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CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL PROJECTS

A Case Study of the Municipality of Groningen

By E.T. Wieffer

Abstract

The municipality of Groningen has initiated neighbourhood renewal initiatives in corporation with the residents in four of its vulnerable neighbourhoods. This study aims to (dis)proof the successfulness of these projects by answering the question, 'How has the participation of residents of four vulnerable neighbourhoods of the Municipality of Groningen helped to create more successful neighbourhood renewal projects initiated by the municipality?' Document analysis as well as a questionnaire show that while the municipality includes the residents the amount of control the residents have depended on the scale of the project. In addition the success of the projects is hard to proof, especially when looking at the residents' response and not only at the project plans. Further research could be done to get a more representative survey of the population to see how the residents see this program.

Key words: citizen participation, neighbourhood renewal, ladder of participation, citizen control, participatory planning

Colophon

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Neighbourhood renewal is a necessary part of maintaining a city, and how to do that efficiently in a modern democratic society is often discussed. Many cities in the Netherlands have shifted, or try to shift towards citizen participation as part of their planning strategies (Geurtz et al., 2010). Part of this can also be implemented on a neighbourhood level as is shown by some cities allocating a budget to be spent in the neighbourhood at their own digression (Geurtz et al., 2010). The Municipality of Groningen has done something similar to promote neighbourhood renewal and improve the liveability of the neighbourhoods. In 2018 the Municipality of Groningen has started initiatives regarding neighbourhood renewal in four of its most vulnerable neighbourhoods at the time (Municipality of Groningen, n.d.). This initiative revolves around working together with neighbourhood communities and thus creating a better neighbourhood together. Each neighbourhood community sends a yearly implementation plan to the Municipality in which the projects in the neighbourhood are discussed. The municipality will then allocate a budget to each neighbourhood based on this plan (Municipality of Groningen, n.d.). Their aim is to improve housing, poverty, green, safety, and suitability to raise children in the neighbourhoods as well as living sustainably and healthy (Municipality of Groningen, n.d.). The municipality claims to achieve these goals by working together with residents, entrepreneurs, housing associations, schools, police, and other stakeholders in the neighbourhood (Municipality of Groningen, n.d.). This initiative is aiming to improve neighbourhood renewal by working together with all parties involved, especially the residents. The municipality funds projects in each neighbourhood and requires an implementation plan from each neighbourhood community. Each implementation plan consists of a collection of different plans within the neighbourhood that differ in size and degree of participation.

The public voice has become more important globally in urban projects over the last years (Wu et al., 2023), and in this case citizen participation is integral to the municipality's strategy. Purely expert based policy making and planning encounters obstacles like opposition and dissatisfaction with authorities in the current modern liberal democracies (Wagenaar, 2007). A solution would be to engage more into citizen participation, as this has multiple benefits to the planning process (Wagenaar, 2007; Creighton, 2005). For example, a planning solution where citizens are involved is more likely to be accepted by future users of the space (Burby, 2003; Brody et al., 2003). In addition, non-expert local knowledge provides a different perspective outside of the professional sphere, but with local applications (Van Herzele, 2004).

Furthermore, when participatory planning is done in a transparent manner, the sense of community is strengthened, and it raises increased awareness of the issues within the area (Thwaites et al., 2013). This means that the project has more chance of long-term success if the residents are involved since the beginning. With an increased sense of community and neighbourhood relations, residents are more likely to participate in the project (Wu et al., 2023).

Much research has been done into the role of participatory planning in an urban setting (Wu et al., 2023; Scorza et al., 2021). While participatory planning in the Netherlands has been discussed (Michels, 2006; Portschy, 2016; Denters et al., 2010; Geurtz et al., 2010), there has not yet been a case study about the initiatives of Groningen. This initiative is ambitious in combining all relevant stakeholders for neighbourhood renewal, and if something can be said about the success of this initiative it could help structure other programs in different places. It is important to look further into the success of citizen participation since the success and value of citizen participation is often taken for granted, and not much researched (Ianniello et al., 2019). Thus more research into the success of this particular initiative could help to explain the 'successfulness' of citizen participation.

