

The influence of young adult stayers' participation on the future liveability in depopulating rural areas

Case study: Dutch municipality 'Het Hogeland'

Paulien Mensinga

S3148483

Master Cultural Geography
Faculty of Spatial Sciences
University of Groningen

Prof. dr. Tialda Haartsen

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Abstract

Leaving rural areas as a young adult for jobs or educational opportunities is a trend that has been researched over the last few years. However, some young adults deliberately decide to stay in the village or municipality they grew up in. Them staying and participating in their village community could influence the future liveability of village communities but this topic has been less researched. Therefore, this master thesis has focused on young adult stayers instead of leavers using a qualitative research approach in Het Hogeland, a depopulating Dutch municipality. This thesis looks at the perception young adults have on the liveability in their village community, how they participate, what motivates and influences them to participate and how they think their level of participation contributes to the (future) liveability. The results show that young adults value social aspects more than services and facilities when defining liveability. All young adults appreciate the current liveability in the village community they live in and they all plan on staying in the village or municipality in the long term. Furthermore, the young adults mentioned various motives for participating like being satisfied with the current liveability of the village and feeling responsible for its future. They also mentioned influences on the extent to participate such as emotional interest and social capital which have an impact on their level of participation. Overall, the young adults do believe that their way of participation contributes to the (future) liveability of Het Hogeland.

Keywords: population decline, rural stayers, liveability, participation, social capital.

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1. Introduction

According to Leidelmeijer (2012): “Living in an environment that meets your requirements and needs as much as possible is important for almost everyone.” Therefore, governments are interested in keeping rural villages liveable (Leidelmeijer, 2012). Liveability thus entails the degree to which the physical and the social living environments fit the individual requirements and needs (Gieling & Haartsen, 2017). Besides governments, inhabitants have a role in keeping a village liveable as well. Participation in the village community is then crucial since people who participate tend to be more positive about their environment than people who do not participate (Bernard, 2015). Participating can be done in various ways. According to Leidelmeijer (2012), citizens can start to participate when problems, such as disagreements between citizens about projects or the closure of services and facilities, need to be solved. Another way to participate is by staying in touch with neighbours, organising activities (of all kinds), and being a member of an organisation, sports club, committee or board. Being a volunteer is also a way to participate in which people choose to contribute to the liveability of the village on a voluntary basis.

There has been an interest in the phenomenon participation for the last decades. There are different variations of the concept, such as active citizenship, vital society or participation society, which are all embraced by the Dutch political establishment (de Haan, 2014; Tonkens, 2015). Participation means that citizens can be in control of their own faith and do not have to rely on the state. The political establishment wants to give the Dutch citizens their responsibility and encouragement to engage in the local liveability. This can, especially in depopulating areas, be seen as beneficial to the local community because the local community can address citizen initiatives which can boost local policy. These citizen initiatives are thus led by the citizens with the support of the government (Ubels et al. 2020). But there are risks to a participation society as well. High educated citizens, who have social capital, are more capable to take part in the participation society than citizens with less social capital, which leads to a bigger division in society (de Haan, 2014). The idea that every citizen is and can be involved in our participation society is not as easy as the government thought it would be (Kusiak, 2019).

It is interesting to look at how young adults can boost improvements in their livelihoods through participation (Trivelli & Morel, 2020). They are in the transition to adulthood and have certain views and expectations of what their future will look like, which could influence the liveability of villages (Severson & Collins, 2020). Besides, their ideas could be more innovative than the ideas of others,

because young adults have an inventive mind on what they would like to see in their future village community (Trivelli & Morel, 2020).

This study, therefore, focuses on young adult stayers in depopulating rural areas and their perceptions on liveability. This will be done by obtaining an insight into how young adults participate in their village community by looking at their motives and influences. Young adults, due to the life stage they are in, could have a certain renewing view on how they perceive liveability. They might look at liveability different than people in older age categories. Keeping these ideas in mind, the following research question has been developed:

“How do young adult stayers participate in their village community and how does that relate to their perceptions of a liveable future community?”

This research will, as mentioned earlier, focus on the motives and influences behind participation and on how participation impacts liveability in depopulating rural villages. Therefore, the following sub questions are created:

1. How do young adults perceive a liveable village?
2. What motivates young adults to participate in a village community?
3. What influences the extent to which young adults participate?
4. To what extent do young adult stayers think their participation contributes to a liveable village?

This thesis aims to explore how the presence and absence of motives and influences impact the abilities and opportunities of young adults to participate in their village community. The next chapter elaborates on existing literature about depopulating rural areas, young adult stayers in these areas, liveability, participation, and the motives and influences that have an impact on their participation. After that, the case study will be explained, collectively with the methods and ethical considerations in the methodology section. Consecutively, the results will be analysed to find an answer to the research questions. In the conclusion the findings and literature will be discussed along with suggestions for future research.

2. Literature review

This literature review starts with showing the theoretical framework, which explains the different elements and concepts that will be discussed in the following chapters.

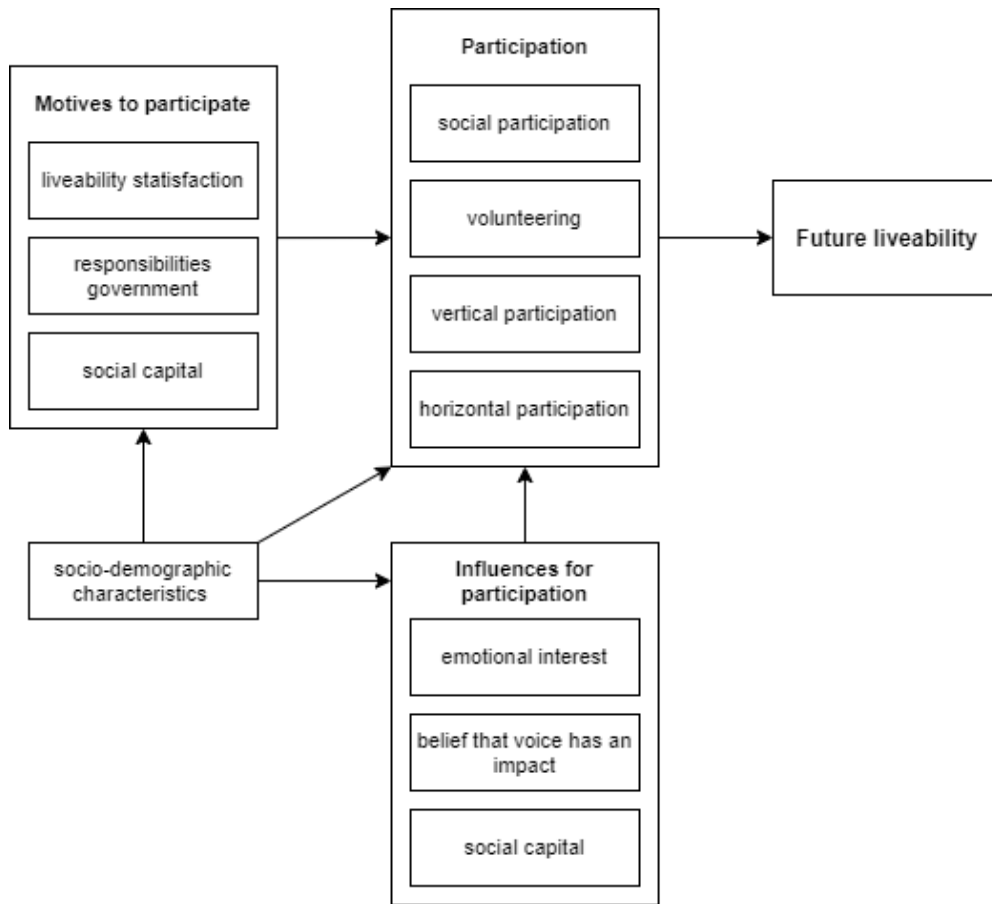


Figure 1: theoretical framework

The main focus of the theoretical framework is participation and how this has an impact on the future liveability of a rural village. This framework will be further explained in the next paragraphs. The next section will first start with an explanation of depopulation and rural stayers since this will contribute to the context after which the focus will be on participation.

