Inclusive Citizen Participation

-The role of underrepresented groups' perception on different participation forms-

Abstract

Citizen participation is increasingly used in society as a more deliberate and democratic form of making policies together with citizens. Citizen participation however mostly have led to disappointing results in terms of policy impact and on inclusivity. Although there is a debate on the importance of inclusivity, a growing number of scientist claim that inclusivity is needed for some general goals of citizen participation in for example political legitimacy and social cohesion. Governments are also more and more reacting on these disappointing results by shifting their focus from a government central focus to wider needs of citizens and instead of traditional methods, are experimenting with alternative participation forms. These forms are more informal, incidental and less intensive, hopefully more suitable for a broader range of citizens. However, there is still an academic gap on wether underrepresented groups actually have more positive perceptions and intentions for these alternative participation forms. This research tried to fill this gap by a survey among 110 respondents, accompanied by five interviews with participation professionals for additional context. The results showed that underrepresented groups prefer alternative methods over traditional methods. However, intention of respondents did not increase after alternative methods were explained in the survey. While perception increased slightly, it seems that perceptions of informality and relevance of topics discussed were easier changed due to providing this alternative forms, than perceptions of time, responsibility and impact.
The results provided some potential avenues to influence these aspects in a positive way. Participation forms at higher places on the participation ladder and more consequent communication of participation results for policies could help with a sense of impact. More active and personal targeted invitations to specific citizens could help for a higher sense of responsibility. This also helps with informing more citizens about the existence of citizen participation as a large part of respondents was still unfamiliar with citizen participation. This research could mostly speculatively assess possible inclusivity outcomes as respondents noted their stated preferences. More qualitative experimental participative research should be done to better assess the relation of perception and intention with actual behaviour of underrepresented groups.

Key concepts: Alternative participation forms, Inclusive citizen participation, Participation intention, Government centrality, Empowerment, Population groups and diversity

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Dutch government says to value citizen participation by making citizens more involved into policy making and planning (VROM, 2007). Citizen participation is indeed related with a number of positive societal outcomes like higher policy legitimacy, increased social cohesion, and several individual effects for participants (Nienhuis et al., 2011; Willems et al., 2020). However, citizen participation has given disappointing results: citizens are not being heard enough, planning decisions are often not really influenced and not a wide or representative share of citizens joins in citizen participation (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011). The low inclusivity is visible in how youth, working parents, ethnic minorities, lower incomes and lower educated are structurally underrepresented (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Checkoway et al., 2005; Martiniello, 2005; Bovens & Wille, 2010; Voorpostel & Coffé, 2012). This is strikingly, as an important share of the policies discussed within widely used participation forms like advisory boards, are policies that are made for vulnerable groups like social welfare policies for lower incomes (FSP, 2020).

Scientists mention inclusive participation would have multiple benefits: public planning would be more legitimate, social cohesion between different (ethnic) groups increases and creates bridging capital (Putnam, 2000), it decreases potential power imbalances between groups and creates more chances for previously non active population groups, while also improving spatial policy measures (Arnstein, 1969; Ewijk, 2011; Nienhuis et al., 2011).

But, the missing of the underrepresented groups makes it that certain perspectives are not being heard, while these groups have found to have unique political viewpoints. This way, policy will not be legitimised, positive individual effects are not occuring for all and societal effects like integration or increased social cohesion are not happening.

This low inclusivity might be related to government centrality (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011). Government centrality explains how participation is paradoxically based on governments' viewpoints instead of those of citizens. Because of this government central perspective on citizen participation forms, mainly traditional participation forms are used, that are formal and complex (being tied to strict governmental policy structures), time-intensive, and of low actual impact on policy (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011). The literature explains how these five underrepresented groups have a variety of reasons why they are not empowered to join citizen participation (Naranjo-Zolotov et al., 2019), being it due to having low amounts of time, having low trust participation will have actual impact, or participation being distant from ones own lived world in terms of topics, formality or complexity (Arnstein, 1969; Schlozman et al., 1994; Martiniello, 2005; Bovens & Wille, 2010).

So how can participation be made more inclusive? One solution might be found within alternative participation forms. A shift towards alternative participation forms that are more informal, less time and knowledge-intensive, and closer to the lived world of citizens is argued for by Dutch social research institutes like Movisie (2020) and a shift towards them is slowly occurring (Nyseth et al., 2019).

Whether inclusivity within participation should be determined as a goal or not is ultimately a decision made in political arenas. However, since an increasing trend towards the importance of inclusivity is found within the scientific debate and within governments, it can be interesting to look at what factors influence citizen participation inclusivity.

For alternative participation forms to have effect on inclusiviy, the underrepresented groups need to have a more positive perception and intention for these forms. Measuring perceptions on alternative participation forms is rarely done in the literature, and a research gap is noted here the (Bingham et al., 2005). That is why for this research the central question is:

"What are obstacles and chances for inclusive citizen participation, especially paying attention to underrepresented population groups perceptions and intentions for different participation forms?"

Four hypotheses are being tested to get more insights into the answer of this question. The first two hypotheses are there to test important premises for the research. They test if participation is indeed underrepresentative by not including those five other groups and if other demographic variables that are included by the literature, also play a role. The last two hypotheses are able to answer our central question, by researching if intention to participate indeed increases after providing alternative forma and by looking into the differences between groups. These differences can help maximise inclusivity by not only including some, but all underrepresented groups.

Hypothesis 1: The five underrepresented population groups participate less often
Hypothesis 2: Other explanatory variables from the literature are an explanator for participation
Hypothesis 3: Intention to participate increases for underrepresented groups after providing alternative participation forms
Hypothesis 4a: There are differences in perceptions and conditions on citizen participation between different underrepresented groups
Hypothesis 4b: There are differences between underrepresented groups in the ranking of different participation forms.

To test these forms and answer the central question, a survey was done among 110 respondents, including the five underrepresented groups. The survey asked a range of questions on perception and intention for different participation forms, and also made sure to be able to test intention increase by asking intention before, and after explaining about four alternative forms. Besides the survey, five interviews were done with participation professionals to provide more context on the urgency of inclusive citizen participation and the aspects of current participation forms provided by municipal governments.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Increasingly complex society

Society is becoming increasingly complex. There is on the one hand a changed societal environment: societal structures are becoming more complicated with increased mobility and the erosion of previous social structures like churches and the Dutch 'zuilen'. Because of the internet and increased mobility citizens are more informed than in the past and more capable to contribute to society. On the other hand governments are becoming increasingly challenged in their activities due to globalisation, less influence on land management and having less funds (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011). Spatial problems become also more complex because of these dynamics and increased complexity. One response that has been found is the increased attention towards citizen participation, where not only governments deal with spatial problems, but society at large as well. The argument for this increased attention to citizen participation is that a diverse and wide group of citizens should be more capable to define and tackle these complex spatial problems (Bingham et al., 2005; Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; de Roo, 2013). However, an opposite scientific and political narrative is found in more neo-liberal strategies like 'New Public Management', that tries to deal with this more complex world by focusing on economic efficiency and inputs from the market, rather than democratic aspects of politics. Economic inputs should provide necessary and adequate information to respond problems of complexity. Political decision-making forms that are argued for from this perspective are for example tendering or privatisation, rather than citizen participation (Sager, 2009). Nevertheless, the last decennia an increased focus in governments has come on more deliberate forms of democracy and citizen participation, shifting away from more modernistic and top-down policy making (de Roo, 2013). Citizen participation can be defined as the re-distribution of power from the haves, towards the have-nots. The have-not citizens, previously excluded from democratic practices are invited by the government into the policy making process, the setting of goals and tax allocation (Arnstein, 1969). In this process, the initiative lies with the government. Citizen participation is thus different from self-organisation and citizen initiatives where the initiative comes from citizens themselves (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Bakker et al., 2012). There is also an obvious distinction with public-private partnerships where instead of regular citizens, companies are involved in (execution of) policies (Woltjer et al., 2011).

Four types of benefits of Citizen Participation

An important question to ask is: why should citizen participation be used? Researchers have come up with multiple benefits from using citizen participation in public policy projects. Boonstra & Boelens (2011) name four types of such benefits: social, spatial, economic and political.

An important social effect many researchers name is the generation of public support for policy plans (Nienhuis et al., 2011; Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; de Roo, 2013). This support means higher political legitimacy (Willems et al., 2020), which can be defined as an increased share of citizens accepting and agreeing with the policy plan (Mondak, 1994). Apart from the topic of the policy, citizens also can become more positive towards their fellow citizens as participation can increase social cohesion. Nienhuis et al. (2011) name the encouragement of self-organizing capacity, and also add more insight on the relationship between social cohesion and participation: according to their studies social cohesion is not only an outcome but also a prerequisite for participation as participants more often have strong local ties.

A special form of a social cohesion effect can be mentioned in the form of the integration of ethnic minorities and immigrants. Ewijk (2011) and Martiniello (2005) explain that Europe has faced increasing immigration in the latest decennia. Coupled with the recent wave of arrival of refugees in Europe the point of integration and diversity policies has become increasingly important as European countries seek to integrate immigrant communities into mainstream society. One implementation of this goal of integration could be representation of immigrants and ethnic minorities in citizen participation activities. The Dutch government even explicitly mentions this specific opportunity of citizen participation:

> *"Moreover, public participation could be an instrument for improving neighbourhood cohesion and inter-ethnic relations." (VROM, 2007, p. 15 [translated]).*

In the past, several countries in Europe already made advisory boards comprised out of immigrants on the state level. Although these were later criticised as marginalising the immigrant group even more, it was a form of citizen participation with specific targets for the immigrant group (Martiniello, 2005). Nowadays general advisory boards try to also include ethnic minorities, conforming to the ideals of the Dutch government, but have a hard time achieving this goal (FSP, 2020). Moving away from social benefits focused on society at large to the individual, a last social benefit can be that citizens develop certain skills that can also be used in daily life: like vocal skills of formulating an opinion or needs which can also be used in ones (working) life (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011).

A second type of benefit is spatial: participation supposedly makes better spatial policy plans which increases the quality of the spatial environment and people's feelings of belonging to a certain place and of communal citizenship / a sense of ownership of one's own living environment (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011).

Thirdly, two type of economic arguments can be distinguished: one being the lowering of costs of the planning process itself. The assumption here is that because of higher public support fewer legal complaints will be made which decreases the overall time and costs of the planning process. This claim is contended in scientific research and dependent on the type of participation as participation instruments can sometimes also be quite costly (Willems et al., 2020). A second economic benefit is about the economic long-term robustness of overall society, claiming that the development of initiatives and local ties can make communities more resilient towards economic crises, creating more innovation and job opportunities, for example increasing employment rates due to people having a higher social network (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011).

Fourth, political reasons obviously exist of letting citizens participate in planning policy processes. The so-called 'gap' between citizens and government will be bridged and citizens will get a better understanding and more realistic expectations about government actions. A better network between citizens and government can arise (Willems et al., 2020). Bridging the gap should make the overall perception towards the government more positive (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011).

The idea that public participation will have these intended positive outcomes is apparent in the literature, for example see Nienhuis et al. (2011), but this view is not always shared by everyone. For example, Irvin & Stansbury (2004) are more critical about citizen participation and mention it depends on the policy topic whether you want to use citizen participation or not. Some scientists also mention that the effectiveness of citizen participation is dependent on its inclusivity (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Nyseth et al., 2019). However, there is an academic debate on the importance of inclusivity within citizen participation. Some nuances and caveats are given by a number of scientists.

To start, achieving complete inclusivity is impossible, as there are infinite ways in how to divide differences within people. An important distinction can be made between diverse aggregates (all possible differences between people) and diversity, which involves meaningful characteristics that influence someone's way of life. Nevertheless, diversity and inclusivity are social constructs, and their exact definitions and policy implementations are always made by human choices, rather than being objective criteria (Ewijk, 2010). Smith & Wales (2000) note that a small group of citizens never can accommodate for all different perspectives in wider society. Choices always need to be made as inclusivity can never be fully achieved. Smith & Wales (2000) also warn for a false sense of representation. The idea that due to a single elderly slot in a citizen participation group, all elderly people in society are represented is misleading. However, they note that these minority slots can still be effective for inclusivity as individuals can use their backgrounds as inspiration for policy advise. This distinction between representation and inclusivity is important to note (Smith & Wales, 2000).

Two avenues for the basis on where necessary choices that have to be made are policy phase, and policy topic. Nuance in the importance of inclusivity can be given by the phase of the policy cycle. Evans & Sapeha (2015) note that authentic participation means participation should happen at least at the earliest stages. These stages are more about agenda-setting, where preferences can be expressed and certain issues can be put onto the policy agenda, rather than later stages with actual policy formulation. A relation with inclusivity can be made here, with the argument that inclusivity is especially important in the agenda-setting phase, as different population groups could especially have different perspectives on what issues should be put on to the agenda in the first place. More alternative participation forms lately indeed are focusing mainly on early stages of the policy cycle (Nyseth et al., 2019; Movisie, 2000). This does not mean however that participation in general does not play a role in later policy stages. Participation in later policy phases need different forms, like collective maintenance of spatial infrastructure and policy evaluation (Willems et al., 2020). More early citizen participation does run into the risk of a lower occurrence of effective policy translation (Nyseth et al., 2019; Movisie, 2020).

The second avenue is that for the choice how to define inclusivity, the topic of the policy issue in question should be used as inspiration, according to Smith & Wales (2000). However, the increasing trend to integral policy making due to the perception of intersectionality, where topics that are different have to be planned for together (Navarro-Yáñez & Rodríguez-García, 2020) might make this strategy harder to implement.

Ewijk (2011) makes a distinction in motivations for or against inclusivity in (participation) groups by moral reasons versus practical reasons. Moral reasons are about achieving equal opportunities for groups, claiming that there is an ethical responsibility to create representativeness by including a diverse group of citizens. Since participation also has positive individual effects, like developing skills and a better social network (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011), it would only be fair by letting all groups benefit from those. Practical reasons, on the other hand, are claiming that a diverse, representative group performs better. For example that diverse groups work more efficient as they might have more unique skills and resources and thus are enriching the overall pool (Ewijk, 2011). From the practical side however, also a number of disadvantages of inclusivity are noted in academic literature.

Neo-liberal theories like New Public Management mention that dialogical processes are time-consuming and that eventual outcomes from participation activities could be conflicting with experts. (Sager, 2009). As participation becomes more inclusive and gets further away from professional planning, these problems can grow. According to research from the FSP, (FSP, 2020), more inclusive participation indeed means that not only 'professional citizens' but also more lay-men participate, which results in less knowledge about policies and policy structures. Another effect is that within citizen participation due to the wide diversity of strongly held perspectives it is difficult to achieve common ground (Kinsella, 2004). As the diversity of these perspectives increases with higher inclusivity, this problem intensifies. Ultimately, more inclusive citizen participation might have the risk of leading to policies based on unsatisfactory compromises rather than the possibly more coherent vision of the planning designer.

Relation between inclusivity and citizen participation goals

Regardless of these caveats and nuances, a growing number of scientists argue for the importance of inclusivity within citizen participation, as the four goals of citizen participation mentioned earlier (political, social, economic and spatial), can more effectively be realised by inclusive citizen participation.

For the *political* goals, Arnstein (1969) explains how un-inclusivity makes it that only the 'professional citizen', participates, instead of the local citizen: the 'haves' versus the 'have-nots'. Only the 'professional citizen' that is part of the elite is heard that already has knowledge about governmental structures. The gap between the local citizen and the government is thus not bridged at all. This is seen as problematic as it can create a power imbalance within the society between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. Have-nots can be amongst others considered as the unemployed, the youth, the more militant residents and the hard-core poor (Arnstein, 1969). In her research, Arnstein (1969) discovered that the upwardly mobile working-class, the 'haves' were far more often included in participation projects. A counter-argument could be that with careful consideration, the 'haves' could ask the other groups about their opinions and use that information in the participation forms, however Movisie (2020) and FSP (2020) pointed out that the usual suspects are not proficient in finding the vulnerable, underrepresented citizen groups. Besides that, the power imbalance would still be there as 'have-nots' do not have the means to check if their points were brought in in the first place. Bovens & Wille (2010) presented a similar situation that arose between higher and lower educated citizens. Lower educated citizens continue to be underrepresented in citizen participation, while narratives and problems between the two education groups differ considerably (Bovens & Wille, 2010). Higher educated citizens are for example more positive and less distrustful about governmental practices. Thus, the other political goal of participation, creating a more positive perception on government, seems to be at risk with un-inclusive participation as well.

Inclusivity also relates to the *social* goals of citizen participation. Following on the point of diversity of perspectives within population groups, research has shown that population groups are unequally represented within citizen participation (Nienhuis et al., 2011; Arnstein, 1969; Woltjer et al., 2011; Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Willems et al., 2020). People who participate are a unique group so Nienhuis et al. (2011) adds the concern that it is likely that participation attracts a structurally unrepresentative selection of society and that the outcomes of citizen participation are thus not what governments aim for: the social goal of policy that is supported by and beneficial for society on a broad level.

Another social goal of participation: higher social cohesion, could be at risk if participation has low inclusivity. Since Nienhuis et al. (2011) say those that participate are a distinct subset of society whose social lives are within the neighbourhood, the rest: those that have their social lives outside the neighbourhood become increasingly more distanced from them. The problems of the active locals could be overaccentuated in the participation process which even more alienates the two groups from each other. These processes result into bonding capital instead of the bridging capital needed for higher social cohesion and integration (Putnam, 2000), which might increase polarisation.

