial justice can be further explained by understanding the different dimensions to it. The technical university of Delft conceptualizes spatial justice as having three dimensions: *distributive justice, recognition justice* and *procedural justice* (Figure 7) (Rocco, 2023). These dimensions each take a different perspective on spatial justice and are further explained in this paragraph. Although the three dimensions are equally important and always present, this thesis relates mostly to procedural justice, which is why this dimension of spatial justice is the most extensively discussed here.

Figure 7
Dimensions of Spatial Justice

RECOGNITION Justice

Recognition of needs, interests, histories and aspirations

SPATIAL
JUSTICE

DISTRIBUTIVE Justice

Fair distribution of burdens and benefits

PROCEDURAL Justice

Fairness in decision-making

Rocco, 2023.

The first dimension, *distributive justice,* refers to the fair and equal distribution of benefits and burdens among people. This dimension of justice is also closely linked to environmental justice, since this perspective aims to address and rectify the unequal distribution of environmental hazards.

The second dimension, *recognition justice*, focuses on the individual acknowledgment validation, and respect for individual and collective identities, experiences, and cultural expressions. Within this dimension, historical and ongoing marginalization, discrimination, and misrepresentation of certain groups in society are addressed. Furthermore, this dimension seeks recognition of cultural, psychological, social dimensions of identity and belonging, which affects distributive justice and procedural justice.

The third dimension, *procedural justice*, is about how space is being managed, designed, planned and negotiated by the public sector, private sector and civil society. The relationships between these three actors, occur within the framework of either formal institutions or informal institutions. Although both frameworks rely on certain rules that determine the decision-making process, they differ in officialness. Whereas formal institutions provide a structured framework based on rules that are written down like laws or contracts, informal institutions are based on unwritten rules such as socially constructed norms. Within the framework of procedural justice, the level of justice can be found in the procedures of negotiation and decision-making or in the governance of the built environment. Here, planning processes that allow participation and offer transparency are more just, since it offers the possibility that different perspectives are being represented. This relates to Habermas communicative action theory, which claims that democratic decision-making should involve discourse between citizens and authorities. Communication between these actors ensures that different voices are represented which increases the quality of the outcome because the solution is based on broader knowledge, and simultaneously increases the legitimacy of the public policy making process. Furthermore, public participation ensures a more equal distribution of power, as it gives marginalized groups the opportunity to be heard. Although communicative theory advocates for distributive power, it does not recommend replacing expert knowledge by deliberation, but instead, combining these two. (Rocco, 2023)

3.2 Participatory governance

Participatory governance - or collaborative governance - is the process where citizens, interest groups, and private organizations take part in different stages of the public policy-making process

(Tatenhove, Edelenbos & Klok, 2010). According to the theory on spatial justice (section 3.1), deliberative policies are crucial for creating justice within the city and therefore this section will elaborate on participatory governance for urban planning and urban (re)development and specifically what indicators define a robust participatory process.

Degrees of citizen participation

In 'A Ladder of Participation', Arnstein (1969) describes participation as the redistribution of citizen power with a focus on citizens that are currently being excluded from the public policy making process. According to Arnstein, participation is a broad concept, and therefore she distinguishes eight degrees of citizen participation, which then can be subdivided into three categories: *Non-participation, Degrees of tokenism,* and *Degrees of citizen power* (see Figure 8). The first category, *Non-participation*, is not about enabling citizens to participate, but a way for the powers to 'cure' or 'educate' the citizens. Within this category are *Manipulation and Therapy*, both ways of the authorities to convince the public of the decisions that are being made by themselves. The second category, *Degrees of tokenism*, is one step closer to citizen participation, here the citizens have the chance to raise their voices and to be heard, however, citizens lack the power to ensure that their input is translated into action. This category consists of *Informing, Consultation* and *Placation*. In the last category, *Degrees of citizen power,* citizens have the most power, and in the top rungs they even have the control to make the decisions. Here, Arnstein distinguishes *Partnership, Delegated power* and *Citizen control.*

Figure 8
Ladder of participation
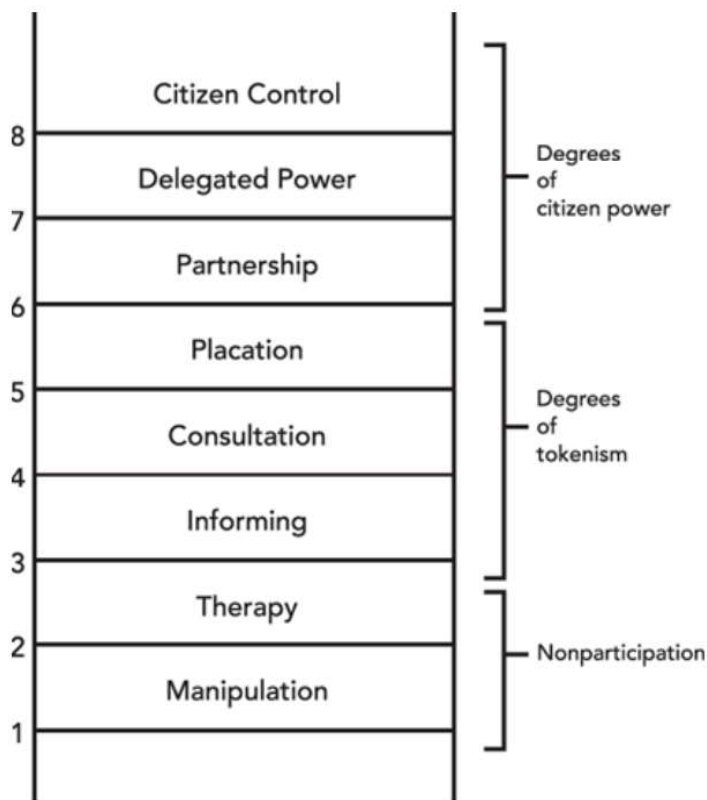
Note. The eight degrees of citizen participation. Arnstein, 1969.

Arnstein is critical of the lower rungs of the ladder, as she argues these degrees of participation are only used by policymakers and planners to legitimize their own decisions. According to her, true participation can only be found in the higher rungs of the ladder and therefore this is what we should aim for.

Successful collaborative governance

Based on an elaborative study of 137 cases where collaborative governance was applied, Ansell and Gash (2008) designed a framework for successful collaborative governance (Figure 9). This framework illustrates the conditions that facilitate or discourage collaborative governance, and how they relate to each other. The following section discusses these conditions and adds on information that was found in other articles.

Figure 9
Framework for participatory governance
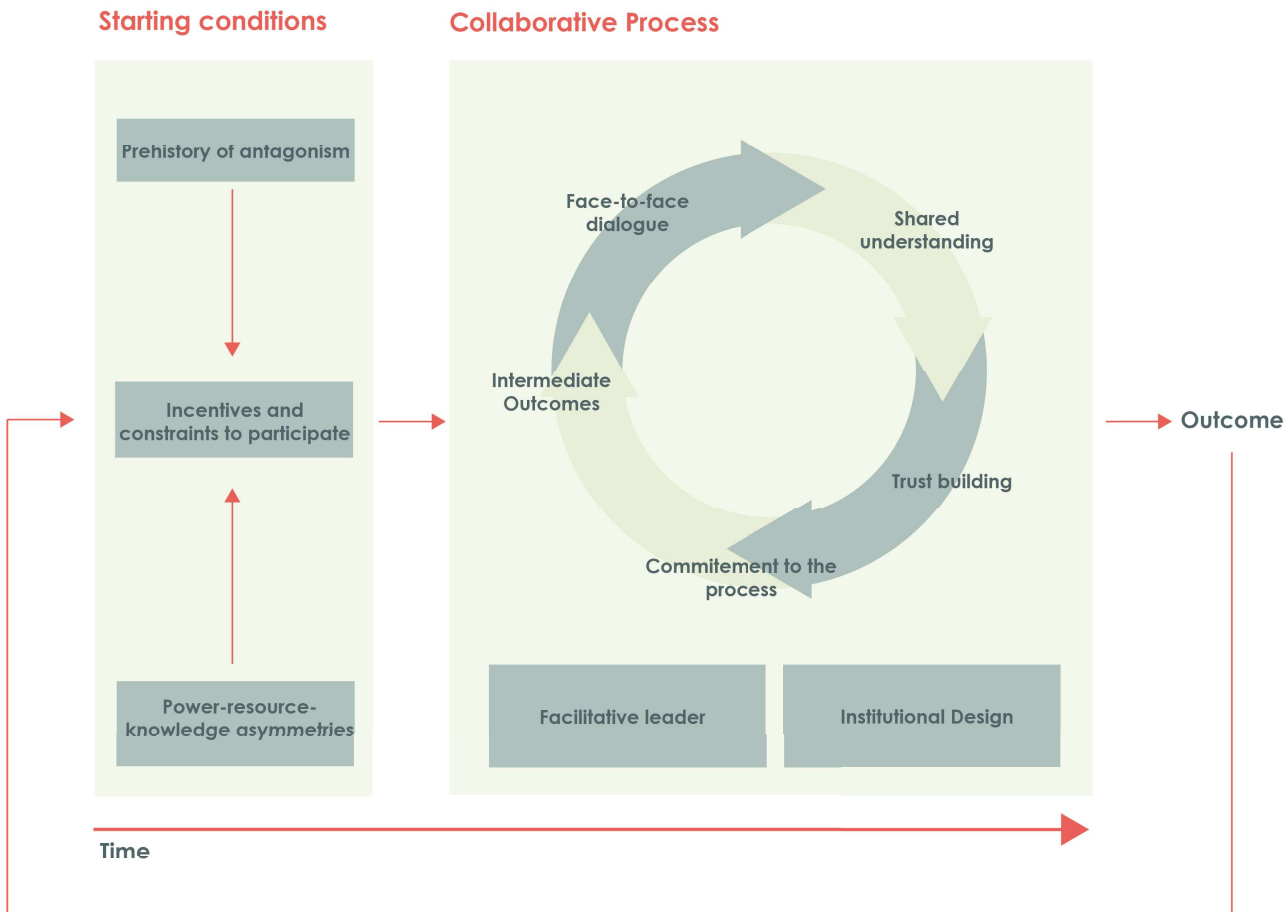
Adapted from Ansell and Gash, 2008.

Starting conditions

First, the governance framework of Ansell and Gash illustrates that a robust participatory governance system is defined by its starting conditions (Figure 9). These conditions consist of: *power-resource-knowledge asymmetries, incentives and constraints to participate* and *a prehistory of antagonism*. Here, both power-resource-knowledge asymmetries as prehistory of antagonism influence the incentives and constraints to participate.

The first indicator, *power-resource-knowledge asymmetries* can be seen as highly influential as it affects other indicators and is addressed by many scholars (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Palmer et al., 2022; Sullivan, White & Haneman, 2019; Bryson et al., 2013). Sullivan, White & Haneman (2019) even argue that when power dynamics are not addressed at the start of the process, the process is likely to fail. As the term states, the imbalances can be related to asymmetries in power, resources or knowledge (Ansell & Gash, 2008). This imbalance among stakeholders can lead to the manipulation of stronger actors which negatively affects the process. To overcome this threshold, the authors highlight the importance of empowering weaker stakeholders in such cases. To add on to this, Palmer et al. (2022) argue that imbalances that are related to knowledge can be narrowed by *praxis*, which means 'learning by doing' or 'research informed practice'; a form of collaboration where participants are

equally informed with the necessary knowledge. To reach this objective, stakeholders should share their personal knowledge with the group, through focus group discussions, workshops, interviews, adaptive planning and participatory mapping exercises.