2.1 Depopulating rural areas

In Europe, population decline is a trend on both national and regional levels. Eastern Europe appears to be dealing with national population decline, while there are various rural regional areas in western Europe also dealing with a declining population (Elshof et al. 2014). According to Bontje and Musterd (2012), reasons for these trends in population decline can be low birth rates and a greying population on the national level, next to rural-urban migration or a mismatch in the housing market on the regional level. The effects of population decline are often seen as negative since it leads to a decline in services and social infrastructure. Important to keep in mind is that there are differences between and within countries, and therefore Europe has to deal with a variation in population decline experiences (Elshof et al. 2014).

As mentioned before, there are various regional areas in western Europe dealing with a declining population. Within the Netherlands, there is a total of nine depopulating regional areas. These are the areas with a declining population. Other areas are growing in population or are anticipating for future decline (Rijksoverheid, 2021). The north of the Netherlands is, within the Netherlands, considered as the most rural area. This is based on the perceptions people have and on the population density, which is relatively low. Within this rural area, regions differ from each other. There is a distinction between the central and southern parts of the area, where the population is growing, and the northern and eastern parts of the area, where the population is declining (Elshof et al. 2014). The main reason for population decline in the Netherlands is a low fertility level. Due to this, internal migration is the only factor deciding whether a region has a growing or declining population. When looking into internal migration, rural-urban migration seems to be a trend (Bontje & Musterd, 2012). The rural-urban migrants tend to move to the city to find jobs or for educational purposes. Their moving to the city is not entirely compensated by people moving to the rural areas. Urban regions, therefore, tend to grow, while some rural regions are shrinking (Elshof et al. 2014).

An important aspect of this rural population decline is selective migration. Young adults are more likely to move to the city because of jobs or educational opportunities than people with children or the elderly. Brain drain might then be a consequence for the rural areas since high educated young adults leave while lower-educated young adults stay (Elshof et al. 2014; Haartsen & Venhorst, 2009).

Besides a possible brain drain, there are more consequences of population decline for local governments and communities, especially in the long term. Population decline entails lower levels of investment, empty houses and buildings, the closing of schools, facilities and services which all leads to a diminishing liveability (Meijer & Sysner, 2017). This could then have a negative impact on regional development which worries policy-makers. Policy-makers are therefore exploring strategies to tackle

the negative impacts of population decline. Collective action, undertaken by local communities, is one of these strategies (Haartsen & Venhorst, 2009; Meijer & Syssner, 2017).

Local communities are directly and indirectly affected by population decline. The direct effect is that the size and composition of the local community changes. An indirect effect is that more tasks need to be done by the citizens since the government is cutting back their services (Meijer & Syssner, 2017). This is where collective action and non-governmental actors, like citizens come into play, resulting in more informal planning practices. Citizens seem to plan more spontaneous and unregulated with the help of the networks they have and their everyday interactions. These informal planning practices are increasing in depopulating rural areas to keep the communities liveable (Meijer & Syssner, 2017).

2.2 Young adults

As mentioned previously, young adults tend to leave rural areas to move to the city. This trend originated mainly from the fact that young adults are in the transition to adulthood. This life-course stage is generally understood as the time between 18 and 30 years of age. During these years many transitions take place, for example enrolling in higher education, starting a job, leaving the parental home, starting a union and having children. These transitions come with variability because the transition to adulthood is not standard and predictable (Severson & Collins, 2020). Since young adults are at the beginning of their careers, those who stay can be of great importance for rural regions. They invest in, and work on their social capital, which can be beneficial for a rural region moving forward (Elshof et al. 2014). Young adults can therefore be a rural asset since they too could have a strong sense of belonging to rural areas (Stockdale et al. 2017).

2.3 Rural stayers

Besides looking at young adults leaving rural areas there has been more attention to research on why people stay instead of leave. Especially in depopulating areas, it could be of interest to seek information on those who stay because stayers can be beneficial for the quality of their future rural life. This is why this research will focus on young adults who decide to stay and on how their decision impacts their rural community.

According to Farrugia (2016), rural young adults who decide to stay refers to the mobility imperative for rural youth which indicates that rural young people are not able to access the same resources in the rural part of the country as they would in the city. Therefore, young rural people have to develop some sort of relationship with cities for work or study opportunities. Young people who do not decide to leave are sometimes perceived as failures because success is based on having the resources to be

mobile. Immobility is thus often seen as something negative because people tend to see those who stay as individuals who did not succeed in leaving (Stockdale & Haartsen, 2017).

But this idea neglects the fact that there might be people who deliberately decide to stay. According to Stockdale and Haartsen (2017): “Those who stay are not passive observers of their own fates.” This links to the immobility perspective in which stayers are active participants and staying is an active process. According to the immobility perspective, a stayer can not only be defined as someone who is born and raised and never moved out of the area. The whole process of staying and the perceptions that come with it are also important to look into (Stockdale & Haartsen, 2017).

Staying does not have to be something that accidentally happened, some people deliberately decided to stay as well. Those who make a committed decision to stay have an optimistic sight on their future. Their decision to stay is therefore based on many different aspects in the past and present (Kuhmonen et al. 2016; Bjarnason & Thorlindsson, 2006). To accomplish this, personal preferences and opportunities which the region has to offer are crucial. There is a constant interplay between personal preferences and considerations which both make the process of staying dynamic (Kuhmonen et al. 2016).

According to Bjarnason and Thorlindsson (2006), young adults decide to stay based on certain events in their own lives and in the lives of their family members as well. Some of them choose to live with their parents for a while. Others choose to leave the parental home but still stay nearby because of the connection they have with their family. Young adults are often seen as those who leave and are highly mobile, even in a rural setting, but many seem to stay. And the longer someone stays the more likely it will be that they become even more attached to the place they are living in.

2.4 Liveability

There is not one universal definition of liveability (Lloyd et al. 2016; Leidelmeijer & van Kamp, 2003). According to Leidelmeijer & van Kamp (2003), the definition of liveability is a combination of how people perceive and value their daily living environments and how this fits their requirements and needs. But since requirements and needs can change over time, the way people perceive liveability differs which thus results in different perceptions of liveability.

According to Gieling & Haartsen (2017), the liveability of rural areas could be influenced by active citizenship since people would like to keep their village liveable in the future. People might therefore be willing to participate in various aspects of village life. By looking into village liveability, one should not only look at the physical aspects, like availability of services and facilities but more at the social

aspects, like maintaining these services and facilities to make it possible for people to meet and interact with each other.

There is thus a difference between physical and social liveability. While the physical component of liveability might focus on infrastructure, housing, public services and transportation, the social component focuses on health, social cohesion, community and social interaction (Lloyd et al. 2016). These components, however, are very complex and sensitive to change, which makes defining liveable communities very subjective. For a while, interventions in the physical space have been a focus of governments for improving the liveability of communities. But communities are not only a physical place, they are based on social relations and interactions as well. These interactions are seen as a forerunner of social connection. Creating opportunities to socially connect are therefore key in increasing the liveability of communities. Increasing social interaction can be done through participation in the community. Considering the social dimension is thus important for the future liveability of communities (Lloyd et al. 2016). This research will focus on the both the physical and the social side of liveability.