Groningen is an older city with a multitude of older neighbourhoods that require some form of neighbourhood renewal to create liveable safe neighbourhoods. This neighbourhood renewal is initiated by the Municipality who funds it, while also giving local stakeholders options to be involved, or initiate projects (Municipality of Groningen, 2018). The Municipality also leads most of the bigger projects, while residents can and do initiate smaller-scale projects. Knowing how these neighbourhoods regard the authorities and local government could show how this take on participatory planning helps with improved trust, something that is often lacking in top-down experts lead planning (Ianniello et al., 2019; Creighton, 2005). Thus understanding the relation between the community and the local government would help by implementing this system in other neighbourhoods successfully.

1.2 Research Problem

This research aims to give more insight into the role of residents have in renewal projects. The role residents play will be relevant in what type of participation is occurring in the neighbourhood which could influence the results of the renewal project.

To that extent, this will be answering the following research question:

How has the participation of residents of four vulnerable neighbourhoods of the Municipality of Groningen helped to create more successful neighbourhood renewal projects initiated by the municipality?

To answer this question these secondary questions will be answered

- What is the role of the municipality in these projects?
- To what degree of participation were the residents involved?
- Was the outcome of the participatory planning successful according to the residents?
- How does citizen participation improve the outcome of neighbourhood projects?

1.3 Theoretical Framework

1.3.1 Why Participatory Planning?

As mentioned before, participatory planning has become more ingrained in today's modern democratic society. There are multiple reason for this. First is that if those affected by the outcome are involved with the decision-making, there is more likely to be a positive outcome that all stakeholders agree with (Wagenaar, 2007). Furthermore, this type of planning also helps to gain more support for plans, as well as actually use the local expertise that is available (Geurtz et al., 2010). Participatory planning, and in this case resident participation is ideal for neighbourhoods since it helps to find local solutions, as well as creating a more acceptable solution for the residents (Wagenaar, 2007; Creighton, 2005; Burby, 2003; Brody et al., 2003; Van Herzele, 2004).

In addition, citizen participation is a form of participatory democracy and thus the voice of citizens is heard more clearly than in a representative democracy (Geurtz et al., 2010). In this case the residents of the neighbourhood could have a direct impact and say on the ongoing renewal in their own neighbourhoods. They are not just represented by others but could be involved if they so wished.

When citizens have a relationship with their neighbourhood, they are more likely to participate in a participatory planning projects (Wu et al., 2023). Furthermore, if citizens are actually given any agency in a transparent project, the sense of community is strengthened (Thwaites et al., 2013). Transparent participatory planning can also have social benefits such as awareness within the neighbourhood (Thwaites et al., 2013). Strengthened community and awareness leads to more residents having a relationship with their neighbourhood and thus more residents are likely to participate in future projects.

When citizens are involved in the planning stages, they are able to voice their opinion and lend their expertise of the neighbourhood. This involvement leads to more agreeable solutions for all parties

(Wagenaar, 2007; Creighton, 2005; Burby, 2003; Brody et al., 2003; Van Herzele, 2004; Geurtz et al., 2010). With an agreeable outcome residents are more likely to see the project as a success and thus when residents are given more agency in the planning stages, the outcome is more likely to be successful.

1.3.2 Citizen Participation

A key concept of this research is participatory planning. Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (1969) will be used to describe the different types and levels of citizen participation (see figure 1). This model still is often referred to in the discussion about citizen participation in the planning field, some even call it the 'cornerstone for planners' (Gaber, 2019) and is thus best suited to describe participatory planning in the context of this research. These different levels have different degrees of participation, and depending on the level, the agency of the citizens is lessened or heightened. The higher up the ladder, the more agency and control the citizens have over the project. From step 3 onwards, there is a form of citizen participation, however, only from step 6 do citizens have a final say in the outcome (Arnstein, 2019). By giving those who are affected by the neighbourhood renewal decision-making power (step 6 and up) the change in alignment of interests and thus coming to a workable action consensus improves (Wagenaar, 2007). Most consultation mechanisms in practice are centred around degrees of tokenism, however close co-operation does happen at a neighbourhood level (de Roo & Voogd, 2021).