Secondly, Ansell and Gash argue that in cases where there is a *history of antagonism*, the stakeholders should either recover their trust or there must be a high level of interdependence among them to create a robust collaborative process. However, a strong level of trust and interdependency among a subset of stakeholders may discourage the collaborative process.

The third important starting condition which is highlighted by Ansell and Gash is the *incentives and constraints for participation*, or the necessity for stakeholders to engage. This need is created when there is a certain level of *interdependency* among the stakeholders. According to the framework (Figure 9), the aforementioned conditions are determinant for stakeholders to feel the incentive to participate, meaning that higher asymmetries in power, resources or knowledge will discourage weaker stakeholders to participate and so will a prehistory of antagonism repel them.

The collaborative process

Following from the starting conditions, Ansell and Gash (2008) argue that the robustness of the collaborative process itself depends on five cyclical stages: *face-to-face dialogue, trust building, commitment to the process, shared understanding* and *the possibility of intermediate outcomes.*

The first indicator*, face-to-face dialogue*, refers to communication and is at the heart of each collaboration process. Dialogue has the power to break down stereotypes which contributes to the process, however, it may work counterproductive as it can also reinforce stereotypes or increase antagonism.

Secondly, *trust building* is pointed out as an important indicator for successful collaborative governance, especially in situations where the stakeholders have a history of being highly antagonistic enough time should be reserved to (re)build mutual trust. Practices that lead to exclusion of stakeholder(groups), like so called 'closed-door-meetings' where only a subset of stakeholders is invited, should be avoided as they generate feelings of distrust (Sullivan, White and Haneman, 2019). Overall, *trust* is argued to be at the core of a successful collaborative process (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Palmer et al., 2022; Sullivan, White and Haneman, 2019).

Next, *commitment to the process* is highly important for the course of the collaborative process. Commitment depends on trust on the one hand, and a sense of ownership on the other hand. However, these two indicators also relate to each other as ownership implies a shared responsibility which then again is based on trust. The authors argue that even when collaborative governance is obligatory, it is essential to achieve commitment to the process or in other words 'buy in'. This sense of commitment is in line with the importance of adaptive thinking, as Sullivan, White and Haneman (2019) have argued in their research. According to them, short-term thinking among stakeholders can harm the outcomes, therefore adaptive thinking, and thus a long breath, is needed.

A *shared understanding* among the participants is key for good collaborative processes, however not always evident. To guarantee a *shared understanding*, Bryson et al. (2013) proposes to define the purpose together with the participants. By defining the purpose, the stakeholders automatically set out targets for evaluation of the process which will help guide the process and avoid misunderstandings and unmet expectations. According to Savini (2011), unmet expectations can lead to dissatisfaction and skepticism, jeopardizing the likelihood of successful future participation. Moreover, it can harm the level of trust during the collaborative process, negatively impacting the process. In general this indicator goes hand in hand with good communication and can be influenced by a facilitative leader, which is further explained in the following paragraph.

Lastly, the *possibility of intermediate outcomes* is imperative, especially in cases where there is a prehistory of antagonism and when commitment to trust building was necessary, intermediate outcomes that lead to small successes are important.

Facilitative leader

A collaborative process needs a leader that suits or facilitates the process (Ansell & Gash, 2008). In situations where conflict is high, trust is low, stakeholders have an incentive to participate and power is

equally distributed, collaborative governance mostly benefits from a trustworthy broker that can act as a mediator. This mediating role is also addressed by Sullivan, White & Haneman (2009), who emphasize the need for conflict resolution mechanisms, through for instance a mediator, to support collaborative agreements when stakeholders are in conflict. However, Ansell and Gash (2009) argue that when power is less equally distributed and incentives to participate are low, successful collaborative governance requires a strong organic leader who emerges from within the community and commands respect and trust at the start of the process.

Institutional Design
The collaborative process is significantly shaped by the *institutional design* of governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Many scholars have touched upon this criteria for collaborative governance, and generally this criteria is twofold. On the one hand it concerns the established ground rules and protocols for collaboration; these rules and structures determine what the decision-making process looks like, and who is participating and how (Bryson et al., 2013). Here, it is important to question who is shaping the process as the values of the one designing the collaborative process inevitably influence the outcome, see Figure 10 (Clark, 2021, citing Schön & Rein, 1994). When planners or administrators work with individuals who share similar values, the resulting design may lack diverse perspectives and fail to interrogate differing values or beliefs. Designers often remain unaware that their process might not achieve key public participation goals, such as legitimacy, justice, and effective administration. Whether intentionally or not, they may design conflict out of the process if there is no value diversity (Clark, 2021, citing Lee et al., 2015, & Fung, 2006). Thus, incorporating diverse stakeholder perspectives is crucial in designing a collaborative governance process. While not all values must be equally represented in the final outcome, it is vital that all participants agree on the result (Clark, 2021). Furthermore, the institutional design is inevitably shaped by the *informal institutions*, in other words, the unwritten rules, social norms and shared beliefs among the participants (Sullivan, White, and Haneman, 2019). These have the power to influence stakeholder behavior and interactions and therefore these dynamics should be understood and addressed. Bryson et al. (2013) adds on to this that the process must be necessary with the project's context and purpose clearly understood by all participants. In cases where there is unclarity regarding the problem, the context or purpose, new problems may arise and wrong solutions may be generated.

Figure 10
Value frames in collaborative governance
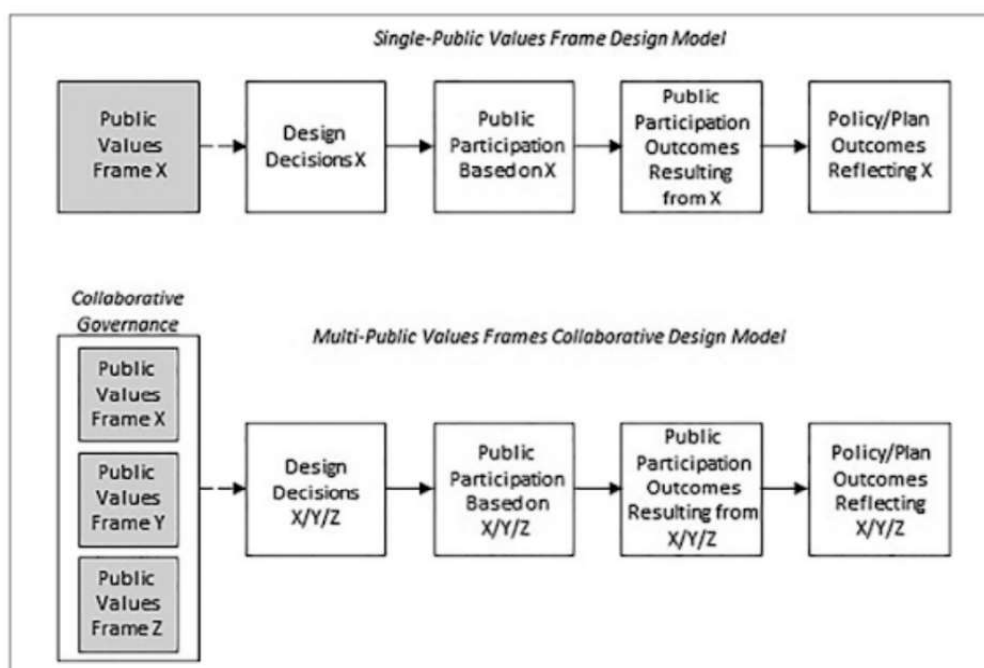
Note. Representation of how public value frames determine the outcome of a design process. Clark, 2021.

Generally, most scholars agree that inclusive participation is a key aspect for a collaborative process, and that it should not only be accepted but actively pursued, here a thorough stakeholder analysis is needed (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson et al., 2013).

In summary, citizen participation is a rather broad concept, however, we should aim for the higher rungs of participation (Figure 8) (Arnstein, 1969). Besides distinguishing different degrees of participation, we can also identify two phases within the overall participatory governance process which are interrelated, namely: *the starting conditions* and *the collaborative process*. All indicators which these phases rely on are to some extent related to *time, trust* or *interdependency* (Ansell and Gash, 2008).
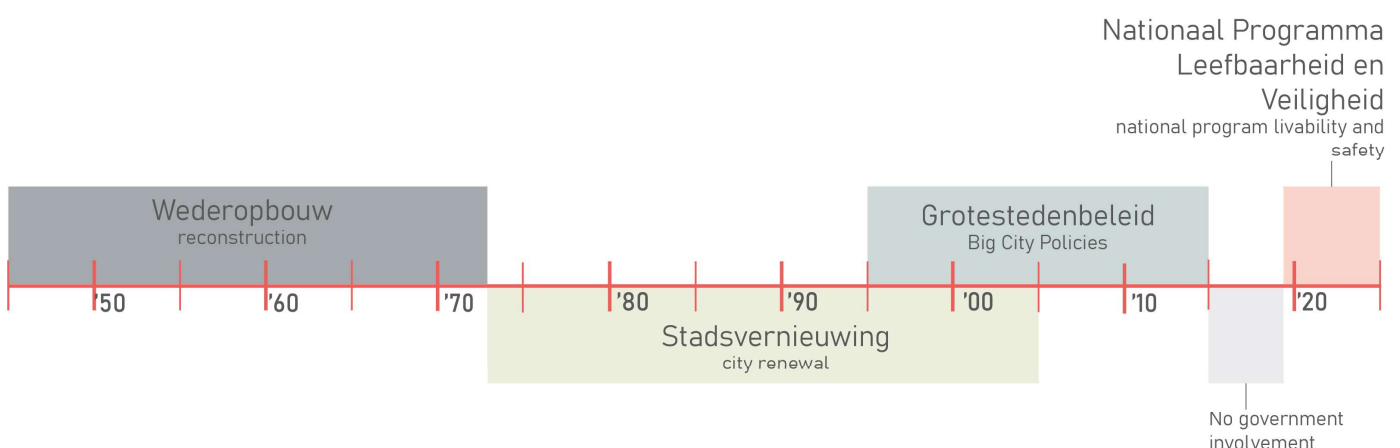
3.3 Urban (re)development
Kleinhans (2012) defines urban regeneration as a process which employs several physical, social and economic measures to improve the quality of an urban area that is dealing with multiple problems. As these processes touch a range of issues, the policies that guide them are often very complex. However, Kleinhans (2012) argues that these policies overall have in common that they focus on housing, which can take two forms. The first type focuses on changing the physical quality of the buildings and environment in order to attract certain residents. The second type is people focussed and uses incentives (such as housing vouchers) to motivate citizens to move to less deprived neighborhoods. Within the first type, demolishing and rebuilding the built environment will inevitably lead to displacement which results in a changed neighborhood composition (Kleinhans, 2014).

Traditionally, urban planning is approached top-down, however, broader pushback against the top-down planning strategies for urban renewal started in the 1960s, which eventually led to public participation being adopted in the field of urban planning (Shipley & Utz, 2012). Especially Western countries are increasingly using participatory processes in urban regeneration projects (Ferilli, Sacco & Blessi, 2016; Savini, 2011; Teernstra & Pinkster, 2016). Nevertheless, this new approach to planning never fully replaced the old top-down approaches, and to the present day, tension exists between these opposite approaches to planning (Whittemore, 2015).

Urban redevelopment in the Dutch context
The Netherlands is familiar with a long history of urban redevelopment approaches, although the course of these developments have changed throughout the years. Figure 11 gives an overview of the approaches in different moments of time, starting right after World War II. This section will briefly explain the first two approaches, and give a more elaborative clarification of the most recent and current approaches to urban redevelopment.

Figure 11
Urban (re)development approaches in the Netherlands

Adapted from Platform 31, n.d.