When a village has a good level of liveability, residents seem to be more involved in the village (Leidelmeijer, 2012). This also works the other way around. In villages where the liveability level is relatively low, residents tend to participate less. Therefore, how people participate in the village they live in could have an impact on the liveability of that village.

The government has a role in keeping rural areas liveable, they focus on maintaining public space and public order. However, not only the government is important for liveability, citizens are crucial as well (Lloyd et al. 2016). They live in the village and make use of its services and facilities. They decide whether or not the physical and social living environment fit their requirements and desires.

2.5 Participation in rural communities

Liveability is important for almost everyone, since living in a place where certain requirements and desires of life are met is beneficial to an individual's degree of satisfaction. Not only governments, but inhabitants as well, have a role in keeping an area liveable. Participating in a village is therefore crucial. It creates trust among those who do participate and others who reap the benefits (Leidelmeijer, 2012). Besides, according to Bernard (2015), people who participate tend to be more positive about their environment than people who do not.

In relation to improving the liveability of Dutch communities, there have been developments in which the power of the people has come into prominence. Lately, municipalities are focusing on making citizens responsible for the choices they make instead of just involving them in the decision making

process. This can be translated into the participation ladder created by Edelenbos and Monnikhof (2001). The design of their participation ladder consists of five levels: informing, consulting, advising, coproducing, and decision-making where each step leads to a higher participation level. Giving the citizens the responsibility of decision-making means that the highest level of this participation ladder is reached.

According to Leidelmeijer (2012), there are four forms of ways to participate: social participation, volunteering, vertical participation, and horizontal participation. Both vertical and horizontal participation focus on solving problems between citizens and authorities or between citizens themselves. Social participation involves staying in touch with neighbours, organising activities (of all kinds), and being a member of an organisation, sports club, committee, board and so on. Lastly, volunteering involves being a volunteer in the community which can also be seen as a part of social participation. Within this research social participation and volunteering is what will be looked into because the focus will not be on using participation as a way to solve problems but on looking at the social dimensions of participation.

2.5.1. Motives and influences for participation

When it comes to the level of participation it is useful to look into the motives and influences that affect participation. According to Ubels et al. (2020) there are several motives that play a role in whether people tend to participate. First of all, the level of satisfaction people have with the liveability in the community. On the one hand, people might not participate when they are already satisfied with their living environment. While on the other hand, dissatisfaction can lead to an increase in participation. Another motive is the perception people have on the responsibility governments have in ensuring the liveability in a community. People tend to participate less when they consider it the role of governments to enhance the liveability. The third and final motive is social capital. Once people have the feeling that participating in a village community can benefit the development of their social capital it turns into a motive for participation (Meijer & Sysner, 2017). This links with the sense of social belonging that motivates people to participate. Once people are socially embedded they have more information about collective wishes in the community.

The motives to participate are in their turn influenced by socio-demographic characteristics like age, gender, education, household composition and employment (Ubels et al. 2020; Van Noije, 2016). When looking at age, people in the age range of 30-65 seem to participate more than the young and the elderly. Furthermore, there seems to be no big differences between men and women since they both tend to participate in their own way. The level of education also plays a part in participation, those who are highly educated tend to participate more than those with a lower education, due to

their social capital (Leidelmeijer, 2012; Van Noije, 2016). Households with young children or unemployed individuals tend to participate less (Ubels, 2020).

Besides focusing on what motivates people to participate, there are also some influences which affect the level of participation. The first influence is emotional interest. When people have a certain emotional interest in what happens in the village they live in, they are also more likely to participate (Bolt & ter Maat, 2005). Emotional interest is important for those who want to participate because it gives a feeling of stability and trust (Van Noije, 2016). When looking into emotional interest as an influence that affects participation, it is useful to look at how intrinsic motivation fuels this interest. On the one hand, having an interest in what happens in a villages leads to a certain willingness to participate. On the other hand, people could also be unwilling to participate. Therefore, whether or not people participate is not only due to influences or motivations but also to the absence or presence of intrinsic motivation (Ubels et al. 2020). Secondly, having the feeling that their voice has an impact on decision-making also influences an individuals' level of participation. When people have the belief that their participation might contribute to improving liveability, they tend to participate because citizens living in depopulating areas can feel a strong responsibility for the local community. They therefore wish to have a say in the decision-making for the sake of the local community (Meijer & Sysner, 2017). The third influence is social capital. People who have connections and a social network in the village they live in are capable to use their social capital to participate while people who lack social capital are not sure how to enter the participating community. The absence or presence of social capital can then influence the level of participation (Leidelmeijer, 2012). Social capital among young adults is thus a motive and an influence and will be further explained in the next section.

2.6 Social capital of young adult stayers

According to Leidelmeijer (2012), those who have more social capital are more inclined to participate in the village they live in. Social capital: “refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.” (Putnam, 2000). Social capital can thus be seen as an overarching and multidimensional concept. According to Lee et al. (2010), there are three dimensions that could be looked in to: the structural, relational and cognitive dimensions. The structural dimension refers to ties between individuals and the networks that come with it. The relational dimension focuses on personal assets, like trust. The cognitive dimension looks into the shared values people have. In relation to participation, having more social ties, trust and shared values initiate a bigger change to participate in a village (Leidelmeijer, 2012).

Lately, the interest in informal planning has been increasing in which the focus of planning practice shifts to a more unregulated and spontaneous way of planning. Governments are therefore stimulating citizens to participate in their local community since the informal planning practices can be performed by different actors. Social capital is important in this matter because citizens need personal contacts and networks to make this happen. Besides, communities that show a low level of social capital have a risk of becoming underdeveloped (Meijer & Syssner, 2017).

When it comes to young adult stayers, social capital is not a given. It is an asset of stayers, but newcomers are usually richer in social capital. Besides, social capital among young adults differs from social capital among adults. For young adults, networks and contact with other young adults and feeling a connectedness with friends is most important since they find it easier to communicate with peers (Onyx et al., 2005). There are three elements important for developing social capital: opportunity, motivation and ability. Young adults need to form a network of ties that will create opportunities for developing social capital. They must then be motivated to use these ties and have to be willing to participate with those ties. Thirdly, young adults need the ability to perform activities. Following these steps then leads to a development in someone's social capital. The elements opportunity and ability are especially decreasing in depopulating areas which leads to a lower level of social capital. This could make it more difficult for young adults to participate while their motivation is there (Meijer & Syssner, 2017).

3. Methodology

3.1 Study area: Municipality Het Hogeland

Dutch municipality Het Hogeland is one of the nine listed depopulating areas in the Netherlands, which means that the municipality has to deal with a declining population. Het Hogeland is situated in the north of the Netherlands and borders the Wadden Sea (figure 2). The municipality recently merged in January 2019 when old municipalities De Marne, Winsum, Bedum and Eemmond decided to start working together. Because of this merge, the municipality is revising their vision for the future. The municipality is currently working on a project called 'De Kop op 't Hogeland'. This project combines six different themes which together need to improve the (future) liveability of the area in which it is important that the identity of the municipality and its inhabitants remains. The six themes are: future economic activity, culture and heritage, living on mounds, taking care of each other, local connections and life-long development. The municipality wants the inhabitants to participate in these projects since it is their view and voice that will be translated into plans for the future. The role of the inhabitants could then be to attend project meetings during which they can give their opinion. This research could be a relevant contribution for the municipality since they want to focus on including young adults in

the participation but they do not yet know how they participate and what their wishes for the future are. The municipality could then benefit from the results in realising what young adults want. Since participation is an important aspect of the project municipality Het Hogeland makes a suitable case study for this research (Het Hogeland, 2020).