This relates to the *economic* goal of higher societal economic robustness in the form of more job opportunities and innovation. When especially already marginalised lower income and lower education groups are excluded from participation processes, they do not benefit from these increased contacts and job opportunities in the same way as included groups. This might diminish the results of participation on economic robustness (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011).

Lastly, in terms of *spatial* goals, the feeling of belonging, sense of place and a sense of ownership might lack for unincluded groups within citizen participation processes (Willems et al., 2020). As in terms of the perceived quality of spatial plans, the following is noted in the literature. The shift from technical-rational modern planning towards collaborative planning included the paradigm shift of the role of planners and policy makers: they do not have the objective rational view on knowledge, but have an opinionated view on it as well so collaborative planners fear their own power in the process (Woltjer et al., 2011; Nienhuis et al., 2011). As a consequence, they focus on the agreed reality that multiple stakeholders make together. Inclusivity in participation forms is necessary herein, as in this way all different perspectives on the planning issues can be included to get the best view on this agreed reality. In that sense, inclusive participation can also be seen as creating better spatial policy plans.

Thus, a number of scientists mention how the goals of citizen participation relate to inclusive citizen participation. The increased focus on inclusive citizen participation in the academic debate can be shown in the literature review on ideal conditions of citizen participation of Irvin & Stansbury (2004). They note that "Commonly cited strategies are the careful selection of a representative group of stakeholders […]". (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004).

Disappointing results of citizen participation

However, the last decennia, scientists note citizen participation often brings disappointing results (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Nienhuis et al., 2011; Nyseth et al., 2019). Boonstra & Boelens (2011) cite papers that say people are not being heard, decisions are not influenced and plans do not get improved because no real relevant information is given by participation to officials. From Arnstein's (1969) point of view regarding her participation ladder, a part of the reason why citizen participation projects do not influence plans is because citizen participation activities are too low on the ladder and give no real power to citizens. This gives citizens the idea that participating is useless since it will not have an impact on policy anyway. Participation forms are then nothing more than rituals where governments check the necessary boxes of 'participation' without any other purpose. Nienhuis et al. (2011) cite papers that criticize participation forms in the USA that do not satisfy citizens and rarely improve decisions that government officials make. This has led to the discouragement of citizens from participating as this would waste their precious time. Nienhuis et al. (2011) mentions that current participation practices are too top-down and paternalistic.

Lastly, there is also a low inclusivity as no broad spectrum of the public is represented (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Nyseth et al., 2019). Whether inclusivity within participation should be determined as a goal or not is ultimately a decision made in political arenas. However, since a number of scientists and government increasingly note inclusivity as goal, it should be noted here.

Nienhuis et al. (2011) note that participation is currently not able to establish a real dialogue. Since there is no real cooperation citizen participation are seen as only 'rituals' without actual purpose or meaning (Nienhuis et al., 2011). Therefore, citizen participation projects often have a hard time finding a representative group of citizens wanting to participate. As illustration, Nienhuis et al. (2011) found out that more than half of Dutch citizens does not want or does not know if they want to participate at all. The disappointing results in terms of impact and of inclusivity can be explained in two parts: the supply side, governments who design certain citizen participation forms, and the demand side, citizens who have certain perceptions and preferences regarding citizen participation.

Government centrality and traditional participation forms

From the supply-side, a concept that explains well what happened at the designing of participation forms by government, is the concept of 'Government Centrality'. The hypothesis of Boonstra & Boelens (2011) is that the process of participatory planning is mostly based from the perspective of the government and of their structures and viewpoints. This 'government centrality' implies that participation is constructed from the viewpoint of the government, in multiple ways. On the process level, the government chooses the participation form and at how high on Arnstein's (1969) ladder the participation form is placed. On the content level, governments often choose the problem definition and the topics to be discussed themselves. And geographically, the government often chooses who participates and who does not by using administrative boundaries, while research has often shown that these do not overlap with the boundaries of lived communities (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011). When the government does not take into account the needs of citizens, but are focused on governmental and policy structures, this government centrality causes three main problems in participation processes:
-Time-consuming procedures
-A framework for participation activities based on the premises and structures of the political system
-A lack of distribution of power and responsibility to citizens

This way citizens do not really feel responsible, and the 'system world' of the participation process of the governments does not fit with the 'lived world' of citizens who are aiming to beneficially change their society (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011). Most citizens do not have the time and knowledge resources to deal with this politicised and administrative 'system world' (Pløger, 2001). This government centrality have led to traditional participation forms, like the Advisory Boards, client councils, and platforms (adviesraden / cliëntenraden), and formal hearings (Nyseth et al., 2019). These are, as the concept of Government Centrality introduced, indeed more time-intensive, policy-technical (being tied to the tight policy cycle of municipalities and with their organisational structure (Hardina, 2003)), and have proven to be of low impact (FSP, 2020; Movisie, 2020). Government centrality can also seen in the Netherlands in how the initiative for choosing alternative participation forms still for 85 % comes from municipalities (Movisie, 2020). The lower impact is a possible result of the fact that participation forms are also more often late in the policy making process, like the information evening about an already designed new street. This gives citizens few chances to react and influence policy for their benefit (Arnstein, 1969).

Increasing worries of non-inclusive participation within governments

Willems et al. (2020) mention that most governments have the ambition to include different societal groups, but that they have trouble reaching all of them. Therefore, current participation practices do not reach the goal of higher political legitimacy as the public support generated is not occurring from the whole society. An example that can be given is how lower educated have a five times lower chance to participate (Bovens & Wille, 2010). Movisie (2020) confirms the concern on inclusivity and notes that municipalities are also worried on the low inclusivity of their formal advisory boards. Since there are mostly highly educated individuals with also often a political or healthcare sector background in these boards, they can easily communicate with government officials but are less proficient in keeping contact with the people the policies are often about: the vulnerable citizens directly affected by the social support system. Another reason for the rise of alternative forms, is that the last decade the Dutch governmental system experienced a trend of decentralisation, where municipalities got more responsibilities and also got the legal responsibility to include citizen participation for these responsibilities on a broader range of topics than before (Woltjer et al., 2011).

A logical assumption is that participation thus should be improved by fulfilling the right conditions that will improve the dialogue between citizens and government and put participation higher on Arnstein's (1969) ladder. Irvin & Stansbury (2004) found that multiple papers write that it is important to support the decision-making process by competent and unbiased group facilitators, transparency within the process and adequate financial resources. Willems et al. (2020) find that higher ambitions in the form of a higher participation level and higher numbers of citizens participating can be reached through more voluntary participation instruments compared to more coercive forms (Willems et al., 2020).

Rise of alternative forms

This increasing worry within governments of un-inclusive traditional participation (Nyseth et al., 2019; Michels & De Graaf, 2010), has led governments, in the Netherlands and beyond, more and more experiment with alternative citizen participation forms (Movisie, 2020; FSP, 2020; Bingham et al., 2005; Nyseth et al., 2019). Dutch social research institutes like Movisie and the Frisian Social Research Institute (FSP) also argue for finding a variety of different, informal alternatives to participatory planning. Alternative participation forms are often more early on in the policy cycle which gives them a potentially higher policy impact (Movisie, 2020). Alternative participation forms are also more informal, incidental and less knowledge- and time-intensive which might make them suitable to the lay-men / less 'professional' citizens as they are closer to their 'lived world'. Examples of such newer forms are more informal 'pizza-meetings', or open calls that let citizens vote on a certain spatial design. Open calls as form diminish one of the potential disadvantages of inclusive participation: it has a lower chance of the unsatisfactory compromise-design result mentioned earlier (Kinsella, 2004) as citizens vote on already designed spatial plans. Another alternative form are the so-called 'theme-tables / 'stamtafels', where citizens in a village or neighbourhood can join government officials in an informal conversation on a specific evening at the local neighbourhood centre to talk about a broad topic like loneliness. This way they can signalise what is going on in society. Since these forms of participation belong to the problem definition phase, it is often easier for a broader range of citizens to participate since little knowledge is needed about governmental processes or their jargon. It is the task of the government then to translate the outcomes into political practice. However, because of the larger distance towards policy, this translation does not always occur easily (Nyseth et al., 2019; Movisie, 2020).

Other examples are the wide range of uses e-participation could bring, from online surveys to online participatory budgeting where citizens can submit and vote for projects to be implemented by the government (Naranjo-Zolotov et al., 2019). Participatory budgeting can also be used as (offline) form where governmental budgets are distributed directly to citizen initiatives, for example when taking over a task that governments normally do, like maintaining public green spaces of a neighbourhood (Wittmayer & Rach, 2016; Movisie, 2020).

Within the academic field, a research gap is found in the need to assess the effectiveness of these alternative forms, in the sense of how individuals perceive these forms and what factors determine the decision to participate within these alternative participation forms for different population groups (Bingham et al., 2005). This relates to the second part of the story of inclusivity within citizen participation, the demand-side of the citizens.

Perception of participation as driver for citizens

One important part of the inclusive participation puzzle is not discussed yet, the citizens themselves. But, there is not one 'citizens': the citizens is not one homogenous group but consists of a multitude of different subgroups with different characteristics, perceptions and different motivations for participation. It is logical that a group of citizens might get dissatisfied by a specific participation form if that citizen group is not fit for that form. Thus, Nienhuis et al. (2011) specify it is too easy to claim that a lack of real power is the only valid reason why citizen participation is failing. To achieve a better functioning citizen participation, it is therefore also important to focus on different population groups perceptions and intentions for citizen participation. Perception is important because it is a driver of behaviour (Nienhuis et al., 2011). Different attitudes between different groups could explain why some groups do participate and other groups do not. From the literature it becomes clear that different groups have different perceptions on citizen participation. Bovens & Wille (2010) for instance explain the sharp divide between perceptions on government for higher and lower educated citizens. Lower educated citizens tend to be much more distrustful and cynical about politics and political institutions while higher educated citizens are more positive and favourable. Lower educated citizens also more often feel that politicians are not listening to them and they are being ignored. Perception thus matters and perception of participation and governments differs between groups. Nienhuis et al. (2011) found out in their research among citizens in Arnhem that active locals that participate are more positive about the act of participating than sideliners. Where this difference in perspective comes from is another question here: it might come from the act of participation itself that gives participants a positive perception or it might be the reason why they chose to participate in the first place. To get more understanding of 'perception', the concept 'empowerment' of Naranjo-Zolotov et al. (2019), is worth looking into. In their studies on intention to join e-participation forms, they found out that the perception of 'empowerment' in citizens significantly impacts intention to use e-participation. Empowerment is here considered to be the sum of four main aspects: *impact* (does my involvement has the impact on the policy I want), *meaning* (is the topic relevant to me), *competence* (am I able to participate, do I have the right skills) and *self-determination* (about the level of responsibility an individual feels, do I have a choice on if and how I participate) (Naranjo-Zolotov et al., 2019). Empowerment, as all these four aspects together is instrumental for intrinsic motivation for participation forms (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). This means that if these conditions are fulfilled, there is a higher chance for one to take a certain action, in this instance joining a participation activity. This should not be confused with another way some researchers use the word 'empowerment'. Empowerment Naranjo-Zolotov et al. (2019) mean is perceptional: as a citizen can have these four perceptions about participation that, if all are fulfilled, will make it likely that the citizen will have the intention to participate.

These four perceptions are found in other literature as well and are similar to concepts earlier mentioned in this thesis. Boonstra & Boelens (2011) and Arnstein (1969) were stressing the importance of the perception of impact that makes participation not be seen as just a 'ritual'. Willems et al. (2020) in a discussion on the use of the open call as participation form, find that the open call creates a 'sense of ownership'. This can be compared with the perception of self-determination, as ownership implies a certain level of responsibility. The four perception aspects of empowerment can also be linked to alternative participation forms, as they have the possibility of making people score higher on the perception aspects. This means that intention to join and inclusivity is dependent on participation form as well. Specifically, the participatory budgeting form might give people a higher sense of impact as citizens get a direct say in how to spend governmental budgets. The theme-table discusses topics that are relevant for citizens so could increase the perception of meaning. E-participation in the form of online surveys can make competences higher for people who do not have the time to participate in more time-intensive participation meetings. Alternative participation forms in general are more incidental rather than organisational so citizens can choose whether to join an activity or not instead of having to become a member of for example an advisory board.

Defining 'Inclusivity'

Thus, government centrality and traditional forms on the supply side, and perceptions of empowerment of (different) population groups on the demand side, are the two sides of the coin that could explain the (according to some scientists) disappointing results of citizen participation in terms of impact and inclusivity. Specifically looking into this second result: inclusivity, it becomes interesting to think about: how do we exactly define inclusivity? One way to look at it is which groups are currently underrepresented in the context of citizen participation. After all, the focus of this thesis is to give insights in factors influencing citizen participation inclusivity which means including underrepresented groups in citizen participation. Inclusivity is thus closely related to the concept of diversity: the fact that humanity consists of different groups of people (Ewijk, 2011).

Since diversity is a social construct, it is important for researchers that they define what they mean with it and which groups are looked at (Ewijk, 2011). Diversity can be defined as the state or a goal for heterogeneity within a certain network of people. For example an advisory board can have the goal of having diverse members to embody society better. To come to what these different groups are, not just every random aggregate works in distinguishing diverse population groups. The aggregate should be a relevant characteristic that influences the way one lives or that is a key part of one's identity. This is important because the concept of diversity tries to distinguish meaningful population groups that have different perspectives and experiences on life (Ewijk, 2011). Objectively as this seems, also these 'relevant' characteristics are not waterproof, as for each individual it is different whether they identify with a certain population group or not. For one person their sexual orientation or skin colour can be relevant for their way of life and identity while for others it does not mean that much (Ewijk, 2011). Self-evaluation, where a person is asked if they identify with a certain group or not might prove valuable thus for empirical research on diversity.

Many relevant characteristics are offered by researchers, such as ethnicity, gender, skin colour or race, class, income, educational background, (dis)ability, age, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, etc. There are in fact so much, that organisations working with diversity and researches studying diversity and inclusivity always have to make choices which of these characteristics they choose and which not (Ewijk, 2011). In the citizen participation literature, some of the relevant characteristics stand out however, as they stand for groups that are structurally underrepresented in citizen participation. This literature mentions how these groups all have different, unique relations towards citizen participation. These population groups are: youth, ethnic minorities, lower educated, lower incomes, and working parents (f.e., see Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Checkoway et al., 2005; Martiniello, 2005; Bovens & Wille, 2010; Voorpostel & Coffé, 2012).

Youth

Participation of youth is important for engaging young people into government and the practice of democracy (Checkoway et al., 2005). Too often adults speak in the name of youth, which is seen in the underrepresentation of youth in citizen participation (Woltjer et al., 2011; Bovens & Wille, 2010; FSP, 2020; Movisie, 2020). Municipalities are the right agencies to include youth in citizen participation, as the municipal level (in comparison with higher levels) offer proximity which is especially important for youth because of their lower mobility range (Checkoway et al., 2005). Youth is often underestimated for its participation potential since mostly the negative aspects are at the forefront in the media. This is remarkable, as youth can make a meaningful contribution to public policy. They can be competent citizens and community builders and have influenced policies and policy budgets in the past successfully (Checkoway et al., 2005).

It is important for governments to assign staff for specifically youth participation projects as they can play the role of encouraging and nurturing youths to "help them express their own power." Adult staff members in youth commissions / advisory boards can play the role of an inspiring leader, that encourages, guides and educates youth. This implies that youth participation asks different governmental support than participation for adults and could thus also imply different participation forms for youth policy participation (Checkoway et al., 2005). A special role can be here for high schools. For example, the distribution of youth surveys in high schools can have a high respondence rate and can effectively determine youth policy priorities. Participation forms that help youths express themselves and focus on positivity are also expected to be affective for youth, like pizza-meetings or approaches that use arts and culture like formulating opinions via hip-hop or rap music (Noguera, 2006).

Ethnic minorities is often mentioned as an important sub-group in society, also when it comes to citizen participation. In terms of definition, Martiniello (2005) focuses on immigrants (and their offspring) and how they have a certain cultural distance towards the country of destination where they live in. This shows in struggles with feelings of belonging and a certain distance to the governmental and cultural system. It also shows in how immigrants often stay connected within a community of other immigrants with the same prior nationality and therefore could have troubles with integration into mainstream society. A result of the struggles with integration is that the population group of immigrants becomes marginalised. This marginalisation means that narratives and problems of these minorities are less easy heard by the rest of society. To hear the problems of these groups better, special consultative immigrant organisations were made in many European countries. Many political scientists criticised this idea by explaining that this would marginalise immigrants only further (Martiniello, 2005). This way, the social networks also remain relatively divided from each other. Minorities would still stay inside their own social bubble. These social bubbles and low interaction also mean that few exchanges are made between minorities and the rest of society. Because of this problem the Dutch government sees inclusive citizen participation as a solution, where ethnic minorities join natives in participation forms as a means to integrate ethnic minorities and "improve inter-ethnic relations" (VROM, 2007). The Dutch government does speak about ethnic minorities here, instead of immigrants. There is a point to make that immigrants and ethnic minorities often overlap, as immigrants per definition come from another country and thus from another ethnic situation, from a cultural standpoint. The viewpoint of the Dutch government makes clear that they have high goals for citizen participation for this subgroup.