As a result of World War II, a national approach to urban redevelopment was required to rebuild what had been destroyed. This approach, referred to as the *Wederopbouw* (reconstruction), was aimed at resolving the housing shortage, but also restoring the economy. To do this, the policy focused on transforming the old city centers into economic centers by demolishing houses in these areas and replacing them with economic functionalities such as office spaces. Some of the inhabitants of the city center were relocated to new houses at the outskirts of town. This period lasted for almost 30 years, but in the early 70s criticism arose regarding this modernistic approach which revolved around the economy. From this point, the attention shifted towards a more humanistic approach where people became the centerpoint. This is when the *Stadsvernieuwing* (city renewal) approach was introduced, and urban renewal was placed in a social context. Characteristic of this approach was the focus on existing social structures and residents rather than economy and efficiency.

Despite the more people-oriented approach, many Dutch cities were still dealing with a range of problems that were harming the livability during the 1990s (Kleinhans, 2014). Additionally, critics argued the approach was too focused on lower income groups of society, causing higher income groups to leave the city center (Platform 31, n.d.). At the time, there was a strong belief that high concentrations of marginalized groups and social provisions were the reason for these problems, which is why municipalities steered towards socially mixed neighborhoods. There was a general conviction that introducing middle income households in deprived neighborhoods would uplift the original marginalized residents and solve the problems. Hence, the government and municipalities slowly adopted urban regeneration programs to transform segregated neighborhoods into socially mixed neighborhoods. (Uitermark et al., 2007; van Ham et al., 2018). Between 1997 and 2011 the Dutch government did this through a massive national restructuring program named *Grotestedenbeleid* (Big city policy) which was focused on the four big cities: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Den Haag, and Utrecht (Kleinhans, 2014). Accordingly, the government started to push municipalities and housing associations to sell and demolish social houses and replace them with owner-occupied housing (Kleinhans, 2014; van Ham et al., 2018). At the time, these policies faced little resistance due to a reduced demand for social housing (Uitermark et al., 2007). Furthermore, the central government reserved huge budgets to allocate at local governments for certain focus areas (Platform 31, n.d.).
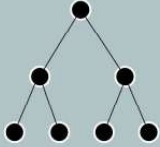
Later on, the huge urban regeneration projects that took place in the 1990s, received much criticism. In many cases urban regeneration was used to create socially mixed neighborhoods as this would 'improve' the quality of the neighborhoods, however, there was (and is) still no evidence that introducing middle income groups in deprived neighborhoods positively influences the original residents (van Ham et al., 2018). In fact, studies have shown that in many cases these urban restructuring projects did not reduce poverty among the original residents nor did it reduce inequality (Kleinhans 2012; Kleinhans, 2014; van Ham et al., 2018). Furthermore, these urban restructuring projects often resulted in processes of gentrification (Earley, 2023).

In the midst of the growing criticism of the urban regeneration policies, the financial crisis broke out in 2008 which had huge effects on an economic and political level. This marked a new turning point in the planning policies, where power was decentralized (see Figure 11). From this time on, policies regarding neighborhood developments were not steered by the central government anymore nor were these developments financed by them. A new era dawned, where municipalities themselves were responsible to increase the overall livability in the areas that were falling behind (mostly postwar neighborhoods). During this period most municipalities were struggling with the financial cutbacks and decentralization of power, which eventually led to an impasse of the livability and safety in the vulnerable neighborhoods. (Platform 31, n.d.)

As decentralizing the power evidently also involved several implications, the Netherlands now finds itself in yet another approach to urban redevelopment, named: *Nationaal Programma Leefbaarheid en Veiligheid* (National Program Livability and Safety). This program was introduced in 2022 and is aimed to be applicable for the next 15-20 years. It focuses on 20 areas nationwide where the livability is at

risk (such as the south of Rotterdam), and tries to combine the previous two approaches, as can be seen in Figure 12.

Figure 12
Urban renewal policies Netherlands

Process	Grotestedenbeleid (ISV)	Locally steered neighborhood improvement	Nationaal Programma Leefbaarheid en Veiligheid
Funding	At the front (government, municipalities, corporations)	bundling regular cash flows	regular and area focused means (government, municipalities and partners)
Coherance	mainly physical	mainly social	integral: social, physical, and safety
Cooperation	integral	compartmentalized (sectorized)	local coalitions (domain superior)
Role residents	inform/consult	under its own steam/independently	increasing the neighborhood resilience
Goal	output (SMART-goals)	outcome	impact
Scale	neighborhood	area, complex or street	shifting between scales
Timeframe	programs of 5 years	flexible (short term)	long term (15-20 years)

Adapted from Platform 31, n.d.

Part of this policy is the reintroduction of the 'mixed neighborhood', where residents with different incomes are intentionally placed next to each other to create 'inclusive' areas, as was also attempted in the *Grotestedenbeleid* in the 90s. The exact impact and effects of this approach are yet to be seen. (Platform 31, n.d.)

It can be concluded that urban redevelopment policies generally respond to the social problems at the time, though they do not always serve the communities best interest. Today, it is merely the question if urban regeneration can benefit the original residents, and how the negative effects of gentrification can remain limited (Earley, 2023). Recent urban regeneration projects have shown that careful and step-by-step regeneration strategies are often the most successful, with reuse and integration of what is already there (Lehman, 2019). Besides, Lehman (2019) argues that the neighborhood scale is best to perform urban regeneration, in contrast to the massive regeneration projects that were used before (like the *Grotestedenbeleid* in the Netherlands).

The three theoretical concepts that are described in this chapter - spatial justice, participatory governance and urban (re)development - are ultimately related to one another. This relation can be described as follows: to ensure spatial justice, participatory governance is needed in the urban redevelopment process. Here, spatial justice can be seen as an overarching concept as it is directly related to development in the urban context and to participatory governance.

4. Methodology

This chapter describes how this research was designed and what methods were used to gather the data. Per subquestion, the used method, data source, data collection method and data analysis is discussed.

4.1 Research Design
To answer the main research question of this thesis: *'What is the role of citizen participation in the neighborhood regeneration strategy for the area of Hoogvliet in Rotterdam, and how can participatory governance be strengthened to support community engagement?',* a qualitative research approach was used, and three sub research questions were formulated. Table 1 outlines these sub questions along with the methods and data sources used to address them. The following subsections will further explain what these methods entail, how they were applied, and how the data was analyzed. Finally, this chapter discusses the ethical considerations that were taken into account when performing the research. A complete overview of the research design is illustrated in Figure 13.

Table 1
Research methods

Subquestion	Method	Data source
SQ 1: What are the current participatory policies and practices regarding the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet?	–document analysis –mapping	–policy documents municipality –policy documents Dutch government –neighborhood council documents –website municipality –website Dutch government
SQ 2: What factors hinder citizen participation for the urban (re) development of Hoogvliet?	–semi–structured interviews	–residents Hoogvliet –municipality of Rotterdam –neighborhood council –Woonbron –neighborhood initiatives: Buurt bestuur, Participarade, Villa Vonk. –public meetings
SQ 3: What are the possibilities for improvement of the participatory governance process for the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet, and how can the VA tool contribute to this goal?	–semi–structured interviews –analysis of the VA digital map	–sub question 1 & 2 –neighborhood initiatives: Buurt Bestuur, Participarade, Villa Vonk. –municipality of Rotterdam –Veldacademie

Own work.

Figure 13
Research design

input
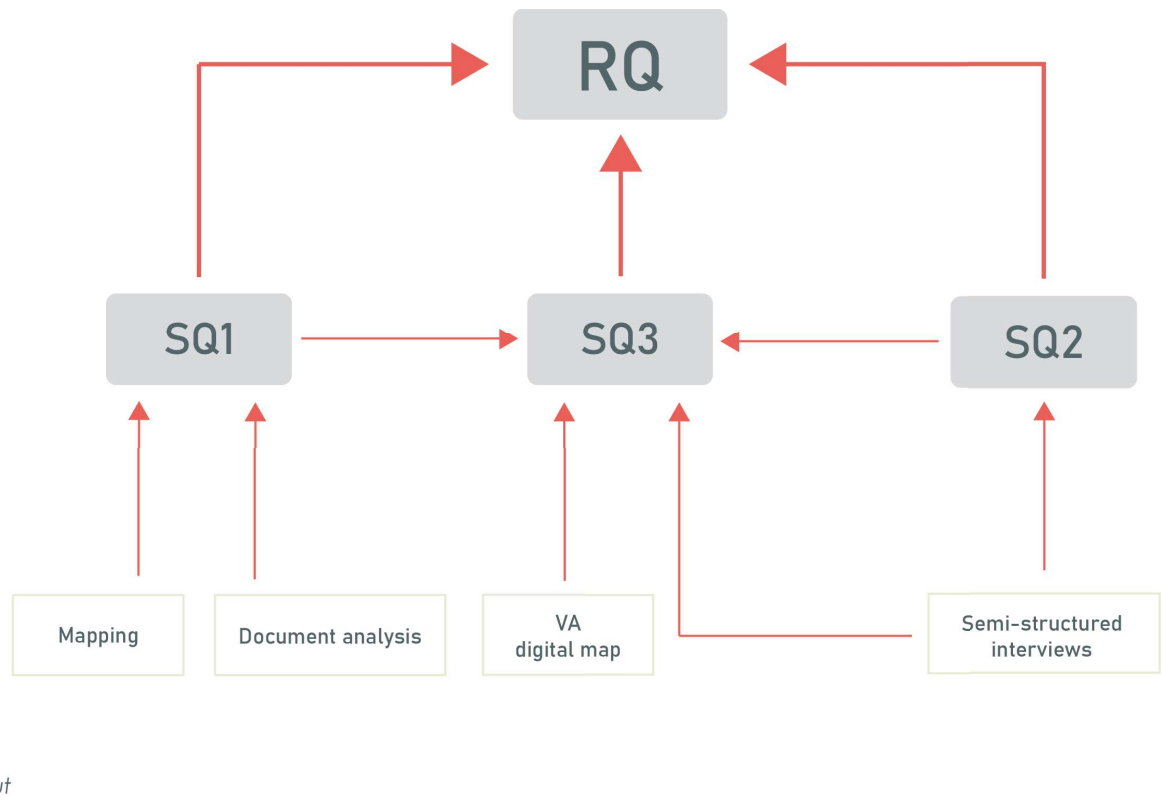
Own work.

4.2 Methods

4.2.1 Literature review

A preliminary *literature review* was conducted to create a theoretical framework for the existing know-ledge that is relevant for this study. In this case, that means creating an understanding of what is needed to create a robust participatory governance system that includes citizens for an urban (re)development process. To do this, literature on citizen participation was analyzed, however, later in the process this scope was widened to participatory governance with citizen participation as a component. This con-sideration was made because participatory governance includes multiple stakeholders and discusses how they should collaborate, which better suits urban (re)development processes. Next, a literature review was performed regarding urban (re)development to comprehend what it entails and how it is used in the Dutch context. Finally, the concept of spatial justice was analyzed, according to this theory citizens should be included in the decision-making process of urban planning. Therefore, spatial justice forms the center pillar of this research, connecting urban redevelopment and participatory governance.

To develop the theoretical framework articles and books on spatial justice, urban (re)develop-ment, and participatory governance were consoled through the use of Google Scholar, TUD library and WUR library.

4.2.2 Document analysis

A significant part of the data for this study was gathered through the method *document analy-sis.* According to Bowen (2009), this method is an efficient way of reviewing documents and is useful to provide context, but can also generate new questions. To answer the first subquesti-on, documents regarding citizen participation in urban redevelopment were reviewed to under-stand the formal guidelines and structures that shape the decision-making process. Additionally, the document analysis helped to generate (some) questions for the semi-structured interviews with the public and private stakeholders, which helped to answer the second and third subquestion.