The municipality consists of 45 villages with populations that range from below 100 to over 5000 inhabitants (Het Hogeland, 2020). By selecting villages for this research it was useful to look at the number of inhabitants in each village to make a decision. Villages with over 5000 inhabitants were considered too large for this research since an individual’s level of participation might not have that much influence on the liveability of the village because social services are organised top-down which could make the decision for citizens to not participate easier (Trautman, 2016). Therefore the decision is made to look at villages between 1000 and 2000 inhabitants. After contacting the municipality, to discuss which villages they are interested in, the four villages that were chosen to be researched are Baflo, Kloosterburen, Sauwerd, and Zoutkamp (figure 2).



Figure 2: selected villages, municipality Het Hogeland (source: maps.google.nl)

3.2 Method

To answer the research question “How do young adult stayers participate in their village community and how does that relate to their perceptions of a liveable future community?” a qualitative research method is most appropriate to use. Using qualitative methods is relevant for this research because of the ability to focus on an individual’s experience and future expectations in their participation in the village they live in and the motivations and influences behind their level of participation (Winchester & Rofe, 2016).

3.2.1 Semi-structured in-depth interviews

To collect data, online semi-structured interviews were organised to gain access to information about the opinions and experiences young adults have with participation in a village community. The decision to organise online interviews was made due to the restrictive measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as a way to collect data due to the opportunity of flexible questioning. Besides, the informal tone of semi-structured interviews is needed to keep an open conversation in which respondents feel free to open up about personal opinions and experiences (Dunn, 2016).

An interview guide was made, which covers a list of questions that were asked during the interviews. Besides, the interview guide was a reminder of the general issues that were going to be discussed. The interview guide was flexible in the sense that follow-up questions could arise during the interview (Dunn, 2016). The interview questions are included in appendix A.

The questions in the interview guide were based on the theory and conceptual model. There were thus four categories important for the interview guide: socio-demographic characteristics, the motives and influences for participation, the level of participation and liveability. The interview guide was made while keeping these themes in mind.

3.2.2. Participant selection

For the selection of the young adult participants, the target group had to be residing in one of the four mentioned chosen villages in municipality Het Hogeland. Apart from being a current resident in these villages, the resident needs to have grown up in the same area as well, since the focus is on rural stayers. There is thus a focus on regional stayers instead of village stayers because the participants do not have to be born and raised in the village they live in now. The research will look into rural stayers in the municipality Het Hogeland, which is why the decision to focus on regional stayers is made. The participants needed to be between 18 and 30 years old.

Finding the participants was, first of all, done via Facebook. I posted a general message on Facebook which people could share and reply to. Since I am a young adult from municipality Het Hogeland myself my connections on Facebook could be of help in finding participants. When not many participants replied, I decided to send a personal message to people I knew in one of the villages, asking if they could provide me with names. They replied and helped me find participants. Once a participant was selected, snowball sampling was used. This means that participants can recommend others who might be interested (Stratford & Bradshaw, 2016).

During April, twelve interviews were conducted with young adults in Baflo, Kloosterburen, Sauwerd, and Zoutkamp. Within each of the four villages, three interviews were done to get the total of twelve. The decision to choose three inhabitants per village was made to create a fair share between the villages while keeping it manageable for me as a researcher to analyse the interviews. However, data collection showed that there were no clear differences between the young adults living in different villages. Therefore, and also to guarantee the participants' anonymity, the decision to not further mention these villages in the following sections is made. Due to the COVID-19 situation, all interviews were organised via Google Meet. Using Google Meet gave me as researcher the possibility to safely store the interviews on the RUG google drive. Table 1 provides an overview of the participants, their age and gender. There is no 50/50 balance between male and female because more females responded to the Facebook message. However, each village has at least, one male respondent.

Participant pseudonym	Age	Gender
Mark	27	Male
Emma	23	Female
Julia	24	Female
Dennis	21	Male
Kim	24	Female
Anouk	24	Female
Frank	25	Male
Kyra	19	Female
Lisa	24	Female
Bas	22	Male
Stef	23	Male
Eva	25	Female

Table 1: overview participants

3.3 Data analysis

The data collection was done via semi-structured in-depth interviews. Each of these interviews was recorded with Google Meet since the interviews were online. The recordings were then used to create transcripts which could be used for coding and analysing. The findings of the interviews are discussed in the following chapter.

As mentioned, after the interviews were done they had to be transcribed. According to Dunn (2016), transcribing is very time-consuming but should also be done as soon as possible after the interview.

Therefore, the transcript were, mostly, made after each interview before the next interview took place. Furthermore, the transcript had to be coded. Coding has three main purposes: reducing, organising, and analysing the data (Cope, 2016). Code trees were made based on the themes in the interview guide. These themes could then be analysed to create answers to the research questions.

3.4 Research ethics

3.4.1. Ethical considerations

According to Dowling (2016), the researcher must inform the participants about the length of the interview, what the content of the interview is and what will be done with the obtained data. Therefore, an informed consent was created via which the participants could give permission to involve them in the research (see appendix B). The informed consent includes an outline of what the research is about, what kind of issues and topics would be explored, and matters of privacy. The possibility to quit at any time during the interview is also communicated with the participants. This informed consent is discussed with the participants beforehand. The participant also received an information letter, appendix C, explaining what the interview and study was about. Besides, recording the interview was discussed. During the interviews, participants gave personal answers about their feelings and experiences which is why the privacy of the participants had to be guaranteed. One way of ensuring the anonymity of the participants is using pseudonyms in the research. Since the given information is private and personal, confidentiality should be accorded. This means that the researcher has the responsibility to make thoughtful decisions on which information should and should not be reported. The participants put their trust in me when they give me their information which is why confidentiality needs to be protected (Vanclay et al., 2013).

The recordings and collected data are stored on the laptop and google drive of the researcher which is only accessible by the researcher.

3.4.2. Positionality

Since municipality Het Hogeland is the area I grew up in myself, I already had some relevant background information and personal experiences about what it is like to grow up in a rural village in Het Hogeland. According to Winchester and Rofe (2016), a researchers personal background can have an influence on the objectivity of the research. Critical reflexivity was thus needed to stay objective and to not let my subjectivity and experiences influence the research process. I did this by constantly analysing my situation and whether or not this influenced the obtained data.

4. Analysis

This chapter provides an overview of the data collection results and the analysis. These outcomes are then compared with the theory. The first thing that will be discussed is whether young adults want to stay or leave municipality Het Hogeland. Secondly, there will be looked into how young adults perceive liveability and what they consider important for the future liveability in the village they live in. Thirdly, the motives and influences for young adults to participate will be explained. Finally, the way in which young adults' participation contributes to the liveability will be discussed.

4.1 Stay or leave?

As mentioned before, municipality Het Hogeland has a declining population. Young adults in particular are more likely to leave because of job or educational opportunities in the cities (Elshof et al., 2014). Their leaving has consequences for the municipality in terms of an impact on the liveability in the village community. However, there are also young adults who deliberately decide to stay. When looking into whether the young adults in Het Hogeland plan on staying or leaving, it is useful to first take a look at where they grew up. Data collection shows that there are eight young adults who grew up in the village they still live in, and thus lived in the village their whole life. Seven of these eight village stayers still live with their parents, while one of them, Mark, made the deliberate decision to move out because he felt it was time to become more independent. He did however decide to stay in the same village:

When I decided to move out the parental home I knew that I preferred staying here. This village is where I feel most comfortable and at home, why leave when I am happy where I am (Mark).

Besides those eight village stayers, there were also four young adults who did make the decision to leave their village of upbringing when moving out of the parental home. They did however move to another village in municipality Het Hogeland, mainly because of staying close to friends and family, and are therefore regional stayers.