In practice, however, these goals are not reached as ethnic minorities are still a largely underrepresented group in citizen participation (Nyseth et al., 2019). This is logical, as the cultural differences are a barrier for this group to participate. Language, political knowledge, low social interactions with natives, differences in perceptions and attitudes could all pose a problem for ethnic inclusion in citizen participation. Participation forms that are easier in terms of form and topic, rather than complex and government-technical, would be expected to fit better to ethnic minorities. In terms of including ethnic minorities, social bubbles make it more difficult as traditional advisory boards often seek new members via their own social network (FSP, 2020). An idea for improvement is to try to make contacts with ethnic, racial, or religious associations where ethnically diverse people are members of (Martiniello, 2005).

One of the goals of citizen participation mentioned earlier was to bridge the gap between citizens and government. Bovens & Wille (2010) disputes this gap, claiming the major divide is found between higher and lower educated citizens: an education gap. Looking at the numbers, a lot more higher educated citizens participate in participation forms like government meetings: for every lower educated citizen, 5 higher educated citizens participated (Bovens & Wille, 2010). The numbers are most strikingly comparing higher educated citizens with the rest (rather than lower educated compared to middle and higher educated). This has to do with a ruling elite where politicians themselves also often have a high level of education. This elite makes lower educated citizens distrustful of governmental practices which could result in them being wary of participation forms as well.

The most problematic side of this underrepresentation of lower educated citizens is that they have very distinct political viewpoints as well (Bovens & Wille, 2010). Lower educated citizens have different perceptions on socio-cultural issues such as crime, admittance of asylum seekers and EU unification. Lower educated citizens are more focused on national order while higher educated citizens value cultural tolerance. (Bovens & Wille, 2010). The conflict dimension between lower educated 'nationals' and higher educated 'cosmopolitans' is a big one in society and can be compared in size with historical conflict dimensions as left and right. Since lower educated participate much less often, a unique perspective is thus at risk of not being heard enough. Apart from different perspectives, lower educated citizens also face different problems in life than higher educated citizens as education is rewarded in society a lot by higher job positions and a higher income. This higher job pressure also explains a part of the perspective on nationalism as lower educated citizens face more risks from globalisation and immigration than higher educated citizens (Bovens & Wille, 2010). The lower educated do not only have different perspectives on political issues, but also on politicians and the government itself. They are more distrustful and cynical about the government, and have the feeling that the government do not hear and do not solve their problems. The higher educated are more positive in their attitudes, which is logical if it is true that certain narratives of lower educated are harder to be found in political arenas, although the recent rise of populism does help with the visibility of lower educated perspectives (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018).

The reason for their underrepresentation, according to Bovens & Wille (2010), is not that lower educated do not want to participate, but that they have more trouble becoming heard. Higher educated citizens converse more easily (and loudly), and they are rhetorically skilled. This makes it that lower educated citizens regularly concede in the informal deliberative arenas. The numbers back this up: the more demanding the form of citizen participation is in terms of time and energy, the higher the disbalance is (Bovens & Wille, 2010). This implies that alternative, more informal and less intensive participation forms would potentially fit better. The aspect of low trust within governmental practices makes it likely that participation forms with a definite higher impact are expected to be attractive as well for lower educated. Examples of these could be the open call or participatory budgeting.

Poor / Lower incomes

A related, but different group is the poor. The poor are, like lower educated, also underrepresented when it comes to citizen participation (Ravensbergen & VanderPlaat, 2010; Movisie, 2020). There is often an obvious overlap between education and income, so the chance that similar problems arise here are possible. Nonetheless, there are additional unique problems for the poor in terms of citizen participation. Irvin & Stansbury (2004) name lower availability of the means to participate since they have such a low income. Travel costs, costs for a computer or laptop to write notes and read articles for an advisory board, buying a babysitter for your children while you are away; it is true that citizen participation comes with personal costs. Movisie (2020) brings in another reason for the underrepresentation: shame. Since people with lower income and especially with debts are ashamed to talk about their problems, they will avoid joining in participation forms where they have to do so publicly. Arnstein (1969) also noticed how most of the citizen participation groups she studied were dominated by the upwardly mobile working-class, even when the topic discussed was the poverty program itself. This thus excluded the views of the unemployed and the poor on topics very relevant for them. A form that worked better was to translate the experiences and stories of people with a lower income into theatre shows (Movisie, 2020). Although this is especially true for the policy topic of poverty, the point of shame can also affect the general participation behaviour of the poor (Ravensbergen & VanderPlaat, 2010).

Arnstein (1969) notes a third reason of the inclusivity of poor in terms of citizen participation: they have less knowledge on the political and socio-economic infrastructure. This is logical as lower income citizens less often fulfil job positions that are related to the political and socioeconomic system of participation and welfare distribution practicalities. This problem is similar to the point of the lower educated who concede in the deliberative arenas, but not so much on their rhetorical skill, but also on an already established knowledge difference that makes it harder for the underrepresented groups to participate. Connecting this problem with the earlier concept of Naranjo-Zolotov et al. (2019), this makes those groups have lower 'empowerment' since their competence (am I able to participate, do I have the right skills) is lower.

Working parents

Working parents with children living at home are a unique distinguishable group in the Netherlands when it comes to their welfare status. The Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau did a large-scale research in 2014: 'Verschil in Nederland', where they determined which groups in the Netherlands had the best welfare status. One of their outcomes was the segmentation of 6 different distinguishable population groups scaling from a low to high welfare status. One of these groups was named the 'working middle class', which scored 3d in range (behind the 'young privileged' and the 'established upper class'). This working middle class often has a job, children living at home, is aged 35-50 and has an average to average-high income level. Although scoring modestly high on the total welfare status, one of the resources this group is extremely low on is 'free time' (SCP, 2014).

The life circumstances one lives in determine the availability of free time. Besides work, raising the children, taking care of the home, and often one or more parents of old age that need aid, working parents have little time to do other things, like citizen participation. Conflict between parenthood and political roles arises, especially when the political behaviour is time intensive (Schlozman et al., 1994). Parenthood is thus associated with decreased levels of political participation (Jennings, 1979).

The low amount of free time working parents have can make them isolated for broader social ties. The focus of parents can shift more inwards to the own household and less on society. However, children who go to school can also increase the social network of their parents via the parents of classmates, neighbours and for example teachers. Children can also be an inspiration to perform certain participation forms, think about co-developing a local playground (Voorpostel & Coffé, 2012). The current underrepresentation of working parents thus not necessarily originates from a lack of interest in citizen participation. Instead, the cause can be that traditional participation forms are too time intensive. A plausible hypothesis is thus that the topic and especially the time intensity of the citizen participation form will be of importance to the group of working parents.

The underrepresentation of working parents is independent from other important factors like education as not only less highly educated but also the well-educated young mothers are underrepresented (McGlen, 1980). The specific policy demands of working mothers (day-care and parental benefits for instance) are thus not heard in this political arena. What worsens the problem of the underrepresentation of this group is that this group is a large group in the Netherlands. Of the six groups the SCP distinguished, this one was the largest of all (SCP, 2014).

A potential solution could be to find participation forms that are easier for working parents to join, for example meetings happening after schooltime at schools, combined with free day-care for their children (Jurkowski et al., 2013) or less time-intensive forms that can be done from home, like e-participation / online mini-surveys.
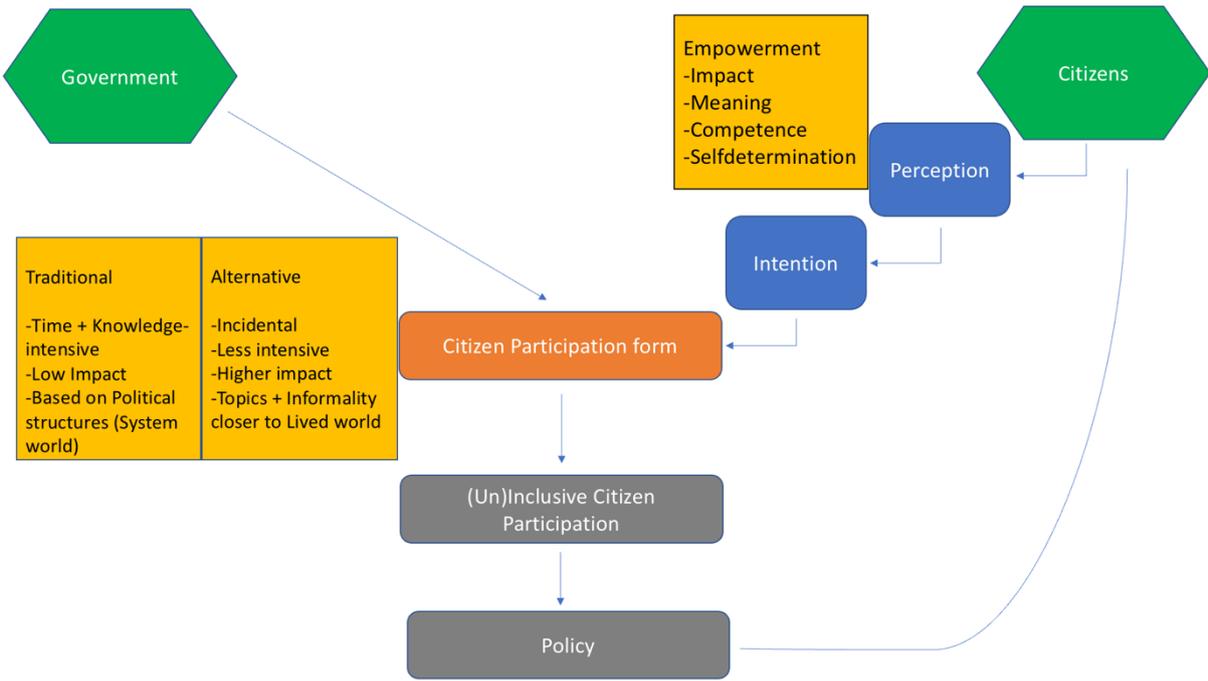
Conceptual model

Figure 1: Conceptual model for inclusive citizen participation

The conceptual model above summarizes the most important concepts from the literature, and explains their relationships. For inclusive citizen participation, the important stakeholders are the government on the one side and citizens, among which underrepresented population groups on the other side. Governments design the participation form to be used. In the past, governments designed participation forms based from their political structures and viewpoints / government centrality (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011), which led to traditional participation forms. These traditional forms, like the advisory boards, ask a lot of time and knowledge about policy processes from citizens, are often low on the participation ladder as they are more evaluative and late in the policy cycle, and are based on political structures and therefore closer to the governmental 'system world'. Contrastingly, alternative participation forms are more incidental instead of organisational and ask less time from citizens, are less intensive in terms of political knowledge that is required, are often more early in the process giving them a (potentially) higher impact on policy, and are closer to the 'lived world' of citizens in terms of topics discussed and in terms of higher informality.

Citizens have a perception on these participation forms, which influences their intention to join citizen participation forms. The literature mentions reasons why citizens that belong to underrepresented groups might prefer certain alternative forms. For example they mention how lower educated might differ from the elite in terms of what topics they deem important, how working parents might prefer shorter forms due to low availability of time, how youth might prefer more positive and expressive forms and how ethnic minorities have less affinity with the Dutch governmental and cultural system which might lead to higher preferences for easier, less knowledge-intensive participation forms.

These perceptions, further explained by the concept of empowerment (Naranjo-Zolotov et al., 2019), are based on perceptions of impact (does the participation activity have the impact on policy that I want), meaning (is the topic relevant for me), competence (do I have the right knowledge and skills to participate) and self-determination (can I choose how and if to participate myself). If the questions on these perceptions are answered positively this would then relate to higher intentions to join citizen participation for these underrepresented groups. Then, if these designed participation forms after communication towards citizens actually enforced and citizen participation actually takes place, then the actual inclusivity of citizen participation can be measured. After the citizen participation activity, the inputs might influence policy plans, and if they do, a better relation between policies and citizens is realised, in the form of higher public support and higher policy adequacy for citizen populations that are included in citizen participation.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Survey as method for generalisability

Since the focus on this research is on perceptions and intentions of underrepresented population groups, it becomes clear that making generalisations for these specific minority groups is necessary. For generalisation of population groups, a large quantity of respondents (75-150) is appropriate (Moore & McCabe, 2006). Thus, quantitative analysis in the form of a large-scale survey could fulfil this purpose in a cost and time efficient way. However, for this specific research, surveys have a number of disadvantages. First, they cannot distinguish between the difference in participation intention and participation outcome. Second, surveys lack a mutual conversation and interaction between respondent and the researcher which will make it harder to explain certain concepts like citizen participation and the different alternative forms. Third, the irony exists where a study about non-participation uses a method that is also highly dependent on willingness to participate with the survey of the research. This makes the research method at risk of not including those population groups that are the most important for this research: the underrepresented minority groups that are hard to reach.

Regarding the first disadvantage: the choice of the survey method implicates that respondents only state their *intention* to participate, rather than revealing actual future participation *behaviour*. However, intention and behaviour do not necessarily correspond with each other. Within the scientific debate, economists have shown legitimate scepticism on measuring intentions with 'stated preference' models, and rather use 'revealed preference' models that study actual behaviour outcomes (Wardman, 1988). While in some studies, stated preference was found to be a reasonable indicator for revealed preference (Wardman, 1988; Hensher, 1994), other studies found that stated preference can give overly optimistic results while those high numbers are not occurring in reality (Axsen et al., 2009). The results for a research method of surveys are thus somewhat questionable and can only speculate about potentially possible future scenarios. More qualitative research methods that are more experimental, like participative action research would be needed to test actual outcomes for behaviour and thus actual inclusivity of participation. These more qualitative research approaches however are less effective in reaching a high quantity of respondents in a time and cost-efficient way. This is problematic, as for lower number of respondents the generalisability falls. Another problem of qualitative research with minority groups is the unequal relationship between researcher and respondent. When minority groups are interviewed in person, while the researcher is from a different status, the unequal relationship might influence the respondents' answers (Clifford et al., 2016). As underrepresented groups that are the focus of this research are part of minority groups like lower educated and ethnic minorities, a white, highly educated researcher might influence them. Thus, the second 'problem' of the survey (that it lacks a mutual conversation and interaction) also has some scientific advantages, although the problem of the difficulty of explaining complex concepts still exists.

Considering the above, while surveys have numerous disadvantages, they still are the most cost and time efficient way of enabling generalisability by including a large amount of respondents. Since generalisation of the perception and intention of underrepresented groups is very important, the survey as method is chosen for this research.

The geographic scope of this research is limited to the municipality of Leeuwarden, which also helps in cost and time efficiency while still being able to target a diverse range of citizens since cities are more diverse in population. Since the generalisation for this research is based on demographic groups rather than on place, the survey thus does not have to be dispersed geographically. Besides these practical reasons, also more topical reasons directed into a municipality-wide geographic scope. Since participation often happens on the municipality level, individual experiences might differ a lot between municipalities with different participation histories. Lastly, the municipality of Leeuwarden is one of the focuses of earlier research by the FSP and has an interesting participation dimension: the decentralisation of 2015 lead to the merging of the former Advisory Board and the Client Council. Regarding the third disadvantage, there is indeed an ironic risk of selection bias in which the underrepresented groups will not participate with the survey for the same reasons as why they do not join citizen participation. This is why the sampling strategy should incorporate ways to effectively reach these groups. The first way this was achieved is by disproportionate stratified, instead of random, sampling as target groups are not of the same relative size in the sample as in the entire population. A minimum amount of 20 respondents for each population group gives the best opportunities for strong parametric statistical methods. Overall sample sizes of at least 75-150 are beneficial for overall statistical precision, however, a minimum of 100 for 5 population groups is not necessarily needed as groups are overlapping too (Moore & McCAbe, 2006).

The second way this was achieved is with the sampling method, where the survey was distributed in several ways. While the questionnaire itself had to be filled in online due to corona, the distribution was done 50% online as well as 50% offline via QR-codes. To reach a large audience online it was chosen to reach out to organisations in the municipality of Leeuwarden that have a large network of citizens. All neighbourhood associations in municipality Leeuwarden were called and emailed for this purpose. Since neighbourhood associations often have a high share of elderly and already politically engaged active citizens that have a lot of local social ties, additional methods were needed to reach younger and less engaged citizens. Therefore, Facebook groups were chosen. As an efficient way of online targeting specific Facebook groups were asked to share the survey link (including a small explanatory text explaining the survey). Facebook groups had the benefit of targeting individuals that are often hard to reach otherwise ánd of targeting specific underrepresented groups effectively. These Facebook groups were used, among others:

Underrepresented group	Facebook group
Working parents	Yoga-clubs, Oppas Gezocht,
Ethnic minorities	St.Federatie Hindoe Organisaties Leeuwarden, Moskee Assalaam Leeuwarden.
Lower educated	'Echte Leeuwarder', Vermiste dieren Leeuwarden
Youth	High schools, youth sport clubs
Poor	Vraag en weggeefhoek Leeuwarden

Figure 2: Facebook group examples that were used to target respondents online

For the physical distribution, a printed a4 with a QR-code was distributed. Measures to limit exclusion bias and target minority groups were taken here as well. The survey was distributed at a diverse range of times and at different busy places (for example supermarkets, dentists, the city centre, schools and parks). This could also reach people with a smaller network and people excluded from online groups. To ensure high enough numbers for all groups, adjustments were made throughout the data collection period. After every 20 new respondents came in, the frequencies of these groups were noted and data collection was adjusted to targeting to places, online groups and via key figures where population groups with lower frequencies could be found.