Data collection

The consoled documents were selected based on their direct influence on citizen participation for

urban redevelopment (applicable to Hoogvliet), and accessed through the website of the Dutch government, the IPLO (knowledge center of the central government), and the municipality of Rotterdam. The analyzed documents included national and municipal policies as both are relevant for defining how citizen participation is (or should be) used in the urban redevelopment of the environment. The national policies are overarching and guiding for all Dutch governments, while the local policies are only applicable for (in this case) Rotterdam and thus Hoogvliet. Herin, the city of Rotterdam further specifies how they wish to integrate citizen participation in urban (re)development projects on their ground, as long as it remains within the framework set by the national government. In the local policies, other municipal documents were referred to, which therefore were also analyzed. These included the municipal vision and guidebook to citizen participation. By analyzing these documents, a clearer understanding of the city's view on citizen participation was created. All documents that were utilized can be found in Table 2.

Data analysis
For this study - and the first subquestion in particular - document analysis was used to understand the policies applicable to citizen participation in urban redevelopment in the Dutch context and Rotterdam (and Hoogvliet) in particular. For this purpose, the analysis of the consoled documents was focused on what is said instead of why it is said. This way of analyzing documents is generally described as *content analysis* and is useful to provide an overview of what is reviewed and leads to quantifiable results (Bowen, 2009). In this thesis, this type of analyzing the data helped to understand what the participatory policies are applicable for the urban redevelopment of Hoogvliet, and it also contributed to understanding what viewpoint Rotterdam holds towards citizen participation.

4.2.3 Mapping
To answer the first subquestion, *mapping* was used to map all the participatory practices and initiatives regarding the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet. According to Cooper (2016), the method mapping seeks to identify linkages rather than results and focuses on aspects like where activities occurred, where funding came from or where information was published. This research utilized mapping to identify the practices and initiatives in Hoogvliet that enable citizens to participate in various aspects (and degrees) of urban (re)development within their neighborhood.

Data collection
To find out what is being organized to include the residents of Hoogvliet in the urban (re)developments of their neighborhood, desk research was used. The mapping of practices started by doing research on what the municipality of Rotterdam is offering the residents of Hoogvliet to take part in any urban developments in their neighborhood. Later in the process, previous research from the Veldacademie on neighborhood initiatives was scanned to find additional practices.

Data analysis
To analyze the participatory practices and initiatives that were found through mapping, *thematic analysis* was utilized. This type of analysis seeks to gain a deeper understanding by applying certain codes (Bowen, 2009). Coding is the process of categorizing or labeling the data to make sense of what is said or written (Bryman, 2016). Here, the goal was to understand to what extent these practices and initiatives enable citizen involvement in Hoogvliet. To do this, all practices were labeled according to the different degrees of participation which the municipality of Rotterdam distinguishes in their participation compass (see section 5.1.2). These degrees are in line with Arnstein's (1969) participation ladder, however slightly simplified and with different terms. The labels that were used thus consist of the following: think along, know along, act together, co-decide and do-it-yourself. In some cases, practices were given multiple labels as different degrees of participation were applicable.

Table 2
Consoled documents

Document	Description	Source
1. Participatiebeleid Omgevingswet	The participation policy from the muni–cipality of Rotterdam.	Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.
2. Omgevingswet voor inwoners	The national policies regarding citizen participation in urban (re)development; Environmental and Planning Act.	Rijksoverheid, n.d.
3. Participatie bij een Omgevingsvisie	Further explanation of what the the national policies (2) entail.	Informatiepunt Leefomgeving, n.d.
4. Grote Participatie Samenvatting	A muncipal document which describes guidelines for citizen participation in urban redevelopment.	Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022
5. Omgevingsvisie Rotterdam. De Ver-anderstad. Werken aan een wereld-stad voor iedereen.	The municipal vision, which entails how Rotterdam views citizen participation in the development of the city.	Gemeente Rotterdam, 2021

Own work.

4.2.4 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews provide for a substantial part of the data in this research. This method is used to understand how citizen participation is embedded in the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet, what implications arise, and seek possibilities for improvement. To get a complete understanding of the citizen participation in Hoogvliet, the study is approached from three different perspectives: private actors, public actors and the civil society. Here, private actors are the non-governmental organizati-ons, public actors are the governmental organizations, and the civil society represents the Hoogvliet community. An overview of all interviews can be found in Table 3.

Data collection
For the interviews with the public stakeholder group, four interviews with three civil servants of the Rotterdam municipality were conducted. These respondents were approached via the website of the municipality of Rotterdam, and among them snowball sampling was used to contact other respon-dents. Among these respondents were the neighborhood manager of Hoogvliet, and two project ma-nagers who were involved in some developments in the area. All semi-structured interviews were held on Teams in Dutch and lasted around 30 minutes.

The semi-structured interviews with the civil society can be divided in two, on the one hand the the residents of Hoogvliet, and on the other hand the active members of the Hoogvliet community who are in charge of a neighborhood initiative or organization. The residents of Hoogvliet were approached in the streets, and lasted for around 5-10 minutes each. These interviews were held in the shopping area of Hoogvliet (the Binnenban) on Friday September 13. Additionally, one resident was approached at the public neighborhood council meeting on May 1st. This respondent was interviewed as a resident, but was also an active member of the Hoogvliet community as she was part of a citizen group (Team Tussenwater), and employed at a healthcare store in the neighborhood (Lelie zorggroep).

      A total of nine residents were interviewed for this study, which is not a representative sample for the neighborhood as a whole. This is why additional interviews were held with neighborhood initiati-ves. Such initiatives are often led by key figures of a community and have a broad network within their neighborhoods (Veldacademie, n.d.). Therefore, the people leading such initiatives are likely to have a

deeper understanding of the community's overall sentiment, giving their perspectives credibility. The active members of the community which were interrogated consist of the chair of the Hoogvliet neighborhood council, and three neighborhood initiatives: Villa Vonk, Buurt Bestuurt Zalmplaat & Meeuwenplaat, and the Participarade. Villa Vonk is a neighborhood house in Hoogvliet, and is responsible for organizing a range of activities for the neighborhood. The selection of activities that are offered is made in collaboration with the residents, and therefore matches the needs of the community. Buurt Bestuurt Zalmplaat & Meeuwenplaat is an organization that was originally established by the municipality, and is focused on increasing the safety and livability of the neighborhood. The organization consists of several residents of Hoogvliet, and collaborates with the municipality and the police department, to tackle issues in the area. Lastly, the Participarade is an organization which is responsible for organizing the annual festival of Hoogvliet. Originally the festival was initiated by the municipality, however, two residents have taken over. During the daytime, neighborhood initiatives of Hoogvliet have the possibility to present themselves to the residents and create overall transparency of what is organized in the neighborhood.

The initiatives were contacted through the website of the respective organization, and the interviews were held in Dutch on Teams and lasted around 30 minutes each.

Lastly, one semi-structured interview was conducted with Woonbron to represent the private stakeholder group. Woonbron is a housing corporation that is responsible for managing a part of the housing stock in the neighborhood, but is also developing new housing in Hoogvliet at the moment. Their main focus is social housing, which is why the organization has to suppress their costs, in which the municipality of Rotterdam assists by offering them reduced prices for the ground. The respondent from Woonbron was contacted through the organizations website, and the interview lasted for around 40 minutes on Teams in Dutch.

Data analysis
All semi-structured interviews which were held online were recorded and transcribed using Turboscribr. The transcripts were uploaded in ATLAS.ti, where the data was analyzed through two rounds of *thematic coding* (see section 4.2.3).

In contrast to the coding of the participatory practices, here the codes were formulated after analyzing the interviews and based on the interview data. In the first coding round, the information was categorized into four codes: implication for participation, participation method, organization and possibility for improvement. The first code was used to find what implications possibly hinder citizen participation. The second and third code was used to understand how the respective organization/institution is organized, how they operate, and to comprehend how participation is embedded. The fourth code was used to gather possibilities for improvement which eventually contributed to answer subquestion three. In the second coding round all the data that was labeled with 'implication for participation', was reanalyzed and based on this analysis five subcodes were created: trust, lack of knowledge & guidelines, bureaucracy, limited capacity, and no incentive for citizen participation.

The resident interviews were not recorded, however, notes were made directly after the conversations. During these conversations people were asked if they had ever been implicated in any urban (re)development processes in Hoogvliet, and if they were interested to participate if they had the possibility. The respondents who answered 'no' were asked why they were not interested in becoming participative, and from their answers, two codes were distilled: trust, and incentive for citizen participation.

Finally, all implications for citizen participation in urban (re)developments in Hoogvliet were joined and summarized in three overarching implications, namely: lack of trust, non-supporting system, and no incentive for citizen participation (see Table 4).

Table 3
Overview interviews

Actor	Organization	Respondent	Date
Private	Woonbron	Project manager real estate development and realization (Pr1)	31/10
Public	Municipality of Rotterdam	Project manager 1 (Pu1)	12/04
	Municipality of Rotterdam	Environmental manager Hoogvliet (Pu2)	30/05
	Municipality of Rotterdam	Project manager 1 (Pu1)	10/06
	Municipality of Rotterdam	Projectmanager 2 (Pu3)	28/06
Civil society	Neighborhood council Hoogvliet	Chair (C2)	14/06
	Villa Vonk	Chair (C3)	02/10
	Buurt Bestuurt Zalmplaat & Meeuwenplaat	Chair (C4)	02/10
	Participarade	Chairs (C5)	03/10
	–	Hoogvliet resident 1 (C1)	15/05
	–	Hoogvliet resident 2 (C6)	13/10
	–	Hoogvliet resident 3 (C7)	13/10
	–	Hoogvliet resident 4 (C8)	13/10
	–	Hoogvliet resident 5 (C9)	13/10
	–	Hoogvliet resident 6 (C10)	13/10
	–	Hoogvliet resident 7 (C11)	13/10
	–	Hoogvliet resident 8 (C11)	13/10
	–	Hoogvliet resident 9 (C11)	13/10

Own work.

Table 4
Implications for participation

Implication for participation	Subcodes
Lack of trust	trust
Non–supporting system	lack of knowledge & guidelines
	bureaucracy
	capacity
No incentive for citizen participation	incentive for citizen participation

Own work.

4.3 Ethical considerations

This thesis partially relies on semi-structured interviews with people who voluntarily participated in this research. In order to take the ethical considerations into account, several measures were taken. First, all participants were fully informed about the purpose and scope of the study before consenting to take part. Additionally, explicit permission was obtained from each participant to use the interview data in this research. To protect the respondents privacy, their names are not mentioned in the research, however, their 'role' is specified to maintain research validity (with their consent secured beforehand).

5. Results

5.1 Participatory policies and practices for urban redevelopment

This section analyzes the participatory policies and practices that are relevant for the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet, and in doing so answers the first subquestion: *'What are the current participatory policies and practices for the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet?'.* An analysis of governmental documents, supplemented by desk research and mapping of the participatory approaches, provides a comprehensive overview of the stated and implemented approaches to participatory governance and urban (re)development in Hoogvliet. This data will contribute to understanding how participatory governance and citizen participation is embedded in the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet.

5.1.1 Environmental law

In January 2024, the Dutch government introduced the *Omgevingswet* (Environment and Planning Act). According to this law, municipalities, provinces and water boards are obliged to include local residents, companies and organizations when proceeding developments in their surroundings (Rijksoverheid, n.d.). To do this, these 'governments' have to establish a participation policy in which they address how they aim to use participation in their environment (Informatiepunt Leefomgeving, n.d.). For municipalities, it is obligatory to establish an environmental vision-, plan-, program- and permit in which they set out boundaries for the establishment of the physical living environment.