When the respondents were asked if they see themselves stay in the village they are currently living in, the majority of them mentioned they plan on staying. The four young adults who already live on their own all want to stay. Kim is one of these young adults and she mentioned that she is happy now and that she and her boyfriend love the house they are currently living in. They therefore see no reason to leave the village.

The seven young adults who still live with their parents were more divided on the decision to stay or leave. Three of them want to leave the village, two want to stay, and two are not sure yet whether

they want to stay or leave, since it will probably depend if they can find a job. One of the respondents, Anouk, explained:

I like it here, so I would rather stay. But there are not a lot of jobs for me available at the moment so when I graduate, which is hopefully this summer, I do not know if I will be able to stay in this village because I do not want to drive to work for more than an hour (Anouk).

Similarly, Kyra is not sure yet either where she will live in the future. She mentioned that she first needs to graduate. Then, following her graduation she needs to find a job and is not sure yet where that will be. Both Anouk and Kyra did however mention that if they move, they want to move to another village within the municipality Het Hogeland and not to a city. So overall, no respondent has or had the desire to move out of the municipality.

When asked what is most important in making the decision to stay, whether it is in the same village or in Het Hogeland, Stef mentioned that:

Being close to friends is more important in making the decision to stay, than having family close by. But the fact that my family lives here as well is a nice advantage because it will make it easier to see each other when I will move out the parental home (Stef).

The other young adults share this opinion and all mention the importance of social contacts in the decision to stay in Het Hogeland. The importance of social contacts will be discussed in the next sections.

4.2 Perception of liveability

In general, it appears that when young adults define the liveability in their village community social aspects are more important to the liveability of villages than services and facilities. This is in line with the literature in which Gieling and Haartsen (2017) explain that social aspects should also be looked into to make it possible for people to meet and interact with each other. Anouk explained that:

The most important aspect of liveability is the social aspect meaning that activities are organised every now and then, because this creates a connection between the citizens and it keeps the village alive (Anouk).

Many interviewees share this thought when they defined liveability, but they combined it with physical aspects. One of them, Stef, mentioned that having accessible places for people to meet each other and being able to meet friends on a terrace for example will enhance the liveability, because it creates a feeling of togetherness. He mentioned that sport associations play a big part in this. He decided to join

the local football club again because he realised it was a place where he could meet, interact, and have fun with his friends. He also mentioned that organising activities like events and parties are very useful to keep a village liveable which again shows that the social aspect is important. However, the social aspect thus seems to rely on the physical aspects because places like terraces, sports canteens and pubs are needed to interact. Bas also shared this feeling of the importance of social networks when he defined liveability. Besides this, he also stated:

Knowing that people pay attention to each other and take care of each other when needed is very important to my perception of a liveable village (Bas).

When it comes to other physical aspects, the presence of services and facilities like a supermarket, are also mentioned by some young adults when they defined liveability. However, they did mention that the services and facilities do not per se have to be in the village they live in. Julia and Stef for example, do not mind having to drive a couple of kilometres to reach a supermarket. Stef even mentioned that as long as social contacts are close by, a supermarket for example, can be in another village.

Liveability to me means having everything you need when it comes to basic requirements and needs, like a supermarket in a range of ten kilometres, because I don't mind driving to another village to go to certain facilities (Julia).

As long as social contacts, organised events and activities are in the village it doesn't matter that I have to drive to other villages to fit other requirements and needs like a supermarket (Stef).

Besides defining liveability the respondents were asked how they value it as well. They all mentioned to appreciate the current liveability in the village community they live in. However, the current global pandemic made it difficult for them to explain how they felt because, as mentioned, the social aspects play a very important role in how they perceive liveability. Kyra explained that since it has not been possible for her to keep in touch with others as much as she would want to, she found it difficult to explain how she currently appreciates liveability but despite all this she said:

Overall I am very satisfied with the liveability, and I am sure that things will go back to normal soon (Kyra).

When it comes to the future liveability of the villages, the young adults seem to focus on the short term first. Due to COVID-19 many activities could not have been organised, so it is said that the first thing that needs to be done “*is going back to how it was pre-COVID*” as Kim mentioned. But on the long term the young adults think that they are, and will be very useful for the liveability of their village

community. Eva explained that she thinks her role in the future liveability could be useful. She wants to help organising new activities that will enable youth to join in order to make sure that they will too start to help improve the future liveability. Kim shared this vision and added that the villages in Het Hogeland should be open to new initiatives which create opportunities for youth. However,

First of all it would be useful to focus on what we already have and make sure that it works, but if people have new and innovative ideas we should hear them as well (Kim).

This quote also suggest that after COVID-19, short-term liveability should be the priority.

According to the young adults the ones responsible for the future liveability are the municipality and its citizens. Anouk explains that:

We as young adults are responsible for the future liveability because we know what is going on and what needs to be done, but the municipality has to support us and be on our side to help with the financial part of organising things (Anouk).

This is in line with Lloyd et al. (2016), who explained that the municipality has a certain responsibility but has to share this responsibility with the citizens since they live in the village, and are therefore more aware of what is going on and what needs to be done.

Other young adults also addressed this dual responsibility. Some of them added that the municipality is responsible for the bigger picture, especially on the physical aspect of liveability, because there are some challenges for the future when it comes to affordable housing and public transport. *“We can focus on organising activities among other things, but the municipality has to look into public transport and housing”* Kim mentioned. Housing is becoming a problem in some of the villages since no new affordable houses are being built. Young adults who want to stay in the village might not always have the opportunity to stay because there are no houses for them to live in. Public transport is also very important since young adults use public transport often and want to keep it usable for the next generation. This challenge was also addressed by Bas, who said that:

The municipality has a big responsibility in the future liveability, a lot of fellow young adults would like to move out of their parents’ house but there is no affordable housing available. The municipality should make an inventory of what we, as young adults, need (Bas).

Despite these challenges, the young adults do believe that the future of the villages is bright since they have their own say in it. Some of the young adults explain that they would like to keep contributing to

the village in the future and that they would like to help organising activities and events. They also mention if someone asks them for help, they will do so without question because living in a relatively small village requires active citizens who are willing to contribute. However, it remains a question whether they will contribute in the future and to what extent. The majority of the respondents is currently contributing but they do not know what the future looks like. They mention having these good intentions but it remains to be seen how much they will contribute and participate. Next to that, they also feel responsible for the youth and would like to inspire younger citizens to start contributing as well to make sure that when they get older there is a next generation ready to take over. As Frank mentioned:

I would like to help organising activities for the youth like football clinics, a Christmas disco or a pub quiz for example. They are the future and it is important to show them how to contribute to the village (Frank).

On the other hand Anouk added that whenever you have ideas about possible changes and such, you need to speak up, because staying quiet will not be helpful.

As a citizen it is important to make comments when needed. That is how you can easily contribute to the future of the village (Anouk).

Both Frank and Anouk express how some young adults are thinking about what the future might look like and what needs to be done to keep the future communities liveable, like introducing youth to participate, and sharing the responsibility with the municipality. Even now, when the young adults are satisfied with the current liveability, they are aware of the challenges the villages in municipality Het Hogeland can face in its future. Being a part of this future is what impacts their own level of participation which will be discussed in the following sections.

4.3 Motives to participate

Before looking into the different motives to participate it is useful to discuss the ways in which the young adults are currently participating. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, there are four ways in which people can participate: vertical participation, horizontal participation, social participation and volunteering. It was then mentioned that this research would focus on social participation and volunteering which is in line with the ways in which the young adults explain to be currently participating. The ways in which the young adults participate are: being a (board)member of the local sports club, volunteering/working in the local supermarket, organising activities in the

community like sport clinics or flea markets and attending village activities like a fair or going to the local pub together.