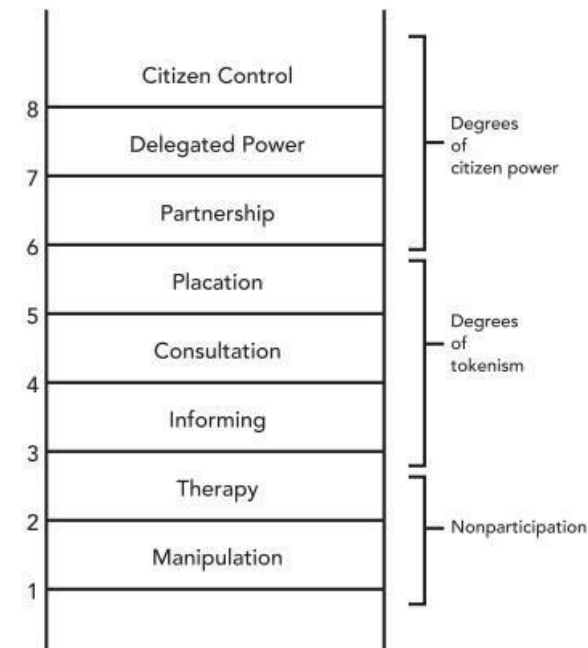


Figure 1: Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969)

The cases within the neighbourhood renewal project of the municipality of Groningen claim to all be based on close co-operation which suggests a degree of citizen power. However, this study will show whether citizen power is actually used in these projects.

1.3.3 Conceptual Model

Figure 2 shows the conceptual model. When people are involved in their neighbourhood, they are more likely to participate in a project concerning the neighbourhood. When the residents are given agencies and control (to some extent) in these projects, the community strengthens and thus people become more involved in the neighbourhood wanting to participate to improve it; it creates a positive feedback loop with the outcome being an improved neighbourhood. This can be seen in figure 2. In addition, while each type of citizen participation could lead to neighbourhood renewal, if citizens were given more

control and agency then they are more likely to accept the solution and thus result to a more successful neighbourhood renewal.

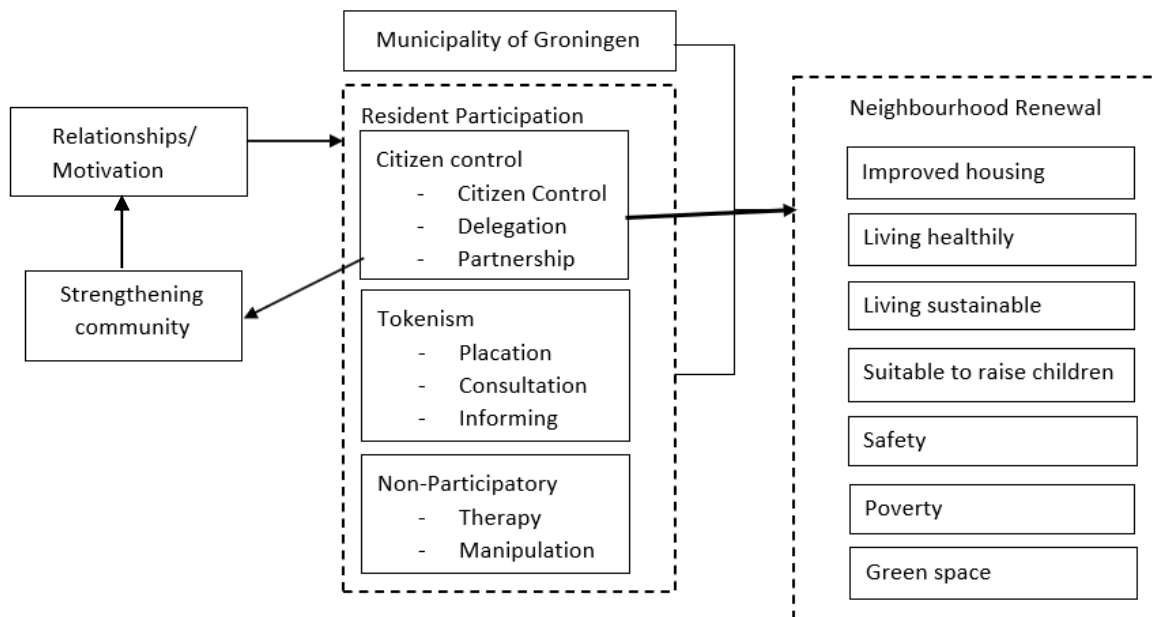


Figure 2: Conceptual model for resident participation

Following this model this research expects to see a high degree of citizen control, and little to no non-participation projects. In addition, there is an expectancy to see success in the neighbourhood renewal initiative, since the initiative is still active since its inception in 2018 and has even expanded to other neighbourhoods. Furthermore, if the number of citizen control cases is high, the improvement of the neighbourhood should also be visible.

