The Development of a Multi-Level Benchmark Framework for Evaluating Public Participation

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The Development of a Multi-Level Benchmark Framework for Evaluating Public Participation

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by

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PREFACE

'If it unleashes community engagement, we should do it. If it crushes it, we should not': with this statement, David Cameron presented his vision of the 'Big Society' on 19 July 2010. I may not fully agree with this pure bottom-up approach to governing, but I do agree that the active participation of citizens is required to accelerate radical change in our energy system.

With this master's thesis on public participation, I conclude my journey at Delft University of Technology. Without any doubt, I can say that this work has been one of the most challenging adventures of my time in Delft. Yet, I believe that I have taken some valuable steps towards enhancing our understanding of what makes good public participation. Undoubtedly, it has been a valuable experience.

Patrick Rusman

Hillegom, February 2019

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As one would expect of a thesis project on public participation, this research has benefited from the participation of many people (both directly and indirectly). I would therefore like to use this opportunity to express my appreciation to these people.

First, I owe much gratitude to my graduation committee. My deepest appreciation goes to Niek Mouter for his guidance, commitment, and infinite enthusiasm in the roles of first supervisor and PVE pioneer. I want to thank Neelke Doorn, the chair of my committee, for her constructive comments and suggestions. I would also like to thank Ruth Shortall for her time, valuable ideas, and consistent desire for improvement. It was a pleasure to work together with all of you.

Second, I would like to extend my thanks to the people who gave their time to be interviewed for this thesis. This research work would not have been possible without your insights, contributions, and enthusiasm. A special mention is due to Claudia Tempelman and Angelina Scalzo for offering me the opportunity to attend a round-table discussion with citizens of Haarlem. This graduation thesis adopts a policy-makers' perspective and I experienced this conversation as an enjoyable way of viewing public participation from a different angle.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to my dear family. I want to thank my brother for the fun and unforgettable memories over the past years. Ronald, Carolien, Betty, Jose, and Kees: I am grateful for the interest you showed in my study progress. Karin: thank you for the unconditional support. Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my grandfather Jan, a 'Delft man' in heart and soul, who has kept a close watch on my time here. Jan, I am proud to present you this master's thesis.

SUMMARY

Background

The Paris Agreement on climate change set a target of limiting the global temperature increase below 2 °C, with a goal of limiting it even further to 1.5 °C. This requires a radical reduction of fossil fuel use in the Netherlands. One of the main challenges is to provide sustainable heating for the seven million houses and one million buildings that are usually heated with natural gas and are not very well insulated. A major obstacle to this is that the Dutch government cannot currently force citizens to change their private heating system. This means that the active participation of the people is critical to the success of the energy transition.

Aim of this thesis

The growing call for greater citizen involvement in the context of the energy transition has been accompanied by an upswing in the number of studies evaluating participatory practices. While this is essentially a positive, and even necessary, development in our understanding of what makes good public participation, the practical usability of the existing frameworks for evaluating public participation is insufficient to meet demand. This thesis responds to the need for a more practical and usable method of evaluating public participation by developing a multi-level benchmark framework (better known as a tree-like structure). In the past, a multi-level benchmark framework has been successfully employed to quantify and measure the success of public participation in water resources planning, but no further applications are known. In the light of the framework's potential, and the opportunities for improvement, this thesis develops an improved multi-level benchmark framework to evaluate public participation. Here, it is important to note that developing such a framework in line with the (sometimes conflicting) demands for participatory approaches of all actors is not possible. Given that policy-makers are arguably an important – if not the most important – stakeholder in the field of public participation, the purpose of this thesis is to develop a multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation in line with policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches.

Methodology

This thesis project was carried out in four sequential steps and includes an investigation of evaluation benchmarks drawn from the academic literature (conceptual investigation) and policy-maker perspectives of public participation (empirical investigation). For a reasonably comprehensive list of benchmarks with which to evaluate public participation, which may be of great relevance to policy-makers, an extensive literature review of international scientific publications was undertaken. The content analysis method was used to analyse the relevant scientific studies and arrange the evaluation benchmarks obtained from the academic literature in a multi-level benchmark framework. To ensure that the final evaluative framework

lines up with policy-maker perspectives of public participation, the science-based framework was validated and improved on the basis of Dutch municipal evaluation studies on public participation and semi-structured interviews with policy-makers. Finally, the functioning of the developed framework was illustrated by evaluating a participatory value evaluation (PVE)[1] experiment for the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management. This shows how the framework might work and how it could help practitioners and policy-makers to derive specific actions or policy measures.

Conceptual investigation

An examination of the academic literature suggests that intended outcomes, resource minimisation, democracy, citizen satisfaction, and ease of participation should be considered in the evaluation of any participatory effort. First, it is frequently argued that participatory programmes should achieve their intended outcomes of making better quality decisions, enhancing political legitimacy, and building capacity for future cooperation. Resource minimisation, in turn, implies that public participation approaches should minimise the cost of the procedure and the time required to issue a final decision. The relevant sub-benchmarks under democracy are fairness, learning, deliberation, and transparency. Fourth, some have claimed that participatory programmes should ultimately result in high satisfaction amongst participants, not least because the public authorities have a responsibility to satisfy the people. Finally, there are academics who argue that participation mechanisms must be as user-friendly as possible, which means that they should be comfortable and convenient, structured, and clear.

Empirical investigation

The municipal evaluation studies suggest that that all five categories of successful public participation obtained from the academic literature are considered important by policy-makers. In particular, intended outcomes and democracy are commonly recognised markers of success in these reports. The five different themes were also identified by the interviewees in this study. Many respondents stated that citizen participation increases the likelihood of citizens developing a sense of ownership regarding the issues that are at stake. Moreover, almost all interviewees noted the key role of clarity. However, the results of the empirical investigation suggest that two relevant sub-benchmarks should be added to the final framework so that it aligns with policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches. First, it was found that policy-makers attach a high value to 'careful weighing', which means that the interests and preferences of stakeholders are carefully weighed against one another. Second, the interviews with policy-makers reveal that sponsors, usually governments, should provide clarity with regard to the wider issue.

[1] PVE is an innovative, web-based economic appraisal method which promises to stimulate the active participation of different social segments, including people typically disengaged from public decision-making processes (see Section 1.4).

Conclusion and discussion

Taking into account the inferences drawn from the conceptual and empirical investigation, a multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation tailored to policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches was developed. This framework visualises the upper evaluation benchmarks in one picture (Figure 1), structuring thinking in a simple and well-organised manner, whilst also providing a detailed checklist for each category to be utilised as practical guidelines. We can provisionally infer that the framework can be helpful to those who need guidance with structuring their thinking about public participation, and that it renders specific policy recommendations about how to design or improve participatory programmes. Nevertheless, the author would like to underline that the framework described in this study should not be treated as a universal or complete format for evaluating public participation. Multiple evaluation benchmarks are suggested in the framework, but given the diverse nature of public participation, not all of these are appropriate for every participation exercise. Hence, the author advises practitioners and policy-makers to use the framework in a flexible way; meaning that evaluation benchmarks can be removed, adapted, or even added, depending on the nature of the participation approach. The developed framework can be used as a starting point for structuring thinking about public participation.

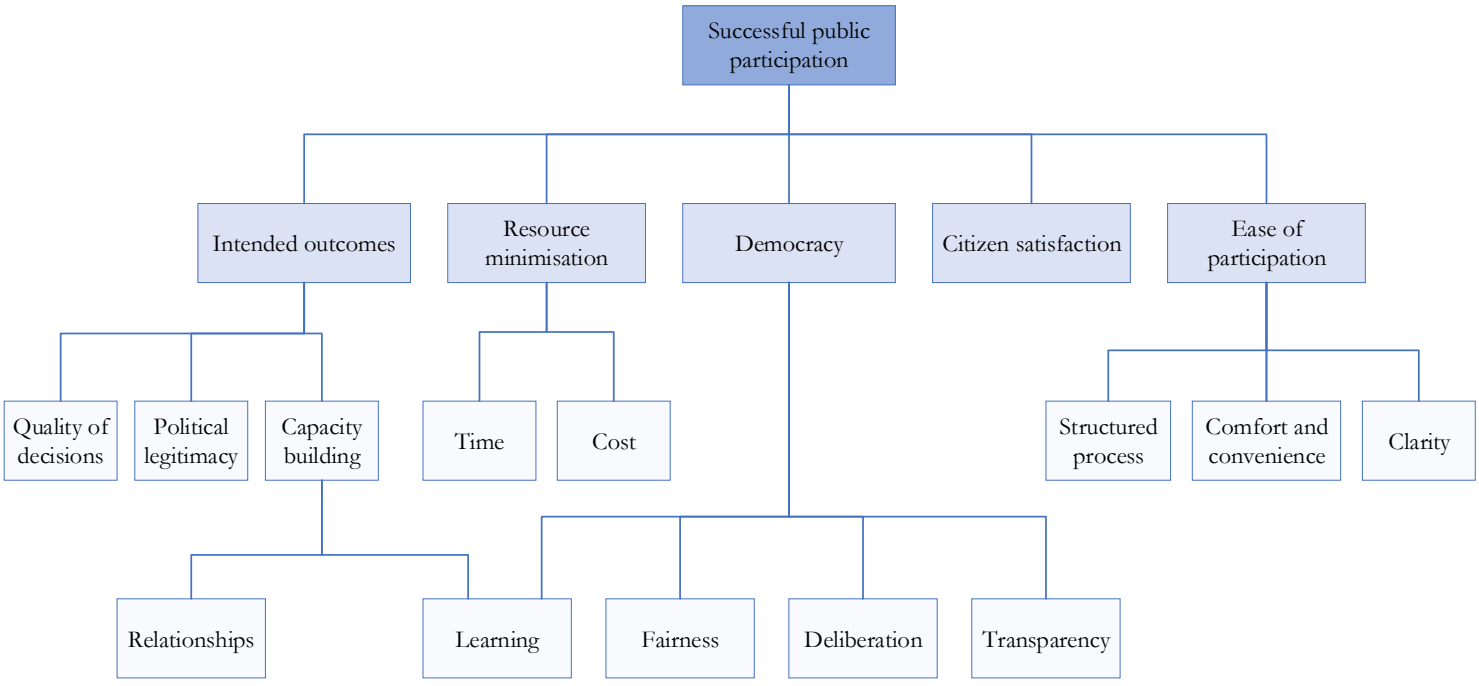

Figure 1. The highest-level elements of the evaluative framework

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1. INTRODUCTION

This graduation thesis is about public participation, a topic which is critical to the success of the Dutch Climate Agreement. To illustrate the importance of this topic, this chapter begins with a description of the challenges we face in the process of the energy transition. It then draws attention to the research problem, objective and research questions, and the contributions of this research (both scientific and societal). Finally, the outline of this thesis is presented.

1.1. Towards a decarbonised building stock

The Dutch energy system must undergo fundamental change in the coming decades. The Paris Agreement on climate change has set a target of limiting the global temperature increase below 2 °C, with a goal of limiting it even further to 1.5 °C (e.g., INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY, 2017; MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, 2017). This requires a radical reduction in fossil fuel use. The Dutch government has chosen to respond proactively, seeking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to nearly zero by 2050. It aims to make 14% of total energy consumption in the Netherlands sustainable by 2020, 16% by 2023, and almost 100% by 2050 (MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, 2017). These aims are reflected in the recent Dutch Climate agreement, which has a central goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the Netherlands by at least 49% of 1990 levels, and possibly even by 55%, before 2030 (CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE, 2018).

Greenhous gas emissions in The Netherlands are primarily associated with energy use and can be roughly attributed to four functionalities: power and light (electricity), high-temperature heat (process heat), transport and mobility, and low-temperature heat (space heating and tap water). Energy consumption for the latter accounts for more than 30% of all energy used in the Netherlands. Therefore, one of the major objectives is a sharp reduction in the use of natural gas by boosting and incorporating sustainable heat in the built environment (MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, 2017).

The European Energy Performance of Buildings Directive has set a target of newly constructed buildings being near 'energy-neutral'. From 2021, all new buildings must meet corresponding legal requirements (EUROPEAN UNION, 2010; EUROPEAN UNION, 2018). However, this will make only a small contribution to the development of a decarbonised built environment. The largest challenge is to provide sustainable heating for the seven million houses and one million buildings that are usually heated with natural gas and are not very well insulated. The aim is to renovate approximately 50,000 existing houses per year in 2021, reaching a rate of 200,000 houses per year well before 2030 (CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE, 2018). The best possible policy may differ locally and requires customised solutions. Municipalities are best placed to assess the local conditions, thus a significant role has been set aside for them (MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, 2017).

1.2. The challenge of local sustainable change

History has proven that local energy projects frequently suffer from significant locally based resistance, caused by factors, such as ecological change, noise, diminished view, safety concerns, pollution, landscape destruction, perceived procedural injustice, and decreased property values (FRIEDL & REICHL, 2016). Although more than three out of four Dutch citizens believe energy conservation is important and that our energy system should be more sustainable (NIEMAN RAADGEVENDE INGENIEURS), many domestic sustainability initiatives have been aborted or considerably delayed due to social resistance (MOUTER, DE GEEST & DOORN, 2018). A well-known example of this is a project which involved storing captured CO_2 in an empty gas field under the town of Barendrecht in the West of the Netherlands, which was aborted due to a lack of social acceptance (PESCH, CORRELJÉ, CUPPEN & TAEBI, 2017). Other countries have faced similar issues, such as the onshore wind project failures in France (ENEVOLDSEN & SOVACOOL, 2016). Hence, there is every reason to believe that the Dutch government will face challenges when radically changing local heating systems.

This conclusion is reinforced by the recognition that the switch from natural gas to sustainable heat will touch upon a key aspect of life: housing. From a citizens' perspective, the move towards decarbonised building stock could be highly invasive as the necessary adjustments will affect the private sphere, in which individuals have a degree of authority, unimpeded by interventions by governmental agencies. The manner in which citizens respond to this invasion will be partly determined by other issues in their living environment (CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE, 2018). Here, it is important to note that, at this moment, the government cannot force private homeowners to change their heating systems. People must decide for themselves whether they wish to spend money on the required adjustments and which alternative to natural gas they prefer (PAK, 2018).

1.3. The key role of public participation

In light of the highly invasive nature of sustainable heating systems, the willingness of homeowners to contribute and a strong cooperation between government and citizens will be critical to the success of the energy transition. This is underlined by the fact that the conversion to renewable energy has a high cost. The transition to natural gas-free houses could cost a private homeowner up to 30,000 euros (PAK, 2018). Furthermore, the government requires citizens to think pro-actively about the best balance between durable, affordable, and equitable policies per neighbourhood, and to be informed about new developments, and when action is needed. Moreover, the government must provide citizens with technical and/or financial support when they opt for energy-neutral homes (SERVICEPUNT DUURZAME ENERGIE, 2018). For instance, PAK (2018) notes that a substantial proportion of Dutch households (approximately 40%) does not have sufficient information to make well-informed decisions. In view of the above, one might argue that active involvement of citizens is more important than ever. The urgency of civic participation is also

acknowledged in the recent Dutch Climate Agreement, which states, 'A balanced distribution of benefits and burdens is important, but more is needed to strengthen public support for the transition. The broad and active involvement of citizens is essential to meet the major challenges of this Climate Agreement' (CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE, 2018, P. 208).

1.4. The introduction of participatory value evaluation (PVE)

As argued above, the transformation of seven million houses into 'energy-neutral' buildings requires the active participation of citizens. However, conventional participation techniques seem to be inappropriate to stimulate high levels of public engagement (e.g., BAKER, ADDAMS, DAVIS, BAKER & LON, 2005; IRVIN & STANSBURY, 2004). They generally require a heavy time commitment, which in turn often results in a poor representation of the general population (discussed in Appendix A). PVE is designed to remedy this issue. This is an innovative, web-based economic appraisal method which promises to stimulate the active participation of different social segments, including people typically disengaged from public decision-making processes (MOUTER, KOSTER & DEKKER, 2017). In PVE, participants are presented with multiple policy alternatives, characterised by various personal and collective impacts. The different options cannot all be implemented. Participants must select their preferred alternatives within the constraint(s), such as limited budgets. Thereupon, behavioural choice models can be used to value the different portfolios that are possible within the available budget (MOUTER, KOSTER, DEKKER & BORST, 2018). A major benefit of PVE, compared to conventional participation approaches, is that the threshold for participating is relatively low. Participants generally require 20-30 minutes to submit their choice (MOUTER ET AL., 2018). More detail of the promises of PVE is provided in Appendix A.

1.5. Research problem

Public authorities recently used PVE for the first time to assess an investment plan by the Transport Authority of Amsterdam (MOUTER ET AL., 2017), a flood protection scheme by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management (MOUTER ET AL., 2018), a water management programme in a neighbourhood in the Hague (DARTÉE, 2018), and various options for a transition towards natural gas-free neighbourhoods in Nijmegen (PAK, 2018). All of these studies, although differentiated in terms of scale and topic, take a first step towards exploring the applicability of the PVE method and thereby represent a valuable step in its development. They demonstrate that PVE facilitates the far-reaching participation of citizens in governmental decision-making due to a low threshold for participation; although targeting a large group of respondents seems to be both challenging and costly at a local level, as was acknowledged by DARTÉE (2018) and PAK (2018).

However, a thorough evaluation of the PVE method is missing, and as such, it is unclear whether the PVE programmes are actually working. There are further unanswered questions on how the method could

be improved, which needs can be satisfied by PVE and which cannot, and whether (and when) PVE is justified in making commitments of private and public resources. Research to evaluate the PVE method would therefore be a logical next step, not least because PVE has the potential to contribute to accelerating local sustainable change by overcoming the limitations of conventional participation techniques.

However, the evaluation of public participation methods such as PVE is difficult. ROSENER (1981) provides four reasons for this: (1) the participation concept is value-laden and complex, (2) there is an absence of widely held benchmarks for judging success and failure, (3) there are no agreed-upon evaluation methods, and (4) there are few reliable measurement tools. Now, almost forty years later, there has been little advancement in evaluation. Despite the uptake in (scientific) studies evaluating public participation, no consistent and widely accepted framework or method has emerged. ROWE AND FREWER (2000) highlight that the systematic evaluation of public participation is problematic due to the lack of a clear structured framework. More recently, BROWN AND CHIN (2013) and MANNARINI AND TALÒ (2013) draw the same conclusion.

A major reason for this gap is that almost all existing frameworks constitute a mere list of evaluation benchmarks, whereas the academic literature suggests that the various benchmarks are interrelated. For example, current-state-of-the art frameworks (e.g., BROWN & CHIN, 2013; MANNARINI & TALÒ, 2013; STEPHENS & BERNER, 2011) include a huge number of benchmarks for evaluation, thereby limiting the comprehension and relative importance of each (BECKER, 2004). However, these frameworks do not specify how these evaluation benchmarks are interrelated, which are the most important (and in which cases), and which are of lesser relevance. As a consequence, practitioners and policy-makers often have difficulty using these evaluative frameworks.

In an attempt to remedy this issue, ESOGBUE AND AHIPO (1982) employ a multi-level benchmark framework (better known as a tree-like structure) to quantify and measure the success of public participation in water resources planning (Figure 2). They argue that several benchmarks for evaluating public participation are interconnected and thus can be 'reduced' to a few core examples, meaning those at the highest level of their framework. These core benchmarks can be assessed by directly descendant factors, which in turn are further broken down into a number of more detailed indicators (ESOGBUE & AHIPO, 1982).

Although the approach of ESOGBUE AND AHIPO (1982) to assessing the success of public participation could be valuable guidance for evaluating public participation, this evaluative framework has rarely been used in practice. This can be explained in part by the fact that their proposed framework is limited. First, they omit a substantial number of relevant evaluation benchmarks. Second, their model is not supported by any substantiating information or evidence, such as scientific literature or stakeholder perspectives. Despite its potential, however, no improved multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation is known to exist.

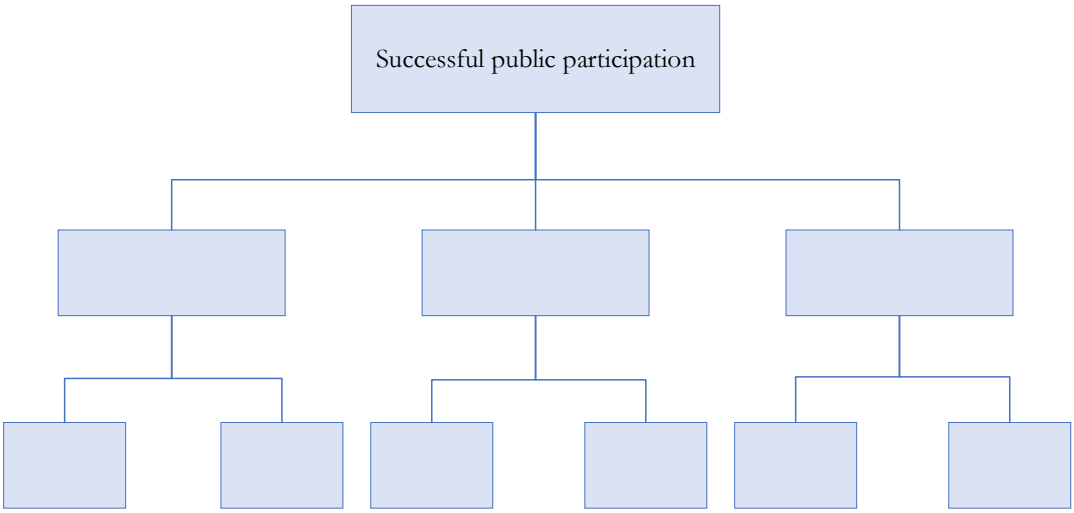

Figure 2. Evaluation of public participation as a multi-level benchmark framework

1.6. Objective and research questions

This thesis responds to the need for a structured multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation approaches. Here, it is important to note, as underscored by WEBLER, TULER AND KRUEGER (2001), that the requirements of 'good' public participation may vary per stakeholder (e.g., citizens versus policy-makers). Consequently, it is not possible to develop an evaluative framework in line with the (sometimes conflicting) demands of all stakeholders. In the field of public participation, policy-makers are a key actor, if not the most important. After all, it is they who decide to launch or evaluate a participatory programme and who must choose between different participation methods when planning a public participation event. Hence, the main objective of this research is to develop a multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation in line with policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches.

Based on the goal stated above, this thesis aims to answer the following research question:

'What are the characteristics of a multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation tailored to policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches?'

To provide an answer to the main research question, four sub-questions will be examined:

Research question 1: 'What common benchmarks for evaluating public participation can be drawn from the scientific literature?' (Discussed in Chapter 3)

To develop a multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation tailored to policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches, the first priority is to develop a clear picture of a reasonably comprehensive list of benchmarks with which to evaluate public participation, which may be of (great) relevance to policy-makers. The academic literature provides a useful starting point for determining these benchmarks.

Research question 2: 'What are the characteristics of a science-based multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation?' (Discussed in Chapter 4)

The next step is to arrange the common evaluation benchmarks (output of the first research question) in a multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation. This science-based framework will constitute the foundation of the final framework.

Research question 3: 'How should the science-based framework for evaluating public participation be revised so that it aligns with policy-makers' demands for public participation approaches?' (Discussed in Chapter 5)

The science-based framework includes a reasonably comprehensive set of interrelated, science-based evaluation benchmarks, which may be of (great) relevance to policy-makers. To ensure that the final framework is in line with policy-maker perspectives of public participation, this research must pay close attention not only to possible science-based benchmarks, but also to the ways in which policy-makers consider these or perhaps even other non-listed benchmarks to be important.

Research question 4: 'What does the application of the framework for evaluating public participation, tailored to policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches, look like in practice?' (Discussed in Chapter 6)

In fact, by answering the third research question, we provide a solid answer to the main research query. However, since the developed framework has not yet been used for evaluating participatory approaches, I will illustrate the framework on the basis of a recent PVE for the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management. This shows how the framework might work and how it could help policy-makers and practitioners to derive specific actions or policy measures.

1.7. Scientific contribution

This research is scientifically relevant for several reasons. First, this study builds upon the ESOGBUE AND AHIPO (1982) framework for measuring the success of public participation in water resources planning. In light of its potential, and opportunities for improvement, it is striking that there have been no further studies setting out a revised multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation. Thus, the framework developed in this research fills this gap.

Second, this study provides new fruitful insights into the links between evaluation benchmarks described in the scientific literature. These links help to clarify what is meant by the abstract benchmarks, such as fairness and democracy.

Third, the interviews with policy-makers held as part of this research offer many new perspectives of public participation (e.g., what should not be the aim of citizen involvement, key parts of expectation management). These findings provide interesting avenues for further research.

Fourth, this thesis can contribute (albeit marginally) to the development of the PVE method, as various valuable insights and specific actions for the PVE community are provided in Chapter 6. Although several strengths and weaknesses of the PVE method are merely hypothesised, and hence may be incorrect, the findings at least provide topics that may be considered for further methodological research on the topic.

A further contribution of this investigation, to the best of my knowledge, is that it marks the first example of policy documents (in this case, Dutch municipal evaluation reports) being applied to the development of a framework for evaluating public participation. Moreover, the results of this study reveal considerable (dis)connection between these policy documents and international scientific studies on the evaluation of public participation. This calls for further research.

1.8. Societal contribution

The most important societal contribution of this thesis is due to the multi-level benchmark framework developed here. This framework responds to the need for a practical guideline for evaluating participatory approaches. Moreover, it can be used by practitioners as guidance for structuring their thinking about public participation; for example, when determining how participation approaches can be modified in line with policy-makers' demands for public participation or which participation techniques work best for particular needs. In this respect, the framework can help practitioners and policy-makers to derive specific actions regarding the (1) evaluation, (2) design, and (3) selection of public participation approaches.

Furthermore, this research can contribute to the development of the PVE method, as discussed in Section 1.7. This may be beneficial to society for several reasons. First and foremost, PVE has the potential to contribute to boosting local sustainable change by overcoming the limitations of conventional participation methods. Second, politicians and decision-makers who disagree with the cost-benefit analysis (CBA) normative judgement that welfare effects can be analysed using consumer-based willingness-to-pay

metrics would be supported in their wish for alternative decision-making tools (see Appendix B). Finally, PVE could help to overcome the problem of erroneous decision-making due to CBA's incorrect valuations of alternatives (discussed in Appendix B).

1.9. Thesis structure

This report is divided into seven chapters, with each illustrating different aspects of the research. Chapter 1 draws attention to the context in which this research is relevant, along with the research problem, objective, research questions, and the contributions of this thesis. Chapter 2 deals with the research methodology. A brief description of each of the phases in the research is presented, including an overview of the data sources and methods used at each phase. Chapter 3 contains a literature review on the evaluation of public participation. An overview of common benchmarks for evaluating public participation programmes drawn from the literature is also included. In Chapter 4, a science-based framework for evaluating public participation is developed. In Chapter 5, this science-based framework is refined so that it aligns with policy-makers' demands for public participation approaches. Chapter 6 illustrates the functioning of the developed framework on the basis of a flood protection PVE experiment along the Dutch river de Waal. Chapter 7 addresses the conclusions and limitations of this thesis and details policy recommendations and topics that may be considered for future research.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This thesis project was carried out in four sequential steps and includes an investigation of evaluation benchmarks drawn from the academic literature (conceptual investigation) and policy-maker perspectives of public participation (empirical investigation). This chapter provides a brief description of each of the steps, including an overview of the data sources and methods used at each phase. In each step, one of the research questions postulated in Section 1.6 is examined. In general, the sub-deliverable of each phase is input for the next, which ultimately leads to an answer to the main research question. This logic is summarised and depicted in Figure 3 at the end of this chapter.

2.1. Step 1: Analysis

In the existing literature, there is an ongoing dialogue regarding whether research should be shaped by theory specified a priori or grounded theory. There are academics who argue that researchers should avoid commitments to any theory about how to analyse data (e.g., VAN MAANEN, DABBS & FAULKNER, 1982). Others argue that research should be based on proper ideas specified a priori (e.g., WHYTE, 1984). In this research, I follow Whyte's approach. For a reasonably comprehensive list of benchmarks with which to evaluate public participation, which may be of great relevance to policy-makers, an extensive literature review of international scientific publications was undertaken. This literature review provided a useful starting point for the development of a science-based framework for evaluating public participation (discussed in Section 2.2) and for the validation and refinement of the science-based framework on the basis of an empirical investigation (discussed in Section 2.3). The sub-question corresponding to this research step is as follows:

'What common benchmarks for evaluating public participation can be drawn from the scientific literature?'

The scientific studies used in this systematic literature review were extracted from the academic database ISI Web of Knowledge. An initial search for English-language scientific publications (academic journals, book reviews, papers in conference proceedings, and so on), up to 12 November 2018, was conducted, using the keywords 'public' or 'citizen' along with 'involvement' or 'consultation' or 'engagement' or 'participation', in combination with 'assessment' or 'evaluation'. These keywords are of similar meanings, and are regularly used interchangeably in the literature on public participation. Due to the limited time span of this study, it was decided to focus on the newest and most cited publications, since this is an efficient strategy for finding the fundamental sources as well as the newest ones, which might elaborate on new evaluation benchmarks, theories, and so on.

Most recent publications appeared to be irrelevant as they do not address benchmarks for evaluating public participation. This is, however, unsurprising, given that there is only a small number of ways that one can assess the quality of public participation practices. Hence, one would not expect entirely new benchmarks for evaluation to emerge frequently in the academic literature (BROWN & CHIN, 2013). Conversely, some older, highly-cited documents (e.g., ABELSON ET AL., 2003; BEIERLE & KONISCKY, 2000; BICKERSTAFF & WALKER, 2001; BLACKSTOCK, KELLY & HORSEY, 2007; BLAHNA & YONTS-SHEPARD, 1989; CARR & HALVORSEN, 2001; CHILVERS, 2008; GUSTON, 1999; HALVORSEN, 2001; LAURIAN & SHAW, 2009; ROWE & FREWER, 2000; 2004; ROWE, MARSH & FREWER, 2004) proved a useful basis for this literature review. These fundamental publications enabled me to apply the snowballing technique. Both backward and forward snowballing[2] was used to develop a more comprehensive list of scientific documents that address benchmarks for evaluating public participation.

Content analysis was used to analyse the relevant scientific studies. This is a structured approach to studying textual material in a replicable and systematic way, which may be helpful for reducing researcher bias. In this method, pieces of text are compressed into various categories (so-called 'codes'), using coding rules. By systematically coding the content of a set of texts, researchers can analyse patterns of content. In general, content analysis begins with a theory specified a priori as starting point for initial codes (WEBER, 1990). Therefore, I began the analysis with some initial codes (categories of evaluation benchmarks), which were based on the work of BROWN AND CHIN (2013) and BLACKSTOCK ET AL. (2007). These studies each contain an extensive list of possible benchmarks for evaluation, drawn from the literature. Meaningful statements were coded when they concerned benchmarks for evaluating public participation; such as, 'The participants should be *involved as early as possible* in the process as soon as value judgments become salient' (BROWN & CHIN, 2013, P. 565).

2.2. Step 2: Design

To arrange the evaluation benchmarks obtained from the academic literature in a multi-level benchmark framework, I again made use of content analysis, followed by a check against the questions, 'Why do we want this?' and 'What does this mean?' for each of the evaluation benchmarks. First, I coded statements on links between evaluation benchmarks, such as, 'The essence of *democracy* itself is now widely taken to be *deliberation*, as opposed to voting, interest aggregation, constitutional rights, or even self-government' (ABELSON ET AL., 2003, P. 241), and statements on links between an evaluation benchmark and descendant factor, such as, 'If an open process is followed in which everyone is given an *equal chance to speak*, the process may be *fair*' (CROSBY, KELLY, & SCHAEFER, 1986, P. 172). The different codes identified (categories of links) were used as input for the development of a multi-level benchmark framework. Subsequently, the

[2] Backward snowballing implies finding citations in a research, whereas forward snowballing implies findings citations to a research (VAN WEE & BANISTER, 2016).

'Why?' and 'What?' questions were used to check the logic of this framework. In general, high-level benchmarks can be identified by repeatedly asking the 'Why?' question. In turn, to move from abstract benchmarks to concrete and measurable benchmarks or factors, researchers can repeatedly ask the 'What?' question (DE HAAN & DE HEER, 2012). To take capacity building as an example, according to BLACKSTOCK ET AL. (2007), this benchmark is linked to relationships. In addition, a link between relationships and respect is identified by WEBLER ET AL. (2001). The 'question-check' validates these links: why do we want respect? Is this intended to strengthen relationships? This can be true. Why do we intend to improve relationships? Is this to build capacity for future cooperation? This may also be true. The sub-question corresponding to this research step is as follows:

'What are the characteristics of a science-based multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation?'

2.3. Step 3: Validation and refinement

The academic literature provides a starting point for the development of a benchmark framework for evaluating public participation in line with policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches. The extent to which this science-based framework aligns with these policy-makers' demands, however, needs to be validated. To this end, this thesis project is supplemented by an examination of Dutch municipal evaluation studies on public participation and semi-structured interviews with policy-makers. As I had no a priori expectations of policy-maker perceptions regarding public participation, I began by conducting a literature search for relevant Dutch municipal evaluation studies. These reports (selected on the basis of availability) were written from the perspective of the municipality, which implies that they contain valuable information on the views and expectations of local policy-makers regarding public participation. The benchmarks identified in these studies were then aligned with the common benchmarks obtained from the academic literature. It could be checked whether those identified in the scientific literature include those relevant to policy-makers. There was no reason to carry out a systematic literature review because the primary objective of this research step was to develop some initial hypotheses about where considerable (dis)agreement may exist between policy-maker perspectives of public participation and the academic literature. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews with policy-makers were conducted to validate these findings, and potentially, to identify relevant evaluation benchmarks too sensitive to discuss in reports.

In total, six semi-structured interviews of approximately 60 minutes each were conducted with a variety of policy-makers. Only those closely concerned with public participation were selected, as their knowledge and experience of public participation were deemed likely to enhance both the quality of the interview and the validity of the findings. The interviews were conducted in person and on a confidential basis, and all were recorded with the respondents' permission. Soon after the interview, the audio material was summarised to compare with the findings of the scientific studies and municipal evaluation reports considered in this thesis. Table 1 provides more information about the six respondents. The sub-question corresponding to this research step is as follows:

'How should the science-based framework for evaluating public participation be revised so that it aligns with policy-makers' demands for public participation approaches?'

Table 1. Overview of interviewees

Respondent 1	Municipal official concerned with the fostering of quality of life, safety, and social commitment
Respondent 2	Project manager of a local workgroup on public participation
Respondent 3	Municipal clerk who had provided several local workshops on public participation
Respondent 4	Project manager responsible for a national pilot on digital participation tools
Respondent 5	Programme manager responsible for a local pilot on new forms of cooperation between citizens, the municipal council, the municipal executive, partners, and municipal officials
Respondent 6	Chairman of a local political group that was against far-reaching public participation in a recent public decision-making process

Each semi-structured interview consisted of three parts. In each part, I began with various predetermined questions. Where it was needed and feasible within the limited time available, I asked follow-up questions, based on the participant's comments during the interview, to obtain further insights into their perceptions. I began part 1 of the interview with various questions on the background of the respondent. In the second part, each interviewee was encouraged to express (and if needed, clarify) the requirements for regarding a public participation exercise as a success. As I assumed that it would be difficult for policy-makers to answer this key question adequately without any preparation, I invited the participants to prepare an answer to this question ahead of the interview. Finally, I presented the science-based multi-level benchmark framework developed in phase 2 of this research and asked for feedback on this: did the interviewee agree with the content? Did the respondent think that some evaluation benchmarks or descendant factors should be excluded? Did he or she miss evaluation benchmarks? Did the respondent believe that certain aspects were overlapping? Did the interviewee agree with the relationships between variables? Did he or she believe that the framework, in its current form, could be used by practitioners to evaluate, select, or design public participation?