Besides perceptions and intentions of the underrepresented groups, another important aspect of inclusivity of citizen participation is the supply-side: where governments design and implement citizen participation forms. Since the literature (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011) affirmed the importance of the role of the governments for inclusive citizen participation, it makes sense to also research their perspectives and experiences with citizen participation and its inclusivity. Therefore, it was chosen to do a mixed method research approach and also do more in-depth qualitative research with participation professionals in the form of five interviews. This way, instead of only research that focuses on intention for future participation (speculative), also more retro-active research can be done on already happened participation practices, which limits the first disadvantage of survey as methods. Thus, the purpose of the interviews was to provide extra context on participation practices from the professional's perspectives. Since the aim was to give extra context, from a different perspective: not merely speculative and from citizens, but retro-active and from professionals, the interviews were done separately from the surveys. No input connection was made from interviews to surveys or oppositely. The interviews were performed during the same time as the survey data collection, so no data analysis was done before interviewing. This way, it was possible to have an unbiased and open-structured interview to fully research the perspective from professionals and their insights and experiences. Later on in data analysis, interview quotes were used to give more nuance or extra understanding into the results found in the surveys. For a wide range of professional's perspectives, the following professional institutions were interviewed, ranging from governmental organisations, to research institutes, to the local advisory board (semi-professional).

1 Dirk Postma: He works at the Fries Sociaal Planbureau (FSP). He was responsible for a research on the current participation forms, and mainly the advisory boards of all municipalities in Friesland. This gave provide additional insights on current participation practices in the location of Friesland.

2 Mellouki Cadat: He works at Movisie, the national knowledge institute on social issues. Movisie is a very innovative organisation and has a lot of practical experience with alternative participation forms as well. Mellouki Cadat works with themes like citizen participation, and vulnerable groups, so was a good fit for an interview, adding a national view and more experiences with alternative participation forms.

3 Roelof de Boer: He is the chairman of the adviesraad sociaal domein Leeuwarden (ASD), thus a prominent member of the primary traditional participation form in Leeuwarden. This gave insights into the workings of this traditional participation form and with the challenges with inclusivity.

4 Bente van Berkum: Employee on participation of municipality Leeuwarden. Municipalities are the primary provider of citizen participation forms. This gave more insights about the municipalities strategies and (inclusivity) goals.

5 Ferenc van Dammen: He is an expert in the field of citizen participation. He is currently working as participation strategist at Provincie Overijssel within Studio Vers Bestuur (SVB). He has a very innovative view on (inclusive) citizen participation and is a highly wanted guest at conferences.

The sequential nature of the questionnaire (Clifford et al., 2016) was used in a specific way for this research's analysis. Therefore it is important to note how the questionnaire was divided into certain blocks that followed each other:

- -A short introductory text of citizen participation in general (see figure 3 on the next page)
- -First block of intention and perception questions
- -A short text about four alternative participation forms (see figure 4 on the next page)
- -Second block of intention and perception questions
- -Demographic questions

The sequencing of these blocks made sure that participants first answer the 1st intention questions, secondly, they read the paragraph providing alternative forms, and only after that as 3th stage they answer the 2nd intention questions. This way the effect of providing alternative forms for intention and perception could be measured. Using the online questionnaire gives additional benefits here as it makes sure people do not skim the entire questionnaire before answering: there is the option to only allow participants to advance to the next segment if they answered the questions before that first. For the whole questionnaire, see the appendix.

Hallo!

Ik ben Frederik Verf, student Society, Sustainability and Planning aan de RUG. Fijn dat je deze enquete wilt invullen. Daar help je mij enorm mee!

Dit onderzoek gaat over **burgerparticipatie**.
In deze vragenlijst bedoel ik met burgerparticipatie: alles waarmee de overheid jou om jouw mening vraagt. Het gaat dus niet over andere soorten participatie zoals hoeveel burgers mee doen in het werkende leven of in de samenleving. Burgerparticipatie gaat hier echt over **beleid** en **meedenken met de overheid**. Burgerparticipatie heeft vaak de bedoeling om overheidsbeleid (de wetten en regels die overheid maakt) beter te laten passen bij jouw mening en die van andere burgers.

Traditionele voorbeelden zijn **adviesraden**. Adviesraden zijn een club mensen die maandelijks praat over overheidsbeleid en daar lange vergaderingen over heeft. Hier krijgen deze mensen een vergoeding voor van gemiddeld 75 euro.
Een ander traditioneel voorbeeld van burgerparticipatie is de **informatie-avond** over een bouwplan in jouw omgeving, bijvoorbeeld de haak om Leeuwarden, het vernieuwde Europaplein, of een nieuwe straat in jouw buurt. Vaak is het beleid al zo goed als klaar bij dit soort informatie-avonden.

[Meldingen vooraf: Dit onderzoek gaat niet over participatie in corona-tijd. Vul de antwoorden dus in alsof er geen corona en coronamaatregelen zijn.

Anonimiteitsmelding: Dit onderzoek is geheel anoniem. Je vult je naam of postcode niet in. Daarnaast wordt de data vertrouwelijk behandeld.]

Figure 3: Introductory text before the first questions of the questionnaire

Naast traditionele participatiemethoden zoals adviesraden en informatiebijeenkomsten zijn er ook nieuwere, alternatieve participatie-methoden, bijvoorbeeld:

-De online mini-enquete waar je in korte tijd en vanuit het gemak van je eigen huis je mening over een aantal onderwerpen kan geven

-De pizza-meeting: waar je met een groep inwoners (bijvoorbeeld een groep jongeren) samen met een gemeente-ambtenaar een top 3 van verbeterpunten maakt, terwijl je gezellig samen gratis pizza eet

-De stamtafel waar er over een bepaald thema vrij gepraat en gebrainstormd wordt: bijvoorbeeld eenzaamheid, betaalbaarheid of veiligheid.

-Buurtbudget: waar jij met andere inwoners uit je buurt zélf een hoeveelheid geld van de gemeente beheert om dit te gebruiken voor zelfbedachte projecten voor ontwikkeling in jouw buurt.

Figure 4: Explanatory text of four alternative participation forms in the middle part of the questionnaire

The questions in the questionnaire can also be divided by topic. Four clusters can be distinguished this way:

- A. Perception
- B. Intention
- C. Form preference
- D. Demographics

Cluster A: Perception

Codeword	Complete question (for prejudice)	Operationalised from theory
Impact	Het heeft toch geen effect op het beleid	Empowerment : Impact Government centrality
Time	Burgerparticipatie kost teveel tijd	Government centrality (time-intensive)
Informal	Participatie lijkt me heel saai / te formeel	Government centrality : Political structures / System world
Complex	Processen en taalgebruik is te ingewikkeld en overheidstechnisch	Government Centrality: Knowledge-intensive Empowerment: Competence
Topics	Besproken onderwerpen zijn niet belangrijk voor mij	Empowerment: Meaning
Choice	In de participatiewerkwijze is al te veel voorgeschreven hoe ik antwoord moet geven	Empowerment: Self-determination
Responsible	Ik voel me niet verantwoordelijk voor het overheidsbeleid	Empowerment: Self-determination
Personally	Burgerparticipatie levert mij persoonlijk niks op	Positive individual effects participation (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011)

Figure 5: The 8 perception indicators used in the survey

Perception-change		
Prejudices-sum	The sum of all prejudice-answers combined	Not a question, but statistically combined number.
Prejudice-low (and middle and high)	Prejudice-sum < 21 : Low Prejudice-sum 21t/m24: Middle Prejudice-sum >25 : High	Statistically developed from prejudices-sum.

Figure 6: The other perception cluster questions/variables

Perception indicators for 'prejudice', 'condition', and 'apparently'-questions

For the perception cluster, the theoretical concepts from the literature were operationalised into 8 indicators. For most of these 8 indicators, at three different times questions using these indicators were asked. The 'prejudice'-questions, are shown above as example, and were asked early in the survey. Later, the 'condition'-questions converted these into questions in the form of 'I would be open for citizen participation, if …'. These thus ask about how important this indicator is for the respondent. Lastly the 'apparently'-questions were asked to only those respondents who said to have a more positive perception than in the beginning, and were asked in the form: 'Why do you think more positive about citizen participation now? Because, Apparently, …'.

Cluster B: Intention

Codeword	Complete question	Additional information
Intention1	Zou je in de toekomst aan burgerparticipatie willen meedoen?	
Intention2	Same as Intention1	
Intention-change	Calculated difference between intention2 and intention1	
More-inclined	Ben je nu meer geneigd mee te doen dan eerder?	
Level-wanted	In welke mate zou jij betrokken willen worden in het beleidsproces?	Possible answers are: -Ik hoef niet betrokken te worden -Ik hoef alleen informatie te krijgen -Ik wil om mijn mening gevraagd worden -Ik wil een actieve bijdrage doen aan de discussie -Ik wil het beleid samen met andere burgers zelf bepalen

Figure 7: Survey questions/variables for the intention cluster

Operationalising intention to participate

On the question: 'do you want to participate?' 5 options on a Likert scale since the amount is not too high and respondents are still able to distinguish the different levels while still giving more options than 3. Also, giving the neutral option: 'maybe', is very important, as it proved to be a large group for Nienhuis et al. (2011) with a percentage of over 40%. Besides, the 'maybe-group' is a very important group for this study since for more inclusive participation, those who are doubting are the easiest to convince compared to those who say they do not want to participate. It might be that providing alternative participation forms will erase certain stigmas and doubts about the participants perceived issues with available time. This will be tested by a small paragraph of text in the middle of the survey explaining some alternative forms of participation breaking with certain stereotypes. This is thus followed by the same question asking about the intention to participate. A control-question 'more-inclined' and a question about the preferred level of participation were asked as well.

Codeword	Complete Question	Additional information
Form-type-preference	Als je de alternatieve methodes die je net las vergelijkt met de traditionele methodes zoals de adviesraad en de informatieavond, met welke doe je dan liever mee?	Alternatieve methodes, Traditionele methodes, neutraal.
Top5	-Maak een top 5 van welke methode jou het meest aanspreekt / waarvan de grootste kans is dat je mee zou doen tot de minste.	-Online mini-enquete -Pizza-meeting -Thema-Stamtafel -Buurtbudget -Adviesraad
Knowledge-alt-forms	Wist je dat deze andere methodes van burgerparticipatie bestonden?	
Selfmade-form	Zou je zelf een eigen bedachte participatie-vorm kunnen bedenken die perfect bij jou past? (Als je niks kan bedenken hoef je deze niet in te vullen)	
Topics-important	Welke onderwerpen zijn belangrijk voor jou?	- verkeersveiligheid - veiligheid op straat - speeltuinen in mijn buurt -duurzaamheid - eenzaamheid - armoede -winkels -anders, namelijk:

Figure 8: Survey questions/variables for the form preference cluster

Operationalising alternative forms

In contrast to intention for participation in general, questions asking about intentions to specific forms of participation were included too. A division between traditional and alternative forms of citizen participation is one question. Also questions on intentions for some specific participation forms were asked. Four specific alternative forms were selected because they break with certain stereotypes of participation coming from the concepts *government centrality* and *empowerment*. The following four forms were chosen:

-The online mini-survey: since it has very low time and cost investments

-The pizza-meeting: since the perception of informality and an easy process

-The theme-table about a certain theme that respondent is invested in: since the theme is important for the individual and it is clear no difficult jargon is needed about the legal processes since it is agenda-setting.

-The neighbourhood budgeting: since it breaks with the stereotype that it will not have effect anyway as participants get to design themselves to what neighbourhood project the budget goes to.

Apart from a top5 question (also including the traditional form of the advisory board), also a question about the prior knowledge that these forms existed was asked, to confirm if these provided forms were indeed new for respondents. Lastly, more open questions were asked about topics that are important for respondents and the option to design an own participation form, for extra insights on form preferences.

Cluster D: Demographics

Codeword	Complete question	Additional information
Working Parents	Vind je dat jij bij de bevolkingsgroep 'werkende ouders' hoort? Hiermee worden mensen bedoeld die kinderen hebben en daarnaast óók nog een baan hebben.	
Ethnic minorities	Zie je jezelf als onderdeel van een 'etnische minderheid'? Hier worden mensen mee bedoeld die naast de Nederlandse identiteit ook een andere identiteit hebben.	
Youth	Vind je dat je bij de groep 'jongeren' hoort?	
Lower educated	Hoe hoog is jouw opleidingsniveau?	5 point scale. Average, etc.
Lower income	Hoe hoog is jouw inkomen, of als je nog thuis woont, het inkomen van je ouders?	5 point scale. Average, etc.
Usual suspects	A new variable was computed where 0= belonging into at least one of the underrepresented groups, and 1 = not belonging into at least one of those.	Not a question. This group was relatively small: n = 12
Inclusivity tips	Vaak zie je steeds weer dezelfde soort mensen bij burgerparticipatie: de oudere, gepensioneerde, rijke, hoogopgeleide, blanke Nederlander. Heb jij ideeën hoe ervoor te zorgen dat er meer verschillende soorten mensen meedoen? Zoja, waar denk je aan?	
Work contact government (Work-contact-gov)	Kom je door je werk in aanraking met de overheid?	
Work neighbourhood	Werk je in de wijk waar je woont?	
Social life neighbourhood	Mijn sociale leven speelt zich voornamelijk af met mensen in de wijk waar ik woon.	
Length residence	Hoe lang woon je in de wijk/buurt waar je nu woont?	

Figure 9: Survey questions/variables for the demographics cluster

Since the focus of this thesis on diversity and inclusivity of participation, inclusivity is operationalised into certain underrepresented groups. All of these underrepresented groups, although provided from the literature study do not have clear boundaries and are sometimes overlapping: lower educated and the poor might overlap a lot. Boundaries are also hard to set for a group like youth, which ages do you take? And at which level of income can you be considered poor?

Instead of choosing artificial boundaries, working with self-assessment fits in this case, where people are asked if they consider themselves to be part of a certain population group.

This self-assessment form has multiple benefits:

-Privacy: One ground rule ethical scientific research has is that researchers should not ask more information of a respondent than is needed for the study. Self-assessment in the form of 'do you consider yourself to be of higher, lower or average income' skips the part of asking someone's specific number of income. Respondents are also more likely to answer to sensitive topics when choosing out of broad categories in comparison to specific numbers (Clifford et al., 2016).

-Accuracy: The identity of a person plays a large role in their viewpoints as well and may create more accurate group definitions. Someone who, according to the specific definition (legal or made up by researcher), is from an ethnic minority because one of their parents was accidentally born while on a vacation probably does not have similar life experiences as a 'typical' immigrant. By asking respondents if they identify with a specific group or not, another problem is also circumvented: when researchers for example give 3 different options of race a respondent might feel belonging to a 4th (Clifford et al., 2016).

-Efficiency: Less statistical calculation needs to be made. This also decreases the risk of making mistakes.

-Ethically: In our current society, formerly 'objective' demographic questions like gender or even sexual orientation become increasingly subjective: think about the legal option of an X, for unknown by gender, to not only accommodate intersex people, but also people who, in their gender, do not *identify* as male or female, regardless of their biological sexe. I think it is time that also the scientific debate moves forward in this, and acknowledges these subjective aspects of demographic characteristics. This is another reason to use self-evaluation questions instead of fixed, statistical, objective responses.

Apart from these five population group questions, certain questions related to neighbourhood and work are asked that were found to be important participation predictors in the literature (Nienhuis et al., 2011; Arnstein, 1969).

Invited	Op welke manier zou je uitgenodigd willen worden om mee te doen aan een participatie-activiteit?	-Via Social Media -Via een brief -Via het lokale nieuws -Via posters/advertenties in de stad -Anders:
Earlier participated	Heb je wel eens aan burgerparticipatie gedaan? Hoe wist je van die participatie-activiteit af?	
Importance topics	Denk aan een onderwerp dat belangrijk is voor jou. Zou je eerder meedoen met participatie als je het onderwerp zelf mocht kiezen? Dit is voor mij:	
Importance financial contribution	Voor mijn deelname aan participatie-activiteiten is een financiele compensatie	
Importance easy language	Als participatie in simpele mensen-taal kan, zou ik eerder meedoen	

Figure 10: Survey questions/variables for the extra cluster with other questions

The rest of the questions that do not fit into one of the other clusters are mentioned here. Some control questions on the importance of certain features were asked. Another aspect of citizen participation, the way citizens are invited to join a certain participation activity, was also the topic of two questions. One as how respondents want to be invited, and the other, only for those who already participated, on how they were invited / knew about that activity.

Four main hypotheses

For this research, the following four hypotheses will be tested:

Hypothesis 1: The five underrepresented population groups participate less often

A crucial assumption for this research is that the five underrepresented groups are, indeed, underrepresented in citizen participation. Otherwise, citizen participation would not become more inclusive at all by also attracting these groups, as they already participated.

This hypothesis will be tested by comparing the variables 'underrepresented groups', with 'earlier participate'. Additional insights can be given by relations with 'prejudices-sum' to see if underrepresented groups have a more negative initial perception.

Hypothesis 2: Other explanatory variables from the literature are an explanator for participation

To further analyse explanatory variables of participation, some variables of the scientific literature (Nienhuis et al., 2011; Arnstein, 1969; Naranjo-Zolotov et al., 2019; Boonstra & Boelens, 2011) that were found to be relating with joining participation, are examined.