Literature showed that it might depend on a person's (dis)satisfaction towards the liveability whether they will participate. When they are already satisfied they might not participate, while dissatisfaction could lead to an increase in participation (Ubels et al. 2020). Data collection shows otherwise. The young adults are in general very satisfied with the current liveability and the majority of the interviewed young adults are currently participating. They explain that they are participating partly because of the current liveability. They appreciate the current liveability but also realise that it will not stay this way if their generation is not continuing to work on it. Bas, for example, is already thinking about his own future life in the village:

I am currently contributing in the village because I want the football association to survive. When I have kids I want them to play at the same association as I do (Bas).

He also mentioned that when he has children in the future, a primary school, sport associations and public transport would be most important. But in order to maintain these services, he also feels partly responsible to keep these services running, by contributing now.

A couple of interviewees were not participating in the village community but did however appreciate the liveability. Their reason for not participating was the global pandemic which made it more difficult to participate, but they do plan to start participating again when it is possible.

When it comes to being responsible for the liveability in villages literature shows that people tend to participate less when they consider it the role of the municipality to enhance the liveability (Ubels et al. 2020). However, the respondents explained that both the municipality and the citizens are responsible and that this feeling of responsibility makes them want to participate. They do feel that the municipality is responsible for the bigger picture, for example funding activities, maintaining the public order or to grant permits. However, they think it is their job to initiate these activities in which the municipality can take on a supporting role. Working together would then be the ideal situation to get the best results. Kim made this clear this in the following quote:

The municipality has a responsibility of course, but they do not live in the village and do not really know what is going on, we should initiate projects or activities and present them to the municipality (Kim).

The young adults explained that they do consider it useful to be up to date about what is going on in the village. Whether is it via social media or the local newspaper, knowing which activities are organised or what is going to happen is useful because it gives them more information about the

collective wishes in the community. However, this was not the case with Dennis. He mentioned that he is only interested in topics interesting to him, like the football club or the local pub. Meijer and Sysner (2017) mentioned that the sense of social or affective belonging motivates people to participate, which is also the case for the young adults.

Being socially embedded in the community links to social capital (Meijer & Sysner, 2017). The development of social capital could then be a motive to start participating if becoming more socially embedded is the goal. Lisa mentioned that she moved to the village during the global pandemic, therefore she has not been able to meet or interact with many people yet. She said that she wants to start participating as soon as she is able to because she wants to get to know more people to create a bigger social network in the village she currently lives in. At the moment she is considering:

To join the local football club or another association because I am currently missing contact with others, by participating I hope to meet new people (Lisa).

4.4 Influences on the extent to participate

According to the literature there are three aspects which could influence the extent to which young adults participate in their village community. These aspects are: emotional interest (Bolt & ter Maat, 2015; Van Noije, 2016), the belief that their voice has an impact (Meijer & Sysner, 2017), and social capital (Leidelmeijer, 2012). When it comes to emotional interest it is useful to look at both the interest young adults have for their village and their intrinsic motivation (Ubels et al. 2020). When the respondents were asked whether they are up-to-date on what is going on in their village community they all mentioned that they are, whether it is via social media, the local newspaper or their social network. However, when they were asked if they think it is important to be up-to-date the answers were less similar and therefore the interest young adults have differs. On the one hand, Stef mentioned that to him:

Being informed about developments in the village is very important because I want to be able to talk with others about it and use this information for activities or projects (Stef).

On the other hand, some young adults explained that they are only interested in the information which has to do with their life rather than information about topics they do not know that much about. This was explained by Lisa who mentioned that she would be interested in information about new projects or ideas because this could have an impact on the way she perceives the liveability. But she also said that information about people she does not know does not really interest her. Finally there was one respondent, Dennis, who explained that he does not care about what is going on and that he is not interested in what happens in the village because it has no impact on his life or perception of liveability.

When it comes to intrinsic motivation, the young adults do seem to mention that there is an intrinsic motivation that makes them participate in the village community. When the young adults who are already participating were asked why they participate, some of them mentioned the main reason to participate is wanting to give something back to the community they grew up in. This is the case for those who are still living in the village they were born in. They mentioned growing up in a safe and fun environment and wanting to be able to make that happen for the next generations as well. That motivates them to participate. They also mentioned that if they are asked to help with something the answer will almost always be yes because according to Julia: *“that’s how life in a village works, you help each other out when needed and you know that you can ask someone for help”*. However, this intrinsic motivation is fuelled by social networks and contacts. The importance of social capital as an influence on participation will be discussed later on.

Another influence on participation is having the feeling that your voice has an impact. Believing that participation can contribute to the liveability could make young adults want to participate because of the responsibility they feel to do something for the village community. Emma, who is currently participating, mentioned that she does have the feeling that her participation has an impact on the liveability of the village community. She mentioned that it is not only her voice that has an impact, but her level of participation as well. Not only for the current liveability, but also for its future.

We as young adults should be aware of how much impact our voice and ideas can have for the future liveability and thus future generations. We sometimes seem to think that people will not listen to us, but they do. So say what is on your mind, because if we stay silent nothing will change (Emma).

Finally, social capital is mentioned as an influence to the extent in which young adults decide to participate. According to Leidelmeijer (2012), people who have connections and a social network are more capable to participate than people who do not have these connections and networks. Therefore, the presence or absence of social capital can have an influence on the extent to which young adults are able to participate. As explained before, not only intrinsic motivation was given as an answer to the question why the young adults decided to participate. The majority of them also mentioned that their social network and connections play a big role in deciding to contribute. One of them is Bas who stated that:

To be honest, it is not about playing football for me. It is about having fun, being able to socialise and meet with friends. They are the reason I signed up for the team again (Bas).

Anouk explained that she noticed that parents also seem to be a reason why young adults decide to participate. Because when parents are participating or have participated in the past, the young adults tend to participate sooner than young adults whose parents did not participate. When young adults grew up with the example of participating parents they get the feeling that participating is something you do when you live in a village. On the other hand, when young adults did not have the example of parents who contributed they feel it is less important or useful. She explained this in the following quote:

What strikes me is that when parents are participating or used to participate, their children also decide to help with organising activities for example. They are somewhat involved in the village community since a young age which influenced their current contribution (Anouk).

There has been a focus in this analysis on those who do participate and their motives and influences which make them contribute. However, there were also a few respondents that mentioned not to participate currently. Their main reason to not participate was either the global pandemic or not really having the interest to participate. Stef mentioned that he used to work in a local restaurant that was now closed, while Dennis mentioned that he was not very interested in participating because he was going to move to another village where his friends live. So again, the social aspect seems to play an important part in the decision whether to participate or not. However, Dennis did mention that he participated in the past because he used to play football at the local club. He also mentioned:

I do see myself participating in the near future again, playing at the local sports club for example in the village I move to, my friends are members there as well (Dennis).

4.5 Contribution of participation on liveability

The young adults do believe that their way of participating contributes to the liveability in the village whether this contribution is direct or indirect. Attending activities and events is seen as an indirect way to contribute. Besides, Emma said:

I am not very active in the village community, but I do go to the local supermarket and bakery to support them, to me that is an indirect contribution to the liveability (Emma).

Stef and Kyra mentioned more direct ways to contribute. Stef explained that he decided to join the local football club again because the team needs him. He wants to help the team survive and being able to do this with his friends makes it even better. Kyra works in the local supermarket that used to be closed but re-opened, because locals have worked very hard to make this happen. In the first

instance Kyra volunteered because she actively wanted to engage in keeping the village liveable by helping the supermarket to stay open. But when this succeeded she was offered a paid job and she decided to take it.

On the other hand, Eva mentioned that contributing in the village motivates others to start contributing as well:

When you start participating other young adults want to join as well, you can then show each other different ways to contribute (Eva).