At the end of the interview, I stressed to the interviewees that they were welcome to contact me if they had additional thoughts on the science-based framework. To encourage this, I gave each of them a hard-copy of the developed framework and the list of feedback-related questions included in part 3 of the interview. This was important because, in my view, it would be difficult for respondents to provide high-quality feedback on the framework without having seen it before. Another solution would be to send the framework to the respondents in advance. However, I decided not to do this because I felt that the respondents' statements made during the second part of the interview would have been influenced by having seen the framework. In my opinion, the need for respondents to develop their own requirements for successful public participation outweighed the interest of obtaining better feedback on the framework. The complete list of interview questions is provided in Appendix G.

Textbox 1: Interview versus focus group

An interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer has the opportunity to participate actively (YIN, 1989). A focus group can be a useful method of obtaining information about stakeholder views, preferences, and attitudes on certain topics. This is an interactive discussion between a small group of participants (4-12 persons), guided by a facilitator. This method often enables rich viewpoints that might not have been identified in interviews because respondents are able to react and build upon the statements of other participants (VAN ASSELT & RIJKENS-KLOMP, 2002). Nevertheless, I decided to conduct interviews for this project. The reason for this decision was that public participation is a sensitive topic for policy-makers, thus they may be reluctant to share their views in the presence of other policy-makers (colleagues). Conducting interviews therefore seemed to be the most auspicious research method in this case.

2.4. Step 4: Illustration

The output of the previous research step is the main deliverable of this research. In the fourth and final step of this project, the functioning of the framework was illustrated by evaluating a flood protection PVE experiment for the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management. This shows how the framework might work and how it could help practitioners and policy-makers to derive specific policy measures or actions. The Dutch flood protection scheme was used as an example because a detailed report on this project (MOUTER ET AL., 2018) is available. Hence, an analysis of this PVE experiment could be based on facts in addition to common sense and personal views. Another advantage is that an illustration of the framework on the basis of this PVE yields valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the PVE method and thus also allows specific recommendations for the PVE community.

The sub-question corresponding to this research step is as follows:

'What does the application of the framework for evaluating public participation, tailored to policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches, look like in practice?'

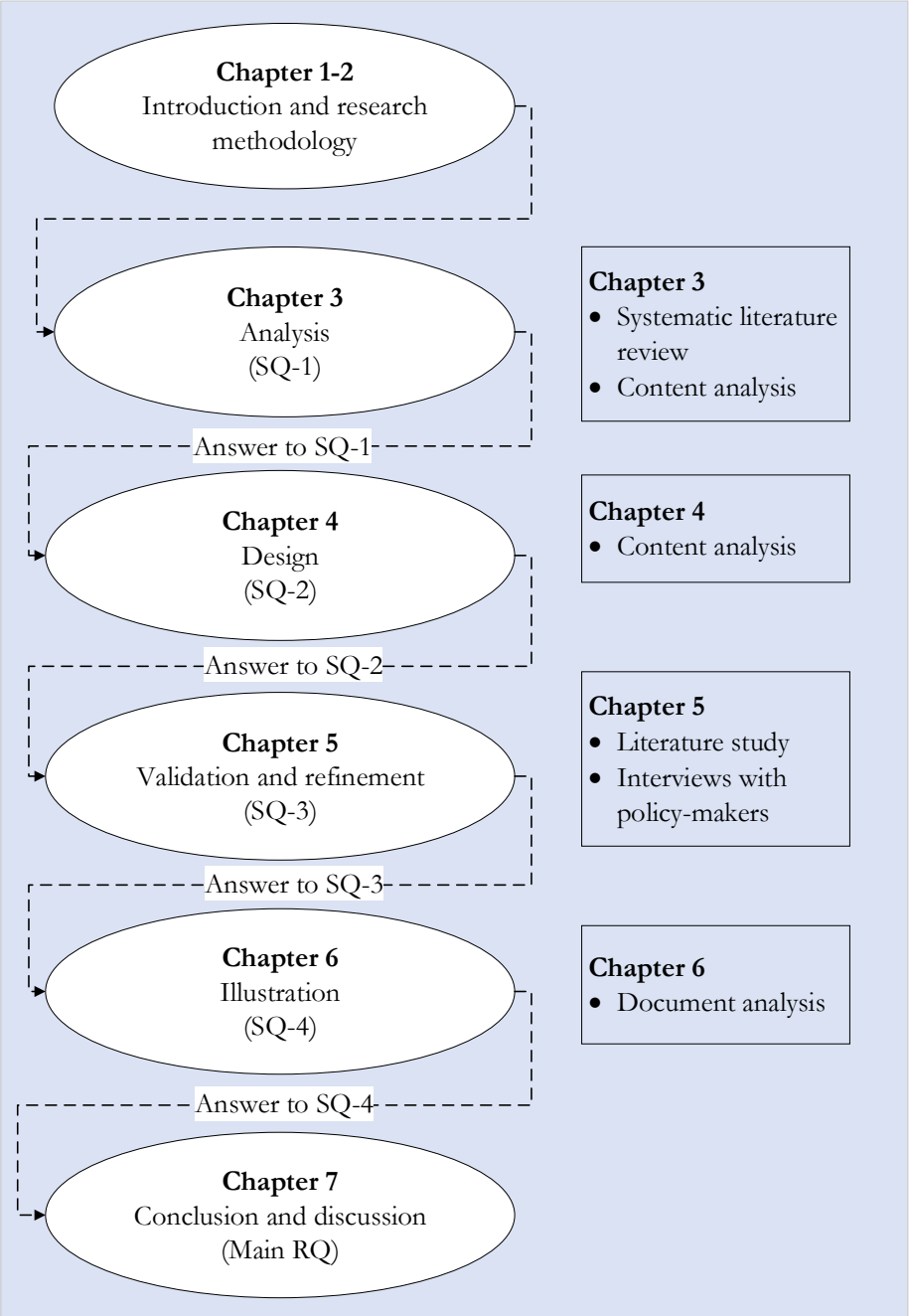

Figure 3. Research flow diagram (SQ = sub-question; RQ = research question)

3. ANALYSIS

This chapter is intended to provide an answer to the first research question, which asks, 'What common benchmarks for evaluating public participation can be drawn from the scientific literature?' Before exploring this (in Section 3.4), this chapter first clarifies what should be understood by 'public participation' in this thesis, as multiple definitions have emerged in the literature. Furthermore, the main arguments[3] for and against public participation are discussed in Section 3.2 and Section 3.3, respectively. These can be used as a starting point for the development of our evaluative framework., as they represent people's desires, expectations, and fears around public participation and thus point to appropriate benchmarks for evaluation. This chapter concludes with a reasonably comprehensive list of 30 common evaluation benchmarks drawn from 50 academic studies (see Table 4). Appendix C provides an overview of the sources behind each benchmark.

3.1. What do we mean by public participation?

The terms (public or citizen) participation, (public or citizen) engagement, and (public or citizen) involvement are regularly used interchangeably in this thesis. However, it will be clarified here what should be understood by these terms.

In practice, citizens can be involved in governmental decision-making at a variety of levels, meaning that the role of the citizen could be different for each public decision-making process. This is noted by several researchers, including ARNSTEIN (1969), who introduced the participation ladder to describe the role of citizens in policy-related decision-making. Using this ladder, EDELENBOS AND KLIJN (2006) define five different levels of public participation in Dutch public decision-making: informing, consulting, advising, co-producing, and co-deciding (see Table 2). Citizens are considered a supplier of ideas at the levels of consulting and advising. They help to determine the agenda and cooperate in producing problem definitions and solutions at the level of co-producing. Lastly, they can make decisions on the plans designed in cooperation with the government at the outer level of co-deciding (EDELENBOS & KLIJN, 2006). Decision-making processes that operate at these four levels are the most evident forms of public participation, as information is exchanged bilaterally between government and citizens. In turn, citizens have no real input into the outcomes of decision-making processes at the level of informing, where information is merely conveyed from government to those affected by the decision. Nonetheless, most (scientific) studies on public participation refer to this one-way flow of information as public participation. There are only a few

[3] The main arguments for and against public participation are briefly discussed in this chapter. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that a complete thesis could have been written on the reasons for (not) pursuing public participation (for example, see CREIGHTON (2005); IRVIN AND STANSBURY (2004); LUYET, SCHLAEPFER, PARLANGE AND BUTTLER (2012) for a more comprehensive list of arguments).

exceptions, such as ROWE AND FREWER (2005), who make a clear distinction between participation and communication. Therefore, I do not deviate from the existing public participation literature and regard decision-making processes as public participation if they take place on the level of informing, consulting, advising, co-producing, or co-deciding.

Table 2. Levels of public participation in Dutch policy-related decision making

Level of participation	**Characteristics**
Informing	To a large degree, politicians and administration determine the agenda for decision making and inform those involved. They will not use the opportunity to invite interested actors to have input in policy development.
Consulting	To a large degree, politicians and administration determine the agenda but regard those involved as a useful discussion partner in the development of policy. Politicians do not, however, commit to the results of these discussions.
Advising	In principle politicians and administration determine the agenda but give those involved the opportunity to raise problems and formulate solutions. These involved actors play a full-fledged role in the development of policy. Politicians are committed to the results in principle but may deviate (if accounted for) from them in the final decision making.
Co-producing	Together politicians, administration, and those involved determine a problem-solving agenda in which they search for solutions together. Politicians are committed to these solutions with regard to the final decision making, after having tested this outcome in terms of a priori conditions.
Co-deciding	Politicians and administration leave the development and decision making of policy to those involved, and the civil service provides an advising role. Politicians simply accept the outcomes. The results of the process have an immediate binding force.

Note: Reprinted from 'Managing stakeholder involvement in decision making: a comparative analysis of six interactive processes in the Netherlands', by J. Edelenbos and E. H. Klijn, 2006, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *16*(3), 417–446.

3.2. The promises of public participation

Public bodies increasingly strive for public participation, as engaging the public has the potential to yield considerable gains. It is rare that participatory processes lead to undesired results that may be worse than those that would have resulted from less public involvement (NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, 2008). Perhaps the strongest result of public participation is improvement in the quality of decision-making, with more plurality seen in the problems considered and possible solutions developed (BLACKSTOCK ET AL., 2007; KLIJN & KOPPENJAN, 2000; NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, 2008; ROWE & FREWER, 2000). Second, participatory efforts enhance political legitimacy, thereby making decisions more broadly acceptable and helping public agencies to move forward with their plans (KLIJN & KOPPENJAN, 2000; NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, 2008). Third, public participation processes can help to strengthen relationships and

offer participants opportunities to develop their capacity to engage in the policy process, usually referred to as 'building capacity' (or 'resilience'). This, in turn, is beneficial for future governmental decision-making activities (NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, 2008).

3.3. The perils of public participation

Although the advantages of public participation are frequently highlighted in the literature, it is important to remember that it also has a number of perils. Four basic arguments against public participation have been offered by opponents of citizen involvement. First, participatory processes involve substantial work and high costs. Public participation can slow down decision-making by introducing additional stages and associated interaction costs into an already bureaucratic process (KLIJN & KOPPENJAN, 2000; LOWNDES, PRATCHETT & STOKER, 2001; NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, 2008). Second, critics of public participation have claimed that most citizens cannot manage the complex nature of the analyses needed for rational decisions. This may yield undesirable results at significant costs in effort, funds, and time (NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, 2008). Third, some have argued that participatory processes seldom achieve equity in process and outcome, because it is difficult to engage some parts of the population in the decision-making process (LOWNDES, PRATCHETT & STOKER, 2001; NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, 2008). Finally, it is frequently argued that the complexity of decision-making processes increases as a result of public involvement. Public participation processes might raise unrealistic public expectations (LOWNDES, PRATCHETT & STOKER, 2001), disagreement between authorities and citizens can result in blockages (KLIJN & KOPPENJAN, 2000), and public participation can reduce politicians' room for manoeuvre to reject or amend policy proposals (KLIJN & KOPPENJAN, 2000).

3.4. Common evaluation benchmarks obtained from the academic literature

In recent decades, the world of policy-making has given increasing attention to citizen participation (e.g., KIM & LEE, 2012; ROWE & FREWER, 2000). The growing call for greater citizen involvement in governmental decision-making has been accompanied by a rise in public participation evaluation studies. Many researchers have introduced (often competing) frameworks that define benchmarks for evaluating public participation. Some of these frameworks (e.g., BLAHNA & YONTS-SHEPARD, 1989) are process-oriented; that is, they compare how actual public participation processes compare to an ideal. For example, they consider whether the process is sufficiently transparent for the relevant population to understand what is happening and how decisions are being made, or they ask whether the participants comprise a broadly representative sample of the population and whether the public is involved appropriately early in the process. In contrast, others (e.g., COGLIANESE, 1997) are outcome-oriented. For example, they ask whether the programme supports the development of civic skills that enable participants to take part in future decision-making processes, and investigate any effect of increased mutual trust. A third category of

evaluation studies (e.g., BROWN & CHIN, 2013) are based on a combination of process- and outcome-oriented benchmarks.

The evaluation of participatory efforts is not new, with perhaps the oldest public participation evaluation study being that of HEBERLEIN (1976). This concluded that there are four benchmarks which may be used to evaluate the quality of any public participation method: (1) the individuals involved should be representative of all groups affected, (2) the individuals involved should be well informed, with knowledge of implications and alternatives, (3) the method should be interactive, and (4) where possible, input should be based on actual experience and behaviour.

FIORINO (1990) notes that evaluation approaches mainly include technocratic rather than democratic evaluation benchmarks. To fill this gap, Fiorono defines four democratic process benchmarks for assessing participatory mechanisms: (1) the option of citizens' direct participation in decisions, (2) the extent to which citizens are able to share in collective decision-making, (3) the degree to which a mechanism provides a structure for face-to-face discussion over a period of time, and (4) the opportunity for citizens to participate on the basis of equality with administrative officials and technical experts.

LAIRD (1993) later examined democracy and derived eight democratic benchmarks for evaluating public participation practices. The key difference between this and the work of FIORINO (1990) is that Laird emphasises the importance of learning among participants.

WEBLER (1995) aimed for a more structured approach to evaluation, developing a normative evaluative framework that defines two meta-criteria for effective public participation: competence and fairness. Competence refers to the ability of the decision-making process to reach the best decision possible given what was reasonably knowable under the present conditions (e.g., using the best available information). Fairness, on the other hand, refers to the opportunity for actors who view themselves as stakeholders to assume a legitimate role in the decision-making process (WEBLER, 1995).

LAUBER AND KNUTH (1999) discuss the fairness concept in greater detail. They examine how citizens perceive the fairness of participation processes and identify four criteria on which citizens base their perceptions: (1) the government's receptivity to citizens' input, (2) the degree of influence that citizens have over the final decision, (3) the quality of knowledge and reasoning of the government leading the process, and (4) the degree to which relationships improve during the process.

BEIERLE (1999) advances an entirely different approach, claiming that evaluation research should return to the core tasks of public participation: asking what we will gain from it. He analysed the problems that public engagement initiatives are intended to resolve and identifies various social goals that emerge from this analysis. These are: educating the public, incorporating public values into decision-making, improving the substantive quality of decisions, fostering trust in governments, and reducing conflict. Although these goals are seen as having real value for society, it is important to remember that their success largely depends on how participants feel about the decision-making process (BEIERLE, 1999). This may explain why ROWE AND FREWER (2000) seek to better define what is meant by a 'good' decision-making process, noting that there are a number of requirements for the success of a participatory process. They translate these requirements as either acceptance benchmarks, related to whether a participatory programme

would be likely to be accepted by public participants as fair, or process benchmarks, related to the effective construction and implementation of a public participation exercise (see Table 3).

Table 3. The often-cited framework of Rowe and Frewer (2000)

Benchmark	**Description**
Acceptance benchmarks	
Representativeness	The public participants should comprise a broadly representative sample of the affected population.
Independence	The participation process should be conducted in an independent, unbiased way.
Early involvement	The public should be involved as early as possible in the process, as soon as value judgments become salient.
Transparency	The process should be transparent so that the relevant population can see what is going on and how decisions are being made.
Influence	The output of the procedure should have a genuine impact on policy.
Process benchmark	
Resource accessibility	Public participants should have access to the appropriate resources to enable them to successfully fulfil their brief.
Task definition	The nature and scope of the participation task should be clearly defined.
Structured decision making	The participation exercise should use/provide appropriate mechanisms for structuring and displaying the decision-making process.
Cost-effectiveness	The procedure should in some sense be cost-effective from the point of view of the sponsors.

Note: Adapted from 'Public participation methods: a framework for evaluation', by G. Rowe and L. J. Frewer, 2000, *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, *25*(1), 3-29.

The often-cited framework of ROWE AND FREWER (2000) has inspired many public participation evaluation studies in the last two decades. For example, EDWARDS, HINDMARSH, MERCER AND BOND (2008) reorganised the ROWE AND FREWER (2000) benchmarks, which resulted in a three-stage (input-process-output) evaluative model. Another example is the study by CHILVERS (2008), which identified considerable agreement in the literature on the evaluation of public participation. His efforts resulted in a list of seven evaluation benchmarks: (1) representativeness and inclusivity, (2) fair deliberation, (3) access to resources, (4) transparency and accountability, (5) learning, (6) independence, and (7) efficiency. It is striking that this set of evaluation benchmarks corresponds largely to the evaluative framework employed by ROWE AND FREWER (2000). Amongst recent efforts, MANNARINI AND TALÒ (2013) primarily refer to the framework proposed by ROWE AND FREWER (2000) and EDWARDS ET AL. (2008). They integrate these two frameworks with fruitful insights drawn from the literature on deliberative democracy.

Table 4. Common benchmarks obtained from the academic literature

Benchmark	Description
Capacity building	A public participation activity should build and strengthen capacity for future cooperation and/or decision-making processes.
Clarity	The nature of the participation exercise should be clearly defined. The roles and responsibilities of all participants must be clear.
Comfort and convenience	Public participation tasks should be comfortable and convenient.
Conflict resolution	Public participation efforts should avoid or mitigate conflict. Participatory programmes should resolve conflict during the process.
Consensus	Decisions made as a result of public participation should be based on consensus.
Deliberation	There should be a substantial degree of discussion (interaction, dialogue, information exchange) in which participants justify their opinions and show willingness to change their preferences.
Democracy	The participation activity should realise democratic principles.
Early involvement	Participants should be involved as early as possible in the process.
Efficiency	Public participation practices should be efficient in terms of cost and time.
Equal accessibility	The decision-making process is open to actors who view themselves as stakeholders. All actors should have an equal opportunity to access the process.
Equal voice	Participants are given equal opportunities to provide their opinions during the process.
Fairness	The decision-making process and outcomes should be fair.
Impartiality	The public participation activity should be conducted in an independent, unbiased way. The process is not steered towards a particular stance and the sponsor is impartial during the process.
Influence on policy	Participants should have a significant degree of influence (control/authority) on policy.
Information quality	The information provided to participants should be of sufficient quality.
Learning	Participatory efforts should be educative. All those involved have the opportunity to learn from one another.
Mutual understanding	The public participation activity should build mutual understanding between stakeholders. Actors should gain a deeper understanding of others' positions.

Table 4. (continued)

Benchmark	Description
Political legitimacy	The decision-making process and outcomes are widely accepted and supported.
Relationships	Public participation practices should build and strengthen social networks during the process.
Representation (inclusiveness)	All relevant participants and viewpoints are adequately represented during the process. Every reasonable effort should be made to involve divergent opinions, needs, concerns, and values.
Resource accessibility	Participants should have access to adequate resources to enable them to successfully achieve their objectives.
Respect	Sponsors and participants are respectful of each other.
Satisfaction	A public participation initiative should result in high satisfaction among participants.
Shared vision	Public participation efforts should result in agreed and clearly defined vision(s) and goals.
Social justice	Risks, benefits, and costs are distributed fairly. The final decision does not harm specific groups.
Structured process	The public participation exercise should use/provide appropriate mechanisms for structuring and displaying the decision-making process.
Quality of decisions	Public participation should improve the substantive quality of decisions (policy).
Transparency	The participation exercise should be transparent so that the relevant population can see what is happening and how decisions are being made.
Trust	Public participation should increase trust among participants and foster trust in the sponsor so that the sponsor is seen as responsive, committed, and capable to implement decisions.
Workable solution	Public participation activities should create an acceptable solution that can be implemented.

4. DESIGN

As we saw in Chapter 3, the public participation evaluation literature provides numerous common benchmarks for evaluation. None of the frameworks considered in this thesis covers all of these. The evaluative frameworks employed by BROWN AND CHIN (2013) and BLACKSTOCK ET AL. (2007) are arguably the most complete; nonetheless, they do not address all identified evaluation benchmarks. The framework developed by BROWN AND CHIN (2013) does not cover benchmarks as learning, efficiency, and respect. In turn, the framework proposed by BLACKSTOCK ET AL. (2007) does not recognise benchmarks of deliberation, comfort and convenience, satisfaction, and mutual understanding. Furthermore, the frameworks reviewed in this research are limited in the sense that they constitute a mere list, whereas the literature suggests that multiple benchmarks for evaluation are interrelated (with the exception of the ESOGBUE AND AHIPO (1982) framework). Therefore, I have arranged the evaluation benchmarks obtained from the literature in a tree-like structure as described below, thereby providing an answer to the following research question: 'What are the characteristics of a science-based multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation?'

An examination of the literature suggests that intended outcomes, resource minimisation, democracy, citizen satisfaction, and ease of participation should be considered in the evaluation of any participatory effort (Figure 4). These constitute the highest-level elements of our framework. The following sections present sub-benchmarks related to public participation in these five categories of successful public participation. Although I do not wish to suggest that, according to academics, democracy is the vital element of successful participation, it can be concluded that most scientific studies focus on sub-benchmarks related to democracy, whilst many do not discuss sub-benchmarks related to citizen satisfaction, resource minimisation, and ease of participation. Figure 5 provides the number of scientific publications considered in this thesis (from a total of 50) that recognise sub-benchmarks related to each category.

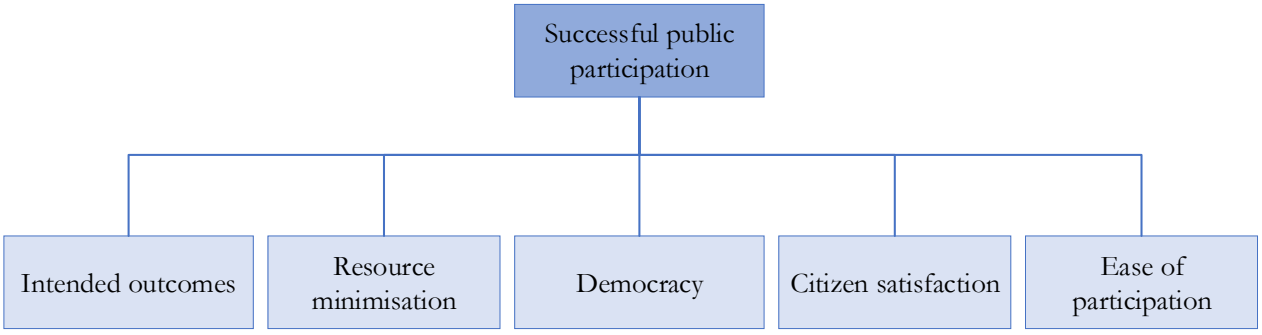

Figure 4. Five categories of successful public participation

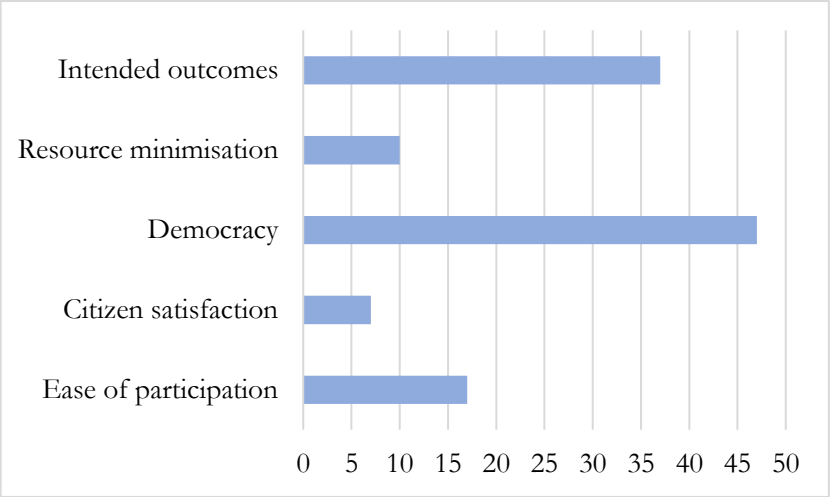

Figure 5. Number of scientific studies (of 50) that recognise sub-benchmarks related to each category

4.1. Intended outcomes

Participatory efforts should achieve their intended objectives or outcomes. As a basis for developing our evaluative framework, the main arguments for and against public participation were discussed in Chapter 3. From this, it becomes clear that the key benefits of public participation are: (1) making better quality decisions, (2) enhancing political legitimacy (support and acceptance), and (3) building capacity (or resilience). Having examined the 50 scientific publications considered in this thesis, I conclude that most objectives can be grouped into these three categories – as illustrated, for instance, by an extensive study of the NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL (2008).

Whether the quality of the decisions (addressed in 20% of the scientific studies considered in this thesis) saw genuine improvement is difficult to measure in practice. Ideally, a participation initiative should result in a decision that is more cost-effective[4] (BEIERLE & CAYFORD, 2002), more suitable (WIEDEMANN & FEMERS, 1993), more consistent with existing laws and policies (CONLEY & MOOTE, 2003), and more socially and politically acceptable (MCCOOL & GUTHRIE, 2001; WIEDEMANN & FEMERS, 1993) than the decision that would have been implemented without a participation process. Unfortunately, measurement of this seems to be impossible. However, two attributes may be used as indicators of improved quality, as they are likely to enhance the quality of the final policy: whether the participants add new information to the decision-making process that is not otherwise available, and whether they generate innovative ideas or creative solutions for solving problems (BEIERLE & CAYFORD, 2002; NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, 2008). These two indicators should be interpreted with caution, because they are substantially affected by the level of participation (see Section 3.1). For example, DARTÉE (2018) found that the level of public participation in PVEs is best categorised as consulting, or at most advising, since citizens have merely a

[4] In this case, cost-effectiveness refers to the cost of the final plan (policy). It does not refer to the cost of the public participation process itself.

minor opportunity to add information and/or formulate new solutions. As a consequence, public input is expected to be limited.

A second key objective of participatory initiatives is to ensure that governmental decisions and plans are more readily supported and accepted (even among non-participants), referred to as political legitimacy. This goal is a target of 30% of the scientific studies considered in this research. Two benchmarks for evaluation may be used as indicators of enhanced political legitimacy: first, the final decision is based on consensus, and second, there are little or no conflicts or, more notably, lawsuits brought against the decision (NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, 2008). It is worth noting that other evaluation benchmarks – most related to fairness (discussed in Section 4.3) – may be important for encouraging the public to see the outcomes and process as legitimate (CROSBY, KELLY & SCHAEFER, 1986; NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, 2008). In particular, the causal relationship between transparency and political legitimacy is frequently emphasised in the academic literature (e.g., ROWE & FREWER, 2000; STEELMAN & ASCHER, 1997; WEBLER ET AL., 2001).

The third and final goal of public participation is to strengthen capacity to benefit future governmental actions and maintain participation over time (mentioned in 16% of the publications). The term 'capacity building', as used in this thesis, includes both learning and network components. This is in line with a work of BLACKSTOCK ET AL. (2007), in which capacity building is defined as the development of relationships and skills to enable participants to take part in future processes or projects. The studies examined in this thesis identify five types of relationships – both among participants and between participants and sponsors (usually governmental agencies): trust (e.g., BLACKSTOCK ET AL., 2007; WEBLER ET AL., 2001), respect (e.g., WEBLER ET AL., 2001), mutual understanding (e.g., BEIERLE & KONISCKY, 2000; WEBLER ET AL., 2001), shared vision (e.g., MOOTE, MCCLARAN & CHICKERING, 1997), and collaboration (e.g., BLACKSTOCK ET AL., 2007; EDWARDS ET AL., 2008; MANNARINI & TALÒ, 2013). In particular, trust and mutual understanding are common topics, addressed in 34% and 32% of the studies, respectively. Turning to the individual level, capacity building involves an educative function. In general, three main categories of education can be identified. First, there may be learning by those involved regarding the substance of the topic or policy issue discussed as a consequence of the participatory exercise (e.g., GUSTON, 1999). Second, citizens may become more competent at effective participation, increasing their civic skills and becoming better able to engage the best available knowledge and information (e.g., NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, 2008). Third, public involvement activities may encourage civic virtues and civic duties, such as active participation in public life, responsibility and a sense of ownership, trustworthiness, and reciprocity (giving and taking). Participatory efforts may even change individual values and behaviour (e.g., BLACKSTOCK ET AL., 2007; GUSTON, 1999).

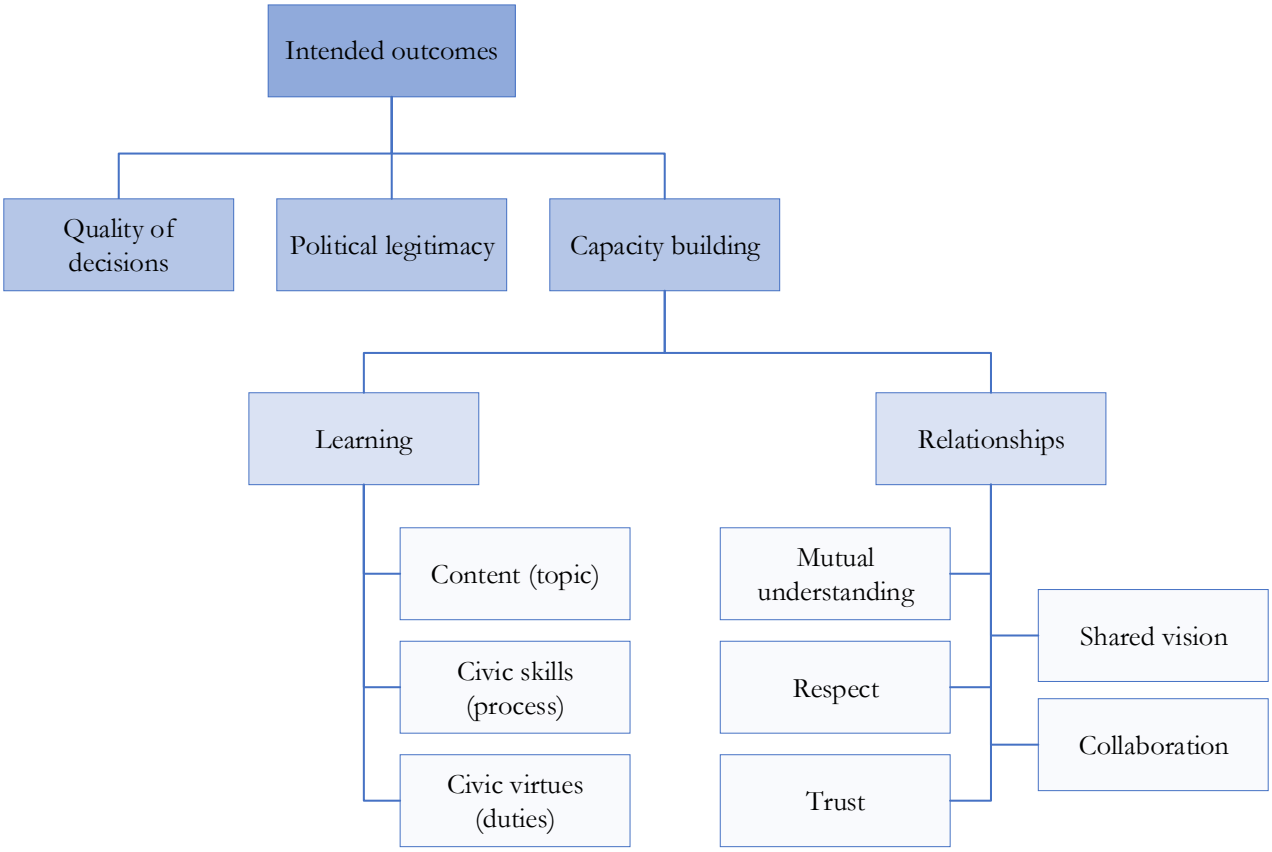

Figure 6. Sub-benchmarks related to intended outcomes

4.2. Resource minimisation

This category of benchmarks concerns issues related to the resource efficiency of public participation (addressed in 20% of the studies). Two aspects of efficiency were a focus of the scientific studies examined in this research: time and cost.

Most attention is paid to the cost of the participatory procedure. STEPHENS AND BERNER (2011) – in a study based on a work of LACH AND HIXSON (1996) – make a clear distinction between direct and indirect costs to measure the effectiveness of any public engagement activity. Direct costs include the cost of resources, such as staff labour reimbursement, time, facilities and services, materials, and expert consultation fees. Indirect costs involve participants' time, opportunity costs, costs associated with authority and influence, and costs related to emotional issues (STEPHENS & BERNER, 2011).

Conversely, time receives scant attention in the literature. Of the 50 publications considered in this thesis, only three invoke the time required to issue a final decision as a relevant benchmark for evaluating public participation. Nonetheless, COGLIANESE (1997) concludes that saving time to develop policy is important for governmental agencies. Although public participation demands a considerable amount of time upfront, this researcher argues that governments save time during the decision-making process (as well as afterwards) by avoiding judicial challenges, as a result of involving the public.

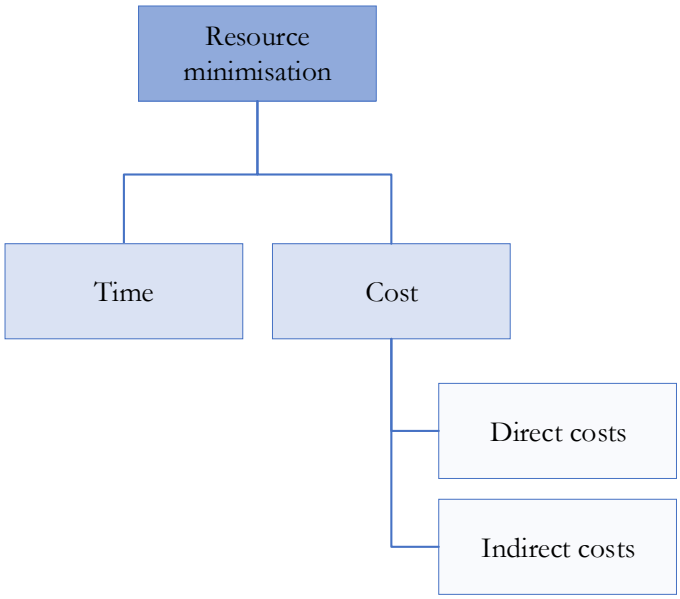

Figure 7. Sub-benchmarks related to resource minimisation

4.3. Democracy

Citizen involvement can be seen as attempt to improve democracy by bridging the gap between citizens and the government (KLIJN & KOPPENJAN, 2000; NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, 2008; ROWE & FREWER, 2000). There are a number of reasons for this, such as fairness, the rights of individuals to be informed and consulted and to voice their views on governmental decisions, the need to better represent the interests of vulnerable groups in society, and the need to capture the insights of citizens (BURBY, 2003). More than that, participatory democrats argue that citizen involvement is vital to democracy. In their view, the delegation of decision-making authority to the government reflects citizens' alienation from governments (MICHELS & DE GRAAF, 2017). However, there is a question of how public participation can enhance democracy and what constitutes democratic public involvement activity.

ARNSTEIN (1969) provides a starting point to answer this question. She argues that participatory practices are a substantial element of direct democracy as they promote fair decision-making efforts that entail power-sharing between federal agencies and citizens. WEBLER ET AL. (2001) and LAURIAN AND SHAW (2009) argue that public participation processes should realise the democratic principle of fairness. Thus, fairness seems to be an important feature of democracy. Here, what is relevant, according to LAUBER AND KNUTH (1999), is that the sponsor is impartial during the process (impartiality), citizens have an equal possibility to access the process (equal accessibility), all important opinions and backgrounds are adequately represented during the process (representation), citizens have an equal opportunity to put forward their views during the process (equal voice), and citizen input has a genuine impact on policy (influence). These five aspects of fairness are frequently recognised in the literature. In particular, influence and representation, both in terms of backgrounds (geographic, demographic, political) and opinions, seem to be highly important in democracy. More than 50% of the studies surveyed in this research give attention to these benchmarks. One important factor is that a participatory event should take place early in the decision-making process to be influential, usually referred to as 'early involvement'. In this way, citizens have as much room as possible to add new information and/or to develop innovative ideas or solutions. As a consequence, it is more likely that public input will influence the final policy.