Do respondents that: - Have work outside the neighbourhood, Live in the neighbourhood for a long time, Do not engage with the government within their work, Score higher on empowerment and government centrality prejudices like 'it won't have effect anyway' - have a lower score on participated earlier? For this hypothesis the neighbourhood and work sub-cluster (within the demographic cluster) and 'prejudices-sum' are compared with 'earlier participated'.

Hypothesis 3: Intention to participate increases for underrepresented groups after providing alternative participation forms

One of the most important assumptions that are to be tested for this research, is the hypothesis that intention to participate for underrepresented groups does increase after providing the alternative forms. So for all underrepresented groups combined a significant higher intention2 than intention1 has to be found for this hypothesis. Supporting questions can be form-type-preference,

Then, if the answer to the question on intention to participate for alternative form is significantly higher than for traditional forms also some evidence is found for this hypothesis relating to the central question of the thesis: that providing alternative forms is a chance for inclusive participation.

Hypothesis 4a: There are differences in perceptions and conditions on citizen participation between different underrepresented groups

Differences between different underrepresented groups are also hypothesised from the literature.

Since this is about differences between groups, regressions are needed for all 16 perception and condition variables. This examines the different reasons different population groups will have to not participate. In the literature it was suggested this was time for working parents (SCP, 2014; Schlozman et al., 1994), topics for lower educated (Bovens & Wille, 2010) and complexity for ethnic minorities (Martiniello, 2005).

Hypothesis 4b: There are differences between underrepresented groups in the ranking of different participation forms

Extrapolating for these different reasons for population groups, differences in preferred (alternative) forms are predicted between groups. For example, working parents might prefer the online mini-survey because their main reason for not joining citizen participation is time-intensity. Again, regressions are needed because this is about differences between different groups.

Statistical analysis

A variety of statistical methods was performed on SPSS to get more insights on answering these hypotheses, but also to get a better feeling on the data itself, ranging from

-computing new variables like 'intention change' and, 'prejudices-sum'

-descriptive analysis of all single variables using frequencies and histograms

-analysing relationships between all combinations of two variables with jitterplots, crosstabs, significant bivariate correlations, and filtered Wilcoxon Signed Rank tests.

-analysing combined effects of multiple predictive variables on an independent variable (for example the effect of population group on perception of participation) with Linear regressions, Ordinal regressions, ANOVA's.

The extent of the depth of such an analysis can be seen in the two figures below.

Figure 11: Apart from 79 variables from the questionnaire itself, a dozen new variables were computed

Figure 12: The extensive data analysis was done as complete as possible which resulted in 3000 rows of syntax

Chapter 4: Results

Before moving on to the results of the hypotheses, an overview of descriptive statistics is given.

Descriptive Statistics: Response rates

A total of 216 respondents started the questionnaire, of which 112 completely filled in the survey. Another 2 of those were discarded because they were not filled in seriously, having a total of 110 analysed questionnaires. Thus, around 48% prevalence of responses dropped because of incomplete data, which is high compared to 9.9% of Hardigan et al. (2016). The total nonresponse is even higher, as also around 50 % of the physically distributed printed QR codes were denied, getting to a result of a total response rate of 25% (or even lower, considering unseen online denials for Facebook groups). This response rate is very low compared to the European Social Survey that has a response rate of around 60% in the Netherlands (Koen et al., 2018). However, it is quite average compared to overall response rates of Hardigan et al. (2016) who find 25% on postal surveys and 10% on email surveys.

During the data collection, it became clear that working parents and young people were easy to reach, while lower income, lower education and ethnic minorities were much more difficult. The adjusted targeting by approaching places, people and Facebook groups with these groups after every 20 surveys helped for lower income and ethnic minorities, however lower educated still only had 3 at the end of data collection. Since I use self-evaluation, a potential reason for this could be that due to social bubbles, someone would consider their VMBO / MBO education 'average', even when I would classify this as at least 'a bit lower'. Another reason could be that a lot of the non-response is of people with lower education, as the topic of citizen participation or the survey itself was too difficult for lower educated. Some proof for this was found by comments of QR respondents that filled in the questionnaire immediately that said the language of the survey was too difficult for them as lower educated. As solution, for education the group 'average or lower than average combined', was used.

For ethnic minorities frequencies unfortunately were still at 18, just below the official minimum of 20. However, no distortions were found when analysing this group, and the group still even had some significant result, so hopefully the problematic effect of the small sample size is negligible.

Working Parents	46
Youth	36
Lower Education (+ average)	32
Lower Income	20
Ethnic Minorities	18

Figure 13: Total frequencies of underrepresented population groups in survey

The most noteworthy descriptive results are mentioned in the following paragraphs. These results are purely descriptive and unweighted, so results might be distorted for overrepresentation of certain population groups. For a complete overview of all descriptive results, see Appendix 1.

One of the things that became clear is that citizen participation is still a relatively unknown feature.

Most respondents did not say they participated in the past. 37% did, 46% didnt, and a sizable 17% did not know if they did[1]. For the 41 who did participate, 27 joined an information-evening, a smaller number of 10 participated in an adviesraad. Another 17 people named something themselves: ranging from highly deliberate forms like a denktank, expertmeeting, wijkpanels, or zoomcall about the future of the neighbourhood, to letting the government know your opinion individually via surveys, petitions, letters, or via associations one is a member of like the bewonersplatform, dorpsbelangen, or citizen initiatives.

The relative unfamiliarity might explain why, for the first intention question, the largest group (43%) answers 'maybe' wanting to participate. - This confirms Nienhuis et al. (2011), who reported a similar 40%. - While probably and definitely are the next biggest groups, maybe is so big that, combined with definitely not and probably not is still the majority of 51%. It seems there is a lot to win in educating and motivating people about participation activities that are offered, if such a large quantity is still at the middle line.

It is also clear that the alternative forms were quite new for the respondents: 55% knew none or most not. Only 12% knew most or all of the alternative forms. These quantities help with the premise of this research that explaining these new alternatives might change people's perspectives, as these forms were indeed new for most respondents.

The last variable that further helps explain the unfamiliarity, is the open question on other reasons why nót to participate. Two types of answers stood out most: It wont' have an impact, and 'I am not asked to' / 'it didn't get on my path yet'. However, this was a small sample size as it was a voluntary open question.

The unfamiliarity with the topic of (alternative) citizen participation makes active invitations from municipalities that explain and invite citizens to a specific participation activity extra urgent. The survey data suggests that personal invitations are more effective than large, broad-scale invitations.

For the people who already participated, on the question 'how did you know about that activity', the largest groups were targeted individually, via acquaintances (10/38) and via a letter (9/38). Only a handful were targeted via large, broad-scale invitations like newspapers. Similar quantities are found for the question 'how do you want to be invited', where a letter (32%) and social media (42%) are the biggest groups while large-scale instruments like the local news (5%) and adverts in the neighbourhood (7%) are in the minority.

Lastly, at the open question: 'how do you think participation can be made more inclusive?' also answers related to targeted invitations were given: "Personal targeting",

"Use more niche social media and more languages and culturally appropriate approaches for certain non-western population groups", "Go to the people instead of letting them come to you".

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[1] This can be explained by the fact that, as I noticed, some respondents skipped the intro text entirely. Thus, after a while I began mentioning to please read the intro text while I targeted respondents.

Unfamiliarity is not the only important explanator for non-participation, a negative perception also definitely plays a role, according to the survey descriptive data.

Perception	Mean rank Likert-scale	Percentage agree	Condition	Percentage submitted
Complexity	3.10	40%	Impact	73,6%
Time	3.08	33,6%	Informality	68,2%
Answer	2.86	22,7%	Topics	65,5%
Impact	2.82	26,3%	Time	50%
Formality	2.62	20,9%	Personally	50%
Personally	2.56	19%	Complexity	34,5%
Responsible	2.54	21,8%	Answer	33,6%
Topics	2.51	15,4%	Responsible	22,7%

Figure 14: Descriptive statistics on the 8 perception and condition variables

Looking at the 8 perception variables in the figure above, it shows that not everybody thinks positively about citizen participation. While for the perception variables, the majority does not agree or is neutral, still a large amount of people see participation activities in a different light, and are not attracted to citizen participation. More than a quarter of the respondents see participation as just for show while 'it doesn't have effect anyway' (impact) and almost as much see it as a boring activity (formality). The biggest groups (looking at largest quantities of negative perceptions) clearly see participation as mostly a technical and laborious process as for 'processes and language are too complex and government-technical' and 'costs too much time' more than a third agrees.

For the condition variables, we can see that even more people think that these 8 perception aspects are important. More variance is found between perceptions here. For a large majority, impact on policy, an informal process, and relevant discussed topics are important. The importance of impact is also shown by the answers given for the open question 'Why do you want to participate' that was asked to those who want to participate in the future (intention1). For this open question, answers were categorised, the largest amount, 16, mentions 'influence on policy', then, 14 say 'make my voice heard', 13 mention a feeling of responsibility: 'a contribution to society overall'. Smaller groups are passionate about a certain topic, like the liveability of their neighbourhood, 4, 5 get something personal out of it, like information, social connections, or just a fun activity, and 2 of them are just curious.

Summarising, unfamiliarity with citizen participation is not the only possible indicator for non-participation. The existence of negative perceptions with respondents does seem to play a role as well. But are respondents changing their perception after reading about the alternative forms?

Looking at overall numbers on perception *change*, 38 percent (42 respondents) got a more positive perception on citizen participation. Reasons mentioned for perception increase are most often: 'Apparently it is not that boring or formal' (24/42), 'Apparently topics that are important to me are discussed' (15/42), and 'Apparently it doesn't cost that much time' 15/42, while a bit less often mentioned are the reasons: 'Apparently it is not that complicated / government-technical' (12/42), 'Apparently you have more impact on policy' (11/42). Comparing these numbers with the condition numbers, we see that while impact is the most important as reason to be open for participation, people changed their perception the least because of perceived higher impact. Apparently people want to see real results first, and a survey with explanations about alternative forms does not do enough for thát part of perception being changed. Perceived higher informality was much more often submitted, thus thát part of perception was more easily changed by explaining about the alternative forms.

Apart from the sizable minority of 38 percent that got an increased perception, a negligible 3 % says to think more negative now after this survey. The largest group, 60 percent did NOT change their opinion. Reasons that are mentioned are for instance that people didn't knew enough about citizen participation to have an opinion first, or the other way around, that people already knew a lot about alternative forms so did not get new information to change their opinion. Also some respondents told that they are not yet convinced it will have impact, or that participation is done in the right way, and still is 'too top-down'. Since a group got a more positive perception, we expect to see a similar small increase in intention to join. Looking at the descriptive results we indeed see a similar minority group that has an *intention* increase. Referring back to intention1, where 51% did not know (the largest part, 43%), or did not want (smaller part, 8%) to participate, for the exact same question intention2, this shrunk to 42%. However, again a majority of 69%, did nót change their intention on this Likert scale. On the control question, 'are you now more inclined to participate', positive numbers are a bit higher, suggesting the 5 point Likert scale could not incorporate all differences: 43% is more inclined. Reasons given incorporate the alternative participation forms: 'Alternative forms are easier', 'The pizza-meeting sounds great' 'More clear to me which forms there are' or mention that they more realise what participation is and what benefits it might have: 'More clear to me what participation is', 'more clear how important it is', 'Feels like it has more effect' , 'I realise I should not complain if I don't participate first'. However, also here, still the majority of 57% does say they are not more inclined to participate than earlier. So perception and intention increased both by a bit, and with similar numbers, although the majority did not change on perception and intention.

Descriptive Statistics: Participation form preference

The relative positive scores suggest that in general, people liked the alternative forms. This can indeed be seen in the data: the alternative forms are far more popular than the traditional ones: 50% against 15%, although a sizable percentage of 36% is neutral.

For the top 5 question: this can be noted as well in figure 15. Looking at the mean ranks, the alternative forms are all above the traditional advisory board. A clear 'winner' is the online mini-survey. People explained this as their top 1 with terms like 'easy from home'. The pizza-meeting is also relatively popular, people explain they like this form with for example: 'As I can be face to face with a municipality employee in an informal setting'. The other two alternative forms are lower in numbers. However, while advisory board is last, still some respondents had this at top 1.

Participation form	Mean Rank[2]	Percentage at 1
Online Mini-Survey	2.08	46%
Pizza-meeting	2.77	20%
Theme-table	2.85	11%
Neighbourhood Budgeting	3.30	13%
Advisory Board	3.99	10%

Figure 15: Mean ranks participation forms

Concluding, it seems like the more accessible participation forms generally are preferred, with the online mini-survey and the pizza-meeting on top.

Besides descriptive results from the surveys, a general finding from the interviews was that they stressed the importance of inclusivity:

General finding Interviews: Diversity: Importance of inclusive citizen participation

Adding to the relevance of inclusive citizen participation, the interviewed professionals emphasize that inclusive citizen participation is essential for the working of democracy:

(Movisie) "Participatie en democratie heeft als waarde dat iedereen waar politiek over gaat, mag en kan deelnemen aan het politieke proces: Inclusiviteit is een bouwsteen van democratie. Er is geen democratie zonder inclusieve participatie."

Without proper inclusive participation, according to some professionals there might even be a risk that participation will be hijacked by big data companies that are even more top-down and potentially manipulative:

(Studio vers bestuur) "Grote platforms zoals google en facebook, hebben nu al meer macht en geld dan welke staat dan ook. Stel dat een slimme jongen of meid met de netflix voor het openbaar bestuur komt, waarmee je met je smartphone direct invloed kan uitoefenen op waar het belastinggeld komt, dan stapt iedereen over. Willen we dat dan? Ik denk het niet!"

Another topic mentioned that stresses increasing urgency for inclusivity, is polarisation. And while, polarisation increases the need for citizen participation, polarisation also makes practicing citizen participation more difficult.

(Municipality Leeuwarden) "Dat polarisatie heel groot is merk ik op dit moment. […]

Je merkt het ook in participatiesessies, het bemoeilijkt het proces, je moet heel goed afwegen hoe doen we het, hoe voelt iedereen zich gehoord, welke bewoordingen gebruik je, dat kost steeds meer tijd en vraagt meer aandacht. Alles wat je doet moet op een weegschaaltje gezet worden, dat bemoeilijkt het want dan vraag je bepaalde vragen niet, die je wel moet weten."

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[2] Friedmans ANOVA testing is significant, which means that the 5 forms were not equally ranked. Kendall's W is .199 which means that 20 % of the variability in ranking is accounted for by the type of participation form.

Referring shortly back to this research's survey, the growing polarisation and relating difficulties with wording was also found there. On the open question after the statement on how currently, participation is mostly done by the 'blanke, rijke, hoogopgeleide gepensioneerde Nederlander' people from both 'camps' expressed their dissatisfaction with this wording:

"Zeer suggestieve stelling.. Enquete-maker stemt groen links? Rijke, blanke Nederlander? In welk land wonen wij ook alweer?"

"Vervang de term "blanke Nederlander" door " witte Nederlander" het woord "blank" valt niet even goed bij iedereen".

Instead of polarisation making participation more difficult, citizen participation can also become a vehicle for decreasing polarisation, especially in smaller settings.

(Municipality Leeuwarden) "De kleinere settings, daar merk je het meest dat mensen meer herkenning in elkaar zien, en polarisatie vermindert."

When different population groups join a collective cause, bridging (Putnam, 2000) between groups can happen (Movisie). Advisory Board Leeuwarden mentions how this is especially important in cities, that already have a lower social cohesion, compared to villages:

(Advisory Board) "Stadsmensen zeggen wel eens dag tegen elkaar, in dorpen kent iedereen elkaar. Dit heeft ook te maken met participatie, in een klein dorp, als mensen het ergens niet mee eens zijn dan hoor je het wel, dan gaat het niet door! In steden zeggen ze, ah juh dat sil wel goedkomme, daar relativeren ze meer, en zijn minder actief."

In the following sections of the results the four hypotheses will be discussed to structure the remaining results, from both surveys and interviews. Since hypothesis 1 and 2 are more about testing the pre-conditions for inclusive citizen participation (by testing underrepresentedness in general), interview quotes are not used here. The interviews focused more on the 'main body', hypothesis 3 and 4: on perception and intention differences between underrepresented groups. The interviews also bring more contexts into why perception and intentions are sometimes negative and how they should be changed towards more positive states.

Hypothesis 1: The five underrepresented population groups participate less often

Variables used	Statistical test	Significance and strength	Strength relationship and confirmation
-The five underrepresented groups -Earlier participation[3]	Individual bivariate Pearson correlations	Lower Income3[4] -.202*[5]Lower Educated -.243* Ethnic Minorities -.189* Youth -.177** Working Parents not sig.	Largely Confirmed Small relationships for all groups except working parents.

Figure 17: Statistical results hypothesis 1

Correlations between the five underrepresented groups and 'earlier participation' were examined. For all groups, except working parents, negative significant correlations were found. The hypothesis thus can be largely confirmed. Thus, indeed the underrepresented groups less often joined participation activities in the past (except for working parents).

Lower initial intention supports hypothesis confirmation

For individual correlation with intention1, a lower income .195* and lower education .372, a lower initial intention is found too. However, young people and ethnic minorities do not correlate with intention1. A lower initial intention is thus a plausible reason for the non-participation of lower incomes and lower educated. Other reasons are to be expected for young people and ethnic minorities: maybe they were not targeted effectively, or just had less chance to participate due to a shorter lifespan.

However, for ethnic minorities some results were found that do suggest a lower intention: ethnic minorities want to participate at significant lower levels (correlation of -.183** with level-wanted). Also ethnic minorities are significantly more prejudiced (.258). Lower educated also wanted to participate at lower levels (-.326) and had higher total prejudice scores (.339).