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 Data Collection

This thesis is based on quantitative data gathered from 4 of the Municipality of Groningen's neighbourhoods where the Municipality employed their initiative for neighbourhood renewal as well as qualitative data analysis of the projects in these neighbourhoods. The four neighbourhoods are Beijum, Indische Buurt / De Hoogte, De Wijert, and Selwerd. These are neighbourhoods that scored lower than the city's average on the liveability index, a research project from the municipality (Municipality of Groningen, n.d.), as can be seen in liveability index of Basismonitor Groningen in figure 3 (2020). Especially De Hoogte/ Indische Buurt and Selwerd are more unfavourable than average, while Beijum and de Wijert scored on the lower side of the average.

The Municipality works together with residents (housing)corporations, Wij-teams, schools, police, and other relevant parties to create the best outcome for these neighbourhoods. Each neighbourhood presents the municipality with a yearly implementation plan for the projects that will happen that year in the neighbourhood. These projects have been discussed with the municipality and the municipality (with help of the state) funds this implementation. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data will give an overview of two sides of the projects. Initially, this study was fully based upon quantitative data, but due to the few responses the data analysis is expanded to include a document analysis of all document on the neighbourhood website (see appendix 1).

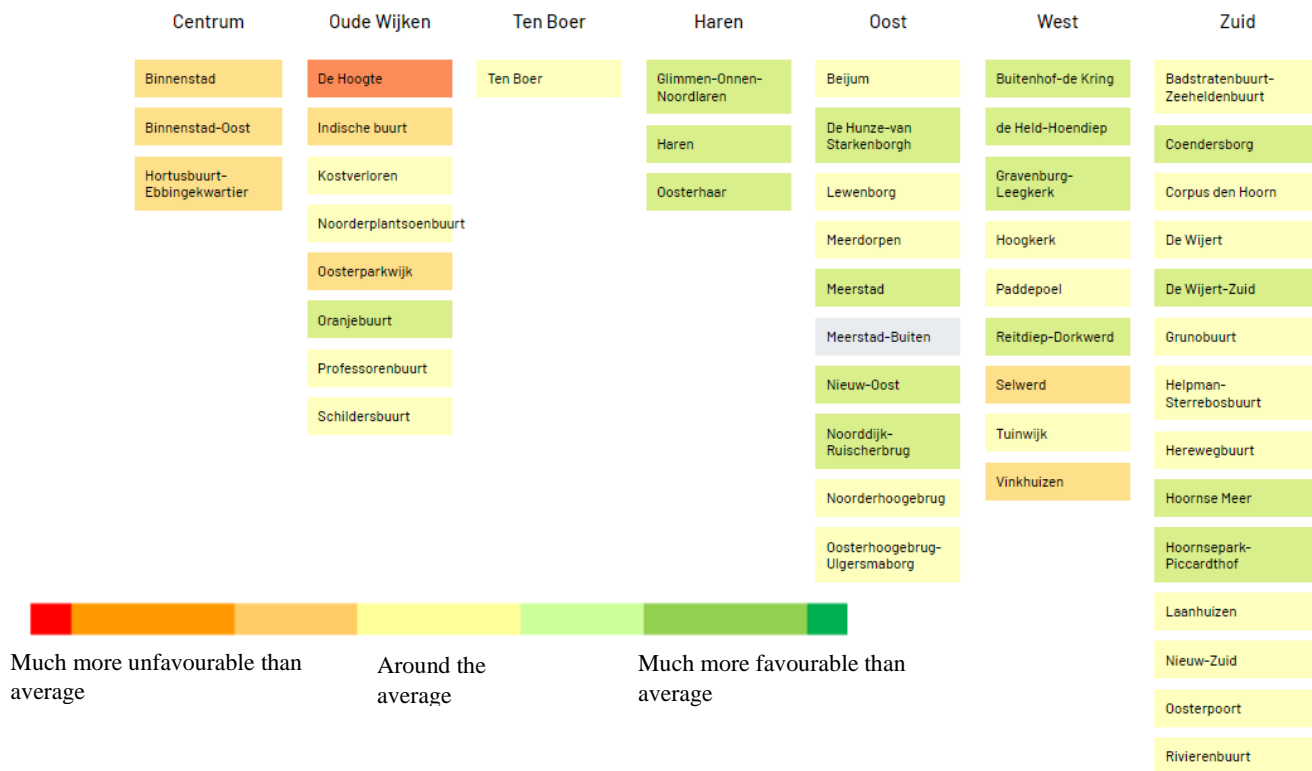


Figure 3: Basismonitor overall livability score 2018 (Basismonitor Groningen, 2020).