Another important feature of fair participation programmes is that public agencies must make some effort to limit resource inequality (LAIRD, 1993). All participants should have access to resources to enable them to successfully achieve their objectives (also known as resource accessibility). The well-known resources include information (included in 20% of the studies), time to run the exercise (14%), and human resources (12%). Many note the importance of the information provided to participants being of sufficient quality. This means that information should be comprehensible (BROWN & CHIN, 2013), digestible in terms of quantity (ABELSON ET AL., 2003), and adequate/reliable (BLACKSTOCK ET AL., 2007). In addition, governments should offer suitable facilities and materials to meet the needs of the participation process (ROWE ET AL., 2004; ROWE & FREWER, 2000). Furthermore, there should be sufficient finance available (LAIRD, 1993; ROWE ET AL., 2004; WIEDEMANN & FEMERS, 1993).

A link not explicitly addressed in public participation evaluation studies, but presented in this research, is the connection between social justice and fairness. Social justice (noted in 12% of the studies) refers to the distribution of benefits and costs associated with the outcomes of a decision. These benefits and costs should be distributed equally (WIEDEMANN & FEMERS, 1993). Moreover, the outcomes should not harm the interests of the most disenfranchised (LAURIAN & SHAW, 2009) or the interest of actors who are not participating in the process (KLIJN & KOPPENJAN, 2000).

Four further sub-benchmarks related to democracy were identified in the academic literature. First, democratic public involvement activities should contribute to the inclusion of citizens in the policy process. This means that participatory efforts should allow all individuals to express their ideas, views, and demands on government. For example, LAURIAN AND SHAW (2009) argues that a democratic process should be inclusive, whilst LAIRD (1993) concludes that participatory democracy should bring more divergent people and groups into a policy process than were previously present. In our science-based framework, inclusion is addressed in the form of representation (as an aspect of fairness), since a representative sample implies that all relevant and thus divergent viewpoints are adequately represented during the process.

Another function of public participation in democracy is educative. Some researchers (e.g., LAIRD, 1993) underscore that participation practices are schools for democracy which provide some means of group learning. Learning is thus not only a way of strengthening capacity for future cooperation (discussed in more detail in Section 4.1), but it is also a vital element of democracy.

Third, deliberative democrats have argued that the essence of democracy is deliberation (discussed in 34% of the studies examined in this thesis); that is, the discussion in which individuals justify their opinions, exchange reasons for and against propositions, and show willingness to change their preferences (ABELSON ET AL., 2003). For example, FIORINO (1990) highlights that a key democratic process benchmark is the degree to which a participatory mechanism provides a structure for face-to-face discussion over a period of time. It is worth noting that deliberation enhances the educative function of public participation in democracy, because an active dialogue improves understanding of the range of values, interests, and concerns (MOOTE, MCCLARAN, & CHICKERING, 1997).

The final feature of a democratic public participation exercise is transparency. As is argued by many democrats (e.g., LAURIAN & SHAW, 2009), participatory democracy should promote transparent decision-making processes. Policy-makers should communicate at least (1) the final outcome of the public participation activity, (2) how decisions are made, (3) how citizen input influences the final decision, and (4) that feedback on public participation has been provided or that feedback is planned (BICKERSTAFF & WALKER, 2001).

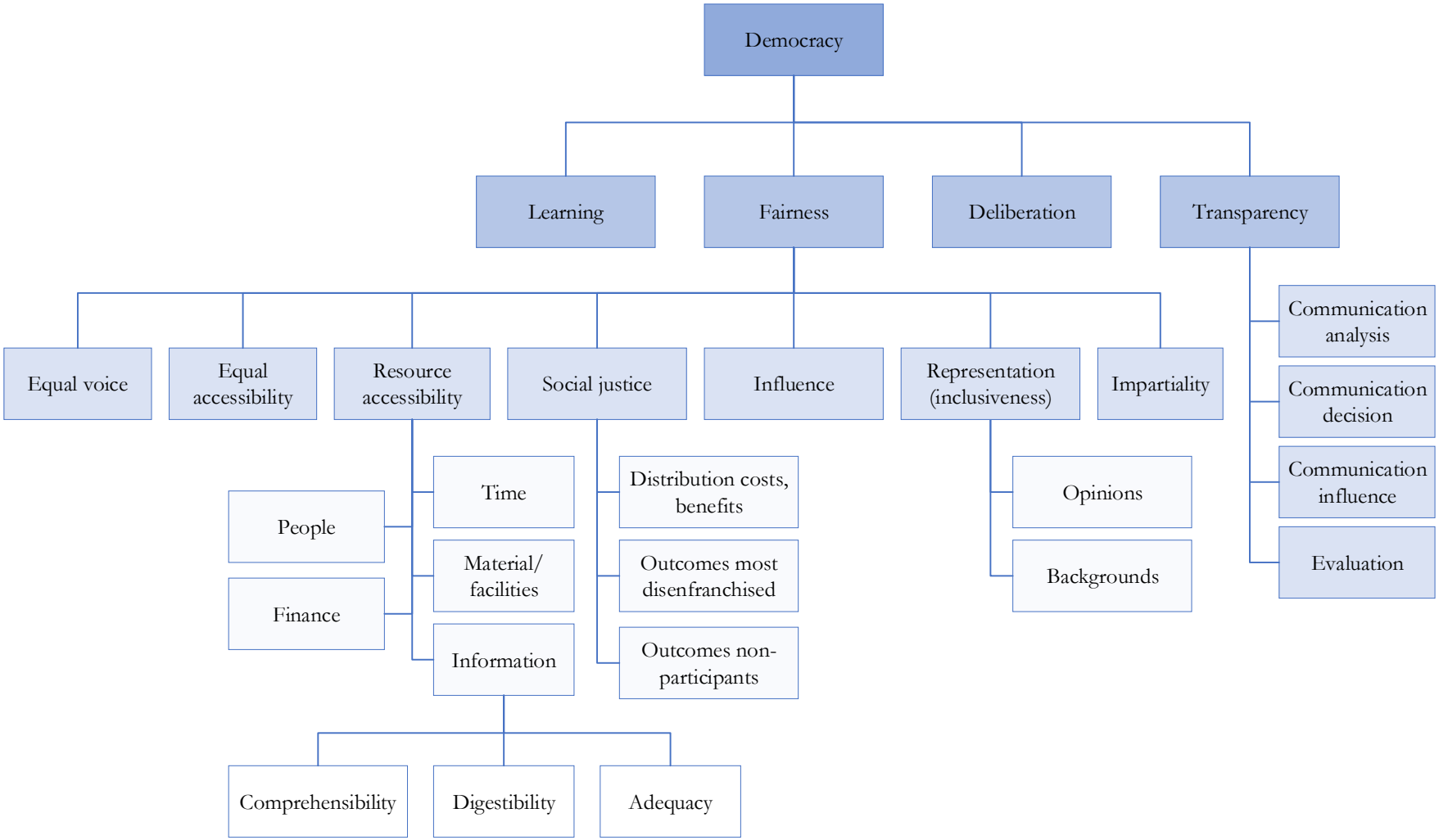

Figure 8. Sub-benchmarks related to democracy

4.4. Citizen satisfaction

BROWN AND CHIN (2013, P. 566) write, 'Good public participation should result in high satisfaction amongst participants'. Of the 50 scientific publications examined in this thesis, only seven introduce citizen satisfaction with process and outcomes as a benchmark for evaluation. Nonetheless, the pursuit of overall satisfaction amongst participants should be an important ideal, not least because the public authorities have a responsibility to satisfy citizens. Moreover, happy people are more likely to make positive contributions to society. GUVEN (2009) found that happy citizens participate more frequently in public activities, perform more volunteer work, are more attached to their neighbourhood, extend more help to others, and have a greater respect for law and order.

Although citizen satisfaction is considered a separate category in this research, we should not forget that satisfaction is strongly related to other evaluation benchmarks. The findings of BROWN AND CHIN (2013) suggest that, in particular, political legitimacy, quality of decisions, representation (inclusiveness), participants' ability to influence policy, and trust in government are closely related to overall satisfaction with the participation exercise. However, citizens can be satisfied with a participatory exercise, even when it is not perfect.

4.5. Ease of participation

Comfort and convenience, structured process, and clarity are cohesive as a category describing the ease of participation. In addition to resource minimisation and citizen satisfaction, ease of participation receives scant attention in the academic literature on the evaluation of public participation. For example, comfort and convenience are addressed in just four of the 50 studies analysed in this research. Nonetheless, one may argue that ease of participation is more important than one might expect at first glance. MORO (2005) notes that public participation is a complex and sometimes exhausting task for citizens. To resolve or at least alleviate this problem, public participation mechanisms should be as user-friendly as possible.

Regarding digital participation tools such as PVE, comfort and convenience mainly involve the general ease-of-use (simplicity) of the ICT system, as illustrated in the work of LOUKIS AND XENAKIS (2008). Non-technical aspects are included among the participatory mechanisms which require face-to-face discussion. For example, SHINDLER AND NEBURKA (1997) note that simple 'care and feeding' strategies, such as providing snacks and drinks at meetings, are usually strongly appreciated.

The evaluative framework employed by ROWE ET AL. (2004) is a starting point for defining what is meant by a structured process. According to this, relevant sub-benchmarks under a structured process are operational management (whether the exercise is well organised and managed on a practical level), procedures/rules (the appropriateness of the decision-making or discussion procedures for the discussion/exercise and the participants), flexibility (the flexibility and adaptability of the exercise), and consistency (the consistency of the decisions and conclusions). Moreover, EDWARDS ET AL. (2008) argue

that a structured decision-making process should be thoroughly documented. ROWE AND FREWER (2000) assert that documenting the process enhances cost minimisation (discussed in Section 4.2) and transparency (discussed in Section 4.3).

The third feature of ease of participation is clarity. Here again, the framework proposed by ROWE ET AL. (2004) is a basis for defining what is meant by clarity. In their view, clarity is required on the overall aims and outputs (what sponsors wish to achieve with the participatory programme), scope/participant roles (the role participants have in the exercise, how the citizen input will be used), context/room for decision (citizens' room for making decisions, what can and cannot be influenced by participants), and rationale for choosing a particular type of exercise. In particular, clarity of aims and outputs is a common sub-theme in the academic literature, with 14% of the studies acknowledging this.

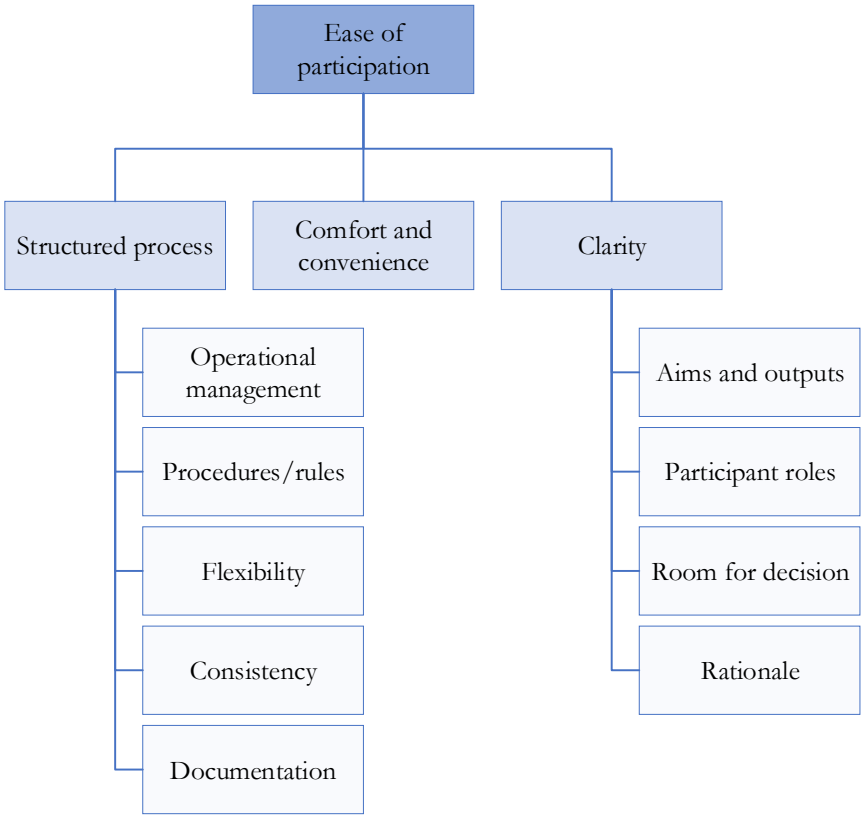

Figure 9. Sub-benchmarks related to ease of participation

5. VALIDATION AND REFINEMENT

The previous chapter provides a science-based framework with which to evaluate public participation. This includes a reasonably comprehensive set of interrelated, science-based evaluation benchmarks, which may be of (great) relevance to policy-makers. To ensure that the final framework is in line with policy-maker perspectives of public participation, this research must pay close attention not only to possible science-based benchmarks, but also to the ways in which policy-makers consider these or perhaps even other non-listed benchmarks to be important. Therefore, this chapter is intended to provide an answer to the following research question, on the basis of 13 municipal evaluation reports on public participation (Appendix F) and six semi-structured interviews with policy-makers: 'How should the science-based framework for evaluating public participation be revised so that it aligns with policy-makers' demands for public participation approaches?'

5.1. Results from municipal reports

'Citizen participation is successful when it demonstrates optimized interaction between citizens, governing parties and civil servants' (MUNICIPALITY OF VELSEN, 2012, P. 12). This is the only criterion used by the municipality of Velsen to assess the quality of local participatory programmes. In 2007, the municipality of Helmond used a similarly unclear criterion to evaluate the performance of citizen involvement activities. According to the study, public participation should result in 'optimum involvement of citizens in public affairs' (MUNICIPALITY OF HELMOND, 2007, P. 5). Fortunately, there are municipalities that more explicitly address this question when a participatory effort is regarded as a success. Table 5 provides an overview of the common science-based benchmarks for evaluating public participation that are covered by each of the municipal evaluation studies surveyed in this research.

5.1.1. Intended outcomes

Figure 10 illustrates that the outcomes of participatory efforts are of great interest to policy-makers. Most notably, building support for a decision (known as political legitimacy) and improving the quality of decisions are common evaluation benchmarks in municipal evaluation studies. Benchmarks related to political legitimacy are identified in nine of the 13 reports, with the quality of decisions discussed in 10 municipal documents. The third main output of citizen engagement (building capacity for future cooperation) has not been explicitly addressed in the 13 municipal studies examined in this study. However, the sub-benchmarks in this category (learning and relationships) are mentioned. For example, the municipality of Bernheze argues that civil agents should learn how to design effective participatory programmes and how to engage local knowledge (CABRERA, 2017), whilst the municipality of Almere underscores that successful participatory programmes should bring a wide range of actors together and

teach them to better cooperate (MUNICIPALITY OF ALMERE, 2010). A closer look at relationships reveals that five (of 13) municipalities – Alkmaar, Almere, Bernheze, Nieuwegein, and Weert – attend to the notion that public participation can strengthen relationships between government and citizens, companies, social institutions, and organisations. For example, the municipality of Alkmaar envisages three outcomes of public participation: higher quality plans, more widely supported decision, and strengthened relationships between government and citizens (KESSENS & CORNIPS, 2008). The municipalities of Almere, Bernheze, and Nieuwegein discuss in great detail what should be understood by improved relationships: according to Almere and Nieuwegein, public participation should contribute to the reinforcement of cooperation between stakeholders (MUNICIPALITY OF ALMERE, 2010; STICHTING DECENTRAALBESTUUR.NL, 2015), whilst the evaluation study of Bernheze emphasises that successful participation should result in mutual understanding between government and citizens. The municipality of Bernheze notes, though, that participation efforts may also have a negative effect on the relationship between government and citizens, if people do not recognise their input in the final policy (CABRERA, 2017).

5.1.2. Resource minimisation

Although resource minimisation has been rarely addressed in the academic literature, a substantial number of municipal evaluation reports (six of 13) indicate the importance of this evaluation benchmark in successful participatory programmes. The municipality of Almere notes that public decision-making processes should be cost-effective (MUNICIPALITY OF ALMERE, 2010), whilst the municipalities of Nijmegen and Enschede argue that participatory programmes should minimise their use of resources (COURT OF AUDITORS NIJMEGEN, 2011; SCHILDER, BOUWMEESTER & EFFING, 2017). A further observation is that the time required to issue a final decision is discussed in five of the 13 municipal documents, while this type of resource efficiency receives scant attention in the scientific literature. According to the evaluation studies of Almere, Bernheze, and Enschede, decision-making processes should reduce resistance and judicial challenges in order to be time-efficient (CABRERA, 2017; MUNICIPALITY OF ALMERE, 2010; SCHILDER ET AL., 2017). The municipality of Boxtel notes that drawn-out participatory practices are undesirable (COURT OF AUDITORS BOXTEL, 2015), and similarly, the municipality of Enschede underlines that governmental processes should be efficient in use of time (SCHILDER ET AL., 2017).

5.1.3. Democracy

The municipal evaluation studies considered in this research cover the four sub-benchmarks related to democracy: learning (addressed in two reports), fairness (one), deliberation (two), and transparency (four). It should be noted, however, that most municipal reports merely address a few sub-benchmarks related to democracy, whereas the majority of the scientific studies discuss a significant number of democratic sub-benchmarks. A closer look at fairness reveals that none of the municipal documents raises resource accessibility and social justice as relevant sub-benchmarks. In particular, the lack of attention to resource accessibility is striking, because this evaluation benchmark is recognised in 36% of the scientific studies examined in this thesis. Furthermore, little attention is given to representation in the municipal evaluation studies (discussed in just one report), whereas more than 50% of the academic studies considered in this research cover this benchmark. Against this background, it is surprising that an additional fairness-related benchmark not discussed in the academic literature is found in the municipal reports of Alkmaar and Nijmegen. These municipalities conclude that public participation can be regarded as a success when the (sometimes conflicting) interests and preferences of stakeholders are carefully weighed against one another. They assert that a decision should be taken on the basis of 'careful weighing' (COURT OF AUDITORS NIJMEGEN, 2011; KESSENS & CORNIPS, 2008).

5.1.4. Citizen satisfaction

Many municipal evaluation reports (five of 13) introduce citizen satisfaction as a relevant benchmark for evaluating public participation. Some even attach great importance to the level of satisfaction achieved. For instance, citizen satisfaction is considered an important pillar in the municipality of Alkmaar (KESSENS & CORNIPS, 2008). In Enschede, satisfaction with both the process and the outcome are considered key benchmarks for evaluating public participation (SCHILDER ET AL., 2017). Another interesting finding is that the municipalities of Amstelveen and Boxtel are concerned with expectation management as a means of satisfying citizens. The council members in Amstelveen underline that citizens should not be disappointed by having less input than promised or expected (VAN DE PEPPEL, BOUWMEESTER & SIERMANN, 2009). The municipality of Boxtel concludes that the final decision may differ from citizens' expectations, but providing regular feedback can alleviate this issue (COURT OF AUDITORS BOXTEL, 2015).

5.1.5. Ease of participation

As we saw in Chapter 4, the fifth and final category of successful public participation is ease of participation. Most of the municipal reports do not discuss this evaluation benchmark. The municipality of Alkmaar mentions that participatory programmes should be systematic and structured (KESSENS & CORNIPS, 2008). However, it remains unclear what should be understood to be a systematic, structured process. The municipality of Boxtel aims for clear public participation activities, but does not explain this notion in greater detail (COURT OF AUDITORS BOXTEL, 2015). The only positive exception here is the evaluation study of Alkmaar. According to this report, sponsors of the participatory programme should be clear about the process, participant roles, the level of participation, and the consequences of the participation activity (KESSENS & CORNIPS, 2008).

5.1.6. Conclusions from municipal reports

To sum up, the science-based framework developed in Chapter 4 covers almost all the evaluation benchmarks included in the municipal evaluation reports, although 'careful weighing' could be added as an additional sub-benchmark related to fairness. The importance of reaching the intended outcomes is emphasised in both the academic literature and the municipal evaluation studies. Moreover, the sources refer to ease of participation in only a small number of cases. The findings suggest that the sources differ in that the municipal reports attach greater value to citizen satisfaction and resource minimisation than the scientific literature does, though further research is needed for corroboration. In addition, the findings indicate that reaching the intended outcomes is the most commonly recognised marker of success in the municipal reports, whereas democracy is the equivalent in the academic literature.

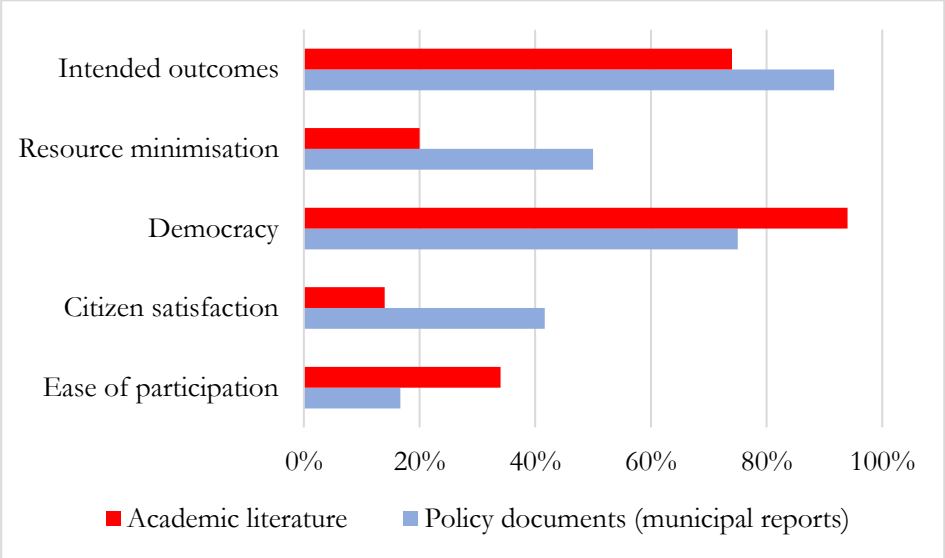

Figure 10. The percentage of scientific studies and municipal reports that recognise sub-benchmarks related to each category

Table 5. Common benchmarks identified in the municipal reports

Benchmark	Alkmaar	Almere	Amstelveen	Bernheze	Boxtel	Enschede
Capacity building						
Clarity	■				■	
Comfort and convenience						
Conflict resolution						
Consensus			■			
Deliberation					■	
Democracy						
Early involvement					■	
Efficiency		■		■	■	■
Equal accessibility					■	
Equal voice					■	
Fairness						
Impartiality					■	
Influence on policy				■	■	
Information quality						
Learning		■		■		
Mutual understanding			■	■		
Political legitimacy	■	■	■	■		■
Relationships	■	■		■		
Representation						■
Resource accessibility						
Respect						
Satisfaction	■		■		■	■
Shared vision						
Social justice						
Structured process	■					
Quality of decisions	■	■	■	■		■
Transparency	■			■	■	
Trust						
Workable solution						

[a] More detail of each municipal evaluation report can be found in Appendix F.

Table 5. (continued)

Benchmark	Helmond	Heumen	Nieuwegein	Nijmegen	Rheden	Velsen	Weert
Capacity building							
Clarity							
Comfort and convenience							
Conflict resolution							
Consensus							
Deliberation				■			
Democracy			■				
Early involvement							
Efficiency				■	■		
Equal accessibility							
Equal voice					■		
Fairness				■			
Impartiality							
Influence on policy	■		■		■		
Information quality							
Learning							
Mutual understanding	■				■		
Political legitimacy		■	■		■		■
Relationships			■				■
Representation							
Resource accessibility							
Respect							
Satisfaction				■			
Shared vision							
Social justice							
Structured process							
Quality of decisions		■	■	■	■		■
Transparency				■			
Trust		■					
Workable solution				■			

5.2. Results from interviews

The five different categories of successful public participation – intended outcomes, resource minimisation, democracy, citizen satisfaction, and ease of participation – were also identified by the six interviewees in this study, as discussed below. Given that various respondents argued that all these categories are important for successful public participation, it is striking that not all interviewees identified all five themes (as they probably just forgot). In my view, this is yet further evidence of the need for a clear multi-level benchmark framework, which could help to structure the thinking around public participation.

5.2.1. Intended outcomes

In general, respondents underscored the view that reaching the intended outcomes is a highly important benchmark for evaluating public participation. The three key goals of citizen involvement – improving the quality of decisions, enhancing political legitimacy, and building capacity – were noted by the interviewees. Almost all respondents noted that active citizen participation could unlock a wealth of knowledge, as these quotes indicate:

> 'An important goal is to use the knowledge, know-how, and energy of citizens' (Respondent 1).

> 'We, policy-makers, do not know the solution, but the citizens do. They live in the specific neighbourhood, so they are experts by virtue of their experience. They can come up with cheaper, different, or better solutions. They can enrich our understanding of the problem' (Respondent 2).

> 'In an ideal situation, interaction between government and citizens results in better ideas than the government would have developed without the involvement of the public' (Respondent 4).

There are also policy-makers who identify enhancing political legitimacy as an important goal of involving the public. For example, one respondent noted,

> 'Policy must be widely supported' (Respondent 6).

However, several respondents stated that the above goal should have a less important role in the evaluation of public participation, in contrast to the views in scientific studies (Appendix E) and municipal reports (Appendix F). One interviewee, for instance, highlighted,

> 'I am allergic to the idea that public participation could help to build support for policy. In this case, you use participation and people to justify policy in view of your own priorities. Building support is only a good goal for people to have a real choice' (Respondent 2).

A respondent responsible for a national pilot on digital participation tools noted,

> 'Public participation can help to enhance political legitimacy, but that would be the wrong approach. Besides, there is also a risk that citizens would see through this straight away' (Respondent 4).

Not surprisingly, respondents also identified capacity building as a key objective of public participation. For example, one interviewee highlighted,

> 'Public participation can foster trust in the government' (Respondent 4).

This respondent continued,

> 'Ideally, citizens understand that decisions have to be made. In this case, they understand conflicting interests and other choices' (Respondent 4).

Many interviewees stated that citizen participation increases the likelihood of citizens developing a sense of ownership regarding the issues that are at stake, as the quotations below suggest. This is surprising because few municipal reports and scientific studies examined in this research make reference to the educative function of public participation with regard to civic duties, such as responsibility and a sense of ownership.

> 'Public participation can encourage people to do more themselves and to develop their own ideas' (Respondent 1).

> 'We should give people the sense that they are responsible for their own living environment and have some sort of ownership of their neighbourhood' (Respondent 2).

> 'We, policy-makers, want citizens to experience a sense of ownership and self-awareness' (Respondent 4).

One respondent even argued that creating a sense of ownership is the final aim of public participation:

> 'Creating ownership is the key objective of public participation. It is not only the problem of the municipality, but also the problem of citizens. Together, we are responsible for what the city looks like. New democracy requires a new role for citizens as well' (Respondent 5).

Some participants underscored that a good participation process may result in a so-called spin-off, with participatory programmes giving rise to new participation initiatives:

> 'People indicate that they want to participate more often. A new initiative may even arise as a consequence of the participation exercise' (Respondent 2).

> 'Public participation can cause a spin-off, and some individuals will go on to organise civic initiatives themselves' (Respondent 4).

Finally, one respondent argued that people could learn about democracy as a consequence of a participatory effort:

> 'Public participation activities could teach citizens what a democratic process looks like' (Respondent 4).

5.2.2. Resource minimisation

It is striking that none of the interviewees raised resource minimisation as a key benchmark for evaluating public participation, whereas this was an important theme in the municipal reports. Some respondents referred to resource minimisation, but said it should not be a determining factor in the decision around whether to involve the public. In addition, most interviewees stated that public participation could help to save time during (and after) the decision-making process:

> 'Public participation can help to avoid judicial challenges' (Respondent 1).

> 'A good participation process avoids any resistance afterwards, such as objections, which can be problematic and costly. It is therefore questionable what is more efficient' (Respondent 4).

> 'A situation in which government and citizens cooperate is valuable and an enrichment for the final product. In this situation, time and money should not be an issue. Besides, upfront preparation is perhaps more intensive, but the process afterwards becomes much easier. So, it may even take less time in the end' (Respondent 5).

Another respondent even argued,

> 'Public participation programmes can help to reduce public budgets. Citizens can take over tasks previously carried out by the municipality. For instance, at this moment, citizens feed the animals on our children's farm as a consequence of a participatory programme. This saves on manpower for us. We only have to ensure that forage is available' (Respondent 3).

Although resource minimisation was not defined as a key benchmark by the interviewees, most said that it should not be ignored in the evaluation of public participation approaches. One interviewee provided an interesting argument for this, that is not discussed in the scientific studies or municipal reports considered in this thesis:

> 'Efficiency is important, not only because of the costs, but also because we cannot hold the attention of citizens for a long period of time' (Respondent 2).

5.2.3. Democracy

As seen in Section 5.2.1, several interviewees identified learning as an important category of successful public participation. This not only applies to public participants but also to the sponsors of public participation, usually the government. For example, one interviewee noted,

> 'We, policy-makers, must be able to learn from a participation exercise' (Participant 3).

The other parts of the democratic participation process (fairness, transparency, and deliberation) were recognised by the respondents. Most underlined fairness as an important theme in public participation. The importance of representation in particular was highlighted. For example, one interviewee noted,

> 'A common argument against public participation is: how representative are these exercises? Who are the people with whom you discussed the issue?' (Respondent 2).

Further comments on the relevance of representation include the following:

> 'First of all, we should map who is actually involved in the problem. All relevant actors should be involved as early as possible in the decision-making process. This remains a major challenge. In addition, it is important to involve the silent majority' (Respondent 1).

> 'Inclusiveness is important. For example, are we actually trying to involve the silent majority?' (Respondent 2).

> 'We should recruit a broad and diverse group of participants. This will improve the quality of the debate' (Respondent 4).

> 'It is important to involve the silent majority. How do we know their views?' (Respondent 5).

The importance of careful weighing is ignored in the academic literature, but it was mentioned by various respondents:

> 'The majority should not always win. Arguments should be carefully weighed against one another' (Respondent 1).

> 'In a good participation process, people feel and understand that there are different and sometimes conflicting interests. These interests should be weighed against one another in a clear and transparent way' (Respondent 2).

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that almost all the respondents identified influence as highly important for successful public participation initiatives, as illustrated by the statements below:

> 'Eventually, something has to be done with the input. We have to take citizens' input seriously' (Respondent 1).

> 'Influence matters. Do we give citizens a real voice?' (Respondent 2).

> 'Something has to be done with the input. Otherwise participation will cause only more negativity' (Respondent 3).

> 'The government must commit to the results. Something has to be done with the input. We have to take the people seriously' (Respondent 4).

In addition to learning and fairness, transparency was raised as an important benchmark for evaluation. One interviewee, for example, noted,

> 'Is the process transparent? Too often, the problem is that the analysis takes place internally within the organisation' (Respondent 2).

Another respondent mentioned,

> 'We should be transparent about how the government addresses issues. For example, it is important to show how citizen input influenced the final decision' (Respondent 4).

A third interviewee, responsible for a local pilot on new forms of cooperation between government and citizens, commented,

> 'Too often, people are dissatisfied with the communication about the projects. Transparency remains an important area for improvement' (Respondent 5).

Deliberation, the fourth and final element of a democratic participation process, was discussed by several respondents. For example, one interviewee commented,

> 'Deliberation is important in a democratic participation process. What is the quality of the discussion? Is there an open conversation or does sentiment prevail?' (Respondent 2).

5.2.4. Citizen satisfaction

Most respondents believe that citizen satisfaction should not be considered critical in the evaluation of public participation, although it could be a welcome side-effect. One respondent, for example, noted,

> 'It is nice if a participation activity leads to increased satisfaction among citizens, but this should not be the final aim' (Respondent 3).

Another respondent mentioned,

> 'If the costs are much higher than expected, this is at the expense of other facilities and investments. In such cases, it may be better to choose a less satisfying alternative or solution' (Respondent 6).

However, citizen satisfaction should not be entirely overlooked in the evaluation of participatory approaches, as the following quotes suggest:

> 'If a participatory exercise did not result in the outcomes that citizens hoped for, it is important that they are at least satisfied with the process' (Respondent 2).

> 'An important objective of public participation is to make citizens happier. For example, public participation could give rise to local initiatives for elderly' (Respondent 3).

Lastly, it is noteworthy that multiple respondents believe that citizen satisfaction is likely to be influenced by other factors. As seen in Section 4.4, this is in line with the academic literature. For instance, one respondent stated,

> 'Public participation is a system of interconnected vessels. Satisfaction may be the final result, but this could be influenced by the quality of the final policy, and so on' (Respondent 1).

5.2.5. Ease of participation

In general, interviewees underlined that public participation should be as user-friendly as possible. It is striking that almost all respondents noted the key role of clarity. First of all, sponsors must be clear about the room for making decisions:

> 'What is the room for manoeuvre? We should establish a clear framework' (Respondent 1).

> 'We should be clear about what is being decided in cooperation with citizens and what is not' (Respondent 5).

> 'The room for making decisions should be framed properly. Be clear about citizens' participation opportunities' (Respondent 6).

Furthermore, several respondents underscored that providing clarity on the space for decision-making is an important part of expectation management. Thus, expectation management involves both this and providing regular feedback, as discussed in Section 5.1.4. For example, one interviewee noted,

> 'What can be influenced by citizens and what cannot? The room for making decisions must be clearly defined. This would help to manage expectations' (Respondent 2).

The provision of clarity regarding participant roles is also considered a key part of expectation management, as highlighted by the following statements:

> 'Expectation management is important. What is completely handed over to citizens? How prepared are policy-makers to listen to citizens? It must be clear what happens with their input' (Respondent 4).

> 'We should clearly express to our citizens how and when they have influence and what kind of influence this is. It must be clear what happens with their input, what their influence is, and who takes the final decision. This is what some people call expectation management' (Respondent 5).

The interviews with policy-makers also show that sponsors should provide clarity with regard to the wider issue or dilemma. This is entirely overlooked in the academic studies and municipal documents reviewed in this thesis. For example, one respondent mentioned,

> 'What is the issue we would like to discuss with the public? The problem should be clear before we can define the room for making decisions' (Respondent 4).

Another interviewee noted,

> 'An important aspect is the question: what is the actual dilemma? We should better clarify the real problem. Too often, we focus merely on the solution or a single plan. By focusing more on the dilemma, participants become aware of the sometimes-painful trade-offs that have to be made' (Respondent 5).

In addition, comfort and convenience was a frequently mentioned category of successful participation programmes. The interviews indicate that comfort and convenience may involve many different aspects, as illustrated by the following quotations:

> 'Ease of participation is important. For example, a participation event should not be held during holidays' (Respondent 1).

> 'At what time would you organise a residents' evening? What would the content look like? Is it only a boring presentation or is there a nice, interesting dialogue? This can be very important' (Respondent 2).

> 'The participatory task should be comprehensible to all. For example, also to people with literacy problems' (Respondent 2).

> 'Organising participation in a playful manner can be interesting; for example, by means of virtual reality. This can be helpful for people who have difficulties with reading or mathematics' (Respondent 4).

> 'Participation should be accessible and user-friendly. For example, we can visit people in shopping centres and libraries to involve people who do not feel comfortable in voicing their views' (Respondent 5).

> 'If public participation takes a lot of effort, participants will disengage' (Respondent 6).

As seen in Section 4.5, the last category of 'ease of participation' concerns a structured process. It is striking that only one respondent noted this benchmark for evaluation (see quote below). This may imply that the level of structure is not considered to have any significance for the success of a participation approach. In my view, however, it is more likely that this evaluation benchmark was simply overlooked, as it was recognised in both the academic literature and municipal studies.

> 'Participation approaches require clear rules and procedures' (Respondent 6).