The *environmental vision* describes the intended development, use, management, protection and preservation of the physical living environment. The vision is an integral long-term vision on the coherence of all themes in the living environment such as traffic, transport, water, environment, nature, cultural heritage, etc. It is a changing document that guides the physical development of the city for several years.

The *environmental plan* contains all the rules on the physical living environment that the municipality sets within its territory.

An *environmental program* describes measures to achieve physical environment objectives. In other words, in an environment program the municipality elaborates the policy for (part of) the physical living environment. For example, in environmental programs, the municipal executive formulates how it intends to realize the strategic ambitions and tasks set out in the environmental vision, and what measures are needed to do so. It may focus on a theme (climate adaptation), an area (inner city), an environmental value (noise) or a combination of these. The obligatory programs stem from national or European regulation, and the non-obligatory programs are established by the municipality itself.

Certain activities in the physical environment require an environmental permit. For example the construction of a road, building houses, cutting down trees or changing the use of a building. In contrast to the other instruments, a permit is requested by an external initiator and reviewed by the municipality. (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022; Informatiepunt Leefomgeving, n.d.)

For each of these instruments, the *Omgevingswet* outlines the minimum participation criteria, including *motivation obligation, giving knowledge* and *application requirement* (see Table 5).

For the environmental vision-, plan-, and program, the municipality is obliged to specify how citizens, companies and social organizations and administrative bodies were involved in the planning process (motivation obligation). Additionally, the environmental plan requires to specify who was involved, when and where, what the role of the authority and the initiative taker is and where more information regarding participation can be found (giving knowledge). Lastly, the environmental permit is required to explain 'if' and 'how' participation was used and how the given input was processed (application requirement).

Table 5
Core instruments municipality

Instrument	Meaning	Rule	Responsible for excecution
Environmental vision	Long term vision about all themes that are related to the physical living environment (traffic, water, nature, etc.).	Motivation obligation (motiveringsplicht)*	Municipality
Environmental program	Implementation policy, which explains how the environmental vision will be implemented.	Motivation obligation	Municipality
Environmental plan	Contains all the rules about the physical living environment.	Giving knowledge (kennis geving)** & motivation obligation	Municipality
Environmental permit	Needed for special activities in the physical living environment like building houses,	Application requirement (aanvraagvereiste)***	Initiative taker

*Motivation obligation: authority is obligated to publicize how citizens, companies, social organizations and administrative bodies were involved in the preparations.
**Giving knowledge: description on who is involved, when and where, what is the role of the competent authority and the initiative taker and where more information is being shared. The publication of the knowledge giving is the formal start of the participation process.
*** Application requirement: The initiative taker should indicate if and how participation was used and what has been done with the given input.

Note: This table represents the instruments of the municipality together with their meaning, participation rules and the responsible party. Adapted from Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022

The *Omgevingswet* sets minimum participation requirements, primarily emphasizing the need to clarify how participation is integrated into a development process. In essence, the law only obliges governments to use participation but does not prescribe how participation must be used. Instead, governments have the flexibility to shape and define participation for urban developments within their participation policies.

5.1.2 Participatory policies in Rotterdam

As discussed in the previous section, municipalities are free in giving substance to their local participation policies for urban development, however, the Rotterdam participation policy program does not hold any additional requirements for participation in comparison to what the *Omgevingswet* demands (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022). However, in 2021 the municipality stated that the city is striving to become more inclusive by involving citizens, companies and visitors in the public policy-making process. Furthermore, they argued that citizens should be taken into consideration at an early stage of the process and that close collaboration is needed (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2021). The municipality summarized their ambitions with regards to participation in six general principles.

1. Participation is customized: There is no singular recipe for participation, the interpretation is depends on the specific context.
2. Involvement with your own living environment: The municipality aims to offer citizens the chance to actively be involved in the development of their direct environment. They do this by standing in close contact with the neighborhood councils, who are responsible to boost the local participation (see section 5.1.3). Furthermore, the municipality stimulates and sometimes even obliges initiators to use the force of the community in their plan development. Lastly, the city is continuously in dialogue with its citizens regarding developments in the living environment.
**3. Clear expectations and proper feedback:** When changes are made that affect the environment or the policies, it must be clear how participation is embedded in the project from the start, and how the outcome is fed back. This accounts for projects where the municipality is in charge as well as for initiatives that are in the lead. Throughout the process the roles and expectations of each

participant must be clear.

4. Presuming the initiative: Participation must be approached as a tool that can support initiatives. The municipality offers guidance for initiative takers regarding the use of participation.

5. Better and more inclusive: For the development of policies and initiatives for the living environment, Rotterdam aims to include a diverse set of people to obtain more inclusivity, and advises initiatives to do the same. To reach this goal, the municipality uses her network including the neighborhood council.

6. Participation is a profession: The act of participation is taken seriously, therefore the municipality offers frameworks and guidelines for external initiatives and tries to stimulate the use of participation also when it's not required.

Although these principles show that the municipality considers participation to be important when it comes to developments in the city, they remain aims rather than requirements. Considering the first principle, the city of Rotterdam intentionally stays away from framing homogenous participation processes, and rather perceives participation as a fluid concept which should be shaped according to the context. According to the sixth principle, the city offers guidance for when organizers/initiators are incorporating participation into their development processes. This guidance consists of guidelines and overall advice for designing participation processes and is captured in the *Grote Participatie Samenvatting*, (big participation summary) referred to as the GPS (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022). Central to this document is the *participation compass* or *participation circle*, which distinguishes five types of participation, and helps and is aimed at guiding organizers to find the most suitable type of participation (Figure 14).

Figure 14
Participation compass Rotterdam
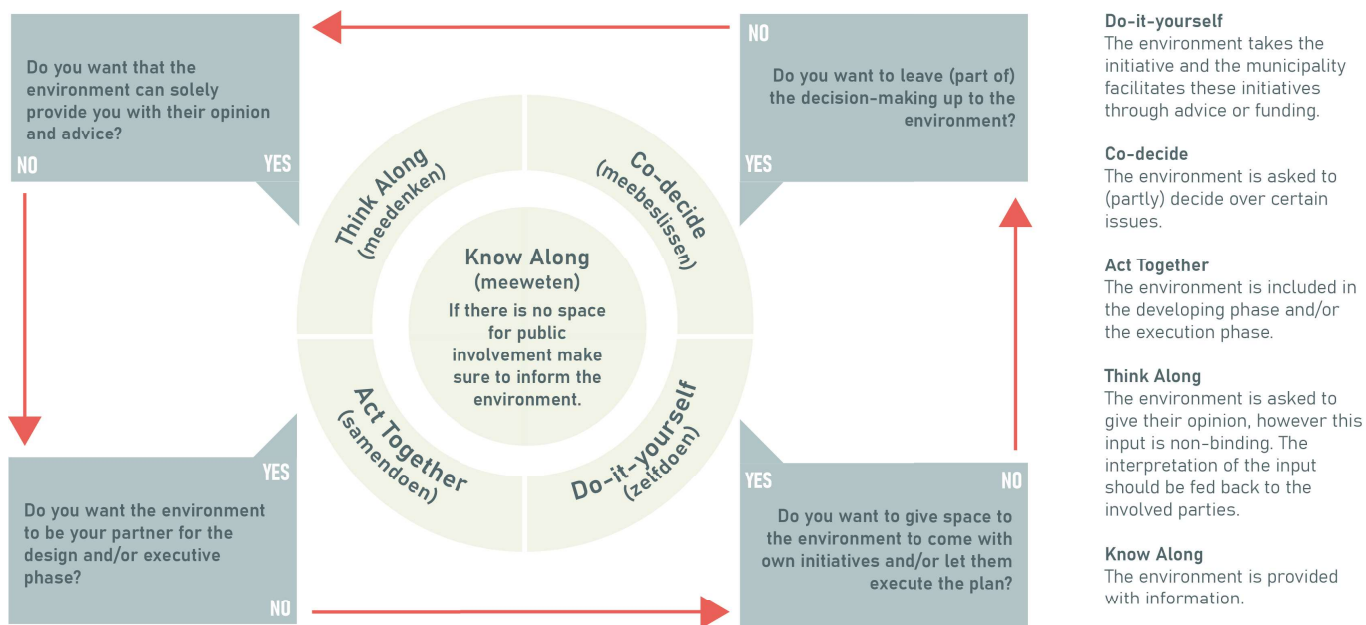
Note: This table represents the instruments of the municipality together with their meaning, participation rules and the responsible party. Adapted from Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022

The *participation compass* descends from the participation ladder that was designed by Arnstein in 1969 (Figure 8), however this representation is slightly adapted. Table 6 shows how the different participation types of Rotterdam correspond to the participation degrees of Arnstein. According to the table, the municipality of Rotterdam excludes *therapy* and *manipulation*, which Arnstein distinguished as *non-participation*, and compresses *delegated power* and *partnership* into *co-decide.* The municipality of Rotterdam deliberately chose to step away from the 'ladder' as they contend that one type of participation is not better than the other (what the participation ladder of Arnstein does imply).

Table 6
Participation degrees Rotterdam and Arnstein

Participation compass Rotterdam	Participation ladder Arnstein
Do-it-yourself	Citizen control
Co-decide	Delegated Power
Co-decide	Partnership
Act Together	Placation
Think Along	Consultation
Know Along	Informing
-	Therapy
-	Manipulation

Own work.

Nevertheless, the compass places *Know Along* at the center of the circle and states that this type of participation should only be used when there is no space for public involvement. Therefore, this degree of participation, where the environment is only being informed about certain developments, can be perceived as 'less' favorable as well as what is minimally required.

Besides selecting the appropriate participation type, the organizer - the municipality or initiative taker - is advised to further specify their interpretation of participation. To do this, the GPS offers six guiding questions:
1. **What** do you want to achieve?
2. **Why** do you want to collaborate?
3. **With whom** do you want to collaborate?
4. **When** do you want to collaborate?
5. **How** do you aim to collaborate?
6. How do you **measure** the collaboration?

Lastly, the GPS highlights the importance of good communication and inclusivity. They advise parties to invest in the participants, seek clearance in communication and to make sure the conversations are well organized. To ensure inclusivity they offer checklists.

Considering the participatory policies discussed above, the Dutch government obliges municipalities to use participation by posing minimum criteria of participation for each environmental instrument, but does not prescribe how participation should be used. Instead, municipalities are responsible for the interpretation of participation for urban developments. The city of Rotterdam acknowledges the importance of participation, encourages organizers to use participation, and provides guidelines for participation, however, does not make participation an obligation for developments in the city, as they argue that *participation is customized*, implying that each project should be approached separately. In other words, Rotterdams local participation policy (aims to) stimulate (higher) degrees of participation in (urban) developments, yet is not directly ensuring participation.

5.1.3 Participatory practices

Apart from the participatory policies for urban (re)developments, there are also some participatory practices that are aimed at including citizens in the urban (re)developments in Hoogvliet. By making use of mapping, this study endeavored to find most of these practices and describes them in the following paragraphs.

Neighborhood council

The establishment of the *neighborhood council* was an initiative of the municipality of Rotterdam and is part of the program *Wijk Aan Zet!* (neighborhood in charge). The aim of this program is to improve the city's neighborhoods by collaborating with its community and giving them more control over their environment. The approach is supposed to be practical, customized and accessible. To achieve this objective, the neighborhood councils have the responsibility to represent the wishes and concerns of the residents, and to communicate information from the municipality to the residents. In other words, the councils function as a mediator and are aimed at narrowing the gap between citizens and authorities. Together with the municipality and the neighborhood network, the neighborhood council develops an annual neighborhood agreement which contains a vision and concrete actions to improve the neighborhood on different fields. The municipality has the responsibility to execute this agreement, and is monitored and advised by the neighborhood council. (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.-e)

The neighborhood council of Hoogvliet consists of 11 residents, who were democratically chosen by the neighborhood. Once a month the neighborhood council organizes an open meeting for residents of Hoogvliet to attend, where they give them the possibility to address topics for discussion and raise questions, and communicate information from the municipality (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.-e).