The data gathering started with a first round of questionnaires distributed, among residents who lived in the street where a project took place. This resulted in a distribution of a total of >1000 questioners between all four neighbourhoods. After two weeks these residents were revisited, by going door by door to speak with the residents directly to explain this research and point them to the questionnaire. After few responses I reached out to the neighbourhood paper, workshops and Facebook and they were willing to help me distribute the questionnaire. The Facebook groups and neighbourhood papers are places where the neighbourhood themselves also posts questionnaires about neighbourhood renewal, and the workshop is visited by people who are active in the neighbourhood and thus more likely to participate in neighbourhood renewal. Next to this, the neighbourhood community groups of each neighbourhood were also willing to distribute the questionnaire through their active member e-mail list. While a lot of effort was put into distributing the questionnaire, only 29 responses were gathered. While this can still give some insight into what the people of these neighbourhoods think, it is too few responses to do significant statistical analysis as initially planned.

To gather more insight into the projects that have taken place and to get an overview of the initiatives that the qualitative data was not able to give, a document analysis was conducted. The qualitative data analysis focused on all projects that fall under the main neighbourhood renewal initiative on each neighbourhood's website and coded to determine three main things; which degree of participation was involved, to what degree was the municipality involved, and which aims of the renewal success were included in the project (see figure 4). In total 102 documents are analysed (see appendix 1). The documents consisted of neighbourhood newsletters, as well as individual posts about each project, and the implementation plans presented to the municipality. If a project was mentioned multiple times in different documents, it was only coded once. While it is a broad selection of cases, it will give the best overview of which projects have taken place and how these projects are planned. The projects were all written up by volunteers from the neighbourhood projects and thus might not fully represent the experience of everyone in the neighbourhood. In addition, the documents available and the detail

available differs for each neighbourhood, which might result in slightly skewed representation since not every neighbourhood as the same number of projects.

1.4.2 Operationalization

The result of the neighbourhood renewal initiatives of the Municipality of Groningen is successful neighbourhood renewal. This is the result of all smaller projects that fall within the bigger renewal initiative within each neighbourhood. The success of each neighbourhood renewal project can be measured by the improvement of the factors set by the municipality: improve housing, poverty, green, and safety in the neighbourhoods as well as living sustainably and healthy and providing a nice environment for children to grow up (Municipality of Groningen, n.d.). All projects claim to improve on these factors and thus rejuvenate the neighbourhoods.

The quantitative data was divided by each neighbourhood and then put into SPSS to gain the descriptive statistics. Each response was logged as a certain degree of participation based on questions 7 and 8 (See appendix 2). For example, if the respondent indicated that they had the option to be involved with making decisions (Q7, appendix 2) and that making plans and decisions were equally divided between parties (Q8, appendix 2) than they were given a score of citizen control, while if there was involvement, but no influence on the final decision it was tokenism. The questions regarding the municipality were 3,4,5 and there was no combination of factors. The respondents were asked to rate a statement on a Likert scale from 1 fully disagree to 5 fully agree. Lastly, the respondents were asked if they knew of a project related to the themes of success used by the municipality (yes/no question), and if they saw improvement in those themes in their neighbourhood (Q14-24) . The respondents could rate their improvement on a Likert scale from 1 fully disagree to 5 fully agree. For each respondent an overall improvement score was created in SPSS by averaging the Likert scales. SPSS was also used to create descriptive statistics for both the municipality questions, as well as the liveability improvement.

As mentioned before, a total of 102 documents were analysed. Each of the projects mentioned in this document was given a code to determine three main things; which degree of participation was involved, to what degree was the municipality involved, and which aims of the renewal success were included in the project (see figure 4). These codes were then converted in bar charts that show the frequency of the code, and thus the number of projects. Each project could only have one code regarding municipal involvement, and degree of participation, but could have multiple codes for the theme of the project. For example, a project could be to improve sustainability in the neighbourhood, but also include improvement of green space.