5.2.6. Conclusions from interviews

In summary, the science-based framework employed in Chapter 4 includes almost all the evaluation benchmarks recognised by the six policy-makers interviewed for this study. It is striking that these policy-makers have some conflicting demands. For example, some respondents identified enhancing political legitimacy as an important goal of involving the public, whilst others argued that this goal should have a less important role in the evaluation of public participation. This tension suggests that policy-makers need a 'flexible' tool for evaluation. Moreover, the interviews suggest that 'careful weighing' could be added as an additional sub-benchmark related to fairness. This is in line with the municipal reports on the evaluation of public participation (see Section 5.1). Furthermore, the results indicate that we can include a fifth sub-benchmark related to clarity, which is clarity with regard to the dilemma. This sub-benchmark for evaluation is entirely ignored in the scientific studies and municipal reports considered in this thesis, while interviewees stated that it can be critical to the success of a public participation exercise.

5.3. An evaluative framework tailored to policy-makers' demands

The findings presented in this chapter reveal that the science-based multi-level benchmark framework developed in Chapter 4 largely aligns with policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches. All five categories of successful public participation obtained from the academic literature – intended outcomes, resource minimisation, democracy, citizen satisfaction, and ease of participation – were considered important by policy-makers. Nonetheless, the results suggest that two relevant sub-benchmarks should be added to the final framework: 'careful weighing' and 'clarity with regard to the dilemma'.

Besides, the interviewees provided several worthwhile suggestions for the design of the framework, which I have taken into account to increase its practical usability. On the basis of the feedback received from the respondents, it can be concluded that the framework, in its current form, is too detailed. For example, one interviewee mentioned,

> 'This framework could become cluttered by the great number of variables and relationships' (Respondent 1).

This respondent also had a valuable suggestion for improvement:

> 'I would like to see the most important variables in a single picture, as this would help me to structure my thinking in a straightforward and user-friendly manner' (Respondent 1).

A project manager of a local workgroup on public participation stated,

> 'It is a nice, exhaustive scheme but perhaps too detailed for structuring my thinking about public participation. Nevertheless, I will definitely use it in my work' (Respondent 2).

Furthermore, the feedback received from the respondents suggests that it would be helpful to provide a separate checklist for the detailed benchmarks at the lowest level of the framework. For example, one respondent mentioned,

> 'Using this framework suggests that the only actual evaluation that needs to be made is the evaluation of the benchmarks at the lowest level of the framework. Why don't you present them in a checklist?' (Respondent 6).

A project manager responsible for a national pilot on digital participation tools, for example, noted,

> 'I like the framework, but some of the benchmarks included ask for clarification before the framework can be used effectively by policy-makers. The framework lacks a clear description of each benchmark' (Respondent 4).

Based on the above and the findings presented in this chapter, the science-based framework described in Chapter 4 is refined so that it is consistent with policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches. This refined framework visualises the upper evaluation benchmarks in one picture, structuring thinking about public participation in a simple and well-organised manner (Figure 11), whilst also providing a detailed checklist for each category to be utilised as practical guidelines (Table 6 to Table 10).

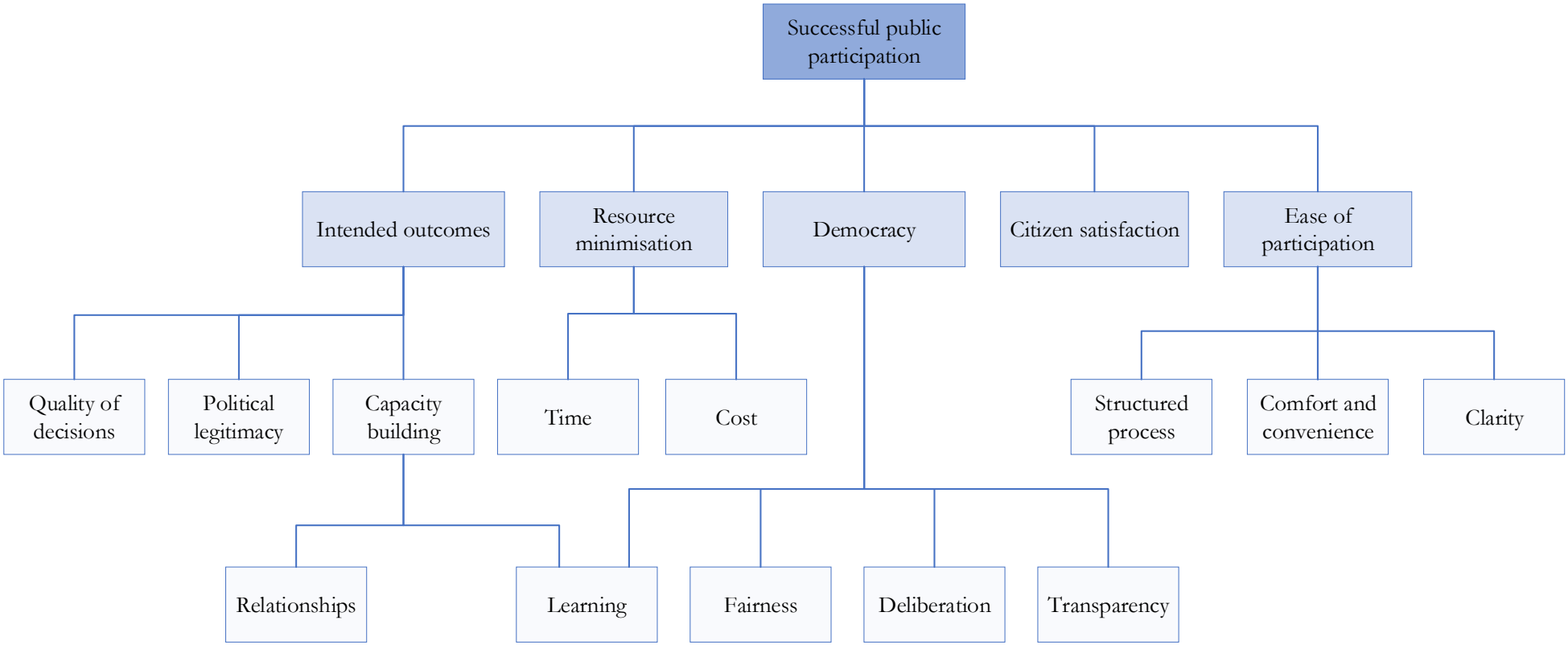

Figure 11. An evaluative framework in line with policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches

Table 6. Checklist intended outcomes

Benchmark	Description
Quality of decisions	
Added information	The participants add information to the process that is not otherwise available.
New ideas	The participants generate innovative ideas or creative solutions for solving problems.
Political legitimacy	
Consensus	The final decision is based on consensus.
Conflict resolution	There are little or no conflicts and, more notably, lawsuits brought against the decision.
Relationships	
Respect	Sponsors and participants are respectful of each other.
Shared vision	The participatory programme results in agreed and clearly defined vision(s) and goals.
Trust	The participatory programme increases trust among participants and fosters trust in the sponsor.
Collaboration	The participatory programme contributes to an increase in collaboration between stakeholders.
Mutual understanding	The participatory programme builds mutual understanding between stakeholders and results in a deeper understanding of others' positions.
Learning	
Content (topic)	As a consequence of the participatory programme, there is learning by all those involved regarding the topic or policy issue discussed.
Civic skills (process)	As a consequence of the participatory programme, citizens become more competent at effective participation, increasing their civic skills and becoming better able to engage the best available knowledge and information.
Civic virtues (duties)	The participatory programme encourages civic virtues and duties, such as active participation in public life, responsibility and a sense of ownership, trustworthiness and reciprocity (giving and taking).

Table 7. Checklist resource minimisation

Benchmark	Description
Cost	
Direct costs	The participatory programme minimises the direct cost of the procedure, including costs of resources such as staff labour reimbursement, time, facilities and services, materials, and consultation fees for experts.
Indirect cost	The participatory programme minimises the indirect cost of the procedure, including time on the part of the participants, opportunity costs, costs associated with authority and influence, and costs related to emotional issues.
Time	The participatory programme minimises the time required to issue a final decision.

Table 8. Checklist democracy

Benchmark	Description
Learning	
Content (topic)	As a consequence of the participatory programme, there is learning by all those involved regarding the topic or policy issue discussed.
Civic skills (process)	As a consequence of the participatory programme, citizens become more competent at effective participation, increasing their civic skills and becoming better able to engage the best available knowledge and information.
Civic virtues (duties)	The participatory programme encourages civic virtues and duties, such as active participation in public life, responsibility and a sense of ownership, trustworthiness and reciprocity (giving and taking).
Fairness	
Equal accessibility	The decision-making process is open to actors who view themselves as stakeholders. All actors have an equal opportunity to access the process.
Equal voice	Participants are given equal opportunities to provide their opinions during the process.
Resource accessibility	Participants have access to adequate resources (time, material and facilities, people, finance, information) to enable them to successfully achieve their objectives. Besides, the information provided to participants is adequate, comprehensible, and digestible.
Social justice	Risks, benefits, and costs are distributed fairly. The final decision does not harm specific groups, such as non-participants or the most disenfranchised.
Influence	Participants have a significant degree of influence (control/authority) on policy. To facilitate this, participants are involved as early as possible in the process.
Representation (inclusiveness)	All relevant opinions and backgrounds are adequately represented during the process. Every reasonable effort is made to involve divergent views, needs, concerns, and values.
Impartiality	The participatory programme is conducted in an independent, unbiased way. The process is not steered towards a particular stance and the sponsor is impartial during the process.
Careful weighing	The final decision is taken on the basis of 'careful weighing', which means that interests and preferences of stakeholders are carefully weighed against one another.
Deliberation	There is a substantial degree of discussion (interaction, dialogue, information exchange) in which participants justify their opinions, and show willingness to change their preferences.
Transparency	
Decision	The sponsor communicates the final outcome (decision) of the participatory programme.
Analysis	The sponsor communicates how and why decisions are made.
Influence	The sponsor communicates how citizen input influenced the final decision.
Evaluation	Feedback on the participatory programme has been provided or is planned.

Table 9. Checklist citizen satisfaction

Benchmark	Description
Citizen satisfaction	The participatory programme results in high satisfaction amongst participants.

Table 10. Checklist ease of participation

Benchmark	Description
Structured process	
Operational management	The participatory programme is well-organised and managed on a practical level.
Procedures/rules	The decision-making or discussion procedures used are appropriate for the exercise and the participants.
Flexibility	The participatory programme is flexible and adaptable, as necessary.
Consistency	The decisions made or conclusions drawn are consistent.
Documentation	The process is documented thoroughly.
Comfort and convenience	The participatory programme is comfortable and convenient.
Clarity	
Aims and outputs	The overall aims and outputs of the participatory programme are clear and appropriate.
Dilemma	The issue or dilemma that is at stake is clear.
Participant roles	The role of participants is clear. It is clear what happens with participant input, what participants' influence is, and who takes the final decision.
Room for decision	Participants' room for making decisions is clear. It is clear what can be influenced by participants and what cannot.
Rationale	The rationale for choosing this particular type of participatory programme is clear and appropriate.

6. ILLUSTRATION

The final framework described in Section 5.3 provides guidance for structuring the thinking around public participation; for example, when investigating whether participation exercises are working, how participation approaches can be modified in line with policy-makers' demands for public participation, and which participation techniques work best for particular needs. Since the framework has not yet been used, this chapter illustrates its functioning by evaluating a PVE experiment concerning a flood protection scheme by the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management. Although a detailed report on this project (MOUTER ET AL., 2018) is available, it is important to note that the scores in this 'hindsight' analysis were awarded based on my personal interpretation of the available information from the case-study (mostly quotes of respondents included in the report by MOUTER ET AL., 2018). A more 'objective' evaluation would require gathering specific information from participants and policy-makers. Therefore, I would like to underline that the scores should not be treated as a reliable basis on which to draw valid conclusions on the strengths and weaknesses of the PVE method. The sole objective of this chapter is to show how the framework might work and how it could help to derive specific actions.

6.1. Introduction to the participatory value evaluation (PVE) experiment

The Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management recently asked researchers from Delft University of Technology, VU University Amsterdam, and the University of Leeds to investigate the societal benefits and costs of a Dutch flood protection scheme on the basis of a PVE experiment. In this experiment, citizens were asked to choose between two types of flood protection projects in four locations along the Dutch river de Waal which did not conform to the relevant safety standards. The first type of project focused solely on strengthening the dikes. The second option combined strengthening the dikes with river expansion. Both options had an equal impact on mitigating flood risks. The main difference between the alternatives was that the second was more expensive but positively influenced biodiversity and recreational opportunities. The participants could allocate a total public budget of 700 million euros. Any remaining budget could be spent on two road projects, two projects mitigating damage from rainfall, and two projects offering additional protection against floods beyond current safety standards. Participants could also delegate their decision to an expert or to a group of fellow citizens, but doing so meant they received less financial compensation for completing the experiment and their choice was replaced by that of the selected delegate. After the respondents had made their selection, they were asked to describe the motivations for their choice. A demo version of the experiment can be accessed at http://ienw.participatie-begroting.nl/.

A total of 2,900 citizens participated in the PVE experiment. Almost one-third of the respondents were specifically recruited alongside the river de Waal. To acquire a thorough understanding of how the participants valued the different portfolios possible within the available budget, the choices were analysed using economic choice models. Based on this quantitative analysis, three conclusions were drawn: (1) the

best portfolio – the one with the highest expected social utility – included that combining river expansion with strengthening dikes in all four locations, (2) the large road project A2 't Vonderen-Kerensheide is not included in the top 10 portfolios, and (3) the project combining river expansion and strengthening dikes is included in all top 10 portfolios for the locations of Sleeuwijk and Werkendam. In addition, the increase in recreational opportunities and improvements in biodiversity were the main reasons given for selecting the project combining river expansion and strengthening dikes. The respondents' preference for this combination project was lower when the project was thought to cause substantial nuisance. For example, the combination project involved the relocation of some households from the location at Oosterhout. Multiple respondents underlined that this relocation would be undesirable. Hence, they opted for a project that focused solely on strengthening dikes.

6.2. Analysis of the experiment using the developed framework

When we use the developed framework to evaluate the PVE experiment for the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, we can conclude that the participatory programme does not score well against all evaluation benchmarks. This is partly related to the nature of the PVE method. However, various improvements could have alleviated some of the weaknesses of the exercise. In particular, the intended outcomes, user-friendliness, and democratic quality could have been improved, as summarised in Figure 12.

6.2.1. Intended outcomes

In the flood protection experiment, all participants were asked to describe the motivations for their choice. These qualitative motivations uncovered considerations, arguments, effects, and problems that policy-makers had been unaware of prior to the experiment. However, several participants pointed out that they would appreciate the opportunity to add projects themselves in future PVE experiments, which they cannot do at present. One public participant noted,

> 'I would appreciate the opportunity to make suggestions about possible bottlenecks for the next financial year'.

Another participant argued,

> 'Citizens also have ideas and experience problems that they would like to introduce. Maybe it would be a good idea to ask citizens about solutions to bottlenecks they experience?'

MOUTER ET AL. (2018) hypothesise that conducting PVEs may help to increase support for public decisions. They provide two main reasons for this hypothesis. First, as well as citizens who have the most to gain by influencing decisions and others interested in participation, the 'silent majority' are likely to engage with PVEs. This helps to ensure that the outcomes of participatory programmes reflect the preferences of a broader group of citizens, which in turn produces outcomes that are more widely and readily accepted. The second reason is that PVE does justice to the three components ensuring acceptance of public policy. First, PVE is a concrete method that gives citizens a real voice in decision-making (procedural justice). Second, PVE allows citizens to express their preferences about the benefits and burdens of government projects (distributional justice). Finally, PVE mobilises local knowledge and respects the preferences of local citizens. Participants receive information during the experiment and can incorporate additional considerations and effects into the rationale of the decisions. These effects and considerations are then factored into the analysis (justice as recognition). Despite this, it should not be forgotten that the final decision in a PVE experiment is not based on consensus. In PVE, citizens are offered the opportunity to voice their views, but the final decision is taken by the government. In general, no effort is made to reach consensus among participants. This might have an adverse impact on acceptance of the final decision.

A closer look at relationships reveals that the Dutch flood protection experiment is likely to have had a positive effect on relationships between stakeholders. First, the experiment increased transparency in spending of public budgets, which in turn is likely to foster trust in the government (HAGELSKAMP, RINEHART, SILLIMAN, & SCHLEIFER, 2016). Second, MOUTER ET AL. (2018) assert that PVE can show politicians that citizens are more single-minded than politicians believe. This creates a shared vision, including agreed and clearly defined goals. Third, many participants in the PVE experiment noted that they regard PVE as a useful 'awareness method'. By participating in the experiment, they became aware of the public challenges, the trade-offs that have to be made, and the (dis-)advantages of the various projects. Moreover, citizens were confronted with the fact that federal agencies have to make choices in a situation of scarcity (it is either one project or the other). This resulted in increased understanding of the decisions that politicians must make (MOUTER ET AL., 2018). For example, one public participant commented,

> 'Great initiative. It becomes clear how difficult it is to choose ….'

Another participant noted,

> 'Good idea to confront citizens in this way with the choices that have to be made'.

Effective public participation approaches also include an educative function. However, it is currently difficult to determine whether participants have learned anything as a consequence of the participatory programme. One may argue that the experiment facilitated learning by participants regarding the topic discussed because PVE provides insights into the trade-offs that must made, as well as the costs and effects of each very specific project. Besides, it seems likely that citizens became – even if only marginally – more competent at effective participation and better able to engage with the available information as a

consequence of their participation. Lastly, the feedback on the experiment suggests that the participatory programme encouraged civic virtues and duties, such as active participation in public life. For example, one participant stated,

> 'Very interesting. Fun and easy to participate. Bring on the next one'.

Another public participant highlighted,

> 'I have completed this list with great pleasure, and maybe contributed something useful to my country as a citizen. The list was good and clear, for which you have my compliments'.

Table 11. Score intended outcomes

Benchmark	**Description**	**Score [-/+]**
Quality of decisions		
Added information	The participants add information to the process that is not otherwise available.	+
New ideas	The participants generate innovative ideas or creative solutions for solving problems.	-
Political legitimacy		
Consensus	The final decision is based on consensus.	-
Conflict resolution	There are little or no conflicts and, more notably, lawsuits brought against the decision.	+
Relationships		
Respect	Sponsors and participants are respectful of each other.	+/-
Shared vision	The participatory programme results in agreed and clearly defined vision(s) and goals.	+
Trust	The participatory programme increases trust among participants and fosters trust in the sponsor.	+
Collaboration	The participatory programme contributes to an increase in collaboration between stakeholders.	+/-
Mutual understanding	The participatory programme builds mutual understanding between stakeholders and results in a deeper understanding of others' positions.	+

Table 11. (continued)

Learning		
Content (topic)	As a consequence of the participatory programme, there is learning by all those involved regarding the topic or policy issue discussed.	+
Civic skills (process)	As a consequence of the participatory programme, citizens become more competent at effective participation, increasing their civic skills and becoming better able to engage the best available knowledge and information.	+/-
Civic virtues (duties)	The participatory programme encourages civic virtues and duties, such as active participation in public life, responsibility and a sense of ownership, trustworthiness and reciprocity (giving and taking).	+/-

6.2.2. Resource minimisation

The study of MOUTER ET AL. (2018) does not provide insight into the resource efficiency of the Dutch flood protection experiment. However, based on an educated guess, I conclude that the participation exercise was efficient in terms of time and cost. First, the PVE experiment was carried out by a small number of researchers. Second, participants were granted a limited period in which to submit their final selection of projects. Key phases of the decision-making process, such as developing a problem-solving agenda and taking the final decision, were maintained by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, thereby reducing the risk of a drawn-out public participation process. However, digital participation tools, such as PVE, generally involve relatively high costs, compared to offline participation methods, as highlighted by one interviewee:

> 'The questionnaire was quite expensive, especially compared to offline participatory programmes, such as public hearings' (Respondent 1).

Table 12. Score resource minimisation

Benchmark	**Description**	**Score [-/+]**
Cost		
Direct costs	The participatory programme minimises the direct cost of the procedure, including costs of resources such as staff labour reimbursement, time, facilities and services, materials, and consultation fees for experts.	+/-
Indirect cost	The participatory programme minimises the indirect cost of the procedure, including time on the part of the participants, opportunity costs, costs associated with authority and influence, and costs related to emotional issues.	+
Time	The participatory programme minimises the time required to issue a final decision.	+

6.2.3. Democracy

As saw in Chapter 4, there are four important sub-benchmarks under democracy. The first (learning) was discussed in Section 6.2.1. Democratic participation programmes must provide some means of learning, and these practices should be fair. An advantage of the 'willingness to allocate public budget' approaches, such as PVE, is that it is plausible to respondents that their answers can actually influence the choices made by the government, thereby having an effect on themselves and others. At the beginning of the experiment, for example, respondents were informed that the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management would spend a part of the public budget on a flood protection scheme along the Dutch river de Waal and that advice from citizens was required. Respondents' selection of certain projects increased the likelihood of those projects being implemented. Thus, there were real-world consequences attached to the choices of the participants. Multiple respondents appreciated being more involved in public decision-making. For example, one respondent mentioned,

> 'It is great that citizens are consulted. That is a good sign'.

Another participant stated,

> 'This is a very good initiative. Participation is very important. Citizens should feel heard'.

Studies based on 'willingness to allocate' align with two important democratic principles. First, the preferences of low- and high-income groups are equally weighted in PVE: every citizen receives the same weight in public decision making (one-person, one-vote). Second, PVE works on the assumption that all (voting) citizens are co-owners of the national government. The preferences of individuals who experience the effects of a government project and the preferences of those who do not are taken into account in the analysis (MOUTER ET AL., 2018). Furthermore, one may argue that the preferences and interests of stakeholders were carefully weighed against one another in the flood protection experiment, because all respondents' choices were analysed using quantitative choice models. On the basis of this analysis, the best portfolio of projects – the one that yielded the highest expected social utility – was determined. A further strength of the experiment is that, due to the low threshold for participating in PVEs (this task required only 20-30 minutes), the participation of a large group of citizens was facilitated, including people typically disengaged from public decision-making processes, thereby increasing the representativeness of the sample.

However, it is observed that those who do not speak the Dutch language and those unable to use a computer or the internet were excluded from the exercise. Equally, the decision-making process was not open to all actors who viewed themselves as stakeholders. Only citizens who received an invitation could participate in the PVE. Another weakness concerns research accessibility. Some respondents felt that more information about the consequences of the various projects was needed to make well-informed decisions:

> 'More information about the ins and outs of the plans is needed. At the moment, it is all too superficial to make a well-founded choice'.

'For this experiment, I would have liked to have had more insight into the consequences of my choices. At the moment, these insights are limited, so I may have made choices that I would not make if I had a better idea of the consequences'.

The remaining two features of a democratic participation programme are deliberation and transparency. Ideally, participation exercises should facilitate a discussion in which individuals justify their opinions, exchange reasons for and against propositions, and show willingness to change their preferences (ABELSON ET AL., 2003). This was not the case in this PVE experiment. Although PVE forces individuals to consider and weigh the effects for themselves and others before any decision is taken, participants did not come into contact with other stakeholders. Finally, one may argue that the participatory exercise was not entirely transparent. Whilst the government is transparent, as it communicates that all respondents' choices were analysed using quantitative choice models, it remained unclear how the government would use the outcomes of the participatory programme.

Table 13. Score democracy

Benchmark	**Description**	**Score [-/+]**
Learning		
Content (topic)	As a consequence of the participatory programme, there is learning by all those involved regarding the topic or policy issue discussed.	+
Civic skills (process)	As a consequence of the participatory programme, citizens become more competent at effective participation, increasing their civic skills and becoming better able to engage the best available knowledge and information.	+/-
Civic virtues (duties)	The participatory programme encourages civic virtues and duties, such as active participation in public life, responsibility and a sense of ownership, trustworthiness and reciprocity (giving and taking).	+/-

Table 13. (continued)

Benchmark	Description	Score [-/+]
Fairness		
Equal accessibility	The decision-making process is open to actors who view themselves as stakeholders. All actors have an equal opportunity to access the process.	-
Equal voice	Participants are given equal opportunities to provide their opinions during the process.	+
Resource accessibility	Participants have access to adequate resources (time, material and facilities, people, finance, information) to enable them to successfully achieve their objectives. Besides, the information provided to participants is adequate, comprehensible, and digestible.	+/-
Social justice	Risks, benefits, and costs are distributed fairly. The final decision does not harm specific groups, such as non-participants or the most disenfranchised.	+
Influence	Participants have a significant degree of influence (control/authority) on policy. To facilitate this, participants are involved as early as possible in the process.	+
Representation (inclusiveness)	All relevant opinions and backgrounds are adequately represented during the process. Every reasonable effort is made to involve divergent views, needs, concerns, and values.	+
Impartiality	The participatory programme is conducted in an independent, unbiased way. The process is not steered towards a particular stance and the sponsor is impartial during the process.	+
Careful weighing	The final decision is taken on the basis of 'careful weighing', which means that interests and preferences of stakeholders are carefully weighed against one another.	+
Deliberation	There is a substantial degree of discussion (interaction, dialogue, information exchange) in which participants justify their opinions, and show willingness to change their preferences.	-
Transparency		
Decision	The sponsor communicates the final outcome (decision) of the participatory programme.	-
Analysis	The sponsor communicates how and why decisions are made.	+/-
Influence	The sponsor communicates how citizen input influenced the final decision.	-
Evaluation	Feedback on the participatory programme has been provided or is planned.	+

6.2.4. Citizen satisfaction

Since it is unclear how the government will use citizen input in this case, we are not (yet) in a position to determine whether participants are satisfied with the outcomes of the participatory programme. Nonetheless, the positive feedback indicates that they are at least pleased with the participation process itself, as the following quotations show:

'No comments, but an encouragement to continue this practice'.

'I found it very nice and interesting to use the buttons myself. Beautifully designed!'

'No suggestions, but it is fun to participate in this way!'

Table 14. Score citizen satisfaction

Benchmark	Description	Score [-/+]
Citizen satisfaction	The participatory programme results in high satisfaction amongst participants.	+

6.2.5. Ease of participation

Using the developed framework to evaluate public participation reveals that the flood protection experiment was user-friendly. First, the participation process was structured. For example, the conclusions drawn from the analysis are consistent and the process is documented in a report by MOUTER ET AL. (2018). We may question, however, whether the PVE experiment was entirely flexible and adaptable. Some innovative elements were added that had not been included in the first application of PVE worldwide (assessing a transport investment plan by the Transport Authority of Amsterdam), such as the possibility to delegate a decision to an expert or to a group of fellow citizens. Having said this, the 'adaptability' of the digital tool relied on interventions and coding by the programmer. Furthermore, no major adaptions could be made after the invitations had been sent to the potential respondents.

Secondly, it can be concluded that the participatory practice was comfortable and convenient. A major benefit of PVE compared to conventional participation approaches is that the threshold for participation is relatively low. Participants generally require 20-30 minutes to submit their choice. As the quotes in Section 6.2.4 suggest, most participants enjoyed the experiment, though some of the respondents' statements indicated concerns regarding task complexity. For example, one respondent stated,

'It is far too complicated for a non-professional like me'.

There were also respondents who did not doubt their own capability to participate in the experiment, but rather the knowledge of their fellow citizens, as illustrated by the following quote:

'For me, this research is fully comprehensible, but I can imagine that it would be difficult for people with a lower level of education and those who without a good command of the Dutch language'.

Finally, we conclude that the participatory programme was clear about the dilemma, room for decision-making, and rationale. The Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management clarified that it needed citizens' advice regarding a flood protection scheme in four locations along the Dutch river De Waal. Furthermore, the Ministry acknowledged that it had opted for a 'willingness to allocate' approach because recent findings indicate that the trade-offs individuals make between private resources and private goods differ from those they believe the government should make between public resources and public goods (discussed in Appendix B). Unfortunately, it is not entirely clear how the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management will use this citizen input.

Table 15. Score ease of participation

Benchmark	**Description**	**Score [-/+]**
Structured process		
Operational management	The participatory programme is well-organised and managed on a practical level.	+
Procedures/rules	The decision-making or discussion procedures used are appropriate for the exercise and the participants.	+
Flexibility	The participatory programme is flexible and adaptable, as necessary.	+/-
Consistency	The decisions made or conclusions drawn are consistent.	+
Documentation	The process is documented thoroughly.	+
Comfort and convenience	The participatory programme is comfortable and convenient.	+/-
Clarity		
Aims and outputs	The overall aims and outputs of the participatory programme are clear and appropriate.	+/-
Dilemma	The issue or dilemma that is at stake is clear.	+
Participant roles	The role of participants is clear. It is clear what happens with participant input, what participants' influence is, and who takes the final decision.	-
Room for decision	Participants' room for making decisions is clear. It is clear what can be influenced by participants and what cannot.	+
Rationale	The rationale for choosing this particular type of participatory programme is clear and appropriate.	+

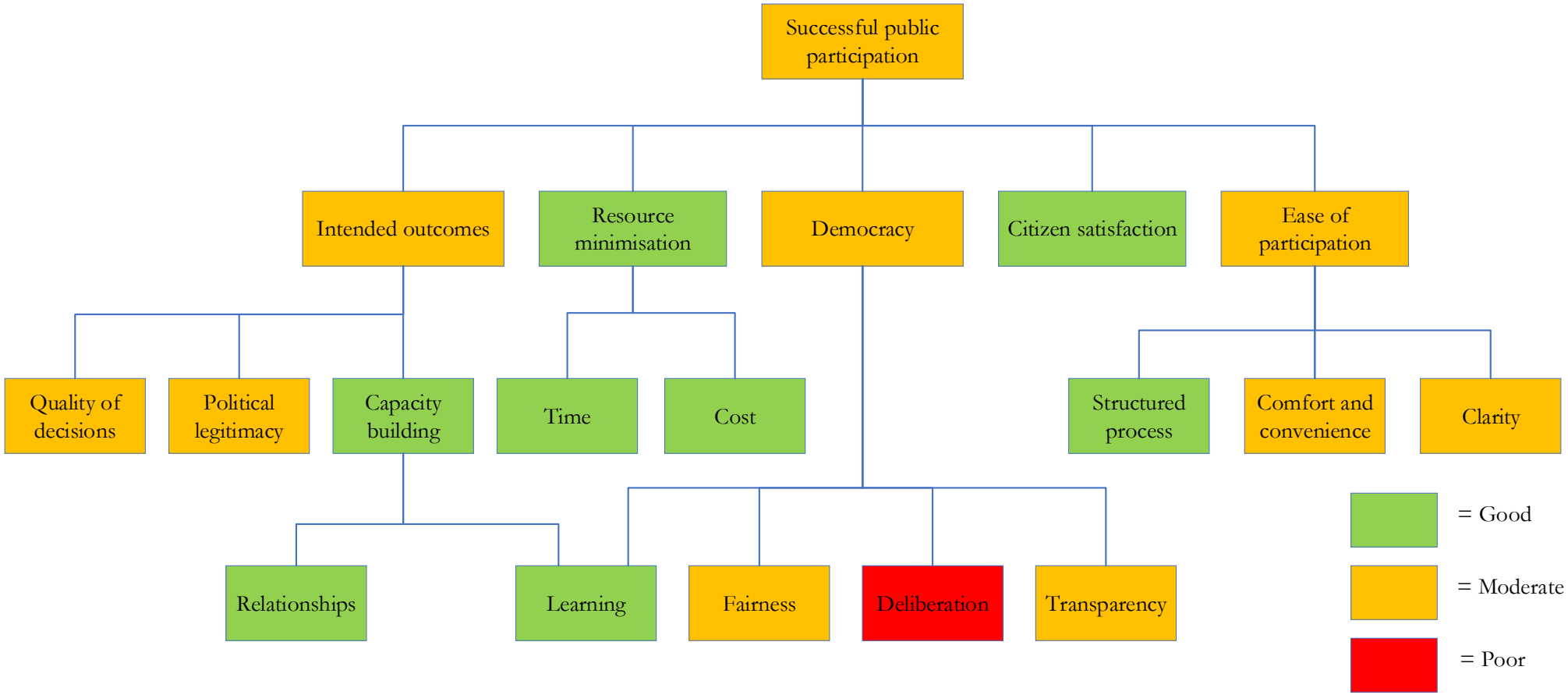

Figure 12. A framework summarising the strengths and weaknesses of the experiment

6.3. Policy recommendations derived from the framework

In summary, we can conclude that the participatory programme concerning a flood protection scheme, by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, did not score well against all benchmarks of evaluation. Although some of these poor scores are likely to be related to the nature of the PVE method, I suggest that the project would have been more successful if the policy recommendations listed below had been followed:

1. Prior to the experiment, participants should have been offered the opportunity to generate innovative ideas or creative solutions for solving problems.
2. The experiment should have included a method facilitating a substantial degree of discussion. This could be either off-line (face-to-face discussion) or online (for example, a chat function through which citizens can exchange reasons for and against propositions). This discussion could also be used to reach a consensus among participants.
3. The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management should have given more attention to transparency and clarity: what is the final decision? How will citizen input be used? Why have certain choices been made?
4. Direct communication with project leaders or experts with extensive knowledge of the projects should have been permitted so that participants who required more information (about the consequences of the various projects) could have made well-informed decisions.
5. The experiment should have been developed in the English language so that those who do not speak Dutch would have been able to participate.
6. The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management could have offered the possibility of participating off-line (e.g., completing the experiment on paper and sending the selections by post).
7. Greater publicity around the participation exercise would have given all parties who view themselves as stakeholders the opportunity to participate, rather than only the individuals invited.
8. To reduce task complexity, participants should have been given the opportunity to receive additional instructions prior to the experiment (e.g., a special event for participants, online meeting).

7. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This thesis aimed to develop a multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation in line with policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches. Based on an investigation of evaluation benchmarks drawn from the academic literature (conceptual investigation) and policy-maker perspectives regarding public participation (empirical investigation), a framework was developed that enables practitioners to determine (1) whether participation exercises are working, (2) how participation methods can be modified in line with policy-makers' demands for public participation, and (3) which participation techniques work best for particular needs. The functioning of the framework was illustrated using a case study of a flood protection PVE experiment along the Dutch river de Waal.

This chapter is organised as follows. Section 7.1 draws attention to the conclusions of this study by answering the four research questions. In Section 7.2, the limitations of this thesis are addressed. Section 7.3 presents an overview of the most important policy recommendations. Lastly, Section 7.4 provides some directions for future research.

7.1. Answers to the research questions

By conducting both a conceptual investigation and an empirical investigation, I aimed to provide solid answers to the four research questions introduced in Chapter 1. These answers are discussed below.

Research question 1: 'What common benchmarks for evaluating public participation can be drawn from the scientific literature?'

In recent decades, there has been an uptake in scientific studies evaluating citizen participation. A multitude of different benchmarks for evaluating public participation have been proposed in the literature. Some of these are process-oriented; that is, they compare how actual public participation processes compare to an ideal. In contrast, others are outcome-oriented. One of the most commonly cited and best-known sets of benchmarks for evaluating public participation is that proposed by ROWE AND FREWER (2000), who make a sharp distinction between acceptance benchmarks, which are related to whether an exercise would likely be accepted by participants as fair, and process benchmarks, which are related to the effective construction and implementation of a procedure. Acceptance benchmarks include the following: *representativeness* of the population of the affected public; *independence*, where the participatory programme should be conducted in an independent and unbiased way; *early involvement*, as soon as value judgments become salient; *transparency*, so that the relevant population can see what is happening and how decisions are being made; and *influence*, where the output of the procedure should have a genuine impact on policy. Process benchmarks include *resource accessibility*, where public participants should have access to the appropriate resources; *task definition*, where the nature and scope of the participation task should be clearly defined; *structured decision-making*,

focused on appropriate mechanisms for structuring and displaying the decision-making process; and *cost-effectiveness*, which means that the procedure should be cost-effective, from the perspective of the sponsors. The often-cited ROWE AND FREWER (2000) framework has inspired many scientific studies seeking to define benchmarks for evaluating public participation. Through examination of a large number of these studies, I have developed a reasonably comprehensive list of 30 common benchmarks for evaluation.

Research question 2: 'What are the characteristics of a science-based multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation?'