Neighborhood hub

In 2024, the municipality opened a *neighborhood hub* in the center of Hoogvliet where employees of the municipality are situated. Residents of Hoogvliet can walk in during office hours and ask questions about their neighborhood, address issues or suggest citizen initiatives. (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.-f)

Citizen initiatives

To attain citizen participation, the municipality of Rotterdam offers people the possibility to hand in *citizen initiatives*. In order for these initiatives to be accepted (by the municipality), they have to comply with several conditions: (1) the initiative has to be organized for and by residents, (2) at least four other residents support the idea and (3) everyone is allowed to participate in the initiative. Accepted initiatives receive funding. (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.-b).

Digital participation tools

To endorse public engagement, the municipality offers several digital participation tools in Hoogvliet.
First, there is the *MeldR app*, which is an app that gives citizens the possibility to address a problem in their neighborhood regarding nine themes: waste, streets and bridges, lighting, greenery, street furniture, animals, floodings, ditches and canals, vehicles. This app is meant for notifications that are rather small, and are tackled by the municipality.
The *Rotterdam Aan De Slag* app provides citizens with updates about specific developments in the public space.
The Bouwapp is an app that is similar to the previous one, and also addresses the current developments in the neighborhood.
The website *MijnRotterdam*, here citizens of Hoogvliet can think along and decide along the plans and projects that influence the neighborhood. Besides, it is possible to hand in citizen initiatives. Citizens of Rotterdam can decide and participate through the website 'Mijn Rotterdam', where they can stay updated of the current activities and plans in their neighborhood and submit ideas or initiatives (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.-b).
Gemeentepeiler is an app where citizens can share their opinion on a diverse range of topics that concern the city or their neighborhood.

Spilter is a digital tool to support collaborative decision-making processes. It helps to get an overview of the different perspectives and how actors relate to one another.
(Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022)

Citylab010
This support program offers the opportunity for active citizens to realize plans that contribute to the people of Rotterdam. Ideas may relate to any field, including urban (re)development. *Citylab010* offers help by providing knowledge, coaching and a network. The best plans are rewarded by the team with subsidies for realization. (CityLab010, n.d.)

Opzoomer Mee
This foundation is aimed at stimulating citizen initiatives and participation with regards to making the living environment more clean, safe and social. The organization offers guidance and resources to realize the initiatives with a hands-on approach. (Opzoomer Mee, n.d.)

Buurt Bestuurt
Similar to the neighborhood council, *Buurt Bestuurt* consists of a group of residents who try to communicate and address local issues with the authorities. They focus on creating safe, clean and livable neighborhoods, and collaborate with the municipality and police. (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.-a)

Table 7
Participation degree of participatory practices

Participatory practice	Participation degree
Neighborhood council	Know Along – Think Along – Act Together
Neighborhood hub	Know Along – Think Along
Citizen initiative	Do-it-yourself
MeldR	Think Along – Act Together
Rotterdam Aan de Slag	Know Along
Bouwapp	Know Along
MijnRotterdam	Know Along -Think Along – Act Together – Co-decide – Do-it-yourself
Gemeentepeiler	Know Along – Think Along
Spilter	Know Along – Think Along
CityLab010	Do-it-yourself
Opzoomermee	Do-it-yourself
Buurt Bestuurt	Think Along – Act Together – Co-decide

Own work.

Table 7 shows what degrees of participation each of these practices entail, according to the participation compass (Figure 14). According to the table, most participatory practices require *Act Together, Co-decide* or *Do-it-yourself*, suggesting 'higher' levels of engagement. However, it is important to note that these practices require approval, and depend on municipal funding on the one hand and the willingness of citizens to engage on the other hand. Ultimately, the participatory practices do not seem to

5.2 Implications for collaborative planning

This section investigates the implications for successful participatory governance regarding the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet, with a focus on citizen participation. In doing so, this section answers the second subquestion: *'What factors hinder citizen participation for the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet?'*. To do this, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the civil society of Hoogvliet (e.g. residents and neighborhood initiatives), and governmental and non-governmental actors who are involved in the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet (see Table 3). From the interview data five implications were found which affect citizen participation in urban (re)development. These were then grouped in four overarching themes: lack of trust (1), non-supporting system (2), and no incentive for participation (3) (see Table 4). The following sections will further explain what these implications entail.

5.2.1 Lack of trust

The data that was collected through the semi-structured interviews, suggests that there is a lack of trust from the Hoogvliet community towards the governmental actors.

During the street-interviews, most of the respondents (six out of nine) indicated to hold little trust in the government and the municipality. It was stated by several residents that participating in any urban redevelopment processes would be useless, as they believed the authorities will carry out their plans regardless of their input. Some of the interviewees had been misled in the past, where participatory events turned out to be gatherings where authorities informed the people about ready-made developments.

'They do whatever they want, it's just like kindergarten.' - (C7)

'The building block where I live is currently pointed out as the location for 'statushouders'. Now I have a new neighbor, a 25 year old Somalian girl. When I come home from work at 3pm, she just starts taking a shower for at least 30 minutes, which is not sustainable at all. Recently, she was watching loud tv in the middle of the night, so I had to ring her doorbell to ask her to turn it off. Besides, she doesn't speak Dutch, so it is not possible to build a connection like that. They think it's really noble of them, but it's easy when the ones making the decision are sitting in their huge houses somewhere else…' (C6)

The neighborhood initiatives - who likely have a broader understanding of the Hoogvliet community (see section 4.2.4) - also pointed out that many residents of Hoogvliet distrust the authorities. According to them, the area has been subject to many drastic developments in the past (which was also discussed in section 1.5.1) which were often poorly communicated, causing anger, disappointment and eventually distrust among people (C3). In addition, the interviewed initiatives confirmed that in the past the organized 'participatory events' turned out to be only informative while residents were under the impression to have actual input (C3 & C4). Overall the semi-structured interviews suggest that miscommunication is also a hindering factor when it comes to citizen participation (C2, C3 & C4) and often occurs because residents and authorities don't speak the same language (figuratively) (C4). Furthermore this respondent argued that the municipality is often not aware how to transfer sensible information to the community and uses terminology that is sometimes incomprehensible for residents. Residents on the other hand, react out of emotion and frustration and sometimes lack knowledge and a long breath to effectively cooperate in collaborative processes (C4).

Besides the latter of arguments, one of the residents who was also involved in citizen groups

(and thus was regularly in contact with the municipality), mentioned that people in charge often changed position and information was not well being transmitted within the municipality causing ambiguity and frustration among her and other residents (C1). This statement was confirmed by one respondent from the municipality, who argued that oftentimes communication and uniformity is missing between the different clusters of the municipality (Pu1).

'Hoogvliet is seen as the city's drain, it has zero priority for the city of Rotterdam and this creates a trade-off, people also don't prioritize the city of rotterdam.' (C5)

Some of the respondents from the civil society also expressed their general dissatisfaction with the municipality of Rotterdam (C1, C3, C4 & C5). According to some of the neighborhood initiatives, this was due to the abolishment of Rotterdams districts in 2014 (see section 1.5.3) (C3 & C5). This change, in fact, entailed that Hoogvliet had no separate government anymore which caused the closing of the Hoogvliet city hall, and a diminishment of civil servants who are solely devoted to Hoogvliet (C5). Furthermore, it was also addressed that the neighborhood is often excluded in policy programs and as a result misses out on certain fundings (C4 & C5). These statements suggest that the two - the municipality and the Hoogvliet community - are disconnected from one another.

'As someone from Hoogvliet you are from Rotterdam, but we always say we are from Hoogvliet.' - (C5)

'If they have a plan and people go against it, they do it anyway.' - (C6)

Originally, the neighborhood council was established to tighten the gap between the residents and the municipality (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.-e), and thus (re)connect them. However, according to the chair of the neighborhood council, there is often a low attendance at the open meetings, despite their effort to reach out to residents (C2). Some of the interviewed initiatives attributed this low turnout to the limited influence of the council, as it is ultimately the municipality or other powerful private entities that make the final decisions (C2 & C4). According to these respondents, residents have little belief that the neighborhood council can make a significant change. The chair of the council shared the same conviction, as she admitted to question the actual influence of the council (C2). According to her, information from the municipality was not always transmitted in time and their input was not always incorporated.

'Sometimes, we only get involved at a later stage in the process or we get a heads up after decisions have already been made.' - (C2)

In sum, the semi-structured interviews suggest that there is a low level of trust from the Hoogvliet community towards the government. In addition, it seems as if this lack of trust affects the functioning of the neighborhood council in Hoogvliet.

5.2.2 Non-supporting system
It was also found through the interviews that the current governance system does not seem to be designed to support or stimulate citizen participation in the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet. This 'non-supporting system' concerns both the system itself as the way the system is being used, which will be explained in the paragraphs below.

Lack of knowledge & guidelines
Firstly, the interviews imply that the policies regarding citizen participation in urban (re)development processes fail to support participation. As discussed in section 5.1, the *Omgevingswet* obliges municipalities to use participation, but does not prescribe how participation should be used. According to the respondents from the municipality, this free interpretation of how they should use and design participation, results in unclarity, and does not support participatory processes (Pu1 & Pu3). One of the

respondents from the municipality stated that Rotterdam now mainly uses *informing* as a participation type, instead of the other types of participation that are proposed in the participation compass (Figure 14) (Pu1).

'Participation, very nice. But what I just understood so far, it's kind of form-free. It's not clear when to use what kind of participation, because you can inform, sound-board, advice or have a binding opinion. But when do you use what, I don't know. So the intention is certainly good, but the implementation is still a bit, yeah, how are we going to do that together? That still has to find its place.'
- (Pu1)

Although the respondents from the municipality of Rotterdam expressed difficulty with implementing citizen participation in urban (re)development processes, the municipality is not responsible for the entire process. Usually this actor is only responsible for the first stages of the process, thereafter a private actor takes over and is responsible for the further course of the process (Pu1). From this point on, the municipality can only advise these organizations to involve residents, but the private actors have the power to decide if and how citizens are included in the development process (Pu1).

Woonbron - who was interviewed to represent the private stakeholder group - however, also indicated that the *Omgevingswet* and what it entails is still very new to the housing corporation and remains vague (Pr1). According to this respondent, there is (not yet) a consensus of how to implement citizen participation in their development processes, despite his interest in involving residents.

Besides the difficulties that the public and private actors seemed to experience regarding knowing how to implement citizen participation, it was also brought up by one of the initiatives (who was also a council member) that the neighborhood council lacks some knowledge. According to her, the council is not always capable of managing certain issues which they are responsible for, which she attributed to the fact that the members of the council are elected based on popularity rather than on quality. Therefore, she believed the council's input was not taken seriously by the municipality. However, it must be taken into account that this is a singular viewpoint.

Bureaucracy
The bureaucratic nature of the governance system can also be attributed for its failure to support citizen participation. It was argued by the neighborhood initiatives that residents often have difficulty reaching the municipality, and oftentimes people get lost and frustrated due to the complicated and long processes (C3 & C4). Furthermore, these respondents indicated to experience a low level of flexibility from the municipality, and argued that civil servants often have difficulty stepping away from old norms. According to them, the people working at these institutions are too attached to the traditional course of events. These initiatives believed that this rigid attitude together with the long and complicated processes, is helding back residents who are eager to initiate, and hindering a (robust) collaborative governance system.