Young adults like to organise activities with their friends or with other villages around them and this leads to more participation by other young adults because they like to work together. The young adults have the feeling that they individually do not have that much impact on the liveability, but when they start working together, they do feel that they are able to make a change. They then have the feeling that their contribution is in particular important on the social level which is, as explained before, the most important aspect of liveability according to young adults.

5. Conclusion

This final chapter will focus on the conclusion by discussing the answers to the research questions. In addition, recommendations for further research and policy makers will be discussed.

Defining liveability is difficult since there is no universal definition and each individual perceives liveability in its own way. When the respondents were asked how they would define liveability they all mentioned that social aspects are more important than services and facilities. Interacting with others and meeting friends enhances their appreciation of liveability, especially in a rural area. However, physical places like sport canteens and pubs are needed to be able to socially interact which makes the physical aspect of liveability important to a certain extent as well. When it comes to other services and facilities, like a supermarket, the respondents mentioned that having them within a ten kilometre range is acceptable because they know living in rural areas means having to drive to other villages for specific services and facilities. Besides, both housing and public transport were mentioned as important aspects for keeping the village liveable. Therefore, both the social and the physical aspects of liveability have been discussed.

Social participation and volunteering are the two main ways in which young adults decide to participate because of the given examples like organising a flea market, being a board member at the local sports club and attending village activities like a fair. The way in which young adults participate are then impacted by motives and influences. Being satisfied with the current liveability and making sure it stays that way is one of the motives. Another motive is the feeling of being responsible. The young adults do consider this a dual responsibility since the municipality has to support the villages and its citizens. But as young adults they realise that without them initiating ideas not much will change. However, they did not mention any ideas for the future. So even though they are willing to contribute in the future, it is yet to be seen what this contribution will look like. The last motive is considering it useful to be up-to-date on what is going on because being socially embedded leads to more information about collective wishes, which makes it easier to know how to participate. When it comes to what influences young adults to participate, the first influence is being interested in what happens in the village. Not all respondents were that interested in what happens in the village, but even without the emotional interest they still decided to participate. With emotional interest comes intrinsic motivation, which is fuelled by social networks and contacts. Those who participate mainly do this because their peers participate too.

The final part of this research discussed whether young adults believe that their current contribution has an impact on the liveability in their village community. The respondents made a division between

direct and indirect contributions. A direct contribution, according to the young adults, means for example being a member of a football team that otherwise would not survive, while a more indirect contribution means attending activities and events. However, there is a distinction in the level of contributing. Some young adults are part of a football team or attend village activities while others are on the board of the sports club or are in the organising committee of events. There, however, seems to be no difference in the way they think about their future contribution. Those that are currently a board or committee member do not have different or more ideas about the future liveability than others. The respondents also mentioned that they, individually, do not believe to have to make impact. But that they, together, are able to make a change.

The main research question of this research was: *“How do young adult stayers participate in their village community and how does that relate to their perceptions of a liveable future community?”*. Most of the respondents are currently participating in their village community and mention that they see themselves participate in the future as well. They are a member at the local sports club, work in the local supermarket, like to organise activities and join friends at the local pub. The ones who do not participate are planning on participating in the near future because they are appreciative of their current village’s liveability as well, and do believe that participation is necessary to keep the village liveable in the future. Besides, they also feel a certain responsibility to keep the village community liveable in the future in which it is important to include next generations and make them enthusiastic to contribute as well.

To conclude, even though the young adults mention that they want to keep participating or start to participate in the future they do not come up with new, creative or innovative ideas that could enhance the liveability. Since they are appreciative of the current liveability they do not seem to have many ideas about changes that could or need to be done. They are not very much looking ahead and seem to define the future liveability according to the current one. Therefore time will tell what the role and influence of young adults for the future liveability will be.

5.1 Recommendations for future research

This research has touched upon the future liveability and the way young adults perceive it. Some of the respondents mentioned that both citizens and the municipality are responsible for the future liveability in village communities. However, this research did not make clear who should take certain responsibilities and what might be the best way for both stakeholders to collaborate. Further research on young adult stayers could therefore take a deeper look into this responsibility and how villages can benefit from this in the future. Next to that, further research could also focus on a longitudinal research to touch upon young adults' changes in their perception of liveability when, for example, their household changes. Their perception of liveability could change over the years and comparing that to their current perception could give an insight in what really matters to young adults concerning liveability in the long term.

5.2 Recommendations for policy makers

As mentioned before, the municipality Het Hogeland wants to include young adults, among other groups, in their vision for the future liveability. However, the conclusion showed that young adults do not come up with creative or innovative plans for the future. Since the young adults mentioned that there is a dual responsibility between them and the municipality in which communication is very important, the municipality could first focus on talking to young adults to see how this dual responsibility could be translated into a vision for the future. The young adults are currently satisfied which means that the municipality might not have to change as much as they now might think they have to change. Leaving things the way they are might also be a vision for the future.

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Appendices

A: Interview guide

Woonsituatie blijvers

1. Wat is je leeftijd?
2. Waar ben je opgegroeid? Welk dorp/omgeving?
 - Wat zijn je herinneringen aan dit dorp/omgeving?
3. Woon je nog bij je ouders of woon je op jezelf/samen met partner?
4. Kun je mij vertellen waarom je hier woont?
 - Waarom dit dorp / deze gemeente?
 - Heb je eerdere connecties met deze plaats?
5. Wat is volgens jou de belangrijkste reden dat je hier nu woont?
6. Spelen de kenmerken en positieve herinneringen van de plaats tijdens je kindertijd een rol bij de beslissing om in dit dorp / deze gemeente te blijven/gaan wonen?
7. Was de keuze om in de gemeente Het Hogeland te blijven wonen spontaan of erg bewust?
 - Heb je hier lang over nagedacht?
 - Hebben andere mensen hier een rol in gespeeld?
8. Toen je besloot om in Het Hogeland te blijven wonen, heb je toen een afweging gemaakt van verschillende factoren? Waren er voor- en nadelen die je hebt doorgenomen?
9. Zie je jezelf ooit vertrekken uit het dorp?
 - Waarom wel/niet?
 - Over hoeveel jaar?
 - Waarheen? Waarom daar?
10. Wat is je huidige gezinssamenstelling?
11. Ben je op dit moment bezig met een studie?
 - Welke studie/niveau/richting?
 - Heeft het volgen van de studie een keuze gespeeld in de beslissing om hier te gaan wonen?
 - Heb je overwogen om het dorp te verlaten om op kamers te gaan?
 - Waarom wel/niet?
12. Wanneer heb je je opleiding afgerond? Wat is je opleidingsniveau en richting?
13. Waar werk je nu? Heeft je baan keuze of locatie een rol gespeeld bij de beslissing om hier te gaan wonen?
 - Heb je alleen gesolliciteerd op banen waardoor je in dit gebied kon blijven wonen?

- Heb je een minder goed aansluitende baan (bij niveau/opleiding) aangenomen omdat je hier wilde blijven wonen?