The scientific studies considered in this thesis include various benchmarks for evaluating public participation. I arranged these benchmarks in a multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation. Intended outcomes, resource minimisation, democracy, citizen satisfaction, and ease of participation comprise the highest-level elements of the framework. 'Intended outcomes' means that participatory programmes should achieve their intended objectives of making better quality decisions, enhancing political legitimacy, and building capacity for future cooperation. 'Resource minimisation' implies that public participation should minimise the cost of the procedure and the time required to issue a final decision. Democracy is the third category of successful public participation. Although I do not posit that, according to academics, democracy is the crucial element of successful participation, it is notable that almost all scientific studies consider this theme. The sub-benchmarks in this category are fairness, learning, deliberation, and transparency. Fourth, some researchers argue that participatory programmes should ultimately result in high satisfaction amongst participants, not least because public authorities have a responsibility to satisfy the citizens. Although satisfaction is considered a separate category of successful participation in this research, this variable is strongly related to other evaluation benchmarks, such as political legitimacy, quality of decisions, representation (inclusiveness), participants' ability to influence policy, and trust in government. The last category of successful participation concerns ease of participation. Public participation is a complex and sometimes exhausting task for citizens. Public participation mechanisms should therefore be as user-friendly as possible, which means that they should be comfortable and convenient, structured, and clear.

Research question 3: 'How should the science-based framework for evaluating public participation be revised so that it aligns with policy-makers' demands for public participation approaches?'

On the basis of 13 municipal evaluation reports on public participation and six interviews with policy-makers, it can be concluded that the science-based multi-level benchmark framework largely aligns with policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches. All five categories of successful public participation obtained from the academic literature (intended outcomes, resource minimisation, democracy, citizen satisfaction, and ease of participation) were considered relevant by policy-makers. Nonetheless, two relevant sub-benchmarks should be added to the final framework so that it is consistent with policy-makers' demands

for public participation: 'careful weighing' and 'clarity with regard to the dilemma'. 'Careful weighing' means that the (sometimes conflicting) interests and preferences of stakeholders are carefully weighed against one another. 'Clarity with regard to the dilemma' refers to the notion that the issue or dilemma at stake should be clearly defined. Furthermore, it was found that it would be helpful to practitioners and policy-makers to present the upper evaluation benchmarks in one picture and to include a separate detailed checklist for each category of successful public participation.

Research question 4: 'What does the application of the framework for evaluating public participation, tailored to policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches, look like in practice?'

The functioning of the developed framework was illustrated by evaluating a recent PVE experiment concerning a flood protection scheme in four locations along the Dutch river de Waal. It was found that the PVE experiment did not score well against all evaluation benchmarks. In particular, the intended outcomes, user-friendliness, and democratic quality of the participatory programme could have been better. This resulted in eight specific policy recommendations for the PVE community and/or the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management.

7.2. Limitations

This graduation thesis has some limitations that may have affected the outcomes of the research. This section addresses the most important of these. Where possible, suggestions to alleviate these limitations are provided.

7.2.1. Interview bias

No research in which interviews were conducted is entirely free from bias. Nonetheless, I believe that the findings of this study are only minimally affected by interview bias, as I took several preventive actions to minimise this. Firstly, it is important to select respondents with the experience and knowledge required to ensure valid and valuable results (PARIDA, 2006). For this reason, only policy-makers who are closely concerned with public participation were selected for this thesis project. Secondly, the respondents' statements may have been affected by the manner in which the questions were asked. To mitigate this risk, I began each part of the interview with the most important question. For example, in part 2 of the interview, I asked the key question: 'What are the requirements for you to regard a public participation exercise as a success?' Both the academic literature and the municipal evaluation reports suggest that these requirements are likely to relate to intended outcomes, resource minimisation, democracy, citizen satisfaction, and ease of participation. To ensure that the interviewees were not steered towards these themes, I encouraged them to consider their own requirements before I asked specific questions related to these pre-determined examples (see Appendix G).

7.2.2. Accessibility municipal reports

As I had no a priori expectations of policy-maker perceptions regarding public participation, I began by conducting a literature search for Dutch municipal evaluation studies on public participation. However, it appeared that these policy documents have low accessibility. Consequently, only 13 relevant municipal reports were found. On the one hand, my findings are unlikely to be influenced by this, because the primary objective of the analysis of these documents was to develop initial hypotheses about where considerable (dis)agreement may exist between policy-maker perspectives of public participation and the academic literature on the evaluation of public participation. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews were used to validate the findings. On the other hand, the findings from the analysis of the 13 policy documents are not a sufficiently reliable basis on which to draw valid conclusions on the (dis)connection between these documents and the academic public participation evaluation literature. Although this thesis provides some cautious hypotheses (see Section 5.1.6), future research is needed for corroboration. Further research could address, for example, whether municipal reports attach greater value to citizen satisfaction and resource minimisation than the academic literature does or whether reaching the intended outcomes is the most important marker of success in the municipal evaluation reports.

7.2.3. National policy-makers underrepresented

The main purpose of this thesis was to develop a multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation tailored to policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches. It should be noted, however, that the municipal studies examined in this thesis were written from the perspective of the municipality, thus they reflect the perspectives of local policy-makers regarding public participation. Furthermore, five respondents interviewed for this thesis are closely concerned with local public participation initiatives. By contrast, only one project manager responsible for a national pilot on digital participation tools was willing to be interviewed. Other national policy-makers who were invited for an interview did not accept the invitations. This means that the interviewees and the municipal reports primarily reflect the perspectives of local policy-makers. Although I hypothesise that the opinions and attitudes of national policy-makers are unlikely to deviate from those of the people operating at a local level, it is not possible to generalise the findings of this research to national policy-makers. Hence, further research on the perceptions of national policy-makers is recommended, not least because the results of this study reveal that policy-makers may have some conflicting demands.

7.2.4. Reliability content analysis

The content analysis method was used to analyse the academic literature on the evaluation of public participation. Although I coded each scientific publication twice, the reliability of the coding cannot be guaranteed. To rectify this, an independent coder could be called upon to process some of the relevant articles using content analysis.

7.2.5. Third series of interview questions

As explained in Section 2.3, each semi-structured interview consisted of three parts. In part 3, I presented the science-based framework developed in step 2 of this thesis project and asked for feedback. For example, I asked if the interviewee agreed with the content and whether they thought that some evaluation benchmarks or descendant factors should be excluded. In retrospect, I note that it was difficult for interviewees to provide feedback on the framework without having seen it before. Although I expected this, I chose not to send the framework to the interviewees in advance (discussed in Section 2.3). With the benefit of hindsight, I could have developed two variations of the interview: one regarding the framework, and the other focusing on the respondents' own requirements for regarding citizen participation as a success. I could then have conducted the first interview with half of the respondents and the second with the other half. I could then have asked each interviewee to prepare for the entire interview, without affecting the results.

7.3. Policy recommendations

Although investigating the performance of PVE was not the purpose of this research, Chapter 6 provides some valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of PVE and addresses various specific actions that may be relevant. In this section, I provide two important policy recommendations for practitioners and policy-makers who aim to evaluate, design, or select participation approaches using the developed framework or other data sources.

7.3.1. Using the developed framework

The findings of this thesis reinforce the argument that every public participation process is unique and should be evaluated according to its own very specific aims (e.g., ROWE AND FREWER, 2004). For example, several policy-makers interviewed for this thesis identified enhancing political legitimacy as an important goal of involving the public, whilst others argued that this goal should have a less important role in the evaluation of public participation. Therefore, I would like to underscore that the framework described in this research should not be treated as a universal or complete format for evaluating public participation. Multiple evaluation benchmarks are suggested in the framework, but given the diverse nature of public

participation, not all these are appropriate for every participatory programme. Hence, I advise practitioners to use the framework in a flexible way, by which I mean that evaluation benchmarks can be removed, adapted, or even added, depending on the nature of the participation exercise. The developed framework can be used as a starting point for structuring thinking about public participation.

7.3.2. Learning from academics

A large number of the evaluation benchmarks included in the municipal evaluation reports align with the common evaluation benchmarks at the highest levels of the developed framework. However, it often remains unclear what is meant exactly by these abstract benchmarks, as clear sub-benchmarks in these categories are rarely mentioned in the municipal studies This observation is in line with those of MOUTER ET AL. (2018), who assert that most policy documents focus on discussing arguments and norms. They underline that concrete requirements or standards have been largely ignored. In my view, the abstract benchmarks included in municipal reports are frequently used in a superficial way; to look like there is something being done. Moreover, this 'vagueness' entails the risk that these benchmarks can be used in a political way (i.e., certain things reported and others not). Therefore, I encourage policy-makers to make use of the abundant academic literature on the evaluation of public participation. I firmly believe that the (sometimes detailed) benchmarks available in the scientific studies provide helpful leads for the evaluation, design, and selection of participation approaches, and render more concrete policy recommendations than the abstract ones currently used in most municipal evaluation reports.

7.4. Further research

Some topics that may be considered for further research were provided in the discussion of research limitations in Section 7.2. In addition to these, various directions for future research are listed below. Section 7.4.1 discusses two avenues for future research on PVE. Sections 7.4.2 to 7.4.4 address various directions for further research on the evaluation of public participation.

7.4.1. Further research on participatory value evaluation (PVE)

Several strengths and weaknesses of the PVE experiment discussed in Chapter 6 are merely hypothesised. Furthermore, some of these weaknesses seem to be case-specific and unrelated to the nature of the PVE method itself. For example, the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management was not entirely clear how the citizen input would be used. However, this does not have to be the case in other experiments. Hence, it is by no means certain that the specific policy actions derived from the developed framework (see Section 6.3) are considered necessary or desirable for all PVE experiments. Therefore, testing the hypothesised strengths and weaknesses of PVE is an important area for further research (e.g., by means of

qualitative questions). This would also provide the basis for firmer recommendations to the PVE community.

Another avenue for future research involves the task complexity of the PVE experiment. As highlighted by various quotes in Section 6.2.5, several respondents believed that the current model is too complex. This issue was also acknowledged by DARTÉE (2018). Therefore, I highly recommend investigation of how the tasks associated with participation in PVEs can be simplified.

7.4.2. Citizen perspectives of public participation

The framework developed in this research aligns with policy-makers' demands for participatory programmes. Next to policy-makers, citizens are arguably the most important stakeholder in the field of public participation, as they are the ones who are to be engaged. An avenue for future research would therefore be to develop an evaluative framework in line with citizens' demands for public participation. A useful point of departure for developing such a framework would be the science-based framework developed in Chapter 4. On the basis of a round-table discussion with citizens of Haarlem, I hypothesise that most of the benchmarks included in this framework are important values for citizens, such as democracy, resource minimisation, ease of participation, citizen satisfaction, capacity building, and better policy decisions. Gaining and maintaining political legitimacy, on the other hand, is unlikely to have a strong public profile. Further research is needed to confirm these hypotheses.

7.4.3. Which areas and issues lend themselves best to public participation?

During the interviews held as part of this research, a number of interviewees suggested (often indirectly) an important direction for future research. For example, one respondent stated,

> 'Is the topic well-suited for discussion in a public participation exercise? It would be nice if we could determine this prior to the development of a participatory programme. Ideally, there should be an instrument, a kind of thermometer, to determine whether people want to participate, and who exactly they are' (Respondent 2).

The same respondent ended saying,

> 'Do citizens want to have any influence at all? After all, people have little time at their disposal' (Respondent 2).

Another interviewee said,

> 'I believe that public participation is interesting and important when the topic relates to citizens' own neighbourhood. In the case of issues going beyond the interests of the municipality, citizens often feel like, 'Why can't the government take a decision on this topic? They get paid for this, it's their job' (Respondent 3).

A third interviewee commented,

> 'Last week we took to the streets asking citizens questions about their relationships with the municipality. Most respondents noted that they were very happy with the municipality. Many did not have a desire to participate more in decision-making. However, when an issue concerns their direct living environment, most people are interested in participation' (Respondent 5).

MOUTER ET AL. (2018) also present various statements made by citizens that suggest that there is not always time, nor it is always necessary or desirable, to involve the public in governmental decision-making. See, for example, the quotes below:

> 'I do not think that citizens should be included in the decision-making process on this topic. It is too specialised, too complex. Moreover, you get reactions based on day-to-day affairs. When you conduct this experiment shortly after a flood, you get completely different responses'.

> 'Sorry, but engaging citizens in this case is just asking for trouble. Citizens are not able to deal with these numbers and certainly not in the case of social issues outside of their own neighbourhood'.

One group of respondents emphasised that, rather than citizens, it should be experts with full knowledge of the facts who are consulted on important matters:

> 'There are a lot of things about which citizens have no idea. That is why it is better to leave these decisions with people who have relevant knowledge'.

> 'Select citizens with a background in the topic. This enables you to make better use of citizens' knowledge – and there is less risk of people just putting forward their opinions'.

In summary, the statements above suggest that not every specific topic is well-suited for discussion in a public participation exercise. First, citizens do not always want to be involved in public decision-making. Citizens are not interested in every topic and they do not have the time to participate in every public activity. Besides, some topics are simply too complicated for non-specialist citizens. Although two respondents in this study suggested that public participation is interesting and important when the topic relates to citizens' own neighbourhoods (Respondent 3 and 5), this research area receives scant attention in the existing

academic literature. Hence, it would be interesting to investigate which areas and issues lend themselves best to public participation. This would help us tackle the question of when citizens should be engaged, thereby saving time and money.

7.4.4. Research on the developed framework

The framework developed in this research could be further extended and improved. At the moment, the framework is not (yet) a fully developed evaluation tool. Some of the evaluation benchmarks cannot easily be measured in practice. For example, it is hard to measure whether all relevant opinions and backgrounds are adequately represented during the process. Moreover, the developed framework does not include clear metrics for each benchmark. It currently requires that policy-makers come up with their own way of evaluation, implying that an evaluation would be based on the subjective opinion of the evaluator. Therefore, future work would involve developing detailed indicators for the framework.

Secondly, multiple case studies of different public participation techniques could be conducted to make use of the developed framework. Linking the evaluation benchmarks in this framework to the characteristics of different participation methods could provide conclusions on the merits of each participation method. These findings, especially if validated by future studies, would help practitioners to choose the most appropriate combination of participation mechanisms to achieve a set of different objectives. Another advantage of this kind of research is that the developed framework will further be tested in practice. This is important because we cannot draw firm conclusions on the value of the framework from one recent PVE experiment for the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management.

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APPENDICES

A. THE PROMISES OF PARTICIPATORY VALUE EVALUATION (PVE)

The field of public participation in governmental decision-making has evolved in recent decades. Citizens have never before been afforded so many opportunities to voice their opinions and share their ideas. The literature addresses a variety of public participation mechanisms for involving citizens, ranging from basic to more in-depth forms of participation (KIM & LEE, 2012). For instance, ROSENER (1975) details 39 different public participation techniques. A book produced by NEW ECONOMICS FOUNDATION (1998), called 'Participation Works!', presents 21 proven public participation methods from around the world. A comprehensive list of participation methods, currently consisting of 57 different forms, appears on the website of PARTICIPATION COMPASS (2018). Furthermore, ROWE AND FREWER (2005) list more than 100 different participation mechanisms.

This appendix is intended to make clear what is believed to be the added value of PVE, compared to other participation methods. To achieve this, this appendix first presents a brief review of the most conventional participation mechanisms, as noted by ROWE AND FREWER (2000), before the concept of participatory budgeting is introduced. The characteristics of these methods are presented in Table 16 on the next page. Performing a literature review of all existing participation methods – or at least presenting a comprehensive list of them – would not have been possible in the time span of this research. Moreover, other non-conventional methods have been implemented in a relatively small number of cases, are less well developed, and/or share common characteristics with the most conventional participation approaches (ROWE & FREWER, 2000).

Weaknesses of conventional public participation methods

Notwithstanding the appearance of novel citizen participation mechanisms, the conventional public participation methods listed in Table 16, and public hearings in particular, continue to be the dominant forms of public participation (BAKER ET AL., 2005). Unfortunately, these methods often fail to achieve far-reaching participation, because most have one (undesirable) feature in common: they require face-to-face meetings. A key deficiency of these meetings is that they are often held in difficult locations and at inconvenient times, usually during weekdays and working hours (BAKER ET AL., 2005). They also require heavy time commitment (IRVIN & STANSBURY, 2004). In view of this, it is unlikely that the attendees of the meetings are representative of the general population. One would expect that citizens who participate have the most to gain by influencing decisions (e.g., their livelihood is strongly affected by the decisions being made), thus introducing self-selection bias. Furthermore, these citizens have the economic resources and/or free time to attend the public meetings (MOUTER ET AL., 2017). Another issue is that the meetings often attract a small, nonelected elite, usually members of the top socioeconomic group, who feel comfortable in voicing their views. IRVIN AND STANSBURY (2004) note that some participants, particularly

those representing business and governance agency interests, dominate decision-making processes. By contrast, attracting low-educated, low-income, younger citizens and ethnic minorities proves difficult (BAKER ET AL., 2005).

Table 16. Overview of conventional participation methods

Public participation method	**Characteristics**
Referendum	A direct vote at a single point in time. All participants (usually a significant proportion of the population) have equal influence. The final outcome is binding.
Public opinion survey	Questionnaire used for gathering information from a large sample (usually representative of the population segments of interest).
Public hearing	Public (limited in number by size of venue) may voice opinions during official meetings at which they hear the facts of policy measures, but they have no direct impact on outcome. May last many weeks/months/years.
Negotiated rule making	Small number of representatives of stakeholder groups try to reach consensus on specific (regulation) questions, usually before a strict deadline.
Consensus conference	First, several meetings to inform citizens' panel with no knowledge on topic (chosen to be demographically representative of the public). Next, citizens' panel participates in a Q&A session with experts during the conference.
Citizens' jury/panel	A small group of people (roughly representative of the local population) comes together to deliberate on a given issue during several meetings over a few days.
Citizen/public advisory committee	Small group (representing views of various groups) convened by sponsor to examine a significant issue over an extended period of time.
Focus group	Guided, one-off discussion of a small group of citizens with video/audio recording and little input/direction from facilitator. Used to assess views and attitudes on the topic.

Note. Adapted from 'Public participation methods: a framework for evaluation', by G. Rowe and L. J. Frewer, 2000, *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, *25*(1), 3-29.

Participatory budgeting

Participatory budgeting has been one of the most successful public participation methods of recent years. In this novel participation mechanism, citizens must establish their preferences through the distribution of (a specific, limited part of) a public budget, and politicians must react to this by deciding to implement it (or not). In this way, participatory budgeting combines elements of direct and representative democracy (ARAGONÈS & SÁNCHEZ-PAGÉS, 2009). Participatory budgeting emerged in Brazil at the end of the 1980s and extended very quickly to many other Western cities worldwide (ARAGONÈS & SÁNCHEZ-PAGÉS, 2009; SINTOMER, HERZBERG & RÖCKE, 2008). In the Netherlands, this form of public participation emerged around 2007. It was introduced to Indische Buurt, a district of Amsterdam, as a response to the economic crisis and an associated crisis of representative democracy. Important issues included the desire

for a wider diversity of views and ideas, for greater direct citizen involvement in decisions regarding public budgets, and for greater transparency and accountability in governmental decisions (WEAVER, BACKHAUS, PEL & RACH, 2017). Since then, the popularity of participatory budgeting has increased substantially in the Netherlands, with the country now considered a global frontrunner (WITTMAYER & RACH, 2016).

Participatory budgeting has several benefits. First, it allows for significant public involvement by the less wealthy and less educated segments of the population, precisely those typically disengaged from public decision-making (e.g., ARAGONÈS AND SÁNCHEZ-PAGÉS, 2009; WEAVER ET AL., 2017). Second, it helps to increase citizens' responsibility for developing ideas and making choices about public budgets, which is considered very important in the Netherlands (WITTMAYER & RACH, 2016). Lastly, HAGELSKAMP ET AL. (2016) conclude that participatory budgeting can make communities happier, healthier, and more prosperous, because it has the potential to

- empower residents to make decisions, acquire civic skills and knowledge and stay politically engaged;
- lead to a more equitable distribution of resources and to public decisions that better align with community needs;
- increase transparency in public spending, build trust between government and citizens, and increase the legitimacy of public decisions;
- foster collaborations between and among public and non-profit stakeholders and build a stronger civic infrastructure.

Participatory value evaluation (PVE)

Given its benefits, participatory budgeting seems to be a promising public participation mechanism. However, traditional participatory budgeting takes places in face-to-face meetings, as do most conventional approaches to citizen participation. Consequently, this method faces the common issues of these mechanisms; namely, self-selection, time constraints, and biased information by political parties and interest groups (discussed above). This is one of the motivations for the MOUTER ET AL. (2017) PVE assessment of an investment plan by the Transport Authority of Amsterdam. The PVE method is based on traditional participatory budgeting. However, PVE involves an online tool which asks respondents to choose their preferred options (trade-offs) within the constraint(s). Completing this task requires just 20-30 minutes. Moreover, participants chose when and where to conduct the PVE (MOUTER ET AL., 2018). In this way, PVE steers a middle course between time-intensive forms of participation and no participation and has the potential to alleviate the deficiencies of conventional participation methods (MOUTER ET AL., 2018). The first results are positive: MOUTER ET AL. (2018) conclude that different segments of society are well represented in a recent study of a flood protection project for the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, albeit with highly educated males slightly overrepresented. However, it is certainly not the case that other groups do not participate at all.

Textbox 2: Participatory value evaluation (PVE) as a policy appraisal method

PVE has been developed not only for greater citizen involvement, but also as an innovative economic evaluation method: in effect, an approach to investigating the social desirability (social-welfare effects) of a specific policy measure by calculating its benefits and costs, denominated in monetary terms. Although it is not the focus of this thesis, I would like to point out that PVE is a better means of gaining insights into the social-welfare effects of policy measures than conventional evaluation methods such as CBA. A key advantage of PVE, compared to conventional methodologies, is that PVE deals with the problem of limited economic resources (e.g., public budgets), as in real life (SINTOMER ET AL., 2008). More importantly, conventional appraisal methods evaluate collective policies based on individuals' private choices. This is problematic because these private choices (by a person in their role as consumer) might not reflect how individuals (in their role as citizen) think the government should allocate taxpayers' money. This implies that the application of conventional evaluation approaches might lead to erroneous governmental decisions. PVE addresses this problem by asking participants to allocate a public budget and to consider social impacts. Hence, participants state how they – in their role as citizen – believe the government should make trade-offs between policy options. More detail of the consumer-citizen duality is provided in Appendix B.

The main promises of PVE are depicted in Figure 13. It is beyond the scope of this thesis project to examine the additional side-benefits of PVE. However, DARTÉE (2018) and MOUTER ET AL. (2018) discuss some of these in detail. For example, DARTÉE (2018) notes that another key advantage of PVE is that this web-based tool provides information on policy options (e.g., on personal and collective impacts) and helps participants to acquire a deeper understanding of the complexity of public budget allocation dilemmas by making trade-offs themselves. This, in turn, might help to change behaviour in the desired way and create support for public decisions (DARTÉE, 2018).

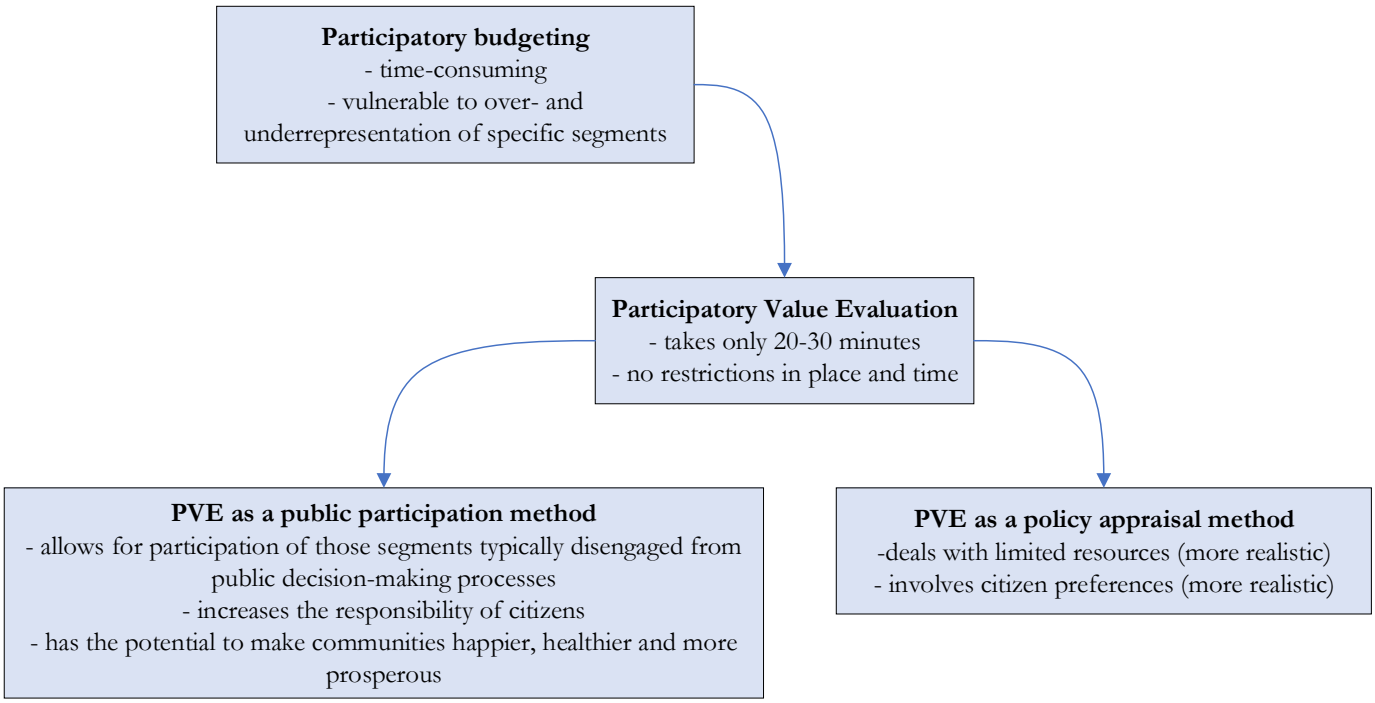

Figure 13. A graphic visualisation of the promises of participatory value evaluation (PVE)

B. THE CONSUMER-CITIZEN DUALITY

Conventional economic evaluation methods such as CBA have been criticised for failing to consider that private choices may not fully reflect how citizens believe the government should allocate taxpayers' money, the so-called 'consumer-citizen duality'. This appendix includes a part of the research proposal for this graduation thesis (RUSMAN, 2018), which is available upon request. This will serve to provide supplementary information on this consumer-citizen duality.

The role of cost-benefit analysis (CBA) in (Dutch) public decision-making

Policy options often have numerous wide-ranging effects. The economic and social benefits and drawbacks of these effects must be weighed before a rational, evidence-based decision can be made (ROMIJN & RENES, 2013). For this reason, CBA is today the standard ex-ante evaluation tool used to support (public) decision-making in most Western countries (e.g., MOUTER, 2017; MOUTER, ANNEMA & VAN WEE, 2015). CBA sees the benefits of a project weighted against the disadvantages, and as much as possible, quantified and monetised. Costs and benefits that occur in dissimilar years are discounted (e.g., THOMOPOULOS, GRANT-MULLER & TIGHT, 2009; VAN WEE & ROESER, 2013). CBA outcomes allow politicians and decision-makers to identify whether the drawbacks of a policy outweigh its benefits (ROMIJN & RENES, 2013).

In many countries, CBA is a widely used appraisal method for evaluating policy options (e.g., BRISTOW & NELLTHORP, 2000; VAN WEE & ROESER, 2013). Most studies (e.g., ELIASSON & LUNDBERG, 2012; MOUTER, 2014; NELLTHORP & MACKIE, 2000; NYBORG, 1998) show that politicians and decision-makers are, to some extent, influenced by the results of a CBA. Nevertheless, the role of CBA in decision-making processes is often criticised in countries and organisations where it is used. For instance, MOUTER, ANNEMA AND VAN WEE (2013) identified much controversy around Dutch CBA practice, specifically concerning the value that is and should be attributed to the tool in decision-making processes (MOUTER ET AL., 2013).

Criticism of cost-benefit analysis (CBA)

One of the normative assumptions in CBA is that the welfare effects of a project can be inferred from choices individuals make with their after-tax income in (hypothetical) markets. The empirical method of inferring the related 'willingness to pay' metrics is generally based on consumer-oriented experiments in which individuals are asked to make choices as if they were paying costs from their own budget and as if the gains are merely experienced by themselves – whereas government projects are paid by taxes and the benefits of these projects are usually experienced by a large number of individuals (MOUTER & CHORUS, 2016). Various economists and philosophers criticise this consumer-based approach, claiming that decisions of individuals in their role as consumer are likely to be a poor proxy of how they in their role as citizen

believe government should allocate taxpayers' money (MOUTER & CHORUS, 2016). Crucially, they claim that the trade-offs individuals make between private resources and private goods differentiate from those they think the government should make between public resources and public goods (e.g., ACKERMAN & HEINZERLING, 2004; ALPHONCE, ALFNES & SHARMA, 2014; KELMAN, 1981; MACKIE, JARA-DÍAZ & FOWKES, 2001; MARGLIN, 1963; SAGOFF, 1988).

> The crucial difference between consumer preferences and citizen preferences is that consumer preferences involve an individual's preference with his/her own budget, whereas citizen preferences involve an individual's preference regarding the allocation of the government's budget (MOUTER ET AL., 2017).

Social and public choice theory posits that people have various preference orderings. MARGLIN (1963) raised the question of whether we should view collective savings and consumption decisions differently to the way we view individual decisions. MACKIE ET AL. (2001, P. 95) highlight the following example:

> 'There is no reason for the value that the individual is willing to pay to reduce travel time to be equal to the value that society as a whole attach to the reassignment of time of that individual to other activities.'

Likewise, ALPHONCE ET AL. (2014) argue that people have different preferences as consumers and citizens, and conclude that empirical studies that do not account for these differences will poorly predict the outcomes of policy measures. Elsewhere, SAGOFF (1988) draws the conclusion that governments should no longer use CBA. KELMAN (1981) also argues against the increased use of CBA for public policy projects, claiming that most people want the government to impose stricter standards than they would opt for themselves.

Despite these critiques of CBA, none of the previous studies prove empirically that people have different preferences as citizens and consumers. Therefore, researchers from TU Delft recently sought to fill this gap. MOUTER ET AL. (2017) conducted several experiments in which individuals were asked to choose between hypothetical routes as consumers or as citizens. Their results demonstrate that people assign more value to safety than travel time as citizens than they do in their role as consumer. In addition, MOUTER AND CHORUS (2016) found that citizens' 'value of time' (the amount of money a traveller is willing to pay to save time) is higher than consumer 'value of time'. Thus, the results of these studies provide evidence that the trade-offs individuals make between private resources and private goods differentiate from those they think the government should make between public resources and public goods.

C. CONTENT ANALYSIS: RESULTS

The coding process of the scientific studies considered in this thesis concerned statements on evaluation benchmarks, links between evaluation benchmarks, and links between an evaluation benchmark and descendant factor. This appendix presents the results of this coding process in the form of three tables. These tables link each of the codes to the respective scientific publications (see Appendix E) in which these codes were identified.

Table 17. Overview of evaluation benchmarks

Code (benchmark)	**Rationale [ID]**
Capacity building	6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 31
Clarity	1, 4, 7, 14, 16, 19, 24, 27, 36, 40
Comfort and convenience	1, 22, 35, 36
Conflict resolution	1, 4, 6, 10, 16, 17, 18, 25, 28, 34, 38
Consensus	1, 6, 15, 16, 17, 24
Deliberation	2, 4, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 22, 24, 35, 36, 37, 41, 50
Democracy	6, 15, 24, 37, 39, 41
Early involvement	1, 3, 4, 10, 14, 15, 27, 42
Efficiency	4, 7, 10, 11, 14, 27, 28, 34, 43, 49
Equal accessibility	4, 7, 16, 24, 26, 31, 35, 38, 41, 43, 46
Equal voice	1, 2, 7, 8, 13, 24, 35, 40, 41, 43
Fairness	3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 15, 17, 24, 30, 36, 38, 43
Impartiality	1, 4, 7, 8, 14, 27, 30, 40, 43
Influence on policy	1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 37, 39, 41, 43, 44, 47, 48
Information quality	1, 2, 8, 10, 12, 15, 24, 36, 37, 43, 50
Learning	2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 16, 18, 23, 24, 28, 29, 35, 39
Mutual understanding	1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 24, 25, 32, 35, 36, 39
Political legitimacy	4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 24, 27, 32, 33, 37, 40, 43
Relationships	1, 2, 6, 8, 10, 13, 16, 17, 23, 24, 25, 30, 35
Representation (inclusiveness)	1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 23, 27, 30, 32, 35, 36, 37, 39, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 50
Resource accessibility	1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 17, 27, 31, 38, 39, 40, 43, 46
Respect	2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 15, 24, 35
Satisfaction	1, 6, 11, 22, 26, 30, 47
Shared vision	1, 10, 16, 17, 35
Social justice	2, 3, 6, 10, 26, 40
Structured process	3, 4, 8, 9, 14, 24, 27, 38, 43

[a] Each specific publication [ID] can be found in Appendix E.

Table 17. (continued)

Code (benchmark)	Rationale [ID]
Quality of decisions	4, 6, 9, 11, 15, 18, 28, 32, 40, 47
Transparency	1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19, 24, 27, 37, 40
Trust	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 16, 17, 18, 24, 25, 28, 32
Workable solution	1, 6, 16, 23, 40

Table 18. Overview of links between evaluation benchmarks

Code (link between benchmarks)	Rationale [ID]
Capacity building – Learning	9, 10, 13
Capacity building – Relationships	10, 17
Democracy – Deliberation	15, 24, 41
Democracy – Fairness	6, 24
Democracy – Representation (inclusiveness)	6, 37, 39
Democracy – Learning	39
Democracy – Transparency	6
Fairness – Impartiality	30
Fairness – Influence	30
Fairness – Representation (inclusiveness)	30
Fairness – Resource accessibility	39
Quality of decisions – Workable solution	40

[a] Each specific publication [ID] can be found in Appendix E.

Table 19. Overview of links between evaluation benchmark and descendant factor

Code (link between benchmark and descendant factor)	Rationale [ID]
Clarity – Aims and outputs	7, 14, 16, 19, 27, 36, 40
Clarity – Participant roles (scope)	1, 4, 7, 14, 27, 36
Clarity – Room for decision (context)	14
Clarity – Rationale	14
Efficiency – Cost	4, 7, 10, 11, 14, 27, 28, 43, 49
Efficiency – Time	7, 34, 49
Fairness – Equal accessibility	7, 30, 38, 43
Fairness – Equal voice	7, 24, 30, 38, 43

[a] Each specific publication [ID] can be found in Appendix E.

Table 19. (continued)

Code (link between benchmark and descendant factor)	Rationale [ID]
Information quality – Adequacy	8, 10, 36, 37, 43
Information quality – Comprehensibility	1, 2, 8, 15
Information quality – Digestibility	10, 15
Learning – Civic skills (process)	9, 23, 29
Learning – Civic virtues (duties)	10, 29
Learning – Content (topic)	18, 23, 29, 35
Quality of decisions – Cost-effectiveness	18
Quality of decisions – Suitability	40
Relationships – Collaboration	2, 8, 10
Relationships – Mutual understanding	24, 25
Relationships – Respect	24
Relationships – Shared vision	35
Relationships – Trust	10, 24
Representation (inclusiveness) – Backgrounds	8, 15, 45
Representation (inclusiveness) – Opinions	8, 45
Resource accessibility – Information	5, 7, 8, 14, 15, 27, 31, 39, 40, 43
Resource accessibility – Finance	14, 39, 40
Resource accessibility – Material/Facilities	14, 27
Resource accessibility – People	7, 10, 14, 27, 39, 46
Resource accessibility – Time	3, 7, 10, 14, 15, 27, 43
Social justice – Distribution costs, benefits	10, 40
Social justice – Outcomes most disenfranchised	6
Social justice – Outcomes non-participants	26
Transparency – Communication analysis	10, 19, 37
Transparency – Communication decision	19
Transparency – Communication influence	7, 12, 19
Transparency – Evaluation	19
Structured process – Consistency	14
Structured process – Documentation	27
Structured process – Flexibility	14
Structured process – Operational management	14
Structured process – Procedures/rules	14

D. CONTENT ANALYSIS: EXAMPLES

The coding process of the scientific studies considered in this thesis concerned statements on evaluation benchmarks, links between evaluation benchmarks, and links between an evaluation benchmark and descendant factor. This appendix presents several illustrative statements (quotations) for each code. Table 20 provides quotes for each benchmark, Table 21 for each link between benchmarks, and Table 22 for each link between a benchmark and descendant factor.