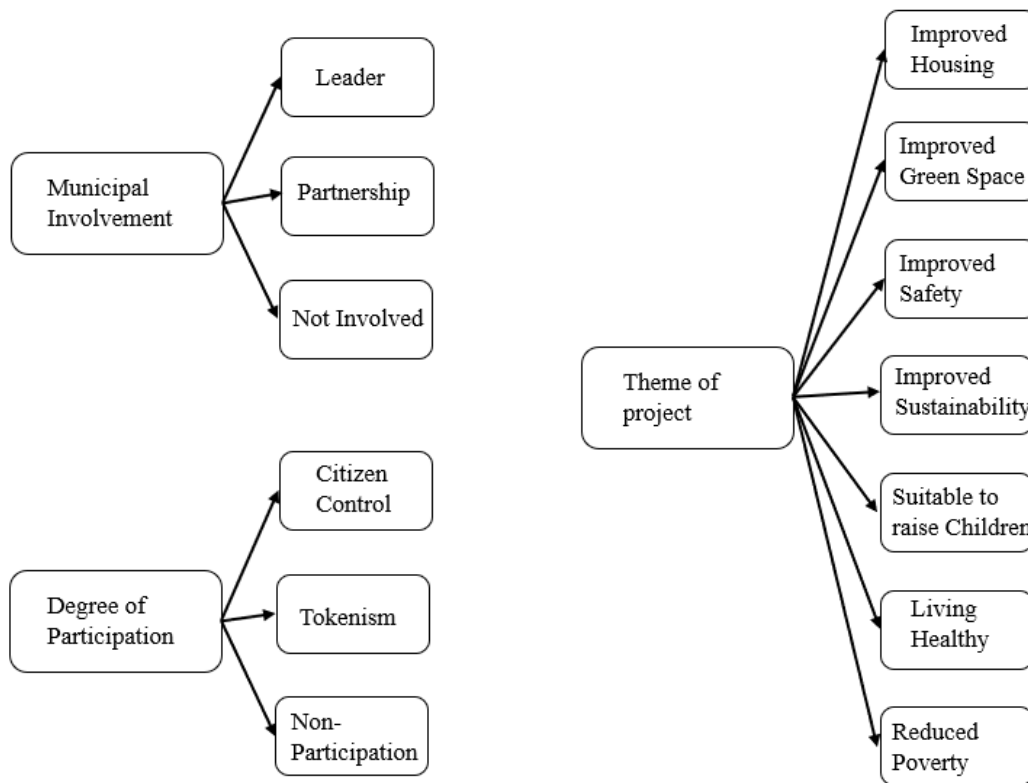


Figure 4: Coding Tree for document analysis

1.4.3 Ethical Considerations

The gathered data from the questionnaires only includes which neighbourhoods the respondent live in, for how long they have lived there and their opinions. No other personal data, like e-mail addresses were collected. Participants need to agree for their data to be used. For this research I am an outsider, looking objectively at the situation. I have no prior encounters or contacts within these neighbourhoods, nor have I lived there, so there is no personal bias on my part.

2. Results

2.1 The Municipality

The municipality funds and is the original instigator of the neighbourhood renewal initiatives. However their involvement in the projects within the initiative differs greatly. Figure 5 shows the number of projects in each neighbourhood on the y-axis and the involvement the municipality had in them on the x-axis. Figure 6 shows the same data with the number of cases on the y-axis, but with the different neighbourhoods on the x-axes. The charts show that there were fewer projects published in De Hoogte/ Indische Buurt compared to the other neighbourhoods, but even so within the projects that were published, there is a relative high number of cases where the municipality has the final say. The low number of projects is interesting since these neighbourhoods scored the least on the liveability index (figure 3). It could be that more immediate actions had to be taken and thus the municipality took the role of the project upon themselves, or it could be that there is not as active a community in these neighbourhoods compared to the other neighbourhoods and thus less community involvement in the projects. Further research would need to be done to determine the reason.