Another interesting supporting finding here is that 'Usual suspects' correlates negatively with prejudices-sum: .168** confirming that usual suspects have less prejudices and thus have a more positive perception on participation.

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[3] For these statistics the Question1: "Heb je wel eens aan burgerparticipatie gedaan?" was used, the answers 'No' and 'I don't know' were combined, so "yes" was compared to these other two answers combined.

[4] For this statistic, Income was combined into three groups: 'lower than average' , 'a bit lower than average' and 'average' were combined, the second group was 'somewhat higher than average' and the third group was 'higher than average'.

[5] **= Significant at 10% level *= Significant at 5% level No star = Significant at 1% level

Box1: Sidenote on a different perspective on population

- Moral vs Practical -> Mentality profiles

An interesting sidenote on how, instead of the demographic population groups, another classification system can also be used, comes from SVB who often uses the mentality model of Motivaction (Motivaction, 2020). SVB explains how of the four major groups: structuurzoekers, pragmatici, plichtsgetrouwen and verantwoordelijken, the structuurzoekers and pragmatici do not often participate, while the other two are the usual suspects.

(SVB) "De structuurzoekers zijn mensen die in de enorme transities waarin we nu zitten, hun vastigheden kwijt raken en raken daar ongerust en boos over. Die houden de verantwoordelijken die in al die besturen / raden zitten, verantwoordelijk voor de veranderingen die zij willen, en die staan helemaal niet positief om gezellig participatiefeestjes met de verantwoordelijken te gaan houden. [...] Structuurzoekers denken dat ze er niet op zitten te wachten, maar eigenlijk vindt iedereen het eigenlijk heel fijn om hun stem te laten horen. Pragmatici denken heb ik helemaal geen tijd voor.
[...] Er zit dus wel wat overlap in sommige demografische doelgroepen en de mentality-profielen, maar ik vind het link om dat 1 op 1 te koppelen. Het gaat om je mens-zijn. Maar over het algemeen kun je wel iets zien dat structuurzoekers tussen 30 en 50 zijn en iets lagere opleiding. En pragmatici jonger dan 45 en een betere opleiding.
[...] Die pragmatici, die 'geen tijd' zouden invullen als reden om niet mee te doen, zouden zéker eerder meedoen bij korte incidentele participatievormen als online enquetes."

Since the focus and structure of this research was already established before this interview, it was unfortunately not possible to look much further into this division in terms of the survey. However, when the overlap between perception indicators was analysed, two groups could be distinguished that very much fit towards the two non-participating groups of the structuurzoekers en pragmatici.

1 Practical reasons are one overlapping group: (Language and processes too complicated. And Too much time)

2 Moral reasons is another overlapping group: (Doesn't have effect. Too much set in stone how I answer. Don't get anything personally)

The other three indicators (Participation is too boring / formal, I don't feel responsible, Topics not relevant for me) correlated with (almost) all other 6 perception variables.

	Time	Boring	Complex	Person	Answer	Topics	Responsible	Effect
Time	-	X	X					
Boring	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X
Complex	X	X	-			X	X	
Person		X		-	X	X	X	X
Answer		X		X	-	X	X	X
Topics		X	X	X	X	-	X	X
Responsible		X	X	X	X	X	-	X
Effect		X		X	X	X	X	-

Figure X: A lot of perception indicators had a significant correlation (X).

For future research and practices with inclusive citizen participation, it might thus also be interesting to get a further look into this mentality-model.

Hypothesis 2: Other explanatory variables from the literature are an explanator for participation

Variables used	Statistical tests	Significance and strength	Strength relationship and confirmation
-Prejudices-sum -Neighbourhood and work sub-cluster -Earlier participation	Individual bivariate Pearson correlations	 Prejudices-sum -.318 Work-contactgov .336 Work-at-nh not sig. Social life at nh not sig. Years living at nh not sig.	Somewhat confirmed Moderate negative Moderate positive No relationship No relationship No relationship
	Ordinal regression Exp(B) / Odds ratio's	Prejudices-sum 1.12 Prejudice-low 6.32 Work-contactgov 5.67 Work-at-nh not sig. Social life at nh not sig. Years living at nh not sig.	Lower prejudiced people have a 6.3 times higher chance of having participated earlier. People who not come into contact with government via their work have a 5.7 lower chance to have participated earlier.

Figure 18: Statistical results hypothesis 2

Some of the explanatory variables from the literature were confirmed. Prejudices-sum was one of the stronger explanators of earlier participation, confirming the empowerment concept (Naranjo-Zolotov et al., 2019) and the Government Centrality concept (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011). The regression showed that lower prejudiced people have a 6.3 times higher chance of having participated earlier. It thus seems to matter how one perceives citizen participation for wether someone actually participates or not.

For the neighbourhood and work sub-cluster questions, based on Nienhuis et al. (2011) and Arnstein (1969), only the question about coming into contact with the government via your work, showed a significant (unique) effect on earlier participation. People who did not came into contact had a 5.7 times lower chance of having participated earlier. This shows that for inclusive citizen participation it is also important to target people at certain work-environments that have less contact with governments.

Interestingly, some signs for an opposite relationship than the literature (Nienhuis et al., 2011) expected was found for people who have most of their social contacs within the neighbourhood. These people more often feel not responsible for government policies (.304** Spearman correlation), while Nienhuis found a positive relationship with participation. A possible explanation can be that it matters how you frame 'citizen participation' in the questionnaire. Nienhuis et al. (2011) used 'neighbourhood projects to improve liveability', while this research named 'burgerparticipatie' explicit and explaining it more in terms of creating policies together with the government.

Hypothesis 3: Intention to participate increases for underrepresented groups after providing alternative participation forms

Variables used	Statistical test	Significance and strength	Strength relationship and confirmation
The five underrepresented groups Intention-change	One-Sample Wilcoxon signed rank test. (Also same test but filtered for different population groups).	Unfiltered: positive increase, but not sig. Filtered per group: Lower income: r^6: .422** Other 4 groups not sig	Mostly deconfirmed Moderate positive effect
	Linear Regression. When 5 groups and prejudice-sum is added.	Education Beta -.223* Other groups not sig	For every education unit increase, the intention-increase became 1/5th of a likert scale step lower.
	Same linear regression as above, but without education.	Income Beta -.167** Other groups not sig	For every income unit increase, the intention-increase became 1/5th of a likert scale step lower.

Figure 19: Statistical results hypothesis 3

The hypothesis is mostly disconfirmed. The survey, providing respondents with information about alternative forms, overall had a small positive, but insignificant effect on intention to join.

A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was performed to determine if intention to participate increased over the survey. Overall, the mean on intention to participate did increase from intention1 to intention 2. From 3.59 to 3.65. Some comments that show this: 'Het is makkelijker dan ik dacht', 'Omdat er ook laagdrempelige, informelere manieren zijn om mee te doen'. The majority however tied and stayed the same: 76. This probably makes it why the Wilcoxon signed rank test is not significant. A comment by one sums it up: [my opinion is the same], 'Een enquete gaat daar in een x aantal vragen niets aan veranderen'.

Looking at individual groups, when intention-change is put into a linear regression model, with 5 population-groups and prejudices-sum as predictors, education is significant. When you leave out education, income is significant, suggesting overlapping effects of low income and low education on intention-change. For simple correlations, income -.181 and education3 -.158 correlate** with intention-change suggesting lower incomes and lower educated more often got a positive intention change.

When filtered as separate groups, the only group getting a significant increase was lower income. This means that lower income not only got significantly more often an intention increase than higher educated, but that their intention also, in fact, increased significantly.

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[6] Calculated manually by Standardized Test Statistic / Square Root of (filtered) Sample Size

Looking at the control question 'more inclined', income .172 and youth .220* correlate. So young people more often SAY they are more inclined, but do not score higher on intention, perhaps because the 5 point Likert scale was too small to accord for the increase (or they might be less honest). For a regression, young people are also the only significant group. OR = 2.87.

A very high link has been found for perception-change with intention (more inclined .675*, and intention-change .266*. So, thinking more positively about participation, will also likely result in a more positive intention to join. This is logical, but important premise for this research. This link between perception and intention can also be found for the perception-indicators of empowerment: prejudice-sum has a moderate significant relationship with intention1 -.432 so a negative perception based on these indicators is quite the explanator for not wanting to join.

Significant perception-change

Perception-change did get a significant increase: a one-sample Wilcoxon signed rank test (for all 5 groups combined) finds a significant positive increase with R: .532: a large effect. One-Sample Wilcoxon signed rank test for form type preference shows that the median is significantly different than neutral and biased towards alternative which means that alternative forms are preferred as well (for all groups combined), r = .420: a moderate effect.

The two results above do give some support for the hypothesis that intention also might have increased by a bit due to higher perceptions because of the provided alternative forms. However, no hard confirmation for an actual significant intention increase (for all 5 groups) can be made, it seems that more is needed.

One way to get more insights on this is to deconstruct perception into its indicators and look at differences in their effects on intention.

Perception deconstruction: differences in relation with intention change

There are some notable differences between the different perception indicators looking at how they relate with intention-change. Intention change correlates negatively[7] with 'participation costs too much time' -.193* and 'I do not feel responsible' -.181**, but positively with 'i think more positive of participation because participation apparently is less boring as I thought' .197*, and 'apparently it is not as boring / formal as i thought' .275. Moreover, impact, is simultaneously the móst often mentioned condition 81/110 (while lowest condition 25), and the léast often mentioned apparently reason for perception increase 11/110 (while highest, not boring was 24). It thus seems that the survey did more often succeed in convincing aspects of informality, and relevant topics, but that the other parts of perception, like impact, time and responsibility, were more stubborn, and respondents were less convinced. For two of these more stubborn perception indicators, the survey and interviews provided chances to dó tackle them more effectively.

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[7] For simple correllations. For a linear regression (with intention-change as dependent variable), time Beta -.198** and responsiblity -.270* are also indeed significantly negative.

Respondents thus find actual impact very important for participation. In the past, however, participation didn't always get to be impactful, interviewees noted:

(Advisory Board) "Wij hadden een tijd lang het idee dat wij als adviesraad wel adviezen uitbrachten maar de gemeenteraad daar nou niet zo vreselijk veel aandacht aan schonk."

(Municipality Leeuwarden) "In het verleden hebben we ook wel eens iets naar buiten gebracht wat eigenlijk al in kannen en kruiken was, dat je een vinkje zet we hebben geparticipeerd, nooit meer teruggekoppeld wat je ermee hebt gedaan."

There is definitely a transition going towards more impactful participation.

(Advisory Board) "Dat is door de top van het ambtelijk apparaat nu wel gepasseerd. Men heeft gezegd dat we echt met elkaar gaan zoeken naar hoe we elkaar kunnen versterken. En dat er aan de adviezen in ieder geval aandacht besteed wordt."

(Municality Leeuwarden) "Ik merk dat gemeenten in transitie zitten, het echte top-down is al veel minder dan 5 -10 jaar geleden, maar we zijn er nog niet. Er is toch nog wel een schil die denkt 'participatie is een informatieavond' hebben we dat vinkje gehad en dan leggen we het nog voor aan de adviesraad en dat was hem, check. Die werkwijze proberen we te veranderen, maar het is een ingesleten cultuur. In veranderingsprocessen heb je dat altijd, early adaptors, maar ook een stroom die het wel goed vindt."

However, the process towards more impactful participation is not finished yet and is not saturated with all employees within governments. Relating to this, also often a conscious choice is missing at the government where a certain participation activity is placed on the participation impact ladder, which sometimes leads to misunderstanding within governments. For instance a situation was named where provinciale staten proudly used the words 'participation should be as high as possible' while after the participation employee asked if citizens then should have direct influence on the policy provinciale staten reacted with: 'no, that is not our intention' (SVB).

(SVB) "Dus wat bij ons vaak mist in de zoektocht is een bewust besluit met van alle afzenders en met name het bevoegd gezag, een bewust besluit van 'dit proces dient zich af te spelen op deze plek op de ladder'."

(Municipality Leeuwarden) "Er valt veel winst te behalen om ook binnen de gemeente goed met elkaar het gesprek aan te gaan van hoe organiseer je dit nou."

It was noted that some factions within governments still think it is a bit scary to hand over (some) contol to citizens, as the government is still end-responsible. Therefore, currently most often the middle ground on the ladder of consultation/advising is chosen. (SVB, FSP, Gemeente Leeuwarden). However, SVB is optimistic that if participation will be done more impactfully and higher on the ladder, citizens will become much more positive about participation:

(SVB) "En in mijn gevoel, in mijn ervaring zullen voor deze mensen die voor het eerst dit waarlijk ervaren nog heel veel magische kippenvel-momenten gaan ontstaan bij mensen die voor het eerst in hun leven waarlijk ervaren dat ze echt invloed mogen uitoefenen op hun eigen omgeving en op hun eigen toekomst."

People in the surveys want to have more actual experiences first too: 'Ik wil eerst zien in de praktijk of deze alternatieve vormen ook echt effectief zijn'.

Apart from influencing impact up-front by designing impactful forms, the results show that communicating the results with participants after a participation activity is really important for a sense of impact. Answers from survey respondents to the inclusivity-question that show this are for example*:*

"Meer resultaat delen. Men moet het gevoel krijgen dat het nut heeft en resultaat oplevert wat voor hen allen belangrijk is."

"Zorg dat het de moeite waard is en dat er duidelijke waardering is. Tastbare resultaten motiveren. Vechten tegen de bierkaai is maar heel even leuk."

"Duidelijk zijn wat er met output gebeurt, terugkoppelen daarop".

Communicating what parts of the input is used and which not, as FSP research showed out, will help, and if you have good arguments why you do not use certain input, this will actually be respected by citizens.

(FSP) "Waarvoor je uitnodigt, wat de status van het gesprek is, en vervolgens op de hoogte blijven wat er met de uitkomsten wordt gedaan. Met name dat laatste wordt heel vaak vergeten waardoor veel inwoners het gevoel hebben 'ik kan roepen wat ik wil maar ik heb niet de indruk dat ik daarmee verschil maak.' De terugkoppeling is belangrijk. "Geen inspraak zonder uitspraak". Dan kunnen inwoners ook best leven met het idee dat overheden niet alles overneemt wat zij geroepen hebben. Ook al is het maar heel minimaal, als de overheid argumenten aandraagt waarom zij niet op bepaalde suggesties zijn ingegaan voelen ze zich wel serieus genomen."

If the communicating of results does not happen the citizen has the feeling like it was all for nothing and the public support base for participation will fall.

(Gemeente Leeuwarden) "Als je partijen 3 keer uitgenodigd, dat het niet terugkomt in het beleid, waarom je bepaalde dingen wel of niet hebt meegenomen, dan ben je je draagvlak kwijt, en participatieprocessen vallen of staan bij draagvlak. Dat je het product laat zien wat uit de input is gekomen, en dan toch nog een navraagronde doet, is dit wat jullie hadden verwacht? Als je het goed kan uitleggen waarom je iets wel of niet meeneemt ben je al een heel eind, het beeldend maken helpt dan, deze keuze gemaakt omdat het invloed heeft op een ander onderwerp, en we werken hetzelfde als jouw huishoudpotje, je kan niet alles."

An obstacle for communicating results is the length of the policy making process. This makes it that only after several months after the participation activity, the results can be communicated.

(FSP) "Daar gaan soms maanden overheden, totdat de cliënt zich nog maar vaag herinnerd welk gesprek hij daarover had gevoerd tijdens de participatiemethode. Tijd is in die zin ook een factor, voor cliënten is het belangrijk dat er een snelle terugkoppeling volgt en die molens draaien langzamer."

Personal invitations and sense of responsibility

A low responsibility for respondents is logical, according to SVB, who mentions that our society in general does not train a sense of responsibility or ownership:

(SVB) "Al die verschillende soorten mensen en belevingswerelden, zijn het helemaal niet gewend om dit soort vragen voor hun kiezen te krijgen. De maatschappij traint geen gevoel van medeverantwoordelijkheid en mede-eigenaarschap, dat jij mede vorm mag en kan geven aan jouw eigen toekomst."

For a sense of responsibility and of higher participation intention, informing citizens about (alternative) participation forms is thus important. This can also be seen in the data where knowledge-alt-forms negatively correlates with 'more inclined' -.212* which confirms that for those who got new information more often their intention to participate increased. Also according to municipality Leeuwarden, citizens are still often uninformed about governmental citizen participation:

(Municipality Leeuwarden) *"Als je vanuit de gemeente zelf naar buiten gaat, denken mensen al snel 'ah dat is niet voor mij' of 'dan moet ik wel heel erg slim zijn of precies weten wat de gemeente doet om daar aan mee te doen'. Soms gaan we er nog te snel van uit dat burgers weten wat we doen als gemeente, dus moet je het heel duidelijk noemen waar je het over wilt hebben met burgers. Dat heel erg specifiek maken, als we zeggen 'we willen dat je meepraat over 'de sociale basis' dan denken mensen 'waar gaat dat over??..' ."*

Also a large degree of respondents said not to know much about citizen participation. Comments that show this are: 'Zou niet weten op welke plekken ik kan bijdragen' and 'Het is nog niet op mn pad gekomen' and "Ik denk dat we in het algemeen nog niet genoeg geïnformeerd worden op dit onderwerp." Informing is thus important for responsibility. However, respondents who do not feel responsible still significantly less often got an intention increase. For an actual sense of responsibility, citizens need to be personally targeted, and be explained why specifically that person is invited to join a specific participation activity. This makes them more involved which helps with a sense of responsibility.