Table 20. Illustrative statements for each evaluation benchmark

Code	Examples
Capacity building	[6] "Build institutional capacity, resilience: community capacity to participate and act in the future." [9] "Capacity refers to participants, including agency officials and scientists, (1) becoming better informed and more skilled at effective participation; (2) becoming better able to engage the best available scientific knowledge and information about diverse values, interests, and concerns; and (3) "Developing a more widely shared understanding of the issues and decision challenges and a reservoir of communication and mediation skills and mutual trust." [10] "Capacity building: Referring to developing relationships and skills to enable participants to take part in future processes or projects." [12] "Build capacity for future cooperation." [13] "Institutional capacity: A combination of social, intellectual and political capital. As this capital grows, the civic capacity of a society grows and participants become more knowledgeable and competent, and believe more in their ability to make a difference." [17] "Networking: Relationships continue irrespective of individuals and the values and interests of different stakeholders are represented in future decision-making processes." [31] "Enabling of future processes."
Clarity	[1] "Task definition: The nature and scope of the participation task should be clearly defined." [4] "Structure: process is structured, participant roles are defined and meeting agendas are provided and followed." [7] "Participatory processes should be transparent to all those inside and outside of the process about objectives, boundaries and how participation relates to decision making." [16] "Clear, visible goals." [19] "Clarity of aims for public involvement activities – with the identification of purposes in carrying out exercises." [26] "Clear roles and goals."

[a] The number in brackets refers to a specific source [ID]. These sources can be found in Appendix E.

[b] A statement (quote) can be linked to more than one code.

Table 20. (continued)

Code	Examples
Comfort and convenience	[1] "Comfort and convenience: The timing and place of meeting should be convenient to the participants schedule. They should also feel comfortable during consultation sessions." [22] "These include that the techniques should be comfortable, convenient, and satisfying to participants." [35] "Agency representativeness strive to make people feel comfortable and respected." [36] "Care and feeding of participants."
Conflict resolution	[1] "Level of conflict: Public participation process should avoid or mitigate conflict." [4] "Respect, reduction of conflict, legitimacy: process accepted as legitimate by the stakeholders, mutual respect, Conflict resolution reducing conflict." [6] "Avoid or mitigate conflict: presence/absence and degree of conflict." [10] "Conflict resolution: Referring to the degree of conflict between participants and the way in which this was resolved during the process." [16] "Improved capacity for dispute resolution." [34] "Reduce or eliminate subsequent judicial challenges." [38] "Implementation of the best procedures for resolving disputes about knowledge and interpretations."
Consensus	[1] "Consensus reached: Decisions made as a result of public participation were based on consensus and mutual understanding." [6] "Consensus reached." [15] "Achievement of consensus over the decision (i.e. broad-based understanding and acceptance of final decision)." [16] "Consensus-based decision making." [17] "Conflict resolution and consensus-building." [24] "Decisions should be made by consensus."
Deliberation	[2] "Arguments: Participants provide and exchange their arguments for their opinions and positions." [4] "Opportunity to integrate views: the degree of interaction among potentially opposing interests, integration of concerns." [8] "Participants actively seek a range of (creative) solutions through collective dialogue." [12] "Promote constructive interaction." [13] "Dialogue: An inclusive set of citizens can engage in authentic dialogue where all are equally empowered and informed and where they listen and are heard respectfully and when they are working on a task of interest to all, following their own agendas, everyone is changed." [35] "All interests are encouraged to discuss their needs, concerns and values in informal, multidirectional exchanges." [50] "The methods should be interactive."

Table 20. (continued)

Code	Examples
Democracy	[6] "Process-based goals include mutual understanding (where participation seeks to increase public awareness of issues and agencies' awareness of public views) and the goal to promote democratic decision making (where participation seeks to promote the transparency, inclusiveness, and fairness of decision-making processes and to structure the power-sharing between agencies and stakeholders)." [24] "The process should realize the democratic principles of fairness and equality." [37] "These include a decision-making process that is perceived to be democratic, open, legitimate, technically competent, and timely." [39] "The first is to develop further the normative democratic criteria that could be used to evaluate participatory mechanisms." [41] "The democratic process criteria outlined here offer a basis for assessing institutional mechanisms in normative terms."
Early involvement	[1] "Early involvement: The public should be involved as early as possible in the process as soon as value judgments become salient." [3] "An early involvement of all stakeholders." [4] "Early involvement: public involved early." [10] "Opportunity to influence: Referring to the participant's opportunity to influence (enough time; involved early enough; access to policy-makers and leaders; organisational structure)." [14] "Early involvement: The participants should be involved as early as possible in the process, as soon as value judgments become salient." [42] "Obtain input early in planning."
Efficiency	[4] "Efficiency, cost avoidance: project efficiency, cost avoidance." [7] "Efficiency: Participatory process should be cost-effective and timely." [10] "Cost effectiveness: Referring to the improvements created through the process in relation to the costs accrued." [11] "Processes should be fair, cost-effective and flexible." [14] "Cost-effectiveness: The procedure should in some sense be cost-effective from the point of view of the sponsors." [49] "Efficiency of participation: The amount of time, personnel and other agency resources required to reach a given decision."
Equal accessibility	[4] "Decision making: the decision-making role of the public, accessibility to decision-making process, decision-making process is transparent." [7] "Fair deliberation: Participatory processes should allow all those involved to enter the discourse and put forward their views in interactive deliberation that develops mutual understanding between participants." [16] "Open, accessible, transparent process." [24] "Open process that is strongly driven by evidence." [26] "The decision-making process was open to actors who viewed themselves as stakeholders."

Table 20. (continued)

Code	Examples
Equal voice	[1] "Deliberative quality: All participants should eb given the chance to speak and provide their opinions." [2] "Equality: Participants are given equal opportunities to actively participate in the discussion." [7] "Fair deliberation: Participatory processes should allow all those involved to enter the discourse and put forward their views in interactive deliberation that develops mutual understanding between participants." [8] "Free consideration of proposals and ideas." [13] "Dialogue: An inclusive set of citizens can engage in authentic dialogue where all are equally empowered and informed and where they listen and are heard respectfully and when they are working on a task of interest to all, following their own agendas, everyone is changed." [35] "Access is provided through informal forums that give everyone an opportunity to voice their needs and concerns"
Fairness	[3] "A fair, equal and transparent process that promotes equity, learning, trust and respect among stakeholders and the administration." [6] "Process-based goals include mutual understanding (where participation seeks to increase public awareness of issues and agencies' awareness of public views) and the goal to promote democratic decision making (where participation seeks to promote the transparency, inclusiveness, and fairness of decision-making processes and to structure the power-sharing between agencies and stakeholders)." [7] "Fair deliberation: Participatory processes should allow all those involved to enter the discourse and put forward their views in interactive deliberation that develops mutual understanding between participants." [9] "Legitimacy refers to a process that is seen by the interested and affected parties as fair and competent and that follows the governing laws and regulations." [11] "Processes should be fair, cost-effective and flexible." [24] "The process should realize democratic principles of fairness and equality."
Impartiality	[1] "Independence: The participation process should be conducted in an independent, unbiased way." [4] "Transparency and "balance" of process: process is unbiased, transparent." [7] "Independence: Participatory processes should be conducted in an independent and unbiased way." [8] "Process of conversation/dialogue is free from bias and not steered towards a particular stance." [40] "Impartiality: Does the decision avoid giving undue weight to one particular interest?"

Table 20. (continued)

Code	Examples
Influence on policy	[1] "Influence: The output of the procedure should have a genuine impact on policy." [2] "Influence: Outcomes influence policy." [4] "Output should have a genuine impact on policy." [5] "Procedural justice: The degree to which individuals perceive decision-making procedures give them a voice of control over outcomes." [8] "Outcomes influence policy or organisations." [27] "Influence: The output of the procedure should have a genuine impact on policy." [43] "Recommendations should be followed: Citizen participation process should have a high probability of being heeded by appropriate public officials."
Information quality	[1] "Non-technical information: The information provided to participants must be easy to understand and contain minimal technical language to prevent confusion." [2] "Understanding: Participants can understand the given information and material." [10] "Quality of information: Referring to the adequacy, quality and quantity of information provided." [12] "Gather the relevant people and information to make the process worthwhile." [36] "Reliable information." [37] "Potential for manipulation of information presented to public."
Learning	[2] "Collective learning: Participants have the opportunity to learn from each other. A variety of knowledge and positions are presented, shared and discussed." [3] "A fair, equal and transparent process that promotes equity, learning, trust and respect among stakeholders and the administration." [4] "Education: educating and informing the public." [7] "Learning: Participatory processes should enhance social learning of all those involved, including participants, specialists, decision makers, and wider institutions." [8] "All participants have the opportunity to learn from each other." [23] "The learning that occurred appeared to concern not only the topic, but also the process of communicating with each other." [39] "Opportunity for learning: Participatory mechanisms should provide some means for group learning."
Mutual understanding	[1] "Increased understanding: Public participation should build mutual understanding between stakeholders and commit to the public good identified." [4] "Learning, understanding and trust: sponsoring agency and other stakeholders understand each other's concerns; the public has trust and confidence in the sponsoring agency." [7] "Fair deliberation: Participatory processes should allow all those involved to enter the discourse and put forward their views in interactive deliberation that develops mutual understanding between participants." [8] "Through dialogue, participants gain a deeper understanding of others positions." [25] "The process should at least be able to help participants understand the goals and perspectives of others by fostering communication and building relationships."

Table 20. (continued)

Code	Examples
Political legitimacy	[4] "Key decisions are improved by public participation and accepted as legitimate by stakeholders." [6] "Increase legitimacy, acceptance of decisions: assessment of implementation, level of opposition/acceptance of decision." [9] "Legitimacy refers to a process that is seen by the interested and affected parties as fair and competent and that follows the governing laws and regulations." [10] "Legitimacy: Referring to whether the outcomes and process are accepted as authoritative and valid." [32] "The decision-making process is accepted as legitimate by stakeholders." [37] "Risk of decision being rejected as illegitimate."
Relationships	[1] "Public participation should build trust and lasting relationships." [2] "Networks, coalitions and partnerships are established." [6] "Build social networks, mutual understanding among participants, social capital, sense of citizenship." [8] "The creation of networks and coalitions." [10] "Relationships: Referring to issues of social capital through new and existing social networks developed during the process/project."
Representation (inclusiveness)	[1] "Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision." [4] "Representation: diversity of views represented." [6] "Participants are often unrepresentative of the populations affected by the decisions at hand." [7] "Representativeness and inclusivity: Participatory processes should be representative of all those interested and affected by a decision or action and remove unnecessary barriers to participation." [8] "Participants are from a wide variety of key stakeholder groups."
Resource accessibility	[1] "Resource accessibility: Public participants should have access to the appropriate resources to enable them to successfully fulfil their brief." [3] "Adequate resources, including time." [4] "Participation: opportunities for participation, citizens have resources to participate." [5] "Informational justice: The degree to which people feel they have access to decision-relevant information." [7] "Access to resources: Participatory processes should provide sufficient resources for effective participation, such as time, expertise and information."

Table 20. (continued)

Code	Examples
Respect	[2] "Respect: Dialogue is free from bias, and participants are respectful of each other." [3] "A fair, equal and transparent process that promotes equity, learning, trust and respect among stakeholders and the administration." [4] "Respect, reduction of conflict, legitimacy: process accepted as legitimate by the stakeholders, mutual respect, reducing conflict." [5] "Interpersonal justice: The degree to which individuals perceive decision-makers are trust-worthy and respectful of those affected by decisions." [13] "Dialogue: An inclusive set of citizens can engage in authentic dialogue where all are equally empowered and informed and where they listen and are heard respectfully and when they are working on a task of interest to all, following their own agendas, everyone is changed." [15] "Procedural rules: amount of time, emphasis on challenging experts/information, mutual respect." [24] "Quality of interaction among the participants in the process (building trust, allowing everyone to have their say, encouraging respectfulness)." [35] "Agency representatives strive to make people feel comfortable and respected."
Satisfaction	[1] "Satisfaction: Good public participation should result in high satisfaction amongst participants." [6] "Overall satisfaction, satisfaction with process and outcomes." [11] "The public should have at least some degree of satisfaction with the outcome, resulting in subsequent sustained public participation." [22] "These include that the techniques should be comfortable, convenient, and satisfying to participants." [26] "Actors are satisfied in the end by the outcomes of the process." [30] "Perceptions of the fairness of the process were related to satisfaction with the process, perceptions of fairness of the decision, and satisfaction with DEC." [47] "The 'level' of overall satisfaction of public participants with the planning process."
Shared vision	[1] "Increased understanding: Public participation should build mutual understanding between stakeholders and commit to the public good identified." [10] "Develop a shared vision and goals: Referring to the creation of an agreed and clearly defined vision, objectives and goals for the process/project." [16] "Broadly, shared vision." [17] "Outcomes: shared principles, knowledge and understanding; mutually agreed goals; shared information; agreed roles and responsibilities; shared accountability." [35] "Collective revision and refinement of goals, objectives and decision-making criteria is encouraged."

Table 20. (continued)

Code	Examples
Social justice	[2] "Common good: Participants provide justification in terms of the common good or propose ideas that would benefit the broader community rather than themselves or specific groups." [3] "A fair, equal and transparent process that promotes equity, learning, trust and respect among stakeholders and the administration." [6] "Improve outcomes for most disenfranchised." [10] "Social justice: Referring to the distributive dimension of the costs and benefits associated with the outcomes." [26] "The outcomes of the process do not harm the interests of stakeholders or other social actors who were not participating in the process." [40] "Distributional justice: Are risks, benefits and costs distributed equally?"
Structured process	[3] "The establishment of rules in advance." [4] "Structure: process is structured, participant roles are defined and meeting agendas are provided and followed." [8] "The process was documented thoroughly." [9] "A well-structured process may be able to help compensate for some of these inequalities." [14] "Structured decision making: The participation exercise should use/provide appropriate mechanisms for structuring and displaying the decision-making process."
Quality of decisions	[4] "Improving the substantive quality of decisions." [6] "Improve quality of decisions." [9] "When done well, public participation improves the quality and legitimacy of a decision and builds the capacity of all involved to engage in the policy process." [11] "Processes should promote improved decision making." [15] "Better (or different) decisions."
Transparency	[1] "Transparency: The process should be transparent so that the public can see what is going on and how decisions are being made." [3] "A fair, equal and transparent process that promotes equity, learning, trust and respect among stakeholders and the administration." [4] "Decision making: the decision-making role of the public, accessibility to decision-making process, decision-making process is transparent." [6] "Process-based goals include mutual understanding (where participation seeks to increase public awareness of issues and agencies' awareness of public views) and the goal to promote democratic decision making (where participation seeks to promote the transparency, inclusiveness, and fairness of decision-making processes and to structure the power-sharing between agencies and stakeholders)." [7] "Transparency and accountability: Participatory processes should be transparent to all those inside and outside of the process about objectives, boundaries and how participation relates to decision making."

Table 20. (continued)

Code	Examples
Trust	[1] "Increased trust: Public participation should build trust and lasting relationships." [2] "Trust: Participants interact in an amicable atmosphere, are polite and pay attention to the others." [3] "A fair, equal and transparent process that promotes equity, learning, trust and respect among stakeholders and the administration." [4] "Learning, understanding and trust: stakeholders understand each other's concerns, mutual learning, trust." [5] "Interpersonal justice: The degree to which individuals perceive decision-makers are trust-worthy and respectful of those affected by decisions." [6] "Increase trust in planning agencies: Agency seen as responsive to public input, committed, and capable to implement decisions."
Workable solution	[1] "Workable solutions: Public participation should create a compromise and acceptable solution." [6] "Solution identified is workable, can be implemented." [16] "Consistent with existing laws and policies." [23] "Socially and politically acceptable." [40] "Practicality: Is implementation realistic? Is the decision politically acceptable? Have resource constraints been considered?"

Table 21. Illustrative statements for each link between evaluation benchmarks

Code	Examples
Capacity building – Learning	[9] "Capacity refers to participants, including agency officials and scientists, (1) becoming better informed and more skilled at effective participation; (2) becoming better able to engage the best available scientific knowledge and information about diverse values, interests, and concerns; and (3) developing a more widely shared understanding of the issues and decision challenges and a reservoir of communication and mediation skills and mutual trust." [10] "Capacity building: Referring to developing relationships and skills to enable participants to take part in future processes or projects." [13] "Institutional capacity: A combination of social, intellectual and political capital. As this capital grows, the civic capacity of a society grows and participants become more knowledgeable and competent, and believe more in their ability to make a difference."
Capacity building – Relationships	[10] "Capacity building: Referring to developing relationships and skills to enable participants to take part in future processes or projects." [17] "Networking: relationships continue irrespective of individuals and the values and interests of different stakeholders are represented in future decision-making processes."
Democracy – Deliberation	[15] "The essence of democracy itself is now widely taken to be deliberation, as opposed to voting, interest aggregation, constitutional rights, or even self-government." [24] "The process should realize democratic principles of fairness and equality: one of the key aspects of a good process, from this perspective, is the interaction among the participants of the process." [41] "Democratic process criteria: The degree to which a mechanism provides a structure for face-to-face discussion over a period of time."
Democracy – Fairness	[6] "Process-based goals include mutual understanding (where participation seeks to increase public awareness of issues and agencies' awareness of public views) and the goal to promote democratic decision making (where participation seeks to promote the transparency, inclusiveness, and fairness of decision-making processes and to structure the power-sharing between agencies and stakeholders)." [24] "The process should realize democratic principles of fairness and equality."

[a] The number in brackets refers to a specific source [ID]. These sources can be found in Appendix E.

[b] A statement (quote) can be linked to more than one code.

Table 21. (continued)

Code	Examples
Democracy – Representation (inclusiveness)	[6] "Process-based goals include mutual understanding (where participation seeks to increase public awareness of issues and agencies' awareness of public views) and the goal to promote democratic decision making (where participation seeks to promote the transparency, inclusiveness, and fairness of decision-making processes and to structure the power-sharing between agencies and stakeholders)." [37] "Directness of democracy: representation." [39] "Democratic criteria: "Participation mechanism should bring more groups into a policy process than were there before."
Democracy – Learning	[39] "Democratic criteria: Participatory mechanisms should provide some means for group learning."
Democracy – Transparency	[6] "Process-based goals include mutual understanding (where participation seeks to increase public awareness of issues and agencies' awareness of public views) and the goal to promote democratic decision making (where participation seeks to promote the transparency, inclusiveness, and fairness of decision-making processes and to structure the power-sharing between agencies and stakeholders)."
Fairness – Impartiality/ Influence/ Representation (inclusiveness)	[30] "We assigned the six criteria to the fairness category that we believed were most closely related to our definition of fairness. This group included those measuring perceptions of (1) whether DEC was impartial during the process (Impartiality); (2) whether DEC was honest during the process (Honesty); (3) whether all citizens had an equal opportunity to participate in the process (Equal opportunity); (4) whether all important viewpoints were adequately represented during the process (Representation); (5) whether all citizens had the opportunity to voice their opinions during the process (Voice); and (6) whether citizens had influenced the final moose management decision (Influence).
Fairness – Resource accessibility	[39] "Democratic criteria: Participation programs must make some effort at blunting the effects of resource inequality."
Quality of decisions – Workable solution	[40] "A good decision: Is the implementation realistic? Is the decision politically acceptable? Have resource constraints been considered?"

Table 22. Illustrative statements for each link between evaluation benchmark and descendant factor

Code	Examples
Clarity – Aims and outputs	[7] "Transparency and accountability: Participatory processes should be transparent to all those inside and outside of the process about objectives, boundaries and how participation relates to decision making." [14] "Task definition: context, scope, aims and outputs, rationale for exercise." [16] "Clear, visible goals." [19] "Clarity of aims for public involvement activities – with the identification of purposes in carrying out exercises." [27] "It is important to ensure that there is little confusion and dispute as possible regarding the scope of a participation exercise, its expected output, and the mechanisms of the procedure." [36] "Clear roles and goals." [40] "Transparency: Are outsiders clear about the objectives and activities of the task force?"
Clarity – Room for decision	[14] "Task definition: context, scope, aims and outputs, rationale for exercise."
Clarity – Rationale	[14] "Task definition: context, scope, aims and outputs, rationale for exercise."
Clarity – Participant roles	[1] "The nature and scope of the participation task should be clearly defined." [7] "Transparency and accountability: Participatory processes should be transparent to all those inside and outside of the process about objectives, boundaries and how participation relates to decision making." [14] "Task definition: context, scope, aims and outputs, rationale for exercise." [27] "The nature and scope of the participation task should be clearly defined."
Efficiency – Cost	[4] "Efficiency, cost avoidance." [7] "Efficiency: Participatory processes should be cost-effective and timely." [10] "Cost effectiveness: Referring to the improvements created through the process in relation to the costs accrued." [11] "Processes should be fair, cost-effective and flexible." [14] "Cost-effectiveness: The procedure should in some sense be cost-effective from the point of view of the sponsors." [28] "Making decisions cost-effectively." [49] "Efficiency of participation: The amount of time, personnel and other agency resources required to reach a given decision."

[a] The number in brackets refers to a specific source [ID]. These sources can be found in Appendix E.

[b] A statement (quote) can be linked to more than one code.

Table 22. (continued)

Code	Examples
Efficiency – Time	[7] "Efficiency: Participatory processes should be cost-effective and timely." [34] "Decrease time to develop regulations." [49] "Efficiency of participation: The amount of time, personnel and other agency resources required to reach a given decision."
Fairness – Equal accessibility	[7] "Fair deliberation: Participatory processes should allow all those involved to enter the discourse and put forward their views in interactive deliberation that develops mutual understanding between participants." [30] "We assigned the six criteria to the fairness category that we believed were most closely related to our definition of fairness. This group included those measuring perceptions of (1) whether DEC was impartial during the process (Impartiality); (2) whether DEC was honest during the process (Honesty); (3) whether all citizens had an equal opportunity to participate in the process (Equal opportunity); (4) whether all important viewpoints were adequately represented during the process (Representation); (5) whether all citizens had the opportunity to voice their opinions during the process (Voice); and (6) whether citizens had influenced the final moose management decision (Influence). [38] "Fairness: attendance at the event; initiation of different types of speech acts; participation in debate for and against validity claim redemption; participation in the group resolution of disputes over claims." [43] "If an open process is followed in which everyone is given an equal chance to speak, the process may be fair."
Fairness – Equal voice	[24] "Fairness is another important feature of a good process, according to this view. Here, what is important is the makeup of the council and the CACs, the way the council treats groups and individuals, and the opportunities the process participants would have to speak and, perhaps most important of all, to be heard." [30] "We assigned the six criteria to the fairness category that we believed were most closely related to our definition of fairness. This group included those measuring perceptions of (1) whether DEC was impartial during the process (Impartiality); (2) whether DEC was honest during the process (Honesty); (3) whether all citizens had an equal opportunity to participate in the process (Equal opportunity); (4) whether all important viewpoints were adequately represented during the process (Representation); (5) whether all citizens had the opportunity to voice their opinions during the process (Voice); and (6) whether citizens had influenced the final moose management decision (Influence). [38] "Fairness: attendance at the event; initiation of different types of speech acts; participation in debate for and against validity claim redemption; participation in the group resolution of disputes over claims." [43] "If an open process is followed in which everyone is given an equal chance to speak, the process may be fair."

Table 22. (continued)

Code	Examples
Information quality – Adequacy	[8] "Participants were given access to adequate information." [10] "Quality of information: Referring to the adequacy, quality and quantity of information provided." [36] "Reliable information." [37] "Potential for manipulation of information presented to public." [43] "One of the most obvious requirements is that the citizens be provided with accurate and meaningful information."
Information quality – Comprehensibility	[1] "Non-technical information: The information provided to participants must be easy to understand and contain minimal technical language to prevent confusion." [2] "Understanding: Participants can understand the given information and material." [8] "The complexity/simplicity of material was such that all participants could understand." [15] "Information: accessibility, readability, digestibility, selection and presentation."
Information quality – Digestibility	[10] "Quality of information: Referring to the adequacy, quality and quantity of information provided." [15] "Information: accessibility, readability, digestibility, selection and presentation."
Learning – Civic skills (process)	[9] "Capacity refers to participants, including agency officials and scientists, (1) becoming better informed and more skilled at effective participation; (2) becoming better able to engage the best available scientific knowledge and information about diverse values, interests, and concerns; and (3) developing a more widely shared understanding of the issues and decision challenges and a reservoir of communication and mediation skills and mutual trust." [23] "The learning that occurred appeared to concern not only the topic, but also the process of communicating with each other." [29] "As a consequence of the analysis, has there been any learning by mass participants and mass nonparticipants regarding the substance of the policy issue discussed, the process or role of the analysis, the citizens' own knowledge, role, civic engagement, and so on?"
Learning – Civic virtues (duties)	[10] "Social learning: Referring to the way that collaboration has changed individual values and behaviour, in turn influencing collective culture and norms." [29] "As a consequence of the analysis, has there been any learning by mass participants and mass nonparticipants regarding the substance of the policy issue discussed, the process or role of the analysis, the citizens' own knowledge, role, civic engagement, and so on?"
Learning – Content (topic)	[18] "Educating and informing the public: Did the public learn enough about the issue to actively engage in decision making?" [23] "The learning that occurred appeared to concern not only the topic, but also the process of communicating with each other." [29] "As a consequence of the analysis, has there been any learning by mass participants and mass nonparticipants regarding the substance of the policy issue discussed, the process or role of the analysis, the citizens' own knowledge, role, civic engagement, and so on?"

Table 22. (continued)

Code	Examples
Quality of decisions – Cost-effectiveness	[18] "Improving the substantive quality of decisions in terms of cost-effectiveness (Do the decisions lead to actions that are more or less cost-effective than a probable alternative?)"
Quality of decisions – Suitability	[40] "A good decision: Is the final decision appropriate to the original problem?"
Relationships – Collaboration	[2] "Networks: Networks, coalitions and partnerships are established." [8] "The creation of networks and coalitions." [10] "Relationships: Referring to issues of social capital through new and existing social networks developed during the process/project e.g. trust, reciprocity and collaboration."
Relationships – Mutual understanding	[24] "Build the relationships necessary for continued dialogue, including respect, trust and a greater understanding of different viewpoints and the issues." [25] "The process should at least be able to help participants understand the goals and perspectives of others by fostering communication and building relationships."
Relationships – Respect	[24] "Build the relationships necessary for continued dialogue, including respect, trust and a greater understanding of different viewpoints and the issues."
Relationships – Shared vision	[35] "Active dialogue improves everyone's understanding of the range of values, interests and concerns. Collective revision and refinement of goals, objectives and decision-making criteria is encouraged.
Relationships – Trust	[10] "Relationships: Referring to issues of social capital through new and existing social networks developed during the process/project e.g. trust, reciprocity and collaboration." [24] "Build the relationships necessary for continued dialogue, including respect, trust and a greater understanding of different viewpoints and the issues."
Representation (inclusiveness) – Backgrounds	[8] "Participants are selected from a variety of backgrounds (including age, geographic area and profession)." [15] "Representative sample (geographic, demographic or political)." [45] "Participants should be representative."
Representation (inclusiveness) – Opinions	[8] "Participants are from a wide variety of key stakeholder groups." [45] "Opinions should be representative; variance in opinions should be representative."

Table 22. (continued)

Code	Examples
Resource accessibility – Information	[5] "Informational justice: The degree to which people feel they have access to decision-relevant information." [7] "Access to resources: Participatory processes should provide sufficient resources for effective participation, such as time, expertise and information." [8] "Participants were given access to adequate information." [14] "Resource accessibility: people, time, facilities, expertise, finance and information." [15] "Information: accessibility, readability, digestibility, selection and presentation."
Resource accessibility – Finance	[14] "Resource accessibility: people, time, facilities, expertise, finance and information." [39] "Participatory mechanisms may provide resources in a variety of ways, both direct and indirect. They can provide funds for salaries or consultants, subsidize research, or disseminate existing information, to name a few." [40] "Compensation for time and effort."
Resource accessibility – Material/facilities	14] "Resource accessibility: people, time, facilities, expertise, finance and information." [27] Necessary resources include (1) information resources (summaries of pertinent facts), (2) human resources (e.g. access to scientists, witnesses, decision analysts), (3) material resources (e.g. overhead projectors/whiteboards), and (4) time resources (participants should have sufficient time to make decisions)."
Resource accessibility – People	[7] "Access to resources: Participatory processes should provide sufficient resources for effective participation, such as time, expertise and information." [10] "Access to policy-makers and leaders." [14] "Resource accessibility: people, time, facilities, expertise, finance and information." [27] Necessary resources include (1) information resources (summaries of pertinent facts), (2) human resources (e.g. access to scientists, witnesses, decision analysts), (3) material resources (e.g. overhead projectors/whiteboards), and (4) time resources (participants should have sufficient time to make decisions)." [39] "Access to officials: Groups must have some form of access to relevant officials." [46] "Access to higher authority."
Resource accessibility – Time	[3] "Adequate resources, including time." [7] "Access to resources: Participatory processes should provide sufficient resources for effective participation, such as time, expertise and information." [10] "Enough time." [14] "Resource accessibility: people, time, facilities, expertise, finance and information." [15] "Amount of time, emphasis on challenging experts, information, mutual respect." [27] Necessary resources include (1) information resources (summaries of pertinent facts), (2) human resources (e.g. access to scientists, witnesses, decision analysts), (3) material resources (e.g. overhead projectors/whiteboards), and (4) time resources (participants should have sufficient time to make decisions)." [43] "Time must be sufficient for participants to learn the information and to reflect on the values and goals relevant to the decision."

Table 22. (continued)

Code	Examples
Social justice – Distribution costs, benefits	[10] "Social justice: Referring to the distributive dimension of the costs and benefits associated with the outcomes." [40] "Distributional justice: Are risks, benefits and costs distributed equally?"
Social justice – Outcomes most disenfranchised	[6] "Improve outcomes for most disenfranchised."
Social justice – Outcomes non-participants	[26] "The outcomes of the process do not harm the interests of stakeholders or other social actors who were not participating in the process."
Transparency – Communication analysis	[10] "Transparency: Participants understand how decisions are made." [19] "Transparency: Evidence of analysis of the outputs from public involvement." [37] "Decision rules: transparent or opaque."
Transparency – Communication decision	[19] "Transparency: Presentation of the results of public involvement."
Transparency – Communication influence	[7] "Transparency and accountability: Participatory processes should be transparent to all those inside and outside of the process about objectives, boundaries and how participation relates to decision making." [12] "Demonstrate influence of local knowledge." [19] "Transparency: Evidence of how public involvement outputs were used to inform the policy process."
Transparency – Evaluation	[19] "Transparency: Evidence that feedback on public involvement has been provided to participants or that feedback is planned."
Structured process – Consistency	[14] "Structured decision making (structured discussion): Were the decisions made (or conclusions drawn) consistent?"
Structured process – Documentation	[27] "Criterion of structured decision making: Documenting the process of reaching a decision (as well as the outcome) is liable to increase transparency (and hence the perceived credibility of the exercise) as well as the efficiency of the process."

Table 22. (continued)

Code	Examples
Structured process – Flexibility	[14] "Structured decision making (structured discussion): Was the exercise flexible and adaptable, as necessary?"
Structured process – Operational management	[14] "Structured decision making (structured discussion): Was the exercise well organized and managed on a practical level?"
Structured process – Procedures/ rules	[14] "Structured decision making (structured discussion): Were the decision-making (or discussion) procedures used appropriate for the discussion/exercise and the participants?"

E. RELEVANT SCIENTIFIC STUDIES

This appendix provides a list of the 50 scientific publications on the evaluation of public participation considered in this research, including a brief overview of the benchmarks discussed in each study.