As Mentioned before, there is a difference in scale within these projects as well. While all projects have a physical representation within the neighbourhood, the scale and complexity of them differ. For example, there was a project in Beijum about creating an insect hotel, while there was also a project about redesigning a shopping square. The size, and thus the funds, needed for these projects are significantly different and that translates in the involvement of the municipality. The municipality was not involved in creating an insect hotel, while they did have final say in the shopping square redesign. All projects that involved a street redesign in all four neighbourhoods fall under the final say of the Municipality.

When you look at each neighbourhood in figures 5 and 6, except De Indische Buurt/ Indische Buurt, it becomes clear that the majority of the projects is done partnership with, or with no involvement of the municipality. The high number of projects in Selwerd can be attributed to the high number of street redesigns in the neighbourhood. As mentioned before, the municipality has final say in those types of projects.

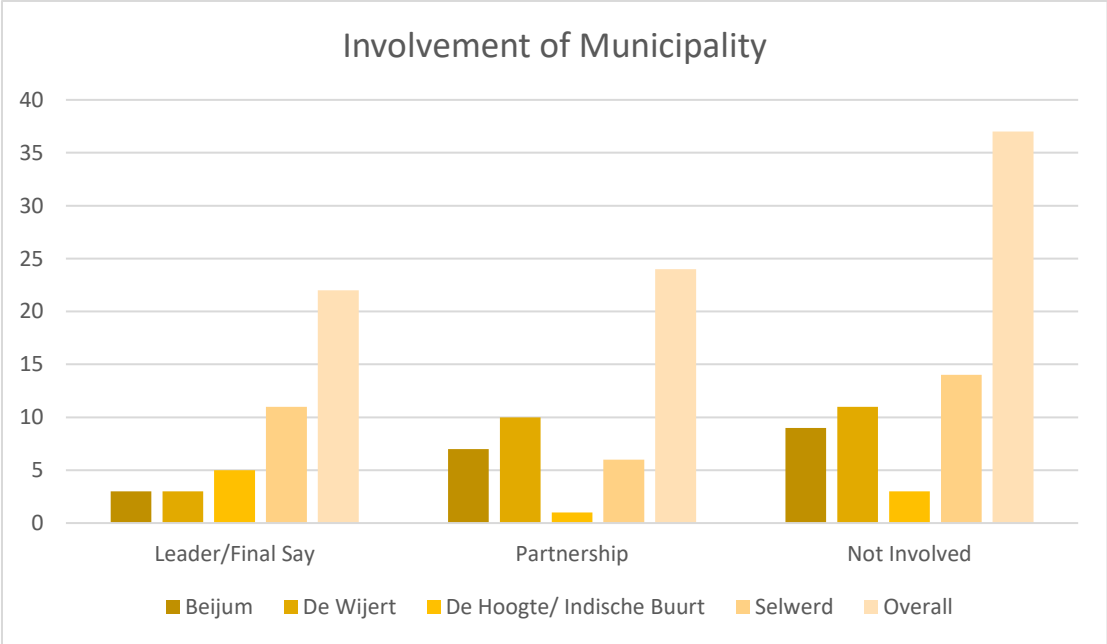


Figure 5: Involvement of the Municipality within the projects

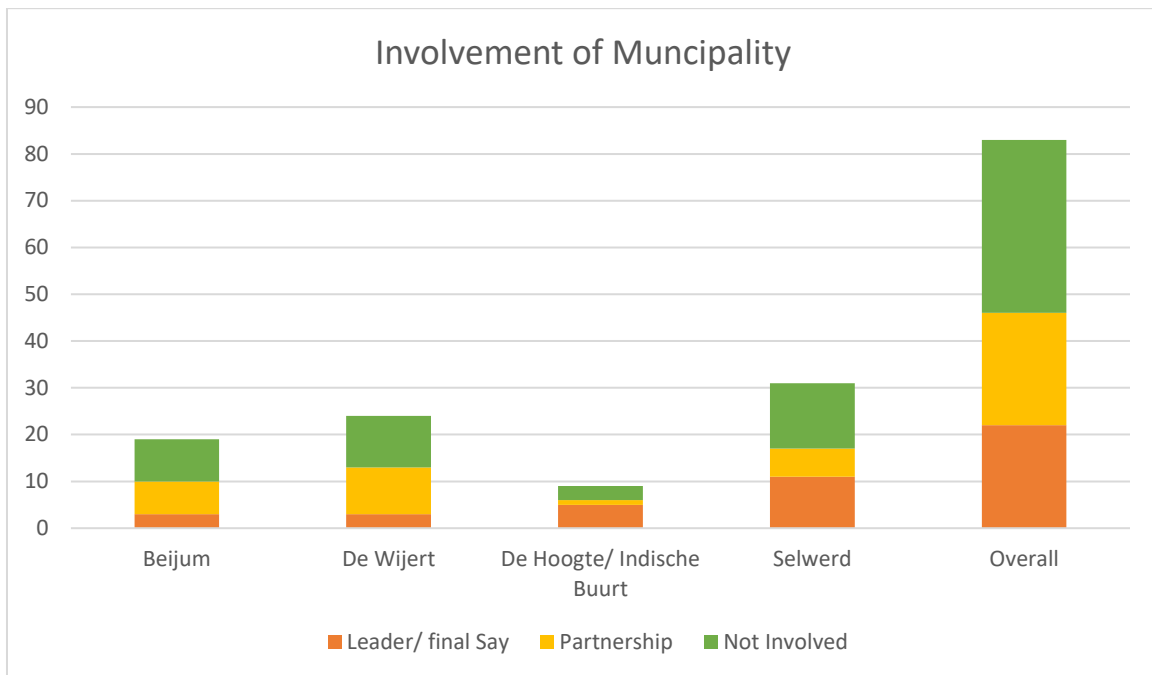


Figure 6: Involvement of the Municipality within the projects

Thus while the municipality has only the final say in a minority in most neighbourhoods, they are still involved in the majority of the projects (final say and partnership combined).

While the answers from the questionnaire are unable to provide a significant statistical answer, they still show some interesting results. Figure 5 shows that there are only 3 projects in Beijum where the municipality has the final say, but figure 7 shows that compared to other neighbourhoods Beijum scores the lowest (slightly below neutral on the likert scale) on their opinion on the investments of the municipality in the neighbourhood. Selwerd, on the other hand, has a high number of projects with the municipality as the final say (figure 5,6) and scores the only 4 (agree) within the whole table on communication with the municipality. Thus even though the municipality has a higher number of projects that they fully control, the opinion of them within Selwerd is relatively good with scores all above neutral. This would seem to go against the idea that more involvement of local government leads to less of trust (Wagenaar, 2007; Geurtz et al., 2010).