Leefbaarheid

[Wanneer de participanten moeite hebben deze vragen te beantwoorden uitleggen wat leefbaarheid inhoudt; wonen in een omgeving die zoveel mogelijk tegemoet komt aan de eisen en wensen die je eraan stelt; op het gebied van werk, wonen, (sport)voorzieningen, dingen die georganiseerd worden, sociale interactie, gezondheid, de gemeenschap]

1. Wat houdt leefbaarheid in voor jou?
 - Wat draagt volgens jou bij aan de leefbaarheid in het dorp?
 - Hoe tevreden ben je op dit moment met de leefbaarheid in het dorp?
 - Wanneer is een dorp leefbaar?
2. Ben je bewust bezig met de leefbaarheid van het dorp?
 - Waarom wel/niet?
3. Hoe zou het dorp in de toekomst leefbaar gehouden kunnen worden?
4. Wie is volgens jou verantwoordelijk voor het behoud van de leefbaarheid in de toekomst?
 - Waarom?
5. Hoe zou jij zelf kunnen bijdragen aan de (toekomstige) leefbaarheid in het dorp?
6. Heb je het gevoel dat je op dit moment bijdraagt aan de leefbaarheid?
 - Waarom wel/niet?
 - *Zo ja, heb je het gevoel dat jouw bijdrage aan de leefbaarheid zin heeft?*
7. Hoe zie jij de toekomst van het dorp voor je?
 - Hoe zie jij de toekomstige leefbaarheid voor je?
 - Motiveert dat jou om bij te dragen aan deze toekomst?
8. Stel je woont hier met kinderen, hoe kijk je dan tegen het belang van leefbaarheid aan?

[deze vraag aanpassen aan huidige gezinssamenstelling]

 - Veranderen de behoeftes die je hebt in het dorp?
 - Waarom wel/niet?

Participatie

1. Ben je op dit moment ergens bij betrokken in het dorp?
 - Zo ja, waar ben je bij betrokken?
 - Waarom ben je betrokken?
 - Wat is jouw taak?

[n.a.v. deze vraag kijken wat de vervolgvraag wordt]

2. Als n.a.v. vraag 1 blijkt dat het om een organisatie gaat:

- Welke organisatie, welke rol?
- Waarom deze organisatie?
- Waarom vervul je deze rol?
- Zijn vrienden ook lid van deze organisatie?

NEE

- Waarom niet?
- Zou je dat wel willen? Zo ja, welke organisatie?
- Zijn vrienden lid van een organisatie in het dorp?

3. Als n.a.v. vraag 1 blijkt dat het om een vereniging gaat:

JA

- Welke vereniging?
- In het dorp? In een ander dorp?
- Waarom ben je lid van deze vereniging?
- Zit je bijvoorbeeld ook in het bestuur of in een commissie binnen de vereniging?
- Zijn vrienden ook lid van deze vereniging?

NEE

- Ben je wel lid geweest?
- Zou je in de toekomst (nog weer) lid willen zijn? Waarom wel/niet?

4. Als n.a.v. vraag 1 blijkt dat het niet om een organisatie of vereniging gaat, maar 'zomaar' is:

- Waarom?

5. Heb je contact met de burenen/buurtbewoners?

- Is het hebben van contact met burenen/buurtbewoners belangrijk voor jou?
- Waarom wel/niet?

6. Organiseer je zelf wel eens een activiteit?

- Zo ja, wat voor activiteit?
- Met wie organiseer je dat?
- Waarom organiseer je dat?

7. Ben je ergens vrijwilliger?

- Waarom wel/niet?

8. Heb je het idee dat de bijdrage die je aan het dorp levert invloed heeft op de leefbaarheid van het dorp?

- Waarom wel/niet?

9. Hoe belangrijk is bijdragen in het dorp voor jou?

10. Ben je op de hoogte van de manieren waarop je zou kunnen participeren in het dorp?

11. Participeren andere gezinsleden ook? Op welke manier?

Sociaal kapitaal

1. Voel je je thuis in dit dorp?
 - Waarom wel? Waarom niet?
 - Wat vind je fijn aan het dorp?
 - Wat zorgt ervoor dat jij je thuis voelt?
 - Zijn er specifieke aspecten waardoor dit komt?
[denk hierbij aan sociale aspecten, het landschap en de omgeving, of allebei]
2. Woont je (schoon)familie in gemeente Het Hogeland?
 - Zo ja, komen ze hier ook vandaan?
 - Wonen ze hier in het dorp?
 - Hoe belangrijk is dit in de beslissing om hier te wonen?
3. Bevindt jouw belangrijkste sociale netwerk in Het Hogeland?
 - Waar wonen jouw beste vrienden?
 - Waar ken je deze vrienden van?
 - Zijn sommige van je beste vrienden ook familie?
 - Hoe belangrijk is het hebben van vrienden (in de buurt) voor jou?
 - Denk je dat je ook lid was geweest/bij had gedragen als je vrienden geen lid waren/niet gingen bijdragen?
4. N.a.v. vraag over studie of werk, heb je ook een netwerk binnen het werk of de studie?
 - Zijn deze netwerken in de buurt?
 - Hoe belangrijk zijn deze netwerken voor jou?
5. Welke invloed hebben deze gevoelens van verbondenheid, thuis voelen en jouw sociale netwerk op jouw houding tegenover de keuze om in Het Hogeland te wonen?
6. Heb je het gevoel dat het hebben van een sociaal netwerk in het dorp bijdraagt aan de bijdrage die je aan het dorp levert?
 - Waarom wel/niet?

B: Informed consent

Toestemmingsformulier voor het onderzoek over de invloed die de participatie van jongeren heeft op de toekomstige leefbaarheid van een dorp.

Ik heb de informatiebrief over het onderzoek gelezen en begrepen. Ik heb de ruimte gekregen om hier aanvullende vragen over te stellen. De gestelde vragen zijn goed beantwoord.

Ik begrijp dat meedoen aan dit onderzoek vrijwillig is en dat ik op ieder moment kan beslissen om toch niet mee te doen zonder daar een reden voor te geven. Ik heb genoeg tijd gehad om te beslissen of ik meedoe.

Ik weet dat meedoen aan het onderzoek vertrouwelijk is en dat de informatie die ik geef op een vertrouwelijke manier opgeslagen wordt. Ik geef toestemming om mijn gegevens te gebruiken voor de doeleinden die in de informatiebrief staan.

Omcirkel JA of NEE:

Ik geef toestemming om mijn antwoorden te laten opnemen JA / NEE

Ik wil graag anoniem blijven JA / NEE

Naam deelnemer:

Handtekening:

Datum:

Ik verklaar hierbij dat ik mij zal houden aan de voorwaarden die in de informatie brief staan. Daarnaast verklaar ik dat ik deze deelnemer voldoende heb geïnformeerd.

Naam onderzoeker: Paulien Mensinga

Handtekening:

Datum:

C: Information letter

Informatiebrief voor het onderzoek over de invloed die de participatie van jongeren heeft op de toekomstige leefbaarheid van een dorp.

Beste [naam],

Bedankt dat je tijd vrij maakt en mee wilt doen aan mijn onderzoek. In deze informatiebrief kun je lezen wat je van het onderzoek kunt verwachten. Als je na het lezen van deze brief nog vragen hebt kun je die altijd stellen. Mijn gegevens zijn onder aan de brief te vinden.

Het interview zal ongeveer 30 minuten duren en tijdens het interview kun je altijd aangeven dat je wilt stoppen of een pauze wilt nemen. Als je een bepaalde vraag niet wilt beantwoorden kun je dit aangeven.

Onderwerpen die tijdens het interview naar voren zullen komen zijn:

- Jouw eigen woonsituatie
- Leefbaarheid in het dorp
- De mate van participatie
- Verbondenheid en sociaal netwerk

Verder wil ik je nog even wijzen op de volgende punten:

- Het interview zal opgenomen worden met een audio-recorder
- Er zal vertrouwelijk worden omgegaan met de gegeven informatie
- De informatie zal veilig op mijn laptop opgeslagen worden

Naast deze informatiebrief stuur ik je een toestemmingsformulier toe die je dan kunt ondertekenen. Met het tekenen van dit formulier ben je niet verplicht deel te nemen aan het onderzoek. Het formulier is dan ook bedoeld om te bevestigen dat je op vrijwillige basis mee doet aan het onderzoek.

Groetjes,

Paulien Mensinga

06-93969443

p.i.mensinga@student.rug.nl