Table 23. Overview of scientific publications on the evaluation of public participation

ID	Source	Benchmarks
1	BROWN & CHIN (2013)	Process benchmarks - Representativeness: The public participants should comprise a broadly representative sample of the population of the affected public. - Independence: The participation process should be conducted in an independent, unbiased way. - Early involvement: The public should be involved as early as possible in the process as soon as value judgments become salient. - Transparency: The process should be transparent so that the public can see what is going on and how decisions are being made. - Resource accessibility: Public participants should have access to the appropriate resources to enable them to successfully fulfil their brief. - Seeking out and involving those affected by decisions: Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision. - Comfort and convenience: The timing and place of meeting should be convenient to the participants schedule. They should also feel comfortable during consultation sessions. - Deliberative quality: All participants should be given the chance to speak and provide their opinions. - Level of conflict: Public participation process should avoid or mitigate conflict. - Seek input from participants in how they participate: Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate. - Task definition: Nature/scope of the participation task should be clearly defined. - Non-technical information: Information provided to participants must be easy to understand and contain minimal technical language to prevent confusion. - Communicates influence on decision: Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision. ID [1] continues on the next page

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
1	BROWN & CHIN (2013)	Outcome benchmarks - Influence: The output of the procedure should have a genuine impact on policy. - Increased understanding: Public participation should build mutual understanding between stakeholders and commit to the public good identified. - Consensus reached: Decisions made as a result of public participation were based on consensus and mutual understanding. - Increased trust: Public participation should build trust and lasting relationships. - Workable solutions: Public participation should create a compromise and acceptable solution. - Satisfaction: Good public participation should result in high satisfaction amongst participants.
2	MANNARINI & TALÒ (2013)	Process benchmarks – Category 1: Dialogue - Equality: Participants are given equal opportunities to actively participate in the discussion. - Trust: Participants interact in an amicable atmosphere, are polite and pay attention to the others. - Respect: Dialogue is free from bias, and participants are respectful of each other. - Disagreement: Participants welcome divergent opinions while aiming to achieve agreement. - Reciprocity: Participants refer to the others' discourse or link their discourse to topics and positions expressed by other participants. - Common good: Participants provide justification in terms of the common good or propose ideas that would benefit the broader community rather than themselves or specific groups. Process benchmarks – Category 2: Knowledge/understanding - Argument: Participants provide and exchange their arguments for their opinions and positions. - Understanding: Participants can understand the given information and material. - Collective learning: Participants have the opportunity to learn from each other. A variety of knowledge and positions are presented, shared and discussed. - Reflexivity: Participants become aware of their thinking and reasoning or gain a deeper understanding of others' positions. - Topic: Participants refrain from discussing off-topic issues. ID [2] continues on the next page

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
2	MANNARINI & TALÒ (2013)	Outcome benchmarks - Discourse: New discourse on the issue is created. - Networks: Networks, coalitions and partnerships are established. - Influence: Outcomes influence policy.
3	LUYET ET AL. (2012)	- A fair, equal and transparent process that promotes equity, learning, trust and respect among stakeholders and the administration - The integration of local and scientific knowledge - The establishment of rules in advance - An early involvement of all stakeholders - The presence of experienced moderators - Adequate resources, including time
4	STEPHENS & BERNER (2011)	Process benchmarks - Decision making: accessibility to decision-making process, decision-making process is transparent - Representation: diversity of views represented - Participation: opportunities for participation, citizens have resources to participate - Opportunity to integrate views: the degree of interaction among potentially opposing interests, integration of concerns - Information: information exchange - Transparency and "balance" of process: process is unbiased, transparent - Early involvement: public involved early - Structure: process is structured, participant roles are defined and meeting agendas are provided and followed Outcome benchmarks - Education: educating and informing the public - Values incorporated: incorporating public values into decision making - Quality or acceptability of decision: improving the substantive quality of decisions, output should have genuine impact on policy, key decisions are improved by public participation and accepted as legitimate by stakeholders - Learning, understanding and trust: stakeholders understand each other's concerns, mutual learning, trust - Respect, reduction of conflict, legitimacy: process accepted as legitimate by the stakeholders, mutual respect, reducing conflict - Efficiency, cost avoidance ID [4] continues on the next page

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
4	STEPHENS & BERNER (2011)	Cost benchmarks - Direct cost (e.g. staff labour reimbursement, time, facilities, facilitation services, materials, travel, specialists/experts) - Indirect costs (e.g. time, opportunity, authority and influence, emotional)
5	BESLEY (2010)	- Procedural justice: The degree to which individuals perceive decision-making procedures give them a voice of control over outcomes. - Interpersonal justice: The degree to which individuals perceive decision-makers are trust-worthy and respectful of those affected by decisions. - Informational justice: The degree to which people feel they have access to decision-relevant information.
6	LAURIAN & SHAW (2009)	Process-based goals - Mutual learning: (1) increase public awareness of issues; (2) increase agencies' awareness of public views - Democratic process: (1) transparency; (2) inclusiveness; (3) fairness and power sharing Outcome-based goals - Issue-related outcomes: (1) meet statutory requirements; (2) find solution, reach consensus; (3) improve quality of decisions - Governance outcomes: (1) increase legitimacy of agency; (2) increase legitimacy, acceptability of decisions; (3) avoid or mitigate conflict; (4) facilitate implementation of solution - Social outcomes: (1) build institutional capacity, resilience; (2) increased trust among participants (e.g. agency seen as responsive to public input, committed, and capable to implement decisions); (3) build social networks, mutual understanding among participants, social capital, sense of citizenship; (4) improve outcomes for most disenfranchised User-based goals - participants satisfied (overall satisfaction with process and outcomes) - other goals defined by participants ID [6] continues on the next page

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
6	LAURIAN & SHAW (2009)	Benchmarks used by respondents - Increased understanding - Consensus reached - Participant satisfaction - Increased trust among participants - Solution identified is workable, can be implemented - Attendance (inclusiveness) - Smooth process, little conflict
7	CHILVERS (2008)	- Representativeness and inclusivity: Participatory processes should be representative of all those interested and affected by a decision or action and remove unnecessary barriers to participation. - Fair deliberation: Participatory processes should allow all those involved to enter the discourse and put forward their views in interactive deliberation that develops mutual understanding between participants. - Access to resources: Participatory processes should provide sufficient resources for effective participation, such as time, expertise and information. - Transparency and accountability: Participatory processes should be transparent to all those inside and outside of the process about objectives, boundaries and how participation relates to decision making. - Learning: Participatory processes should enhance social learning of all those involved, including participants, specialists, decision makers, and wider institutions. - Independence: Participatory processes should be conducted in an independent and unbiased way. - Efficiency: Participatory processes should be cost-effective and timely.
8	EDWARDS ET AL. (2008)	Input benchmarks – Category 1: Breadth and opportunity for participation - Participants are selected from a variety of backgrounds (including age, geographic area and profession). - Participants are from a wide variety of key stakeholder groups. - All potential participants were given an equal opportunity to participate. ID [8] continues on the next page

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
8	EDWARDS ET AL. (2008)	Input benchmarks – Category 2: Initial participant inputs - Agenda setting process is "owned" by participants. - Interest groups have had influence over the event. - There is a shared commitment to the ideal appropriate terms of association. Input benchmarks – Category 3: Input logistics - Training for facilitators was adequate. Process benchmarks – Category 1: Dialogue - Participants are recognised as having deliberative capacity. - Process of conversation/dialogue is free from bias and not steered towards a particular stance. - Participants actively seek a range of (creative) solutions through collective dialogue. - Supporting and/or critical reasons advanced in discussion of proposals. - Participants have ability to question assertions. - Dialogue attempts to deal with structural issues underlying the immediate crisis. - There was authentic dialogue and amicable social interaction achieved throughout. - Trust is created through safe spaces for dialogue. Process benchmarks – Category 2: Knowledge and understanding - Variety of knowledge presented including expert and local/lay knowledge. - The complexity/simplicity of material was such that all participants could understand. - All participants have the opportunity to learn from each other. - Allowances for communication and translation between practice communities were made. - A variety of styles are used to accommodate many learners. - Free consideration of proposals and ideas. - Emphasis on collective thinking during deliberation. - Participants appear to become aware of their thinking, reasoning and place. - Through dialogue, participants gain a deeper understanding of others positions. ID [8] continues on the next page

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
8	EDWARDS ET AL. (2008)	Process benchmarks – Category 3: Process logistics - There were adequate numbers of participants "registered" to consider the process legitimate. - Participants were given access to adequate information. - Inclusion of all participants. - Process involves a truly pluralistic association. - Group ownership of agenda during workshops. - Participants are equal in power and resources during process. - Facilitator encouraged deliberative dialogue. - The process was documented thoroughly. - There is opportunity for genuine reflection each day. Output benchmarks – Output to the process - There is the creation of new discourses. - The creation of networks and coalitions. - Outcomes influence policy or organisations.
9	NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL (2008)	- Quality: (1) identification of the values, interests and concerns of all who are interested in or might be affected by the process or decision; (2) identification of the range of actions that might be taken (for decisions); (3) identification and systematic consideration of the effects that might follow from processes or actions being considered, including uncertainties about these effects, in terms of the values, interests and concerns of interested and affected parties; (4) outputs consistent with the best available knowledge and methods relevant to the above tasks, particularly the third; (5) incorporation of new information, methods and concerns that arise over time. - Legitimacy: a process that is seen by the interested and affected parties as (1) fair and (2) competent and (3) that follows the governing laws and regulations (accountable to existing law). - Capacity: participants, including agency officials and scientists, (1) becoming better informed and more skilled at effective participation; (2) becoming better able to engage the best available scientific knowledge and information about diverse values, interests and concerns; (3) developing a more widely shared understanding of the issues and decision challenges and a reservoir of communication and mediation skills and mutual trust.

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
10	BLACKSTOCK ET AL. (2007)	- Access to resources: Referring to provision of support to allow participants to engage and meet expectations for their roles. - Accountability: Referring to whether the representative's core constituencies are satisfied, including expectations. - Capacity building: Referring to developing relationships and skills to enable participants to take part in future processes or projects. - Capacity to influence: Referring to the participant's ability to influence the process (being heard, competencies in technical and process techniques, influence on others). - Capacity to participate: Referring to the individual's ability to value different points of view and willingness to learn as well as their competence. - Champion/leadership: Referring to the both internal leadership and champions but also to the role of the critical outsider. - Conflict resolution: Referring to the degree of conflict between participants and the way in which this was resolved during the process. - Context: Referring to the political, social, cultural, historical, environmental context in which the process/project occurs. - Cost effectiveness: Referring to the improvements created through the process in relation to the costs accrued. - Develop a shared vision and goals: Referring to the creation of an agreed and clearly defined vision, objectives and goals for the process/project. - Emergent knowledge: Referring to the influence of local knowledge on the outcome of the research. - Legitimacy: Referring to whether the outcomes and process are accepted as authoritative and valid. - Opportunity to influence: Referring to the participant's opportunity to influence (enough time; involved early enough; access to policy-makers and leaders; organisational structure). - Ownership of outcomes: Referring to whether there is an enduring and widely supported outcome. - Quality of decision making: Referring to the establishment and maintenance of agreed standards of decision making. - Quality of information: Referring to the adequacy, quality and quantity of information provided. - Recognised impacts: Referring to whether participants perceive that changes occur as a result of the participatory process. ID [10] continues on the next page

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
10	BLACKSTOCK ET AL. (2007)	- Relationships: Referring to issues of social capital through new and existing social networks developed during the process/project (e.g. trust, reciprocity and collaboration). - Representation: Referring to the spread of representation from affected interests, including how legitimate the representation seen to be, the diversity of views, not just representatives. - Social justice: Referring to the distributive dimension of the costs and benefits associated with the outcomes. - Social learning: Referring to the way that collaboration has changed individual values and behaviour, in turn influencing collective culture and norms. - Transparency: Referring to both the internal, whereby participants understand how decisions are made, and external, whereby observers can audit the process
11	BAKER ET AL. (2005)	- Participants should be representative of the broad public. - Processes should be fair, cost-effective and flexible. - Processes should increase the public's understanding. - Processes should enable citizen participation and influence in discussion and decision making. - Processes should promote improved decision making. - The public should have at least some degree of satisfaction with the outcome, resulting in subsequent sustained public participation.
12	GRANT & CURTIS (2004)	Process benchmarks - Include representation from affected interests. - Provide opportunity and capacity for influence: gather the relevant people and information to make the process worthwhile. - Promote constructive interaction. - Meet agreed standards of decision making. Outcome benchmarks - Build capacity for future cooperation. - Address individual and collective needs: the process should be considered and develop a detailed reference of stakeholders' inputs that clearly identified different individual and collective needs. - Demonstrate influence of local knowledge. - Reach an enduring and widely supported plan.

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
13	INNES & BOOHER (2004)	- Dialogue: An inclusive set of citizens can engage in authentic dialogue where all are equally empowered and informed and where they listen and are heard respectfully and when they are working on a task of interest to all, following their own agendas, everyone is changed. - Networks: Build new professional and personal relationships, understand each other's perspectives, build considerable trust. - Institutional capacity: A combination of social, intellectual and political capital. As this capital grows, the civic capacity of a society grows and participants become more knowledgeable and competent, and believe more in their ability to make a difference.
14	ROWE, MARSH & FREWER (2004)	Process benchmarks - Resource accessibility: Participants should have access to the appropriate resources – information, expertise, material and time – to enable them to successfully fulfil their brief. - Task definition: The nature and scope of the participation task should be clearly defined. - Structured decision making: The participation exercise should use/provide appropriate mechanisms for structuring and displaying the decision-making process (relates to the quality of deliberation as well as how information is collated). - Cost-effectiveness: The procedure should in some sense be cost-effective from the point of view of the sponsors. Acceptance benchmarks - Representativeness: The participants should comprise a broadly representative sample of the affected population. - Independence: The participation process should be conducted in an independent, unbiased way. - Early involvement: The participants should be involved as early as possible in the process, as soon as value judgments become salient. - Influence: The output of the procedure should have a genuine impact on policy. - Transparency: The process should be transparent so that the relevant population can see what is going on and how decisions are being made.

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
15	ABELSON ET AL. (2003)	- Representation: (1) legitimacy and fairness of selection process; (2) representative sample (geographic, demographic or political); (3) participant-selection vs self-selection; (4) inclusiveness (broad) vs exclusiveness (narrow) - Procedural rules: (1) degree of citizen control/input into agenda setting, establishing rules, selecting experts, information; (2) deliberation; (3) amount of time, emphasis on challenging experts/information, mutual respect; (4) credibility/legitimacy of process; (5) What point in the decision-making process is input being sought?; (6) Who is listening? - Information: (1) accessibility, readability, digestibility, selection and presentation; (2) who chooses the information, who chooses the experts; (3) adequacy of time provided to consider, discuss and challenge the information - Outcomes: (1) legitimacy and accountability of decision making, communication of decisions, responses to decision or input, more informed citizenry; (2) achievement of consensus over the decision (i.e. broad-based understanding and acceptance of final decision); (3) better decisions
16	CONLEY & MOOTE (2003)	Process benchmarks - Broadly shared vision - Clear, visible goals - Diverse, inclusive participation - Participation by local government - Linkages to individuals and groups beyond primary participants - Open, accessible, transparent process - Clear, written plan - Consensus-based decision making - Decisions regarded as just - Consistent with existing laws and policies Socioeconomic output benchmarks - Relationships built or strengthened - Increased trust - Participants gained knowledge and understanding - Improved capacity for dispute resolution

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
17	ASTHANA, RICHARDSON & HALLIDAY (2002)	Inputs - Recognition of a need for partnership - Provision of resources: trust, understanding, and tangible support - Leadership and management: personality and an effective team with varied roles and responsibilities - Organizational ethos: establishing linkages and securing an understanding of issues in a wider arena Processes - Conflict resolution and consensus-building - Knowledge/information-sharing - Networking: relationships continue irrespective of individuals and the values and interests of different stakeholders are represented in future decision-making processes - Accountability: agencies entrusted with the responsibility of using public resources and achieving public policy goals should be properly accountable for their decisions and actions Outcomes - Shared principles, knowledge and understanding - Mutually agreed goals - Shared information - Agreed roles and responsibilities - Shared accountability Principles - Access - Representation - Perceptions of power Impacts - Greater synergy between organizations - More choice, flexibility, innovation - Coordination and cost-effectiveness in service delivery

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
18	BEIERLE & CAYFORD (2002)	Evaluating participatory processes using a set of social goals - Incorporating public values into decision making: How much influence is the public having on decisions made? - Improving the substantive quality of decisions in terms of: (1) cost-effectiveness (do the decisions lead to actions that are more or less cost-effective than a probable alternative?); (2) joint gains (are some participants better off without any participants being worse off?); (3) opinion (do participants feel that decisions are better than a probable alternative?); (4) added information (do participants add information to the analysis that is not otherwise available?); (5) technical analysis (do participants engage in technical analyses to improve the foundations on which decisions are based?); (6) innovative ideas (do participants come up with innovative ideas or creative solutions to problems?); (7) holistic approach (do participants introduce a more holistic and integrated way of looking at problems?); (8) other measures (do participants improve the technical quality, benefits or other aspects of a decision?). - Resolving conflict among competing interests: Was conflict that was present at the beginning of the process resolved by the end? - Building trust in institutions: Was mistrust of agencies that was present at the beginning of the process lessened by the end? - Educating and informing the public: Did the public learn enough about the issue to actively engage in decision making?

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
19	BICKERSTAFF & WALKER (2001)	Participation process - Inclusivity: (1) clarity of aims for public involvement activities – with the identification of purposes in carrying out exercises; (2) terminology used in the plan (for example, public involvement, participation, consultation); (3) number of opportunities for the involvement of general public and special interest representatives; (4) number of mechanisms which aim to reach non-traditional or disadvantaged audiences (for example, focus groups, community outreach). - Transparency: (1) presentation of the results of public involvement; (2) evidence of analysis of the outputs from public involvement; (3) evidence of how public involvement outputs were used to inform the policy process; (4) evidence that feedback on public involvement has been provided to participants or that feedback is planned. - Interaction: (1) number of new consultative or deliberative public involvement methods used (for example, citizens panel, community workshop); (2) number of opportunities for discussion and the scope of debate. - Continuity: (1) number of public involvement activities planned for the final LTP stage; (2) number of participation activities carried out underway; (3) evidence that public involvement activities have been evaluated or that evaluation is planned. Outputs and outcomes - Evidence that participation has impacted on the overall shape of the plan. - Evidence that participation has impacted on specific areas of the plan.
20	CARR & HALVORSEN (2001)	- Representativeness: Do the participants represent all significant sectors of the community? - Identifying the common good: Does the process focus upon the common good? - Underlying values and beliefs: Does the process engender critical reflection of the values underlying the discussion?
21	EINSIEDEL, JELSØE & BRECK (2001)	- Substantive impact on the ensuing public debate and on political decisions. - Procedural impact: e.g. does the approach get considered or adopted in the arsenal of decision-making tools? - Symbolic value of the participation method as a demonstration of the ability of lay people to take part in complex decisions.
22	HALVORSEN (2001)	- Satisfaction - Comfort and convenience - Deliberation

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
23	McCool & Guthrie (2001)	Product-oriented measures - Plan written: preparing a bullet-proof plan, meaning that it can be successfully defended and implemented - Plan implementation - Socially and politically acceptable Process-oriented measures - Learning: content, process - Responsibility: managers responsive, sense of ownership - Relationship building: between managers and publics, among publics, learning to listen - Interest representation
24	Webler, Tuler & Krueger (2001)	Competing discourses (perspectives from the public) about good processes - The process should be legitimate: (1) decisions should be made by consensus; (2) evidence drives decisions; (3) transparency. - The process should promote a search for common values (facilitate an ideological discussion): (1) a regional sense of awareness and a regional sense of place (the need for the process to educate); (2) build the relationships necessary for continued dialogue, including respect, trust and a greater understanding of different viewpoints and the issues; (3) strictly enforcing rules for what is acceptable behaviour. - The process should realize democratic principles of fairness and equality: (1) quality of interaction among the participants in the process (building trust, allowing everyone to have their say, encouraging respectfulness); (2) fairness; (3) the combined need for consensus decision making with a sure closure date; (4) a realistic temper about what is feasible for a public participation process to accomplish. - The process should promote equal power among all participants and viewpoints: (1) open process that is strongly driven by evidence; (2) process that educates people and does not limit the scope of discussion. - The process should foster responsible leadership: (1) process promotes respectfulness; (2) succeeds in running a responsible process that is clearly planned and that gives people meaningful opportunities to participate and affect decisions.

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
25	BEIERLE & KONISCKY (2000)	Evaluating participatory processes using a set of social goals - Incorporating public values into decision making: Differences over values, assumptions and preferences should be deliberated in a process. - Resolving conflict among competing interests: The process should at least be able to help participants understand the goals and perspectives of others by fostering communication and building relationships. - Restoring a degree of trust in public agencies: One of the few ways agencies can rebuild trust is through greater public control over decision making.
26	KLIJN & KOPPENJAN (2000)	- More participants were involved in the process of policy formation. - Actors are satisfied in the end by the outcomes of the process. - The decision-making process was open to actors who viewed themselves as stakeholders. - Participants succeed in defining a good content: they succeed in defining a common interest and in formulating a proposal that satisfies different preferences at the same time, without harming others. - The outcomes of the process do not harm the interests of stakeholders or other societal actors who were not participating in the process.
27	ROWE & FREWER (2000)	Process benchmarks - Resource accessibility: Public participants should have access to the appropriate resources – information, expertise, material and time – to enable them to successfully fulfil their brief. - Task definition: The nature and scope of the participation task should be clearly defined. - Structured decision making: The participation exercise should use/provide appropriate mechanisms for structuring and displaying the decision-making process (relates to the quality of deliberation as well as how information is collated). - Cost-effectiveness: The procedure should in some sense be cost-effective from the point of view of the sponsors. ID [27] continues on the next page

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
27	ROWE & FREWER (2000)	Acceptance benchmarks - Representativeness: The public participants should comprise a broadly representative sample of the affected population. - Independence: The participation process should be conducted in an independent, unbiased way. - Early involvement: The public should be involved as early as possible in the process, as soon as value judgments become salient. - Influence: The output of the procedure should have a genuine impact on policy. - Transparency: The process should be transparent so that the relevant population can see what is going on and how decisions are being made.
28	BEIERLE (1999)	Evaluating participatory processes using a set of social goals - Educating the public - Incorporating public values, assumptions and preferences into decision making - Increasing the substantive quality of decisions - Fostering trust in institutions - Reducing conflict Sixth goal can be added: Making decisions cost-effectively, that is, choosing the least resource-intensive decision-making process needed to achieve the goals of interest.
29	GUSTON (1999)	- Actual impact: As a consequence of the analysis, has there been any change in relevant legislation, funding, regulations or any other consequence to any authoritative public decision? - General thinking: As a consequence of the analysis, has there been any change in relevant vocabularies, agendas, problem statements or any other political aspect regarding the substance of the policy issue discussed or the process or role of the analysis? - Training of knowledgeable personnel: As a consequence of the analysis, has there been any learning by elite participants regarding the substance of the policy issue discussed, the process or role of the analysis, the participants' own knowledge, role organization, contact, and so on? - Interaction with lay knowledge: As a consequence of the analysis, has there been any learning by mass participants and mass nonparticipants regarding the substance of the policy issue discussed, the process or role of the analysis, the citizens' own knowledge, role, civic engagement, and so on?

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
30	LAUBER & KNUTH (1999)	Benchmarks related to fairness judgments (fairness of the process) - The management agency's receptivity to citizens' input - The degree of influence that citizens had over the final decision - The quality of knowledge and reasoning of the agency leading the process - The degree to which relationships improved during the process Perceptions of the fairness of the process are related to: (1) the satisfaction with the process; (2) perceptions of fairness of the decision; (3) satisfaction with the agency
31	TULER & WEBLER (1999)	- Access to the process - Power to influence process and outcomes - Access to information - Structural characteristics to promote constructive interactions - Facilitation of constructive personal behaviours - Adequate analysis - Enabling of future processes
32	CARNES, SCHWEITZER, PEELLE, WOLFE & MUNRO (1998)	- The decision-making process allows full and active stakeholder representation. - The decision-making process is accepted as legitimate by stakeholders. - Stakeholders understand each other's concerns. - The public has trust and confidence in the sponsor. - Key decisions are improved by public participation. - Key decisions are accepted as legitimate by stakeholders. - The sponsor's mission is accomplished.
33	SCOTT (1998)	- Accountability - Legitimacy
34	COGLIANESE (1997)	- Decrease time to develop regulations - Reduce or eliminate subsequent judicial challenges

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
35	MOOTE, MCCLARAN & CHICKERING (1997)	- Efficacy: Groups and individuals interested in or affected by public decisions report that the resultant plan addresses their needs, concerns and values, and they will not appeal it. - Representation and access: Everyone who might be affected by or have an interest in the plan is involved, particularly nonactivist, nonaligned members of the public. Access is provided through informal forums that give everyone an opportunity to voice their needs and concerns. Agency representatives strive to make people feel comfortable and respected. - Information exchange and learning: All interests are encouraged to discuss their needs, concerns and values in informal, multidirectional exchanges. Active dialogue improves everyone's understanding of the range of values, interests and concerns. Collective revision and refinement of goals, objectives and decision-making criteria is encouraged. - Continuity of participation: The public is involved continuously throughout all stages of planning and decision making. - Decision-making authority: Decision-making authority is explicitly shared among all participants, with agencies holding no exclusive authority.
36	SHINDLER & NEBURKA (1997)	- Representative, committed groups with balance and fairness - Promoting interaction, rather than simple information sharing and feedback - Clear roles and goals - Active involvement of the decisionmaker - Reliable information - "Care and feeding" of participants; - Learning the intent behind each other's positions - Distinguishing the local issue from larger national concerns
37	STEELMAN & ASCHER (1997)	Directness of democracy - Representation Degree of openness - Rulemaking authority: restored to public, partially delegated to public or retained by agency - Potential for information input Legitimacy of decision - Risk of decision being rejected as illegitimate - Decision rules: transparent or opaque ID [37] continues on the next page

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
37	STEELMAN & ASCHER (1997)	Technical competency in decision - Potential for manipulation of information presented to public - Potential for public and experts to exchange information - Potential for compromise: room for expression of alternative options and incentive to compromise Timeliness of decision - Potential for uncertainty
38	WEBLER (1995)	- Fairness: (1) attendance at the event; (2) initiation of different types of speech acts; (3) participation in debate for and against validity claim redemption; (4) participation in the group resolution of disputes over claims. - Competence: (1) assess to knowledge and interpretations; (2) implementation of the best procedures for resolving disputes about knowledge and interpretations.
39	LAIRD (1993)	Democratic benchmarks – Category 1: Pluralism - Number of groups: Participation mechanism should bring more groups into a policy process than were there before. - Opportunity for learning: Participatory mechanism should provide some means for group learning. - Access to officials: Groups must have some form of access to relevant officials. - Means of coercion: Groups must have some influence over officials. Democratic benchmarks – Category 2: Direct participation - Number of individuals: A mechanisms that brings more people into the process as individuals gets a positive evaluation. - Improved understanding: Citizens must be given information and analysis that are genuinely educative. - Resources for participation: Participation programs must make some effort at blunting the effects of resource inequality (e.g. information, salaries, subsidies). - Delegating authority: Participants must actually have some authority to codetermine decisions.

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
40	WIEDEMANN & FEMERS (1993)	Conflict management as an approach for improving public participation - Empowerment: (1) access to information; (2) transfer of technical competence to the public (e.g. support the public in choosing its own experts); (3) compensation for time and effort; (4) the right to participate in decision making. - A good decision: (1) Transparency: Are outsiders clear about the objectives and activities of the task force?; (2) Equal access to relevant information for all parties; (3) Open-mindedness: Are the parties willing to reconsider their initial positions as a result of developments in the decision-making process?; (4) Unconditional right of all stakeholders to make their concerns hear; (5) Actual power: Does every party have more than a token role in the decision-making process?; (6) Distributional justice: Are risks, benefits and costs distributed equally?; (7) Sensitivity: Have health risks, environmental impacts, and economic and social consequences been considered?; (8) Suitability: Is the final decision appropriate to the original problem?; (9) Practicality: Is implementation realistic? is the decision politically acceptable? Have resource constraints been considered?; (10) Openness to re-evaluation, further consideration and improvement; (11) Impartiality: Does the decision avoid giving undue weight to one particular interest? - Commitment: The final decision must be actively supported by both insiders (the members of the task force) and outsiders (those not involved in the decision making).
41	FIORINO (1990)	Democratic process benchmarks - Direct/amateurs: Allow for the direct participation of amateurs (citizens) in decisions. - Share authority: The extent to which citizens are enabled to share in collective decision making. - Discussion: The degree to which a mechanism provides a structure for face-to-face discussion over a period of time. - Basis of equality: Citizens are offered the opportunity to participate on some basis of equality with administrative officials and technical experts.
42	BLAHNA & YONTS-SHEPARD (1989)	- Obtain input early in planning - Involve public throughout planning process - Obtain representative input - Use personal and interactive methods - Use input in development and evaluation of alternatives

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
43	CROSBY, KELLY & SCHAEFER (1986)	- Participant selection: Participants represent the broader community. - Effective decision making: The way the decision was structured for citizens and the way processes performed within the structure (e.g. accurate information, sufficient time, agenda must be planned). - Fair procedures - Cost-effectiveness - Flexibility: Participation method should be adaptable to a number of different tasks and settings. - Recommendations should be followed: Citizen participation process should have a high probability of being heeded by appropriate public officials.
44	BERRY, PORTNEY, BABLITCH & MAHONEY (1984)	- Representativeness of participants - Responsiveness of agency to policy demands of participants
45	GUNDRY & HEBERLEIN (1984)	- Participants should be representative. - Opinions should be representative. - Variance in opinions should be representative.
46	MACNAIR, CALDWELL & POLLANE (1983)	- Frequency of meetings - Allocated resources - Access to higher authority - Involvement in decision-making process - Intended role of citizens - Selection of independent membership
47	ESOGBUE & AHIPO (1982)	- Level of public influence on decisions: (1) the degree of participation of the participants; (2) the level of impact of public on decisions; (3) the degree of representativeness of participants of interest - Degree of performance of the adopted plan: (1) the value of the adopted plan with regard to the goals and objectives of the planning process; (2) the level of environmental impacts of the adopted or recommended plan - Citizen attitude: (1) the level of overall satisfaction of the public participants with the planning process; (2) the level of frustration over the recommended or adopted plan of the public participants

Table 23. (continued)

ID	Source	Benchmarks
48	ROSENER (1982)	- Influence: The degree to which citizens who participated influenced the outcomes.
49	SEWELL & PHILLIPS (1979)	- Degree of citizen involvement, in terms of both numbers of people and degree of individual commitment. - Degree of equity achieved: The extent to which all potential opinions and values were heard. - Efficiency of participation: The amount of time, personnel and other agency resources required to reach a given decision.
50	HEBERLEIN (1976)	- The individuals involved should be representative of all groups affected. - The individuals involved should be well informed, with knowledge of implications and alternatives. - The method should be interactive (i.e. action, response, reaction). - Where possible, input should be based on actual experience and behaviour.

F. RELEVANT MUNICIPAL REPORTS

This appendix provides a list of the 13 municipal evaluation studies on public participation considered in this research, including a brief overview of the benchmarks discussed in each municipal report.

Table 24. Overview of municipal evaluation reports on public participation

Municipality	Source	Benchmarks
Alkmaar	KESSENS & CORNIPS (2008)	- The government should be responsive, which means that interests and preferences are carefully weighed against one another. On this basis, a decision is taken and communicated. - The participation effort should achieve the intended objectives: improved quality of policy, a more widely supported decision, and an improved relationship between government and citizens. - A participatory programme should result in satisfaction among citizens. - The sponsor of a public participation exercise should be clear about the process, participants' roles, level of participation, and consequences of the participation activity. - The public participation process should be systematic and structured.
Almere	MUNICIPALITY OF ALMERE (2010)	- A participatory effort should build support for the final decision, which implies that the final plan is seen as legitimate. - Public participation should result in the creation of a high-quality plan. - The decision-making process should be cost- and time-efficient. It should result in a lower risk of political or legal rejection. - The participation process should result in the development of social networks where citizens and organisations meet one another and learn to cooperate.

Table 24. (continued)

Municipality	Source	Benchmarks
Amstelveen	VAN DE PEPPEL ET AL. (2009)	- The participation activity should result in better municipal plans through the inclusion of expertise and local knowledge and the generation of new ideas/solutions. - Public participation practices should result in broader support for local decisions, thereby reducing or eliminating subsequent judicial challenges. - Public participation should build mutual understanding and a greater understanding of the decisions made. - Sponsors of participatory programmes should manage expectations: citizens should not be disappointed by having have less input than promised and/or expected. - Decisions made as a result of public participation are based on consensus.
Bernheze	CABRERA (2017)	- Public participation should result in better policy and improved substantive quality. - Public participation should result in increased support for decisions. The process should be transparent and the sponsor should communicate how participant input affects the final decision. - Public participation should result in faster processes and reduce subsequent judicial challenges. - Sponsors of participatory practices should be responsive to the needs and wishes of citizens. - Participatory efforts should encourage civic duties, such as being responsible. - Policy-makers should learn how to engage with local knowledge. - Participatory efforts should strengthen relationships between government and citizens (e.g., mutual understanding).

Table 24. (continued)

Municipality	Source	Benchmarks
Boxtel	COURT OF AUDITORS BOXTEL (2015)	- The process should be evaluated on an ongoing basis (transparency). - Wide publicity should be given to the participation exercise so that all parties have the chance to participate (equal accessibility). - The process should be transparent and clear. - The process should be unbiased (impartiality). The government seeks solutions through dialogue with the local community. - The decision-making process should be accessible. All parties should be able to voice their views and ideas. - Participants should be involved as early in the process as possible. - All participants should have some influence over the decision-making process. - Sponsors of the public participation activity should manage expectations, as the final decision may differ from citizens' expectations. Regular feedback can solve this issue. - The process should be efficient in terms of time. Drawn-out processes are undesirable.
Enschede	SCHILDER ET AL. (2017)	- Citizens should be satisfied with the process and results. - Public participation should result in support for decisions. - The decision-making process should be of sufficient quality, which means that (1) the process is efficient in terms of time and (2) the participants should comprise a broadly representative sample of the affected population. - Local knowledge is deployed. Policies should be informed by the best local knowledge available. - The process makes optimal use of resources (financial, human).
Helmond	MUNICIPALITY OF HELMOND (2007)	- A public participation activity should provide more clarity for citizens, resulting in mutual understanding. - A participatory effort increases the influence of citizens in the establishment and development of a policy. - A public participation exercise involves the (direct) optimum involvement of citizens in public affairs (the execution of municipal duties).
Heumen	DE VIJLDER, KEIJSERS & KIGGEN (2016)	- Public participation should increase mutual trust among participants. - Public participation should improve the substantive quality of policy. - A public participation task should build support for policy (enhance legitimacy).

Table 24. (continued)

Municipality	Source	Benchmarks
Nieuwegein	STICHTING DECENTRAAL BESTUUR.NL (2015)	- Public participation should improve the quality of policy. A participatory effort should make the best possible use of the expertise and insights of citizens. - Public participation should build support and contribute to the reinforcement of cooperation (relationships) or the democratic process. - For participants, it is important that they have a 'real' input, meaning that they can influence the final decision.
Nijmegen	COURT OF AUDITORS NIJMEGEN (2011)	- There should be fair and open (transparent) communication in the development of plans and policy, preferably in an open dialogue; thereby offering participants a fair opportunity to influence the final decision. - Effectiveness: the participatory effort should enrich local policies. - Efficiency: the process should use as few resources as needed. - The process should be carried out in accordance with the regulations and laws in force. The final policy should be workable. - Interests and preferences are carefully weighed against one another. - Public participation should result in satisfaction among citizens and entrepreneurs.
Rheden	COURT OF AUDITORS RHEDEN (2011)	- Public participation should result in a plan that corresponds to the wishes and expectations of citizens. - A participatory exercise should minimise resistance, because it only hampers and prolongs decision-making. - The process should be efficient in terms of time. - All should have the opportunity to express their opinions. - Interested parties should be able to add information, thereby improving the substantive quality of municipal plans. - Public participation should result in mutual understanding. Citizens should understand the choices made by the government.
Velsen	MUNICIPALITY OF VELSEN (2012)	- Successful public participation demonstrates optimised interaction between citizens and policy-makers.

Table 24. (continued)

Municipality	Source	Benchmarks
Weert	MUNICIPALITY OF WEERT (2011)	- Participatory efforts should use local knowledge/expertise to achieve better policies. - Public participation should build support for policy. - Public participation should improve the relationship between government and citizens, companies, social institutions, and organisations.

G. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND GUIDE FOR THE INTERVIEWER

Interviewee:
Interviewer:
Date:
Time:

Interview (in Dutch)

Introduction

Bedankt dat u een bijdrage wilt leveren aan dit onderzoek. Zoals vermeld toen ik contact met u opnam, heeft mijn onderzoek het volgende hoofddoel: het ontwikkelen van een framework om burgerparticipatie te evalueren. Met dit framework hoop ik te kunnen voldoen aan de vraag naar een handleiding om burgerparticipatieprojecten te evalueren of op te zetten, en om een weloverwegen keuze te kunnen maken tussen verschillende participatiemethoden. Met behulp van dit interview probeer ik vast te stellen aan welke criteria een burgerparticipatieproject moet voldoen om als succesvol beschouwd te worden vanuit het **perspectief van de beleidsmaker**. Daarom vraag ik tijdens dit interview naar uw persoonlijke mening over burgerparticipatie. Het interview zal ongeveer 1 uur duren.

First series of questions: background of the respondent[5]

1. Kunt u wat meer vertellen over …..? Bijvoorbeeld: Wanneer is het ontstaan, en met welke reden? Wat houdt het precies in? En wat proberen jullie er precies mee te bereiken?
2. Wat is uw rol in de gemeente ….. en meer specifiek binnen ….?
3. In welke mate is er sprake van burgerparticipatie in de gemeente ….? En hoe is dit in de loop der jaren veranderd? Kunt u enkele voorbeelden noemen uit de praktijk waaruit dit blijkt?

[5] The first series of questions are respondent-specific. This is an example. However, key words were removed to safeguard full anonymity.

Second series of questions: successful public participation

4. Aan welke **criteria** moet voldaan worden om een participatieproject als succesvol te zien?
5. Wat zijn naar uw mening de **einddoelen** van burgerparticipatie? Wat verstaat u precies onder deze doelen? En wat is ervoor nodig om deze einddoelen re realiseren?
6. In hoeverre is het van belang dat een participatieproject **democratisch** is? Wat verstaat u precies onder een democratisch participatieproces? En wat is ervoor nodig om dit te realiseren?
7. Wilt u reageren op de volgende stelling:
   "Het is voor beleidsmakers belangrijk dat een participatieproject **efficiënt** is met betrekking tot zowel tijd en als geld."
8. Wilt u reageren op de volgende stelling:
   "Het belangrijkste is dat burgerparticipatie uiteindelijk tot **tevredenheid** zorgt onder inwoners."
9. In hoeverre is het van belang dat burgerparticipatie **gebruiksvriendelijk** is? Wat verstaat u precies onder een gebruiksvriendelijk participatieproces? En wat is hier allemaal voor nodig?

Third series of questions: framework for evaluating public participation

I present the framework developed in my research and ask for feedback:

10. Bent u het eens met de inhoud van het framework?
11. Bent u van mening dat enkele criteria/factoren uit het framework verwijderd moeten worden?
12. Bent u van mening dat er enkele criteria/factoren ontbreken die juist aan het framework toegevoegd zouden moeten worden?
13. Vindt u dat bepaalde aspecten van het framework overlappen? Zo ja, welke?
14. Bent u het eens met de relaties (links) tussen de verschillende variabelen in het framework?
15. Denkt u dat het framework nuttig kan zijn bij het evalueren of opzetten van een participatieproject, en bij het maken van een weloverwogen keuze tussen verschillende participatietechnieken? Waarom wel/niet? Wat is er goed aan het framework? Wat kan er beter?