(FSP) *"Het moet ook ráken aan jouw leefsituatie. Dat degene die de vraag stelt heel duidelijk is, waarom wordt ik uitgenodigd, door wie wordt ik uitgenodigd."*

Thus, the invitation itself should also be personal instead of general. Civil servants should move out of their offices, and come into contact with citizens. People need to be invited via other people, for example via key figures with large networks, like communities of ethnic minorities. Other more personal invitation strategies mentioned in interviews and surveys are: providing invitations in different languages, and inviting parents via their work or the schools of their kids.

(Advisory Board) *"Ambtenaren die plannen maken, moeten het gemeentehuis uit, en contact met de mensen zoeken. In het WMO zijn er nu ook twee opbouwwerkers, dat is gewoon broodnodig. Er is een periode afgebouwd, nu wordt het toch duidelijk dat je mensen moet interesseren, motiveren, naar ze toe gaan."*

Movisie names a specific forms that can be used for personal targeting: the participative, activating research.

(Movisie) *"Als je wil dat mensen participeren moet je het ze vragen, weten we vanuit onderzoek: het is push en pull. Dat de overheid naar de mensen toe gaat. [...] Een activerend onderzoek doen, je gaat samen, bewoners en bestuurders, de buurt in, en vraag je vervolgens aan anderen wil je samen meedenken, vervolgens vragen opstellen die je wil stellen aan de hele buurt Wat vind je waardevol, waardeloos? Wat moet blijven wat moet anders? Een groep nooit gevraagde, maar welwillende burgers kan je helpen een groot aantal burgers in de wijk te spreken, dit in het buurthuis, moskee, het COC-gebouw. Zo'n participerend activerend onderzoek activeert de mensen. Je krijgt zo én veel informatie én je betrekt veel nieuwe mensen. Je moet mensen vragen via sleutelfiguren, niet een algemene oproep, zeker voor mensen met laag vertrouwen, dan werkt een flyertje in de bus niet."*

If governments do not actively and personally target specific individuals, participation will be still at risk of attracting mostly usual suspects, regardless of participation activity, according to SVB.

(SVB) "Je moet heel erg je best doen om structuurzoekers en pragmatisten überhaupt, op een niet-vooroordeel-bevestigende manier, onderdeel te maken van het gesprek, en dan mét hen te gaan co-creëren. […] Als je dan niet ontzettend je best doet om juíst ook die structuurzoekers en die pragmatici ín de juiste verhouding aan boord te krijgen voor je gesprek, dan praat je dus weer, ook met zo'n heel mooi instrument, alleen met de usual suspects.

Hypothesis 4a: There are differences in perceptions and conditions on citizen participation between different underrepresented groups

Variables used	Statistical tests	Significance and strength	Strength relationship and confirmation
5 population groups Perception cluster Condition cluster	Ordinal Regressions Exp (B) / Odds Ratio's	Youth: Choice perception 1.932** Youth: Choice condition 2.481* Ethnic minorities: Complex perception 2.459** Ethnic minorities: Complex condition 2.851** Lower income3[8]: Formality perception 3.142* Lower income3: Informality condition 4.271** Lower Education: Perception Topics 4.967 Perception Formality 4.199* Perception Personal gain 7.264 Perception Effect 3.796* Condition Formality LESS -3.490**[9]	Confirmed Read as: Young people have a two times higher chance to agree with the statement that 'in participation it is too much set in stone how I answer', while also for the condition 'if I can choose how to answer myself', compared to other groups.

Figure 20: Statistical results hypothesis 4a

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[8] Significant effect is only apparent if education is left out, suggesting an overlapping effect of education and income on this variable.

[9] Perception and condition questions do not always overlap. Apparently it is thus not that easy to say certain negative viewpoints of participation also always relate to that aspect being important for the respondent. In this case, there are significant relations in opposite direction: lower educated léss often say 'if it would be fun, I'd join often' while they more often think participation is boring. Maybe they can not imagine themselves iit will be fun. Or they agree with it not being fun, and see participation as a necessary evil. More psychological scientific research can help planning research to really delve into these relations.

Ordinal regressions were done for all 8 perception questions and for all 8 condition questions to see which population groups significantly more often had certain perceptions and conditions. Significant differences were found between groups, the hypothesis can thus be confirmed. Most interesting are the significant perceptions and conditions that overlap. These overlaps give the strongest incentive for governments who want to reach a certain group, as these group thinks participation is still lacking in that aspect/indicator, while it is also especially important to have that aspect for that group. These are:

1 For youth: open and free answering

2 For ethnic minorities: easy language and processes

3 For lower income: more informal participation

While not having overlapping perceptions and conditions, lower educated did have a long list of significant negative perceptions:

4 Lower educated feel a higher moral distance towards participation: Topics are not important to them, they think it is boring, don't get anything out of it personally, think it won't have effect anyway.

Comparing these groups' perceptions with the literature, we can confirm several scientific theories:

1 Youth: Checkoway et al. (2005) mentioned how youth wants to be encouraged in 'expressing their own power' and potentially specific participation forms therefore are needed. This can be seen in line with the higher ratings for youth on how important they think it is that they can answer in their own way.

2 Ethnic Minorities: a certain cultural barrier was mentioned by Martiniello (2005) and the consequent potential obstacles of language and political knowledge issues for ethnic minorities. These can be confirmed by the significantly high scores on the indicator complexity that asks about language and government technical processes.

3 Lower income: the theory of Arnstein (1969) related lower income with less competence via less familiarity with governments via their work. This leads to less familiarity with the formal, government-focused structures of the governments 'system world'. The significant results for the indicator of formality for lower income is in line with this theory. The theory also via competence would predict complex would be significant for income, but this was not the case.

An answer on the survey explains the high rating of informality:

"Lekker gewoon, niet in een sjieke vergaderzaal waar je je niet op je gemak voelt. Ik ben een bewoonster en niet een maatpakdame van de gemeenteraad dus lekker aan de gezellige stamtafel"

4 Lower Education: the theory on lower educated mentioned the 'education gap' (Bovens & Wille, 2010) where the major divide in society is found between lower and higher educated. This gap is shown by lower trust for lower educated in governmental processes, which can be confirmed by the high prejudice score on impact. Another part of this gap is the fact that important topics are different for lower educated, and because of unrepresented lower educated, are currently not discussed within citizen participation. This can also be confirmed by the significant result on the perception 'topics'. Topics that lower educated find significantly more important are topics that indeed are close to the 'Lived World', like playgrounds (simple correlation of .397) and shops (.288), instead of broader topics like sustainability.

5 Working parents: the theory of Schlozman et al. (1994) that working parents participate less often because of too few available time can not be confirmed. Not many significant results for working parents were found at all-in the survey. The only significant result was the simple correlation with condition of informality. Working parents léss often found informality important -.173**. Maybe this might be related with the fact that they think informality means that activities will take longer and be less efficient, but that is just one potential reason. Besides that, this relation does not show up in the regressions. However, some interviewees confirmed the premise that working parents do have few time:

(Advisory Board): "Als je echt een full-time baan hebt die veel energie en tijd kost, heb je een stukje extra motivatie nodig. Sommige mensen hebben dat, anderen doen liever andere dingen, die sporten, of wat dan ook voor leuke dingen. Mensen met jonge kinderen hebben het gewoon druk thuis. Ik denk dat voor hen andere participatiemethodes wel meer passen."

Lastly, the simple correlation for perception 'costs too much time' was found negatively relating with lower incomes -.193*, and lower educated -.161**. This might be because lower incomes and lower educated more often have a part-time job or no job at all, giving them more time than for example the group working parents.

Hypothesis 4b: There are differences between underrepresented groups in the ranking of different participation forms.

Variables used	Statistical test	Significance and strength	Strength relationship and confirmation
Top5 Forms Cluster 5 population groups	Linear Regression B values	Youth: Pizza-meeting .909 Online survey -.471** Ethnic minorities: Online survey .575** Lower income: Advisory board -.204** (-.276* when education out). Lower education: Advisory board -.281** (-.374* when income out).	Confirmed Read as: Young people rate the pizzameeting almost one step in the top 5 higher, compared for the other population groups.

Figure 21: Statistical results hypothesis 4b

This hypothesis can be confirmed as well. Significant differences have been found in the ranking of participation forms by the different underrepresented groups. Linear regressions were performed of all 5 forms, with the population groups as predicting variables. This helps determining the unique effect of the population group, thus adjusting for overlap. These lead to the following results:

1 Young people rate the pizza-meeting higher, and the online mini-survey a bit lower, compared to other groups.

2 Ethnic minorities rate the online mini-survey higher, compared to other groups.

3 Both lower income and lower educated rate the advisory board significantly lower than the other groups.

Different perceptions explain the different form preferences

1 Youth: The perception of wanting to answer in your own way fits with the more open and deliberative pizza-meeting. Youth can be helped to express themselves better with this meeting which fits to the need for self-expression that Checkoway et al. (2005) for youth described. The online mini-survey is indeed a lot more strict in the way one answers, with already defined questions and answers, which is in line with this perception well. The need for trained staff that Checkoway et al. (2005) mentioned is confirmed by Movisie:

(Movisie) "Jongeren bereik je ook door actief jongeren aan te spreken. Het opstellen van een jeugdmanifest en die aan de gemeente te presenteren is een optie. Goede, opgeleide, jongerenwerkers zijn hierin belangrijk, waarin je ook een jongere zelf kan opleiden om zelf de jongerenwerker te worden."

2 Ethnic minorities: The perception of ethnic minorities that language and processes are too complex can also explain why they rate the online mini-survey higher. Rather than highly deliberative forms like the pizza-meeting, theme-table and advisory board that have a lot of face-to-face group conversations, the online mini-survey can be performed individually at one's own tempo. If needed, the participant can look up the meaning of certain words. Besides that, the form itself is also pretty straightforward rather than complex.

3 Lower income: The perception where lower income value informality high, fits with their significantly lower rating of the highly formal Advisory Board. The advisory board Leeuwarden recognizes this as well:

(Advisory Board) "Maar specifiek iemand uit die doelgroep [laag inkomen] zit er bij ons, jammer genoeg, niet in. Ja, ik denk, dat als ze naar onze advertenties zien en kijken naar onze website, dat dat niet hun interesse heeft. "Dat officiële gepraat, we bereiken toch niks", dat soort ideeën."

The lower rating of advisory boards fits Arnstein's worry that even when poverty programs are discussed, the upwardly mobile working-class is dominating the discussion which excludes the view of the unemployed and the poor (Arnstein, 1969). This is quite shockingly, as advisory boards often evaluate social welfare services that are mainly used by the lower income population.

4 Lower educated: Lower educated, that score high on a number of perceptions that indicate their moral distance towards the government, also rate the advisory board lower. The formal structure of advisory boards, close to the policy cycle is far from the lived world that lower educate value more (Bovens & Wille, 2010). The distance towards the government is also seen in the lower trust of these type of participation forms. FSP finds that different forms like participatory budgeting and referenda would fit better, as they can resemble an 'emergency break' that can be pulled.

(FSP) "Hogeropgeleiden zijn vaker tevreden en participeren meer, lageropgeleiden vinden dat ze niet gehoord worden en zijn minder tevreden, en ook minder op de hoogte. Minder kennis van de beleidswereld, maar hebben wel veel meer kennis van de leefwereld van cliënten die zijn aangewezen op zorg en ondersteuning. […] En sommige methoden zoals referenda en burgerbegrotingen die weinig worden ingezet spreken wel tot de verbeelding van lageropgeleiden, die daarmee het gevoel hebben dat ze aan een soort noodrem kunnen trekken. Als ik genoeg medestanders vind kunnen we de gemeente stoppen."

5 Working Parents: While no significant relation with form preferences could be found, Movisie argues how schools and online participation could be attractive for working parents:

(Movisie) "Werkende ouders kunnen goed op scholen van hun kinderen participeren, binnen eigen vermogen. De online digitale samenleving kan daarnaast ook een uitkomst zijn voor werkende ouders. Online platforms waar je je verhaal kan delen met de overheidsambtenaar."

Alternative vs Traditional

There are not many differences between groups when we look at the perception of alternative forms in general. With filtered one-sample Wilcoxon sign rank tests, all groups, except for working parents, significantly preferred alternative forms over traditional ones. (Youth r=.312**, Ethnic minorities r= .392**, lower income r=.564*, lower educated r=.395*).

So what does this mean for the traditional advisory boards? FSP thinks that for inclusive citizen participation, advisory boards are not the appropriate form:

(FSP) "Dat gesprek binnen adviesraden is vaak vrij technisch, je moet weten wat de beleidssystematiek is, de rol van de gemeente, de wettelijke kaders, weten welke zorgaanbieders er actief zijn. Als je dat niet weet moet je bereid en nieuwsgierig genoeg zijn om je daarin te verdiepen en we merken dat niet iedereen die nieuwsgierigheid heeft en die betrokkenheid voelt. Ik denk daarom dat een adviesraad niet het juiste instrument is om een brede maatschappelijke discussie te voeren."

The advisory board itself also notices they are lacking in inclusivity:

(Advisory Board) "Het gaat heel lastig om etnische minderheden als leden bij de adviesraad te krijgen. We zetten op de ouderwetse manier een advertentie uit en iemand die belangstelling heeft die loopt mee. Wat we niet doen is heel direct minderheden benaderen om die mee te nemen. Dat gebeurt op dit moment gewoon niet. Eigenlijk is dat niet ok, het is gewoon moeilijk. [...] Als jongeren willen participeren, moeten ze dat op hun eigen wijze doen, jongerenraad, via wijk en buurtwerk. Waar wij betrokken in zijn, visie en beleid, ik denk dat jongeren dat wat minder aanspreekt. De sociale media moet je ook helemaal inzetten om ze te bereiken want ja, wij gebruiken het wel, facebook en Instagram om ze te bereiken. En dan een biertje met een pizza drinken past er goed bij, het hoeft ook allemaal niet zo officieel."

However, the advisory board still can play their role, especially when we look at the implications of participation in different policy phases. Participation should happen at every phase in the policy cycle (FSP, 2020) since different roles are needed per phase.

(FSP) Elke fase heeft ook zijn eigen werkvorm, andere mensen haken aan bij elke fase zul je zien, daarom kunnen adviesraden daarin het proces volgen en een regisserende rol pakken.

Different people will join in different phases, especially when using more incidental participation forms. The advisory board can overlook the whole process of policymaking, in all different phases, and can ensure input in earlier participation forms is used throughout the whole process, and can hold policy makers accountable for earlier made promises. This is especially important as participation in the beginning phases in the form of agenda-forming creates input that still has to be translated towards actual policy advises (Movisie, 2020).

Municipality Leeuwarden also sees a future where advisory boards indeed still play their role, but are not the primary forms to include a wide share of citizens into the policy making process.

(Municipality Leeuwarden) "Cliëntenraden waren denk ik wel beter in het vertegenwoordigen van de stem van de burgers. Maar toch denk ik dat we daar niet naar terug moeten. We moeten het niet meer uitbesteden, maar ook zelf doen. De ASD als controlerende macht moet er zeker zijn, maar het ophalen en zelf organiseren daar ontkom je niet meer aan."

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This research aimed to give more insights in obstacles and chances for inclusive citizen participation, with a special focus on the perception and intention of underrepresented groups for different participation forms. Regarding the hypotheses, the five population groups from the literature indeed participate less often, except for working parents. This means that youth, ethnic minorities, lower incomes, and lower educated indeed need to be targeted to join citizen participation if the goal is to have more inclusive citizen participation. For the survey of this research, concepts from the literature, like government centrality and empowerment were converted into perception indicators. A significant relation between perception and intention was found as more negative perceptions were moderately related to lower intentions to join participation and lower actual participation rates. This confirms the concepts of empowerment from Naranjo-Zolotov et al. (2019) and government centrality (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011). It thus matters how people perceive citizen participation, and influencing the perception of underrepresented groups positively should thus lead to more inclusive citizen participation. Other demographic explanatory variables from the literature, like several variables on neighbourhood residence and job position (except for contact with government via work), were not found to be significant, leading to a relatively high importance of the perception on participation and the population group you belong to.

Through this research it became clear that underrepresented groups significantly prefer alternative participation forms over traditional forms, mainly because of perceived higher informality and the perception that topics discussed are more relevant and close to the lived world of these citizens.

The possibility that alternative forms might relate to more inclusive participation was mentioned by a number of scholars (Nyseth et al., 2019; Bingham et al., 2005;) and social research institutes (Movisie, 2020; FSP, 2020). The result that alternative forms are preferred by underrepresented groups gives more scientific confirmation within the scientific debate for this potential of alternative forms. However, no significant intention increase was found (except for lower income), mainly because perception only increased slightly. Not for all parts of perception a relation with an intention increase was found. Where respondents that value informality and relevant topics were convinced by the alternative forms, this was the opposite case for perceptions of time-intensity, responsibility and impact. This means it cannot be said that explaining alternative forms to underrepresented groups will immediately result in more inclusive participation as more than just providing alternative forms is needed to influence the entire perception.