Limited capacity
The public and private stakeholders who were interviewed for this study, both contended that participatory processes require money and time, which are both scarce. According to one of the project managers from the municipality, the institution has to deal with financial cutbacks which eventually also leads to cut back on their employees (Pu2). For Woonbron the suppression of costs is the usual course of business since they are a non-profit organization, which automatically means they have little capacity (Pr1). Overall both the public and private stakeholders who were interviewed, considered this limited capacity as an implication for organizing citizen participation in (re)development processes.

In summary, the latter of implications that were addressed in the interviews indicate that the current governance system is not designed to contribute or guide a participatory process for urban (re)development where citizens take an active role.

5.2.3 No incentive for citizen participation

Lastly, the interview data suggests that the incentive for citizen participation in the urban redevelopment of Hoogvliet is lacking. Both the public and private stakeholders who were interviewed, did not see the added value of including citizens along every step of urban redevelopment, despite their recognition of the importance of public participation (from an early stage). According to them, the inclusion of citizens in such processes would especially complicate matters. However, these stakeholders also attributed the limited use of citizen participation in development processes to the residents themselves. According to them, people are not interested in complicated participation programs, and are typically only engaged when changes affect their direct environment (Pr1, Pu1, Pu2 & Pu3).

'Residents tend to look at themselves and think: 'Whats in there for me?' - (Pr1)

Generally, residents want to see concrete plans, otherwise it tends to be too abstract for them, Pu2 argued. Although these might be false presumptions from these respondents, similar arguments were made by the civil society of Hoogvliet. According to the neighborhood initiatives, residents tend to be short sided and are usually not willing to be implicated in long term processes (despite their possible dissatisfaction). From the interviewed residents, seven out of nine residents indicated not to be interested in any participatory processes due a lack of time or general interest.

'I also have to realize something in a shopping center, but there are hardly any residents over there. I could organize a complicated participation process, however that won't result in much.' - (Pu1)

Since all three stakeholder groups - public, private, and civil society - highlight a lack of incentive among citizens to engage in urban (re)development processes, this appears to be a credible conclusion.

'I think most people want a lot, but are not willing to make the effort themselves.' - (C4)

The three main implications derived from the semi-structured interviews do not stand alone, in fact, they are interconnected, as suggested by the collaborative governance framework of Ansell and Gash (2008) (see Figure 9). This means that the latter of implications affect, and possibly reinforce, each other.

6. Discussion & limitations

This thesis investigated citizen participation within the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet, a neighborhood in Rotterdam. Although extensive research is dedicated to participatory governance within urban (re)development projects, practice shows that these processes often face many implications. This is why this thesis endeavored to comprehend how citizen participation is currently embedded in the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet, and what implications are hindering a robust collaborative governance system. In order to do so, policies and practices regarding participation in this neighborhood have been analyzed and interviews with different stakeholder groups (private, public, and civil society) have been conducted. This chapter will discuss the results and compare them with the existing literature that was reviewed in Chapter 3.

Non-supporting governance system
With the establishment of the *Omgevingswet* (Environment and Planning Act), the Dutch government hopes to stimulate and create greater citizen involvement in areas such as, among other things, urban (re)developments (Informatiepunt Leefomgeving, n.d.). However, further analysis of this law revealed that it only obliges municipalities to use participation, leaving its interpretation up to the local governments. Consequently, the policy program of Rotterdam (which applies to Hoogvliet), does not specify when and how to use citizen participation in urban (re)development processes. Both national and local policies only oblige the respective actors to clarify what role citizen participation has played in the urban (re)development process, if any. The city of Rotterdam explicitly states that 'participation is customized', meaning that there is no 'one size fits all' approach and that every situation must be reviewed separately. Nonetheless, both the central and local governments advise using participation and give suggestions on how to implement participation.

Ultimately, in this thesis, it was found that the absence of clear guidelines is mainly what is hindering the use of citizen participation in urban (re)development processes in Rotterdam. According to the interviews with private and public stakeholders - who are still at the helm of such developments - it remains unclear for them how to include citizens in the urban planning process. Currently, most (re)development projects in Hoogvliet only depend on *informing* as a type of participation (Figure 8), despite the municipalities' stated aim to use higher levels of engagement (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022). In addition, it was brought up by the neighborhood initiatives of Hoogvliet, that most civil servants have a rigid attitude towards change and struggle to move beyond traditional procedures. Given this, along with the flexible character of the current policies, it becomes understandable why higher levels of participation are not utilized. According to Bryson et al. (2013), a robust participatory process requires a clear understanding of the ground rules and protocols for all participants. In Rotterdam (specifically in Hoogvliet) this clearity appears to be missing, and the collaborative governance system is indeed not 'robust'. However, Bryson et al.'s argument might be even more relevant for urban (re)development processes, as most power (still) rests with public actors who seem to lack some flexibility and act upon the given freedom. Lastly, both the public and private actors reported a lack of time, employees and money (capacity) to implement participatory processes for urban (re)developments in Rotterdam and Hoogvliet. The latter of implications - lack of guidelines and knowledge, bureaucracy, limited capacity - creates a non-supporting governance system in Hoogvliet.

Poor foundation for a robust collaborative governance system
The findings suggest that the current situation in Hoogvliet does not support a robust collaborative governance system. According to Ansell and Gash (2008), three starting conditions are important preliminary to the process: an *incentive* to participate, no *prehistory of antagonism*, and an absence of *power-knowledge-resource asymmetries* (Figure 9). This study's findings suggest that in Hoogvliet, these startings conditions are insufficient to serve as a foundation for a robust collaborative governance system.

The semi-structured interviews indicate that the Hoogvliet community lacks trust in the government and the municipality of Rotterdam for various reasons. In the past, Hoogvliet was subject to large urban redevelopment projects steered by the policy program *Grotestedenbeleid* (Kleinhans et al., 2014). According to the literature review, these redevelopments were not always in favor of the

residents, in fact, they often resulted in displacement (Earley, 2023; Kleinhans 2012; Kleinhans, 2014; van Ham et al., 2018). These events have affected the level of trust and indicate a *history of antagonism* (one of the starting conditions according to Ansell and Gash (2008) (see Figure 9)). However, the low level of trust does not seem to be solely based on the drastic redevelopments from the past, according to respondents from the civil society of Hoogvliet. Multiple examples were given from present (re)developments in the area, where citizens were not well informed, information was not transmitted (on time), or false premises were being made. Consequently, these experiences resulted in disappointment among residents and an overall loss of faith according to the civil society. These assertions also suggest that the current Dutch policy program for urban (re)development - *Nationaal Programma Leefbaarheid en Veiligheid* (National Program Livability and Safety) (see section 3.1.3) - still do not (necessarily) favor the residents. Furthermore, the interviews indicate that the lack of trust in Hoogvliet is related to a disconnection between the community and the municipality of Rotterdam. It was argued by multiple respondents from the civil society that Hoogvliet has no priority for the city of Rotterdam, that the neighborhood is often excluded from policy programs, and that there is a lack of communication between the two. In addition, it was mentioned that residents and authorities do not speak the same language (figuratively), affecting the level of trust on both sides. Ultimately, the neighborhood council was established to bridge the gap between residents and the municipality and to give residents more control over their environment. However, the council experiences difficulty engaging its citizens, which makes the effectiveness of this measure questionable. In general, it was stated by several residents that they do not see the value in participating in any urban redevelopment processes due to their lack of trust in the authorities. This finding is in line with the literature, which suggests that the level of trust influences the incentive to participate (Ansell & Gash, 2008). However, residents also attributed their disinterest as being linked to an overall satisfaction with their neighborhood or a lack of time to be implicated in such processes. Besides these arguments, the neighborhood initiatives experienced that many residents are oftentimes short sided, and not interested in long and complicated processes. The same argument was also brought up by the public and private actors, who therefore did not always see the benefit of including citizens in such complicated and long processes, despite their conviction that citizen input can contribute to an urban (re)development project. According to the literature, a certain *commitment to the process* is needed in participatory processes (Ansell and Gash, 2008), where adaptive thinking and having 'a long breath' is required (Sullivan, White, and Haneman, 2019). Lastly, Ansell and Gash (2008) defined the power-knowledge-resource asymmetries as important starting condition, which also influences the incentive to participate (see Figure 9). However, several findings suggest some imbalances in power, knowledge and resources. Among these are the use of lower levels of engagement and the observed disconnection between the citizens and authorities.

In sum, the results suggest that currently, citizen participation does not seem to be well embedded in the urban redevelopment of Hoogvliet, despite the changing policies and available participatory practices. While discretionary policies regarding participation might be effective in other contexts, urban (re)developments are still in control of bureaucratic institutions, which have difficulty to adapt and to act upon this freedom, eventually resulting in low levels of participation. Although the participatory practices in Hoogvliet allow higher levels of engagement (see Table 7), they are still dependent on funding and approval from the more powerful players, and, maybe most importantly, the willingness of residents to engage in such practices. This willingness was described by Ansell and Gash (2008) as the incentive to participate, and is influenced by the level of *trust* and the *power-knowledge-resource asymmetries*. These requirements that define the incentive to participate, do not seem to be sufficient in Hoogvliet, which ultimately influences the effectiveness of participatory practices. Therefore, this study indicates that measures aimed at creating more citizen involvement and overall collaboration (such as the VA map aims to do) are not likely to succeed if the abovementioned implications are not addressed first. Though, a certain level of *interdependency* among the stakeholders regarding an urban (re)development project, could overcome this threshold (Ansell and Gash, 2008).

Spatial justice

In a broader sense, the organization and implementation of citizen participation in the urban redevelopment process of Hoogvliet does not seem to facilitate spatial justice. According to Harvey (2003), citizens have the right to shape their environment, however, the power that residents have in the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet seems limited. From a procedural justice perspective (one of three dimensions of spatial justice (see Figure 7)), the three actors, public, private, and civil society, should manage, design, plan, and negotiate the space in accordance (Rocco, 2023). In Hoogvliet however, the urban redevelopments mostly rely on *informing*, which Arnstein (1969) categorizes as a *degree of tokenism*, and ranked at the bottom of her participation ladder (Figure 8). Engagement levels within this category allow citizens to express their views and be heard, however, they cannot exert power and make substantial changes to the status quo. The extent to which such a degree of participation leads to more justice thus remains limited. Furthermore, the literature on spatial justice advocates amplifying the voices of marginalized groups (Harvey, 2010; Fainstein 2014), as these are generally the most disadvantaged by urban redevelopments (Earley, 2023). Fainstein (2010) defines this as equity, which according to her is one of the main indicators of justice within the city. In an area such as Hoogvliet, which has been subject to many urban redevelopments and events of displacement, raising the voice of the marginalized groups should therefore be a focus point. Yet, these voices do not seem to be raised in the studied neighborhood. Although participatory practices such as the neighborhood council attempt to do this, they eventually rely on trust and interdependency which remains low according to this study. Lastly, the findings of this thesis suggest that the current participatory policies, which stem from the *Omgevingswet*, give the illusion of citizen control rather than create a substantial change. According to Savini (2011), unmet expectations can lead to dissatisfaction and skepticism, jeopardizing the likelihood of successful future participation. Therefore, such policies could potentially harm justice rather than create justice, which should be taken as an important note.

Limitations & future research

This study encountered several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. Given the scope of this thesis, only a small sample of residents was interviewed, which reduces the *validity* of the results. To overcome this threshold, residents involved in neighborhood initiatives were interviewed to gain insight of the civil society perspective. Nevertheless, the sample remains relatively small compared to the size of Hoogvliet, which may bias the findings of this study. A similar limitation arises concerning the representation of the private stakeholder group. Despite the attempt to interview more respondents, only one organization agreed to cooperate. In addition, this respondent - Woonbron - is a housing association focused mainly on social housing. Such organizations prioritize cost reduction and benefit from financial support from public actors, unlike other private entities. This further limits its ability to fully represent this stakeholder group.