Other comments

Heeft u nog verdere vragen/opmerkingen over dit onderzoek? Wilt u nog onderwerpen bespreken die niet aan bod zijn gekomen tijdens het interview, maar waarvan u denkt dat deze wel interessant zijn voor mijn onderzoek?

Warm down: Bedankt voor uw tijd, enthousiasme en input. Als u nog aanvullende gedachten heeft in de komende dagen, kunt u vanzelfsprekend nog contact met mij opnemen. U kunt eind februari het eindrapport van dit onderzoek verwachten.

H. ACADEMIC ARTICLE

The Development of a Multi-Level Benchmark Framework for Evaluating Public Participation

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Abstract / The growing call for public participation in the context of the energy transition has been accompanied by an upswing in the number of studies evaluating participatory practices. While this is essentially a positive, and even necessary, development in our understanding of what makes good public participation, the practical usability of the existing frameworks for evaluating public participation is insufficient to meet demand. This paper aims to fill this gap by developing a multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation in line with policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches. On the basis of a conceptual and an empirical investigation, five categories of successful public participation were identified: intended outcomes, resource minimisation, democracy, citizen satisfaction, and ease of participation. These five comprise the highest-level elements of the developed framework. The research concludes with some avenues for further research on public participation.

Keywords / public participation • evaluation • energy transition

1. Introduction

The Dutch energy system must undergo fundamental change in the coming decades. The Paris Agreement on climate change has set a target of limiting the global temperature increase well below 2 °C, with a goal of limiting it even further to 1.5 °C (e.g., International Energy Agency, 2017; Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2017). This requires a radical reduction of fossil fuel use in The Netherlands. One of the largest challenges is to provide sustainable heating for the seven million houses and one million buildings that are usually heated with natural gas and are not very well insulated. A major obstacle to this is that the government cannot currently force citizens to change their private heating systems. This means that the active participation of the people is critical to the success of the energy transition.

The growing call for greater citizen involvement in the context of the energy transition has been accompanied by an upswing in the number of studies evaluating participatory practices. While this is essentially a positive, and even necessary, development in our understanding of what makes good public participation, the practical usability of the existing frameworks for evaluating public participation is insufficient to meet demand. Most evaluative frameworks (e.g., Brown & Chin, 2013; Mannarini & Talò, 2013; Stephens & Berner, 2011) contain merely a list of individual evaluation benchmarks, thereby limiting the comprehension and relative importance of each (Becker, 2004). However, these frameworks do not specify how these evaluation benchmarks are interrelated, which are the most important (and in which cases), and which are of lesser relevance. As a consequence, practitioners and policy-makers often have difficulty using these evaluative frameworks.

In an attempt to remedy this issue, Esogbue and Ahipo (1982) employ a multi-level benchmark framework (better known as a tree-like structure) to quantify and measure the success of public participation in water resources planning (Figure 1). They argue that several benchmarks for evaluating public participation are interconnected and thus can be 'reduced' to a few core examples, meaning those at the highest level of their framework. These core benchmarks can be assessed by directly descendant factors, which in turn are further broken down into a number of more detailed indicators (Esogbue & Ahipo, 1982).

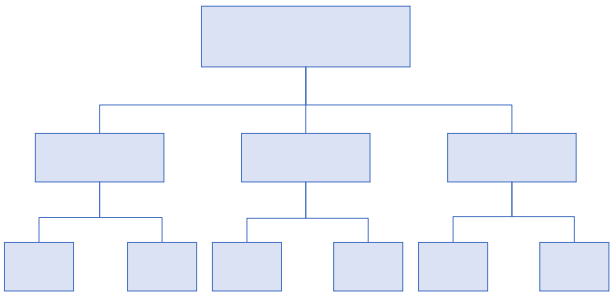

Figure 1. A multi-level benchmark framework

Although the approach of Esogbue and Ahipo (1982) to assessing the success of public participation can be valuable guidance for evaluating public participation, this evaluative framework has rarely been used in practice. This can be explained in part by the fact that their proposed framework is limited. First, they omit a substantial number of relevant evaluation benchmarks. Second, their model is not supported by any substantiating information or evidence, such as scientific literature or stakeholder perspectives. Despite its potential, however, no improved multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation is known to exist.

This study responds to the need for a multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation. Here, it is important to note, as underscored by Webler, Tuler and Krueger (2001), that the requirements of 'good' public participation may vary per stakeholder. Consequently, it is not possible to develop an evaluative framework in line with the (sometimes conflicting) demands of all stakeholders. In the field of public participation, policy-makers are an important – if not the most important – actor. After all, it is they who decide to launch or evaluate a participatory programme and who must choose between different participation methods when planning a public participation exercise. Hence, the objective of this study is to develop a multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation in line with policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches.

This remainder of this paper is organised as follows. Section 2 deals with the research methodology. Section 3 presents the results of this study. The validity of the findings is discussed in Section 4. Finally, Section 5 addresses the conclusions and limitations of this study and details policy recommendations and topics that may be considered for future research.

2. Methodology

For a reasonably comprehensive list of benchmarks with which to evaluate public participation, which may be of great relevance to policy-makers, an extensive literature review of international scientific publications was undertaken. The scientific studies used in this systematic literature review were extracted from the academic database ISI Web of Knowledge. An initial search for English-language scientific publications, up to 12 November 2018, was conducted, using the keywords 'public' or 'citizen' along with 'involvement' or 'consultation' or 'engagement' or 'participation', in combination with 'assessment' or 'evaluation'. Subsequently, both backward and forward snowballing was used to develop a more comprehensive list of scientific documents that address benchmarks for evaluating public participation. This left me with fifty relevant academic studies on the evaluation of public participation.

Content analysis was used to analyse the relevant scientific studies and arrange the evaluation benchmarks obtained from the academic literature in a multi-level benchmark framework. This is a structured approach to studying textual material in a replicable and systematic way, which may be helpful for reducing researcher bias. In this method, pieces of text are compressed into various categories (so-called 'codes'), using coding rules. In general, content analysis begins with a theory specified a priori as starting point for initial codes (Weber, 1990). Therefore, I began the analysis with some initial codes (categories of evaluation benchmarks), which were based on the work of Brown and Chin (2013) and Blackstock, Kelly and Horsey (2007). These studies each contain an extensive list of possible benchmarks for evaluation, drawn from the literature. Meaningful statements were coded when they concerned benchmarks for evaluating public participation or links between evaluation benchmarks.

To ensure that the final evaluative framework is in line with policy-maker perspectives of public participation, the findings of the conceptual investigation were validated on the basis of an empirical investigation. As I had no a priori expectations of policy-maker perceptions regarding public participation, I began by conducting a literature search for Dutch municipal evaluation studies on public participation. In total, thirteen relevant municipal reports were retrieved. The evaluation benchmarks identified in these studies were then aligned with the benchmarks

obtained from the academic literature. It could be checked whether those identified in the scientific literature include those relevant to policy-makers. There was no reason to carry out a systematic literature review because the primary objective of this research step was to develop some initial hypotheses about where considerable (dis)agreement may exist between policy-maker perspectives of public participation and the academic literature. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews with policy-makers were conducted to validate these findings, and potentially, to identify relevant evaluation benchmarks too sensitive to discuss in reports.

In total, six semi-structured interviews of approximately 60 minutes each were conducted with a variety of policy-makers. Only those closely concerned with public participation were selected, as their knowledge and experience of public participation were deemed likely to enhance both the quality of the interview and the validity of the findings. The interviews were conducted in person and on a confidential basis, and all were recorded with the respondents' permission. Soon after the interview, the audio material was summarised to compare with the findings of the scientific studies and municipal evaluation reports considered in this study. Table 1 provides more information about the six respondents.

Table 1. Overview of interviewees

Respondent 1	Municipal official concerned with the fostering of quality of life, safety, and social commitment
Respondent 2	Project manager of a local workgroup on public participation
Respondent 3	Municipal clerk who had provided several local workshops on public participation
Respondent 4	Project manager responsible for a national pilot on digital participation tools
Respondent 5	Programme manager responsible for a local pilot on new forms of cooperation between citizens and the municipality
Respondent 6	Chairman of a local political group that was against far-reaching public participation in a recent public decision-making process

3. Results

An examination of the academic literature suggests that intended outcomes, resource minimisation, democracy, citizen satisfaction, and ease of participation should be considered in the evaluation of any participatory effort. The following sections present sub-benchmarks related to public participation in these five categories of successful public participation. Figure 2 provides the number of scientific publications considered in this study (from a total of 50) that recognise sub-benchmarks related to each category.

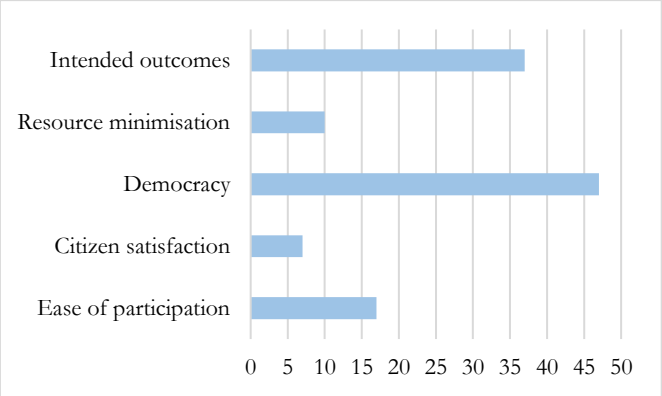

Figure 2. Number of occurrences in scientific publications

3.1. Intended outcomes

Participatory efforts should achieve their intended objectives or outcomes. Through examination of a large number of studies, I conclude that most objectives can be grouped into three categories: (1) making better quality decisions, (2) enhancing political legitimacy, and (3) building capacity.

Whether the quality of decisions (addressed in 20% of the scientific studies considered in this research) saw genuine improvement is difficult to measure in practice. Ideally, a participation initiative should result in a decision that is more cost-effective (Beierle & Cayford, 2002), more suitable (Wiedemann & Femers, 1993), more consistent with existing laws and policies (Conley & Moote, 2003), and more socially and politically acceptable (McCool & Guthrie, 2001; Wiedemann & Femers, 1993) than the decision that would have been implemented without a participation process. Unfortunately, measurement of this seems to be impossible. However, two attributes may be used as indicators of improved quality, as they

are likely to enhance the quality of the final policy: whether the participants add new information to the decision-making process that is not otherwise available, and whether they generate innovative ideas or creative solutions for solving problems (Beierle & Cayford, 2002; National Research Council, 2008).

A second key objective of participatory initiatives is to ensure that governmental decisions and plans are more readily supported and accepted (even among non-participants), referred to as political legitimacy. This goal is a target of 30% of the scientific studies considered in this paper. Two benchmarks for evaluation may be used as indicators of enhanced political legitimacy: first, the final decision is based on consensus, and second, there are little or no conflicts or, more notably, lawsuits brought against the decision (National Research Council, 2008).

The third and final goal of public participation is to strengthen capacity to benefit future governmental actions and maintain participation over time (mentioned in 16% of the publications). The term 'capacity building', as used in this paper, includes both learning and network components. This is in line with a work of Blackstock et al. (2007), in which capacity building is defined as the development of relationships and skills to enable participants to take part in future processes. The studies examined in this research identify five types of relationships – both among participants and between participants and sponsors (usually governmental agencies): trust (e.g., Blackstock et al., 2007; Webler et al., 2001), respect (e.g., Webler et al., 2001), mutual understanding (e.g., Beierle & Koniscky, 2000; Webler et al., 2001), shared vision (e.g., Moote, McClaran & Chickering, 1997), and collaboration (e.g., Blackstock et al., 2007; Edwards, Hindmarsh, Mercer & Bond, 2008; Mannarini & Talò, 2013). In particular, trust and mutual understanding are common topics, addressed in 34% and 32% of the studies, respectively. Turning to the individual level, capacity building involves an educative function. In general, three main categories of education can be identified. First, there may be learning by those involved regarding the substance of the topic or policy issue discussed as a consequence of the participatory exercise (e.g., Guston, 1999). Second, citizens may become more competent at effective participation, increasing their civic skills and becoming better able to engage the best available knowledge and information (e.g., National Research Council, 2008). Third, public involvement activities may encourage civic virtues and civic duties, such as active participation in public life, responsibility and a sense of ownership, trustworthiness, and reciprocity (giving and taking). Participatory efforts may even change individual values and behaviour (e.g., Blackstock et al., 2007; Guston, 1999).

3.2. Resource minimisation

This category of benchmarks concerns issues related to the resource efficiency of public participation (addressed in 20% of the studies). Two aspects of efficiency were a focus of the studies examined in this research: time and cost.

Most attention is paid to the cost of the participatory procedure. Stephens and Berner (2011) – in a study based on a work of Lach and Hixson (1996) – make a clear distinction between direct and indirect costs to measure the effectiveness of any public engagement activity. Direct costs include the cost of resources, such as staff labour reimbursement, time, facilities and services, materials, and expert consultation fees. Indirect costs involve participants' time, opportunity costs, costs associated with authority and influence, and costs related to emotional issues (Stephens & Berner, 2011).

Conversely, time receives scant attention in the literature. Of the 50 publications considered in this research, only three invoke the time required to issue a final decision as a relevant benchmark for evaluating public participation. Nonetheless, Coglianese (1997) concludes that saving time to develop policy is important for governmental agencies. Although public participation demands a considerable amount of time upfront, this researcher argues that governments save time during the decision-making process (as well as afterwards) by avoiding judicial challenges, as a result of involving the public.

3.3. Democracy

Citizen involvement can be seen as attempt to improve democracy by bridging the gap between citizens and the government (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2000; National Research Council, 2008; Rowe & Frewer, 2000). More than that, participatory democrats argue that citizen involvement is vital to democracy. In their view, the delegation of decision-making

authority to the government reflects citizens' alienation from governments (Michels & De Graaf, 2017). However, there is a question of how public participation can enhance democracy and what constitutes democratic public involvement activity.

Arnstein (1969) provides a starting point to answer this question. She argues that participatory practices are a substantial element of direct democracy as they promote fair decision-making efforts that entail power-sharing between federal agencies and citizens. Webler et al. (2001) and Laurian and Shaw (2009) argue that public participation processes should realise the democratic principle of fairness. Thus, fairness seems to be an important feature of democracy. Here, what is relevant, according to Lauber and Knuth (1999), is that (1) the sponsor is impartial during the process, (2) citizens have an equal possibility to access the process, (3) all important opinions and backgrounds are adequately represented during the process, (4) citizens have an equal opportunity to put forward their views during the process, and (5) citizen input has a genuine impact on policy. These five aspects of fairness are frequently recognised in the literature. In particular, influence and representation, both in terms of backgrounds (geographic, demographic, political) and opinions, seem to be highly important in democracy. More than 50% of the studies surveyed in this research give attention to these benchmarks.

Another important feature of fair participation programmes is that public agencies must make some effort to limit resource inequality (Laird, 1993). All participants should have access to resources to enable them to successfully achieve their objectives. The well-known resources include information (included in 20% of the studies), time to run the exercise (14%) and human resources (12%). Many note the importance of the information provided to participants being of sufficient quality. This means that information should be comprehensible (Brown & Chin, 2013), digestible in terms of quantity (Abelson et al., 2003), and adequate (Blackstock et al., 2007). In addition, governments should offer suitable facilities and materials to meet the needs of the participation process (Rowe et al., 2004; Rowe & Frewer, 2000). Furthermore, there should be sufficient finance available (Laird, 1993; Rowe et al., 2004; Wiedemann & Femers, 1993).

A link not explicitly addressed in public participation evaluation studies, but presented in this paper, is the connection between social justice and fairness. Social justice (noted in 12% of the studies) refers to the distribution of benefits and costs associated with the outcomes of a decision. These benefits and costs should be distributed equally (Wiedemann & Femers, 1993). Moreover, the outcomes should not harm the interests of the most disenfranchised (Laurian & Shaw, 2009) or the interest of actors who are not participating in the process (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2000).

Four further sub-benchmarks related to democracy were identified in the academic literature. First, democratic public involvement activities should contribute to the inclusion of citizens in the policy process. This means that participatory efforts should allow all individuals to express their ideas, views, and demands on government. For example, Laurian and Shaw (2009) argues that a democratic process should be inclusive, whilst Laird (1993) concludes that participatory democracy should bring more divergent people and groups into a policy process than were previously present.

Another function of public participation in democracy is educative. Some researchers (e.g., Laird, 1993) underscore that participation practices are schools for democracy which provide some means of group learning. Learning is thus not only a way of strengthening capacity for future cooperation (as explained in Section 3.1), but it is also a vital element of democracy.

Third, deliberative democrats have argued that the essence of democracy is deliberation (discussed in 34% of the studies); that is, the discussion in which individuals justify their opinions, exchange reasons for and against propositions, and show themselves willing to change their preferences (Abelson et al., 2003). For example, Fiorino (1990) highlights that a key democratic benchmark is the degree to which a participatory mechanism provides a structure for face-to-face discussion over a period of time.

The final feature of a democratic public participation exercise is transparency. As is argued by many democrats (e.g., Laurian & Shaw, 2009), participatory democracy should promote transparent decision-making processes. Policy-makers should communicate at least (1) the final outcome of the public participation activity, (2) how decisions are made, (3) how citizen

input influences the final decision, and (4) that feedback on public participation has been provided or that feedback is planned (Bickerstaff & Walker, 2001).

3.4. Citizen satisfaction

Brown and Chin (2013, p. 566) write, 'Good public participation should result in high satisfaction amongst participants.' Of the 50 scientific publications examined in this thesis, only seven introduce citizen satisfaction with process and outcomes as a benchmark for evaluation. Nonetheless, the pursuit of overall satisfaction amongst participants should be an important ideal, not least because public authorities have a responsibility to satisfy citizens. Moreover, happy people are more likely to make positive contributions to society. For example, Guven (2009) found that happy citizens participate more frequently in public activities, perform more volunteer work, are more attached to their neighbourhood, extend more help to others, and have a greater respect for law and order.

Although citizen satisfaction is considered a separate category in this research, we should not forget that satisfaction is strongly related to other evaluation benchmarks. The findings of Brown and Chin (2013) suggest that, in particular, political legitimacy, quality of decisions, representation (inclusiveness), participants' ability to influence policy, and trust in government are closely related to overall satisfaction with the participation exercise. However, citizens can be satisfied with a participatory exercise, even when it is not perfect.

3.5. Ease of participation

Comfort and convenience, structured process, and clarity are cohesive as a category describing the ease of participation. This category of successful public participation has often been overlooked in the academic literature, but is more important than one might expect at first glance. Moro (2005) notes that public participation is a complex and sometimes exhausting task for citizens. To resolve or at least alleviate this problem, public participation mechanisms should be as user-friendly as possible.

Regarding digital participation tools, comfort and convenience mainly involve the general ease-of-use (simplicity) of the ICT system, as illustrated in the work of Loukis and Xenakis (2008). Non-technical aspects are included among the participatory mechanisms which require face-to-face discussion. For example, Shindler and Neburka (1997) note that simple 'care and feeding' strategies, such as providing snacks and drinks at meetings, are usually strongly appreciated.

The evaluative framework employed by Rowe et al. (2004) is a starting point for defining what is meant by a structured process. According to this, relevant sub-benchmarks under a structured process are operational management (whether the exercise is well organised and managed on a practical level), procedures/rules (the appropriateness of the decision-making or discussion procedures for the discussion/exercise and the participants), flexibility (the flexibility and adaptability of the exercise), and consistency (the consistency of the decisions and conclusions). Moreover, Edwards et al. (2008) argue that a structured decision-making process should be thoroughly documented.

The third feature of ease of participation is clarity. Here again, the framework proposed by Rowe et al. (2004) provides a basis for defining what is meant by clarity. In their view, clarity is required on the overall aims and outputs (what sponsors wish to achieve with the participatory programme), scope/participant roles (the role participants have in the exercise, how the citizen input will be used), context/room for decision (citizens' room for making decisions, what can and cannot be influenced by participants), and rationale for choosing a particular type of exercise. In particular, clarity of aims and outputs is a common sub-theme in the academic literature, with 14% of the studies acknowledging this.

4. Validation

The municipal evaluation reports on public participation suggest that that all five categories of successful public participation obtained from the academic literature (intended outcomes, resource minimisation, democracy, citizen satisfaction, and ease of participation) are considered important by policy-makers. In particular, intended outcomes and democracy are commonly recognised markers of success in the municipal reports surveyed in this study, as summarised and depicted in Figure 3. This is in line with the academic literature on the evaluation of public participation.

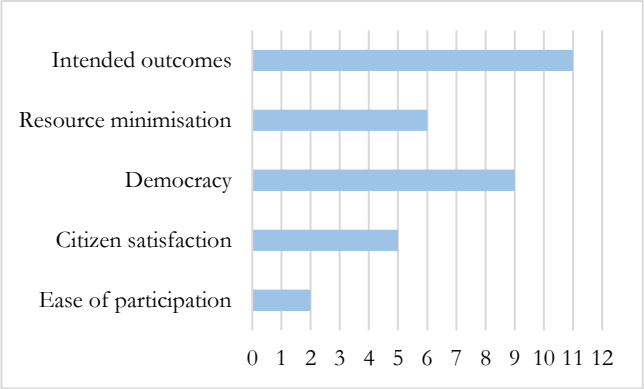

Figure 3. Number of occurrences in municipal reports

The five different categories of successful public participation were also identified by the six interviewees in this study. Many participants stated that citizen participation increases the likelihood of citizens developing a sense of ownership regarding the issues that are at stake, as highlighted by the following quote:

> 'Creating ownership is the key objective of public participation. It is not only the problem of the municipality, but also the problem of citizens. Together, we are responsible for what the city looks like. New democracy requires a new role for citizens as well' (Respondent 5).

Furthermore, it is striking that almost all respondents noted the key role of clarity. For example, one interviewee underscored that providing clarity on the space for decision-making is important:

> 'What can be influenced by citizens and what cannot?" The room for making decisions must be clearly defined' (Respondent 2).

Another interviewee, for example, argued that sponsors should provide clarity with regard to participant roles:

> 'We should clearly express to our citizens how and when they have influence and what kind of influence this is. It must be clear what happens with their input, what their influence is, and who takes the final decision' (Respondent 5).

Although the municipal reports and semi-structured interviews validate most inferences drawn from the content analysis of the scientific publications, the results of the empirical investigation suggest that two relevant sub-benchmarks should be added to the final framework so that it aligns with policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches. First, it was found that policy-makers attach a high value to 'careful weighing', which means that the interests and preferences of stakeholders are carefully weighed against one another. For example, one respondent stated,

> 'The majority should not always win. Arguments should be carefully weighed against one another' (Respondent 1).

Another respondent commented,

> 'In a good participation process, people feel and understand that there are different and sometimes conflicting interests. These interests should be weighed against one another in a clear and transparent way' (Respondent 2).

Second, the interviews with policy-makers reveal that sponsors, usually governments, should provide clarity with regard to the wider issue. For example, one respondent mentioned,

> 'What is the issue we would like to discuss with the public? The problem should be clear before we can define the room for making decisions'
> (Respondent 4).

Another interviewee noted,

> 'An important aspect is the question: what is the actual dilemma? We should better clarify the real problem. Too often, we focus merely on the solution or a single plan. By focusing more on the dilemma, participants become aware of the sometimes-painful trade-offs that have to be made' (Respondent 5).

The interviewees also provided several worthwhile suggestions for the design of the framework. On the basis of the feedback received from the respondents, it can be concluded that it would be helpful to present the upper evaluation benchmarks in a single picture and to include a separate detailed checklist for each

category of successful public participation. For example, one interviewee noted,

> 'I would like to see the most important variables in a single picture, as this would help me to structure my thinking in a straightforward and user-friendly manner' (Respondent 1).

Another respondent mentioned,

> 'Using this framework suggests that the only actual evaluation that needs to be made is the evaluation of the benchmarks at the lowest level of the framework. Why don't you present them in a checklist?' (Respondent 6).

Based on the above and taking into account the inferences drawn from the conceptual and empirical investigation, a framework for evaluating public participation tailored to policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches is developed. This framework visualises the upper evaluation benchmarks in one picture, structuring thinking in a simple and well-organised manner (Figure 4), whilst also providing a detailed checklist for each category to be utilised as practical guidelines (Tables 2 to 6).

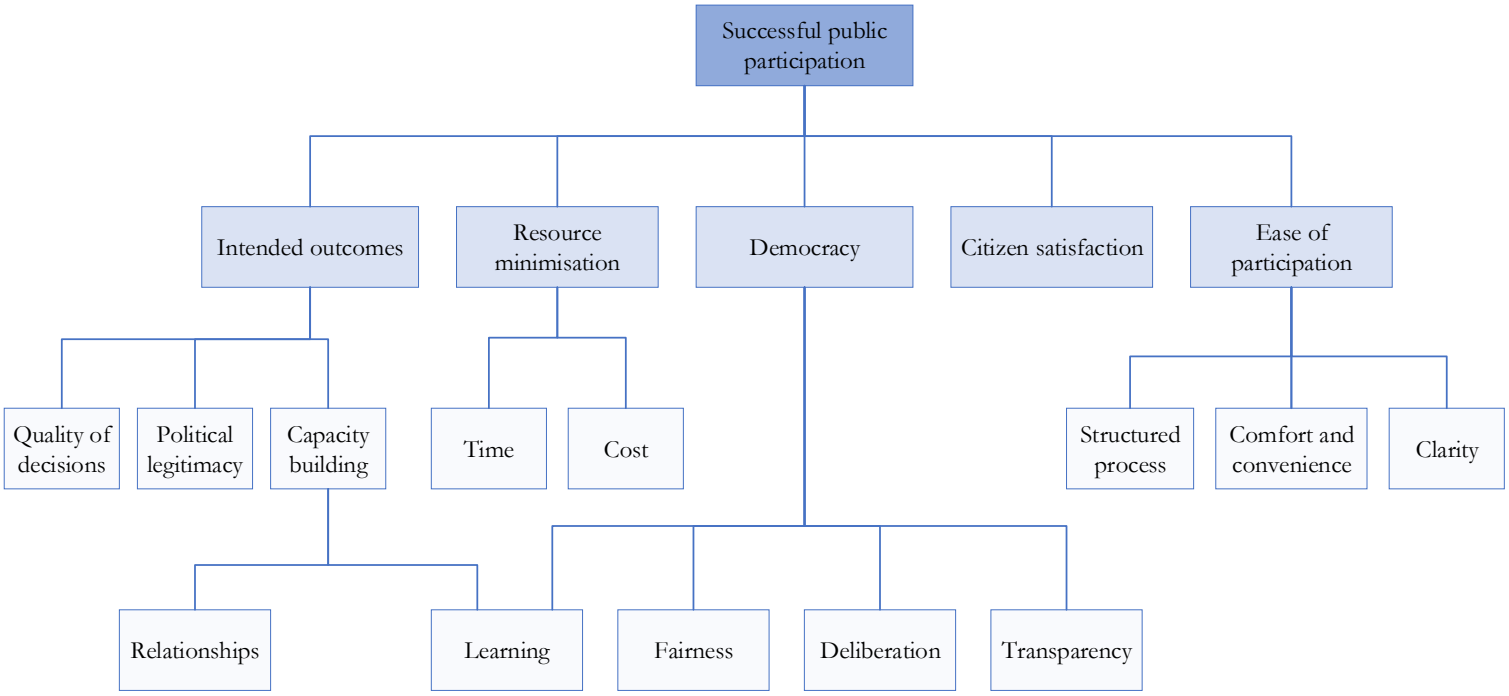

Figure 4. An evaluative framework in line with policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches

Table 2. Checklist resource minimisation

Benchmark	Description
Cost	
Direct costs	The participatory programme minimises the direct cost of the procedure, including costs of resources such as staff labour reimbursement, time, facilities and services, materials, and consultation fees for experts.
Indirect cost	The participatory programme minimises the indirect cost of the procedure, including time on the part of the participants, opportunity costs, costs associated with authority and influence, and costs related to emotional issues.
Time	The participatory programme minimises the time required to issue a final decision.

Table 3. Checklist intended outcomes

Benchmark	Description
Quality of decisions	
Added information	The participants add information to the process that is not otherwise available.
New ideas	The participants generate innovative ideas or creative solutions for solving problems.
Political legitimacy	
Consensus	The final decision is based on consensus.
Conflict resolution	There are little or no conflicts and, more notably, lawsuits brought against the decision.
Relationships	
Respect	Sponsors and participants are respectful of each other.
Shared vision	The participatory programme results in agreed and clearly defined vision(s) and goals.
Trust	The participatory programme increases trust among participants and fosters trust in the sponsor.
Collaboration	The participatory programme contributes to an increase in collaboration between stakeholders.
Mutual understanding	The participatory programme builds mutual understanding between stakeholders and results in a deeper understanding of others' positions.
Learning	
Content (topic)	As a consequence of the participatory programme, there is learning by all those involved regarding the topic or policy issue discussed.
Civic skills (process)	As a consequence of the participatory programme, citizens become more competent at effective participation, increasing their civic skills and becoming better able to engage the best available knowledge and information.
Civic virtues (duties)	The participatory programme encourages civic virtues and duties, such as active participation in public life, responsibility and a sense of ownership, trustworthiness and reciprocity (giving and taking).

Table 4. Checklist ease of participation

Benchmark	Description
Structured process	
Operational management	The participatory programme is well-organised and managed on a practical level.
Procedures/rules	The decision-making or discussion procedures used are appropriate for the exercise and the participants.
Flexibility	The participatory programme is flexible and adaptable, as necessary.
Consistency	The decisions made or conclusions drawn are consistent.
Documentation	The process is documented thoroughly.
Comfort and convenience	The participatory programme is comfortable and convenient.
Clarity	
Aims and outputs	The overall aims and outputs of the participatory programme are clear and appropriate.
Dilemma	The issue or dilemma that is at stake is clear.
Participant roles	The role of participants is clear. It is clear what happens with participant input, what participants' influence is, and who takes the final decision.
Room for decision	Participants' room for making decisions is clear. It is clear what can be influenced by participants and what cannot.
Rationale	The rationale for choosing this particular type of participatory programme is clear and appropriate.

Table 5. Checklist citizen satisfaction

Benchmark	Description
Citizen satisfaction	The participatory programme results in high satisfaction amongst participants.

Table 6. Checklist democracy

Benchmark	Description
Learning	
Content (topic)	As a consequence of the participatory programme, there is learning by all those involved regarding the topic or policy issue discussed.
Civic skills (process)	As a consequence of the participatory programme, citizens become more competent at effective participation and increasing their civic skills and becoming better able to engage the best available knowledge and information.
Civic virtues (duties)	The participatory programme encourages civic virtues and duties, such as active participation in public life, responsibility and a sense of ownership, trustworthiness and reciprocity (giving and taking).
Fairness	
Equal accessibility	The decision-making process is open to actors who viewed themselves as stakeholders. All actors have an equal opportunity to access the process.
Equal voice	Participants are given equal opportunities to provide their opinions during the process.
Resource accessibility	Participants have access to adequate resources (time, material and facilities, people, finance, information) to enable them to successfully achieve their objectives. Besides, the information provided to participants is adequate, comprehensible, and digestible.
Social justice	Risks, benefits, and costs are distributed fairly. The final decision does not harm specific groups, such as non-participants or the most disenfranchised.
Influence	Participants have a significant degree of influence (control/authority) on policy. To facilitate this, participants are involved as early as possible in the process.
Representation (inclusiveness)	All relevant opinions and backgrounds are adequately represented during the process. Every reasonable effort is made to involve divergent views, needs, concerns, and values.
Impartiality	The participatory programme is conducted in an independent, unbiased way. The process is not steered towards a particular stance and the sponsor is impartial during the process.
Careful weighing	The final decision is taken on the basis of 'careful weighing', which means that interests and preferences of stakeholders are carefully weighed against one another.
Deliberation	There is a substantial degree of discussion (interaction, dialogue, information exchange) in which participants justify their opinions, and show willingness to change their preferences.
Transparency	
Decision	The sponsor communicates the final outcome (decision) of the participatory programme.
Analysis	The sponsor communicates how and why decisions are made.
Influence	The sponsor communicates how citizen input influenced the final decision.
Evaluation	Feedback on the participatory programme has been provided or is planned.

5. Conclusion and discussion

This study aimed to develop a multi-level benchmark framework for evaluating public participation in line with policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches. This was being done by conducting both a conceptual and an empirical investigation. The developed framework responds to the need for a practical guideline for evaluating participatory approaches. Moreover, it can be used by practitioners as guidance for structuring their thinking about public participation; for example, when determining how participation approaches can be modified in line with policy-makers' demands for public participation or which participation techniques work best for particular needs. In this respect, the framework can help practitioners to derive specific actions or policy measures regarding the evaluation, design, and selection of public participation approaches.

Despite its potential, I would like to underscore that the framework described in this research should not be treated as a universal or complete format for evaluating public participation. Multiple evaluation benchmarks are suggested in the framework, but given the diverse nature of public participation, not all of these are appropriate for every participation exercise. Hence, I advise practitioners and policy-makers to use the framework in a flexible way; meaning that evaluation benchmarks can be removed, adapted, or even added, depending on the nature of the participation approach. The developed framework can be used as a starting point for structuring thinking about public participation.

5.1. Limitations of this study

A general limitation of interview-based research is that it cannot be entirely from bias. Nonetheless, I believe that the findings of this study are only minimally affected by interview bias, as I took several preventive actions to minimise this. Firstly, it is important to select respondents with the knowledge and experience required to ensure valid and valuable results (Parida, 2006). For this reason, only policy-makers who are closely concerned with public participation were selected for this research. Secondly, the respondents' statements may have been affected by the manner in which the questions were asked. To mitigate this risk, I began each part of the interview with the most important question.

Another limitation is that the interviewees and municipal reports primarily reflect the perspectives of local policy-makers. Five respondents interviewed for this study are closely concerned with local public participation initiatives. By contrast, only one project manager responsible for a national pilot on digital participation tools was willing to be interviewed. Although I hypothesise that the opinions and attitudes of national policy-makers are unlikely to deviate from those of the people operating at a local level, it is not possible to generalise the findings of this research to national policy-makers. Hence, further research on the perceptions of national policy-makers is recommended, not least because the results of this study reveal that policy-makers may have some conflicting demands.

Finally, the content analysis method was used to analyse the academic literature on the evaluation of public participation. Although I coded each scientific publication twice, the reliability of the coding cannot be guaranteed. To rectify this, an independent coder could be called upon to process some of the relevant articles using content analysis.

5.2. Further research

The framework developed in this research aligns with policy-makers' demands for participatory approaches. Next to policy-makers, citizens are arguably the most important stakeholder in the field of public participation, as they are the ones who are to be engaged. Hence, it might be useful to develop an evaluative framework in line with citizens' demands for public participation.

Second, various respondents in this study suggested (often indirectly) a direction for future research. For example, one respondent stated:

> 'Is the topic well-suited for discussion in a public participation exercise? It would be nice if we could determine this prior to the development of a participatory programme. Ideally, there should be an instrument, a kind of thermometer, to determine whether people want to participate, and who exactly they are' (Respondent 2).

Whilst this paper enhances our understanding of what makes good public participation, the findings of this research cannot help us tackle this question of when citizens should be engaged. This research area receives scant attention in the academic literature. Hence, it seems worthwhile to investigate which areas and issues lend themselves best to public participation, thereby saving time and money.

Third, the framework developed in this research could be further extended and improved. At the moment, the framework is not (yet) a fully developed evaluation tool. Some of the evaluation benchmarks cannot easily be measured in practice. For example, it is hard to measure whether all relevant opinions and backgrounds are adequately represented during the process. Moreover, the developed framework does not include clear metrics for each benchmark. It currently requires that policy-makers come up with their own way of evaluation, implying that an evaluation would be based on the subjective opinion of the evaluator. Therefore, future work would involve developing detailed indicators for the framework.

Finally, multiple case studies of different public participation techniques could be conducted to make use of the developed framework. Linking the evaluation benchmarks in this framework to the characteristics of different participation methods could provide conclusions on the merits of each participation method. These findings, especially if validated by future studies, would help practitioners to choose the most appropriate combination of participation mechanisms to achieve a set of different objectives. Another advantage of this kind of

research is that the developed framework will further be tested in practice.

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