Bingham et al. (2005) noted a scientific gap for insights on perception on alternative participation forms of different groups and on what determines the decision of individuals to participate. While the importance of perception of impact was already noted (Arnstein, 1969; Naranjo-Zolotov et al., 2019), more insights on how to influence this perception was given by this research with the insight of the importance of communicating results and participation forms higher on the participation ladder. When governments are clear how input was used for the making of policies, the perception of impact of citizens will rise. Failing to communicate results and participation that is at the lowest stages of the participation ladder will erase the support base for citizen participation. The interviews gave this more context by mentioning that this does not mean that all inputs need to be translated towards policy, if the government can make sound arguments why not to use certain inputs.

Besides impact, the importance of a sense of responsibility was also already known (Naranjo-Zolotov et al., 2019). This research added an avenue for creating a sense of responsibility: by active and personal, targeted invitations that ask specific, individual citizens to join a citizen participation activity. This way it can be explained why a certain citizen is asked to join for a specific type of participation activity. These personal, often face to face invitations via other people like key figures have found to be more effective by participation professionals.

More active invitations will not only help with a sense of responsibility, but also with the fact that, as data from Nienhuis et al. (2011) already showed, a large group of respondents does not know if they want to participate. More active and personal invitations will then help in informing more people about the existence of citizen participation.

Also, some differences between groups were found, which shows that for inclusive participation, some range of different participation forms is needed as not all population groups have similar preferences. Young people more often valued their ability to choose how they answer themselves in participation forms. Therefore, they preferred the more open, expressive participation form of the pizza-meeting and had lower ratings on the straightforward and strict online mini-survey. This can confirm the need for expression for youth that Checkoway et al. (2005) described. Ethnic minorities often said that language and processes of participation were too difficult, confirming the literature (Martiniello, 2005) that mentioned a distance towards culture and governmental systems. While the result that ethnic minorities prefer the online mini-survey was not expected from the literature specifically, it does make sense as the form is more straightforward and less deliberative.

For lower incomes informality is important which relates to them rating the formal advisory board lower. This is quite a striking result, as one of the advisory boards main goals is evaluating social welfare policies that are made for the lower income population. This can confirm the worry of Arnstein (1969) that even for participation forms where topics like poverty programs are discussed, lower income groups are not included. Lastly, the education gap of Bovens & Wille (2010) can be confirmed as lower educated indeed have a higher distance towards participation and government in general. The distance towards the government can be seen with the large number of negative perceptions on the moral side. More often, lower educated say that topics are not relevant to them, participation is too formal, they don't get anything out of it personally, and it won't have effect anyway. Bridging this gap needs a lot of efforts. In terms of possible participation forms, the interview results gave some insights in lower educated having a higher preference for participation forms like referenda and participatory budgeting, but this could not be confirmed by the survey. The survey data did show the dissatisfaction of lower educated with the traditional advisory board.

For working parents, the literature that mentions how working parents participate less often because of low amounts of time (f.e. Schlozman et al., 1994) cannot be confirmed. More research is needed to analyse this groups participation rates and perceptions.

When designing participation activities, governments should take these differences into account, especially when certain population groups are needed specifically for certain policies.

However, the differences between group preferences were not that large as the online mini-survey and the pizza-meeting both were rated very high. The survey results showed that the more complex forms of the neighbourhood budgeting and theme-table were harder for respondents to understand, which might relate to their relatively row rating and the absence of correlations with other variables. Thus, more qualitative research could be helpful to better assess underrepresented groups perceptions on these specific alternative participation forms. More qualitative experimental research can also be useful to better assess actual behaviour rather than stated preferences. Also, more psychological research is needed to get a better understanding on the relations between perception and preference/condition variables as these variables did not always overlap. For the overall generalisability of this research, it can be said that the findings from this research will probably be applicable in other western countries as well, since a similar participation situation has arisen in for example Scandinavia (Nyseth et al., 2019) and the United States (Arnstein, 1969; Nienhuis et al., 2011). More research can be done to assess the particularities of inclusive citizen participation within non-western societies.

Thus, the following advises are recommendations for the government.

- Use more alternative forms instead of traditional forms like advisory boards for the goal of inclusive citizen participation. However, advisory boards can still play an important supportive role in participation, for the structural evaluation of governmental policies, but also for a controlling, overarching view on the participation process itself within the different policy phases. This way advisory boards can ensure that input from óther participation forms is translated and used throughout the whole policy phase and they can keep the government accountable for earlier made promises.
- Dare to make a conscious choice of using participation forms higher on the participation ladder, and communicate results consequently for participation activities to increase the perception of impact for citizens.
- Be active and personal in the targeted invitation of underrepresented groups. This will give citizens a higher sense of responsibility and increase more awareness about citizen participation itself.
- Take the differences in perception and preferences of different underrepresented groups into account when designing specific participation forms

Hopefully then, participation will become more inclusive and more population groups will feel heard, and a number of societal goals like higher policy legitimacy and increased social cohesion can be reached, instead of policies with no social support, higher polarisation and an ever increasing gap between government and society.

Chapter 6: Reflection

Some advantages of the survey as research method became clear during this research: a relatively large and diverse group of respondents could be approached in a small time-frame. For qualitative research, getting towards these numbers would have been much more difficult. However, compared to professional surveys, sample sizes were still relatively small and the non-response was high. Thus, the results and findings of this research do need to be taken with some caution, also because some of the significance and effect sizes numbers were small. Another advantage of the survey was that its sequential form was appropriate in researching immediate intention differences of citizens after providing alternative participation forms. When governments design new participation forms and communicate these towards the citizens, a similar situation arises where a citizen hears about something one time, and then their immediate response will lead towards participation or non-participation. Therefore this sequential form fitted better than for example a longitudinal research with multiple surveys over time. What I also have learned in terms of doing research is that surveys have the disadvantage that it is hard to explain new concepts to respondents, especially when they are more complex. No interaction can be made where questions can be explained. Moreover, especially respondents that are already hard to approach and have little time or interest in filling in surveys are rushing through the survey quite quickly so also do not always read explanatory texts properly. This is why for this type of research you have to make sure to use simple concepts. In hindsight, the harder to explain participation forms like the theme-table or neighbourhood budgeting were not fit for this research method. They should have been omitted or researched by different, more qualitative methods. Interviews should be able to explain the pros and cons of these forms better, while more experimental, participative research approaches where respondents are joining these forms can be used to really assess what type of citizens actually join these forms and why they do so. The lack of interaction for the survey method also aggravated understandability issues. Some measures for understandability were taken, like the use of B1 language using the tool 'IsditB1?', making sure the questionnaire did not contain difficult words. Also, pre-testing was done to ensure the questionnaire ran smooth and respondents understood the questions. However, when doing the physical QR distribution, some people responded that due to their lower education, they thought the language in the survey was sometimes too difficult. One for example said: "Meer jip-en-janneke-taal". Sometimes the reason for this was (as I noticed this for some of the physically distributed respondents) that some respondents skipped the introduction text and then did not know what 'burgerparticipatie' was. After a while I tried to compensate for this by asking to please read the introductory text before starting the survey. While small measures like these, or notes like "please read first" might help, qualitative research has a lot more potential for the explanation of concepts, especially when targeting already hard to reach population groups. The targeting of these groups themselves is a thing that went well in this research. The diverse way of targeting by using different Facebook groups and different physical places where the different minority groups could be found had a satisfying effect. Looking at the range of types of answers given, indeed a wide spectrum of society can be seen, which meant research outside my own social bubble was done. While sometimes it felt uncomfortable when I approached people I would not have approached otherwise, specifically targeting these minority groups was very insightful for me. It helped to understand my positionality even better, for example be (even) more neutral in my wordings, an insight I will definitely use in my future career.

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Appendix

The whole questionnaire that was used for this research can be viewed below. It can also still be seen online here: https://rug.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0CYIkRw469u5rDg

———————————————————————————————————————

Hallo!

Ik ben Frederik Verf, student Society, Sustainability and Planning aan de RUG. Fijn dat je deze enquete wilt invullen. Daar help je mij enorm mee!

Dit onderzoek gaat over **burgerparticipatie**.
In deze vragenlijst bedoel ik met burgerparticipatie: alles waarmee de overheid jou om jouw mening vraagt. Het gaat dus niet over andere soorten participatie zoals hoeveel burgers mee doen in het werkende leven of in de samenleving. Burgerparticipatie gaat hier echt over **beleid** en **meedenken met de overheid**. Burgerparticipatie heeft vaak de bedoeling om overheidsbeleid (de wetten en regels die overheid maakt) beter te laten passen bij jouw mening en die van andere burgers.

Traditionele voorbeelden zijn **adviesraden**. Adviesraden zijn een club mensen die maandelijks praat over overheidsbeleid en daar lange vergaderingen over heeft. Hier krijgen deze mensen een vergoeding voor van gemiddeld 75 euro.
Een ander traditioneel voorbeeld van burgerparticipatie is de **informatie-avond** over een bouwplan in jouw omgeving, bijvoorbeeld de haak om Leeuwarden, het vernieuwde Europaplein, of een nieuwe straat in jouw buurt. Vaak is het beleid al zo goed als klaar bij dit soort informatie-avonden.

[Meldingen vooraf: Dit onderzoek gaat niet over participatie in corona-tijd. Vul de antwoorden dus in alsof er geen corona en coronamaatregelen zijn.

Anonimiteitsmelding: Dit onderzoek is geheel anoniem. Je vult je naam of postcode niet in. Daarnaast wordt de data vertrouwelijk behandeld.]

————————

Heb je wel eens aan burgerparticipatie gedaan?
[Ja, Nee, Weet ik niet]

Zo ja, wat voor?
-Een informatieavond
-Meegedaan aan een adviesraad
-Anders, namelijk:

Zo ja, hoe wist je van die participatie-activiteit af?

-Via social media
-Via een brief
-Via het lokale nieuws
-Via posters/advertenties in de stad
-Via bekenden
-Via mijn werk
-Anders, namelijk: [Blank]

————————

Zou je in de toekomst aan burgerparticipatie willen meedoen?

-Zeker niet
-Waarschijnlijk niet
-Misschien
-Waarschijnlijk wel
-Zeker wel

De volgende vragen gaan over redenen voor jou om nu (nog) niet aan burgerparticipatie mee te doen:

In hoeverre ben je het eens met de volgende zinnen: [Totaal niet mee eens, niet mee eens, neutraal, eens, totaal mee eens]

-Burgerparticipatie kost teveel tijd
-Processen en taalgebruik is te ingewikkeld en overheidstechnisch
-Participatie lijkt me heel saai / te formeel
-Burgerparticipatie levert mij persoonlijk niks op
-In de participatiewerkwijze is al te veel voorgeschreven hoe ik antwoord moet geven
-Ik voel me niet verantwoordelijk voor het overheidsbeleid
-Besproken onderwerpen zijn niet belangrijk voor mij.
-Het heeft toch geen effect op het beleid.

Zijn er nog andere redenen waarom je nu niet meedoet of zou willen meedoen aan participatie-activiteiten? [Blank]

————————

Naast traditionele participatiemetoden zoals adviesraden en informatiebijeenkomsten zijn er ook nieuwere, alternatieve participatie-methoden, bijvoorbeeld:

-De online mini-enquete waar je in korte tijd en vanuit het gemak van je eigen huis je mening over een aantal onderwerpen kan geven

-De pizza-meeting: waar je met een groep inwoners (bijvoorbeeld een groep jongeren) samen met een gemeente-ambtenaar een top 3 van verbeterpunten maakt, terwijl je gezellig samen gratis pizza eet

-De stamtafel waar er over een bepaald thema vrij gepraat en gebrainstormd wordt: bijvoorbeeld eenzaamheid, betaalbaarheid of veiligheid.

-Buurtbudgetten: waar jij met andere inwoners uit je buurt zélf een hoeveelheid geld van de gemeente beheert om dit te gebruiken voor zelfbedachte projecten voor ontwikkeling in jouw buurt.

Wist je dat deze andere methodes van burgerparticipatie bestonden?
[Ik kende geen, de meeste kende ik niet, ik kende een deel, ik kende de meeste, Ik kende allemaal]

-Als je de alternatieve methodes die je net las vergelijkt met de traditionele methodes zoals de adviesraad en de informatieavond, met welke doe je dan liever mee?
[Alternatieve methodes, Traditionele methodes, neutraal]

————————

-Maak een top 5 van welke methode jou het meest aanspreekt / waarvan de grootste kans is dat je mee zou doen tot de minste.

-Online mini-enquete
-Pizza-meeting
-Thema-Stamtafel
-Buurtbudget
-Adviesraad

-Waarom heb je gekozen voor X op 1? [Blank]

———————

Als participatie in simpele mensen-taal kan, zou ik veel eerder meedoen dan als het in formele overheidstaal gedaan wordt. [Erg oneens, oneens, neutraal, mee eens, heel erg mee eens]

Denk aan een onderwerp dat belangrijk is voor jou. Zou je eerder meedoen met participatie als je het onderwerp zelf mocht kiezen? Dit is voor mij:
[Heel onbelangrijk, onbelangrijk, neutraal, belangrijk, heel belangrijk]

Welke onderwerpen zijn belangrijk voor jou?
- verkeersveiligheid in de wijk
- veiligheid op straat
- speelvoorzieningen
- eenzaamheid
- armoede / betaalbaarheid
- een ander onderwerp, namelijk: [Blank]

———————

In welke mate zou jij betrokken willen worden in het beleidsproces?
-Ik hoef niet betrokken te worden
-Ik hoef alleen informatie te krijgen
-Ik wil om mijn mening gevraagd worden
-Ik wil een actieve bijdrage doen aan de discussie
-Ik wil het beleid samen met andere burgers zelf bepalen

-Voor mijn deelname aan participatie-activiteiten is een financiele compensatie:
[Heel onbelangrijk, onbelangrijk, neutraal, belangrijk, heel belangrijk]

Ik zou open staan voor burgerparticipatie: (kruis alle aan die bij jou passen)
- als het niet te veel tijd kost
- als er begrijpelijke taal wordt gesproken
- als het leuk is om te doen / niet te formeel is
- als ik er persoonlijk iets aan heb
- als ik zelf mag kiezen op welke manier ik antwoord geef
- als ik weet dat het echt effect heeft op beleid
- als het gaat over onderwerpen die ik belangrijk vind
- als ik me verantwoordelijk zou voelen voor overheidsbeleid
- als [Blank]

————————

-Open vraag: Zou je zelf een eigen bedachte participatie-vorm kunnen bedenken die perfect bij jou past? (Als je niks kan bedenken hoef je deze niet in te vullen)

Waarom deze? [Blank]

————————

Ben je, na gelezen te hebben over alternatieve participatievormen, anders gaan denken over burgerparticipatie?

[Veel negatiever, negatiever, niet anders, positiever, veel positiever]

Waarom? (Kruis alle aan die relevant zijn)
-Blijkbaar kost het soms toch niet zo veel tijd als ik gedacht had
-Blijkbaar is het soms toch minder saai/formeel/beleidstechnisch dan ik dacht
-Blijkbaar worden er soms toch echt onderwerpen besproken die belangrijk zijn voor mij
-Blijkbaar heb je toch soms meer invloed dan ik eerst dacht
-Andere reden: [Blank]

——————

Zou je in de toekomst aan burgerparticipatie-activiteiten mee willen doen?

-Zeker niet
-Waarschijnlijk niet
-Misschien
-Waarschijnlijk wel
-Zeker wel

-Ben je nu meer geneigd mee te doen dan eerder? Zoja, waarom? [Blank]

Op welke manier zou je uitgenodigd willen worden om mee te doen aan een participatie-activiteit?

-Via Social Media zoals facebook
-Via een brief
-Via het lokale nieuws
-Via posters/advertenties in de stad
-Anders: [Blank]

————————

Vaak zie je steeds weer dezelfde soort mensen bij burgerparticipatie: de oudere, gepensioneerde, rijke, hoogopgeleide, blanke Nederlander.

Heb jij ideeën hoe ervoor te zorgen dat er meer verschillende soorten mensen meedoen? Zoja, waar denk je aan? [Blank]

————————

Het laatste deel van deze enquete bestaat uit wat vragen over algemene kenmerken over jou als persoon.

Vind je dat jij bij de bevolkingsgroep 'werkende ouderen' hoort? Hiermee worden mensen bedoeld die kinderen hebben en daarnaast óók nog een baan hebben. [Ja, Nee]

Zie je jezelf als onderdeel van een 'etnische minderheid'? Hier worden mensen bedoeld die naast de Nederlandse identiteit ook een andere identiteit hebben. [Ja, Nee]

Vind je dat je bij de groep 'jongeren' hoort? [Ja, Nee]

——————

Hoe hoog is jouw opleidingsniveau? [Lager dan gemiddeld, Gemiddeld, Hoger dan gemiddeld]

Hoe hoog is jouw inkomen, of als je nog thuis woont, het inkomen van je ouders? [Lager dan gemiddeld, Gemiddeld, Hoger dan Gemiddeld]

Kom je door je werk in aanraking met de overheid?

[Helemaal niet, bijna niet, neutraal, geregeld, Heel erg]

———————

Werk je in de wijk waar je woont?

[Ja, Nee]

Mijn sociale leven speelt zich voornamelijk af met mensen in de wijk waar ik woon
[Totaal niet mee eens, niet mee eens, neutraal, mee eens, totaal mee eens]

Hoe lang woon je in de wijk/buurt waar je nu woont?

-Korter dan 5 jaar
-Tussen 5 en 10 jaar
-Langer dan 10 jaar

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Bedankt voor het invullen van mijn enquête! Als je nog vragen hebt, mag je me altijd een mailtje sturen: fred.erik.verf@hotmail.com .

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