Regarding *reliability,* it's important to note that this research was conducted in the same year as the *Omgevingswet* was introduced, 2024. Given that the law was only introduced recently, it likely requires more time for it to be fully integrated into the governance system. Therefore, conducting follow-up research is recommended to assess how citizen participation is embedded in future urban (re)development processes. In addition, I would recommend to further explore the exact impact of the available participatory practices in Hoogvliet to assess their effectiveness, and to understand how they contribute to achieving spatial justice.

7. Conclusion & reflection

As indicated in the introduction, collaborative governance - the process where citizens and other stakeholders are included in the decision-making process - is increasingly gaining more ground in the field of urban (re)development across Western countries (Ansell and Gash, 2008; Michels & de Graaf, 2010; Tatenhove, Edelenbos & Klok, 2010; van Gool, 2008). While participatory policies strengthen our democracy and help to ensure spatial justice, research has shown that these collaborative processes often come with many challenges that ultimately limit their effectiveness in promoting justice. This is why this thesis aimed to understand how citizen participation is currently embedded in the urban redevelopment process of Hoogvliet, a neighborhood in the south of Rotterdam that has been subject to many urban developments and still is today. In doing so, this study contributed to understanding which factors hinder a robust collaborative process and ultimately explore potential improvements. The guiding question of this thesis was: *'What is the role of citizen participation in the neighborhood regeneration strategy for the area of Hoogvliet in Rotterdam, and how can participatory governance be strengthened to support community engagement?'.*

The findings of this study show that, despite changing policies and convictions towards participatory planning, citizen participation is not yet well embedded in the urban (re)development process of Hoogvliet. Several arguments were found that ultimately led to this conclusion, however, two main points can be drawn.

First, it was found that the current policies, both from the central and local government level, allow for a flexible interpretation of how citizen participation is implemented in urban (re)developments. As citizen participation is a rather broad concept, such 'free' guidelines do not guarantee high levels of engagement, and ultimately Rotterdam mainly uses *informing* as a participation type for their (re)development processes. This was categorized by Arnstein (1969) as a degree of tokenism which is a way for authorities to legitimize their decisions, but does not result in to true citizen participation, as Arnstein argues this can only be found in the higher rungs of the ladder (see Figure 8). The study showed that despite the willingness of public and private actors to include citizens in urban processes, the current policies remain too vague for them to achieve higher levels of citizen engagement.

Second, the research indicates that the three defining starting conditions - *incentive to participate,* no *prehistory of antagonism*, no *power-knowledge-resource asymmetries)* (Ansell and Gash, 2008) - are insufficient in the case of Hoogvliet. Among these conditions, a lack of trust (prehistory of antagonism) is particularly significant, as various scholars emphasize trust as a defining factor in collaborative processes (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Palmer et al., 2022; Sullivan, White and Haneman, 2019). In Hoogvliet, the interviews with the civil society suggest that there is a lack of trust from the community towards the government. Many residents reported a feeling of being unheard and misinformed by the government, leading to deep-seated mistrust. Consequently, people are reluctant to participate because they believe they have no real influence in the decision-making process. Besides the lack of trust, the study did not find a strong incentive for citizen involvement in the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet from all three stakeholder groups. Ultimately, this influences the effectiveness of participatory practices (such as the neighborhood council █████████

This study also has value for other (Dutch) neighborhoods undergoing urban (re)developments. It was found that the *Omgevingswet* does not guarantee high levels of citizen engagement, and as this is a national law, this also applies to other Dutch neighborhoods. Therefore, other neighborhoods might face similar challenges, unless their local governments implement more restrictive policies or civil servants demonstrate how to act upon the flexibility of the current policies. Furthermore, the lack of trust that was observed in Hoogvliet, is in part tied to past events where (large-scale) urban restructuring projects displaced residents. Therefore neighborhoods with a similar profile and history might experience high levels of distrust, which could negatively affect the level of engagement.

In the case of Hoogvliet, and possibly other neighborhoods, the issues mentioned above undermine the potential for a robust collaborative governance system where citizens have genuine power and, more broadly, spatial justice is achieved. Spatial justice requires meaningful public involvement and in particular, it calls for strengthening the voices of marginalized groups (Harvey, 2010; Fainstein 2014).

Currently, the *Omgevingswet* seems to give the impression of more justice rather than creating a substantial change in terms of justice. Over time, unmet expectations may negatively impact citizen participation (Savini , 2011), and thus affecting justice in the city. Furthermore, this study concludes that for participatory processes and practice to succeed in terms of creating more citizen involvement and thus justice, the starting conditions (Ansell and Gsh, 2008) (see Figure 9) must be in order. From these conditions, restoring the level of trust should be a focus point in Hoogvliet, as this currently seems to be lacking. The following chapter describes additional recommendations to improve the participatory governance system for Hoogvliet.

Reflection
Working on this thesis has been both a challenging and rewarding journey. The topic of my thesis genuinely intrigued me and resonated with my interests. However, at times I struggled finding clarity, which presented difficulties in maintaining a focused direction throughout the project. Additionally, this was my first time writing a social research paper of this depth and scope. Due to my limited experience, I faced several challenges throughout the project, from framing the research questions to conducting and analyzing the results in a meaningful way. Despite these challenges, the experience has been a valuable learning opportunity. I gained a deeper understanding of social research methods and developed skills in critical analysis and academic writing. Reflecting on this experience, I am grateful for both the personal and academic growth I have gained.

8. Policy advice

This section investigates the possibilities to move towards a more robust collaborative governance system for the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet. By doing so, it answers the third sub question of this thesis: '*What are the possibilities for improving the participatory governance process for the urban (re)development of Hoogvliet, and how can the VA tool contribute to this goal?*'. To do this, the obtained knowledge from sub question one and two are used as input, and the semi-structured interviews have provided additional insights. Together, this led to several improvements which are summarized below, including how the VA tool can contribute to improvement of the collaborative process for urban (re)development.

Sharpen the guidelines
Currently, the policies do not seem to sustain a collaborative governance system where citizen participation is well integrated in the urban (re)development process. The policies are open to interpreation, which leads to ambiguity among public and private stakeholders, and eventually low levels of engagement. To ensure that public engagement goes beyond informing, sharpening the current guidelines regarding citizen participation is needed. Here it is important to take into account that urban (re) development projects differ from each other and should be reviewed separately (as the municipality of Rotterdam contemplates). Therefore, it is important to distinguish several project types and scales and develop clear roadmaps for each typology. This will provide more guidance for public and private stakeholders that are at the helm of such processes, whilst still acknowledging the diverse nature of such projects. In addition, the indicators that were found in the literature review (see Figure 9) can be used to assess the quality of the collaborative system throughout the process and afterwards.

Rebuild trust
The findings showed that a lack of trust is mainly what is hindering citizens from engaging in participatory processes in Hoogvliet. This also affects participatory practices that are aimed at creating more citizen participation, ████████████████████████████████████ Therefore, to create a more robust collaborative governance system where citizens actively take part in the process, restoring the trust should be a focus point in this neighborhood. In order to achieve this, transparency regarding (re)developments and participatory processes is crucial, as it was frequently mentioned that, currently, this is what causes the lack of trust. Although rebuilding trust usually takes time (Sullivan, White and Haneman, 2019), it is crucial to invest in restoring trust as it is at the core of robust collaborative processes (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Palmer et al., 2022; Sullivan, White and Haneman, 2019).

Distinguish and reinforce the different types of residents
The study suggests that most residents are not willing to participate in long and complicated participatory processes, however, it was argued by one of the initiatives that Hoogvliet is full of active and engaged residents and despite past experiences people remain hopeful (C4). According to one of the initiatives, there will always be a group of people that will complain no matter what, however this does not account for all residents (C3). This is why it is important to distinguish different types of residents, instead of regarding them as one homogenous group. In literature, scholars argue that inclusion is a key aspect for participatory processes, and state that including different stakeholders must be actively pursued (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson et al., 2013). This is also regarded as equity, one of the pillars for creating justice in the city according to Fainstein (2010). A more in-depth analysis of the different types of residents as well as how they could potentially reinforce each other, could therefore contribute to a more robust collaborative governance system. One of the interviewed initiatives, for example, argued that it is important to include people who have certain skill sets to take others along (C4).

Establish a testpanel
The study indicates one of the implications for creating participatory processes for urban redevelopments is the limited capacity (e.g. a lack of time, money and employees). In order to overcome this threshold, it was suggested to establish a 'test panel', where citizens are given funding to develop something for their own neighborhood (C3). According to the initiatives, such community efforts usually require a much smaller budget than when it's organized by other stakeholders. An additional benefit is

that residents usually have a broad network within their neighborhood and are more trustworthy than most public or private stakeholders. By giving more control to citizens, it is more likely that they will make use of what the area has to offer, which Lehman (2019) regarded as an important aspect for successful urban redevelopments. Furthermore it could also provide opportunities for youngsters in Hoogvliet (C3), for whom the neighborhood is not offering enough (Wijkraad Hoogvliet, 2023). To establish a testpanel, the municipality could reach out to neighborhood initiatives who are often led by active members of the community. In literature, it was argued that a facilitative leader is needed for a collaborative process. This role could be taken by the active community members, as they are likely to possess important knowledge and skills to take a leading role (C3 &C4).

Create a clear and small scale process
According to the interviews with the neighborhood initiatives and the public and private stakeholders, many residents are not interested in engaging in long and complicated processes that do not directly affect them. These stakeholders all argued that most people are usually only interested when changes affect their direct environment (C4, Pu1 & Pu2). Taking the latter into account, collaborative urban (re) developments processes should be comprehensible and only include the residents who are directly affected by the developments. In literature it is argued that urban (re)developments should focus on the neighborhood scale with a reuse of what is already there to be successful (Lehman, 2019). One of the interviewed initiatives from this study however, mentioned that focusing on an even smaller scale, such as street-level, might be most effective (C4). In order to not fall into complicated participatory processes, creating a shared understanding of the process, as Bryson et al. (2013) argued, could help. Here, it is crucial to set out clear expectations as well as a clear understanding of the course of the process together with all involved stakeholders (Bryson et al., 2013; Clark, 2021). ████████████████

Create/search interdependency among stakeholders
For collaborative processes to succeed, stakeholders need an incentive to participate, which requires a certain level of interdependency (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Therefore, organizers of participatory processes or practices should actively search for this interdependence in urban (re)development projects.

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Appendix

Interview guide

General introduction
Hello my name is Margot and I'm a MADE student, which stands for Metropolitan Analysis, Design & Engineering. For my master's thesis, I am conducting research on citizen participation in the urban (re)development of the Hoogvliet neighborhood. I would like to ask you some questions regarding this subject, since I think you could provide me with some valuable information for my research. Also, I would like to ask you if you are okay if I record this interview in order for me to process the information more easily? I will keep you anonymously.

Residents
- Are you a resident of Hoogvliet?
- Have you ever been implicated in any participatory events regarding urban (re)development in Hoogvliet?
- Would you be interested to be implicated in any participatory events regarding urban (re)development in Hoogvliet and why?
- Have you ever attended a public meeting of the neighborhood council?

Initiatives
- What is the main aim of your organization?
- What is your role in the organization?
- How does your organization try to engage residents of Hoogvliet?
- How do you perceive the relation between residents of Hoogvliet and the municipality?
- How do you think the collaboration between residents and municipalities or developers could be improved in Hoogvliet?

Public & private actors
- What is your role in the organization?
- How do you include citizens in the urban (re)development processes?
- Do you encounter any implications in the collaboration with citizens?
- How do you think the collaboration could be improved?