Descriptive Statistics: Respondents Feelings Towards the Municipality

Neighbourhood		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Beijum	The Municipality Invests Enough in the Neighbourhood	11	2	4	2,82	,751
	Impression of the Municipality is Good	11	2	4	3,18	,751
	The Municipality's Communication towards the Neighbourhood is Good	11	2	4	3,00	,775
	Valid N (listwise)	11				
Indische Buurt/ De Hoogte	The Municipality Invests Enough in the Neighbourhood	4	3	4	3,25	,500
	Impression of the Municipality is Good	4	1	5	3,25	1,708
	The Municipality's Communication towards the Neighbourhood is Good	4	1	4	3,00	1,414
	Valid N (listwise)	4				
De Wijert	The Municipality Invests Enough in the Neighbourhood	7	3	4	3,57	,535
	Impression of the Municipality is Good	7	3	5	3,57	,787
	The Municipality's Communication towards the Neighbourhood is Good	7	3	4	3,43	,535
	Valid N (listwise)	7				
Selwerd	The Municipality Invests Enough in the Neighbourhood	7	2	5	3,43	1,134
	Impression of the Municipality is Good	7	3	4	3,43	,535
	The Municipality's Communication towards the Neighbourhood is Good	7	3	5	4,00	,577
	Valid N (listwise)	7				

Figure 7: How Residents Regard the Municipality of Groningen

2.2 Degree of Participation

Similar to the involvement of the municipality the degree of involvement of the residents also varies depending on the project. Figures 8 and 9 show the degrees of participation. Figure 8 shows the number of projects on the y-axes and the degrees of participation on the x-axes, while figure 9 shows the number of projects on the y-axes and the neighbourhoods on the x-axes. It is notable that there is only one case of non-participation and that is in de Wijert. This is an update to a rental property but only the housing company was involved. In Beijum and De Wijert most projects are led by citizen control while De Hoogte/Indische Buurt and Selwerd have slightly more tokenism. Thus in all neighbourhoods all cases (except the 1) have some form of citizen participation. It makes sense that Selward has a higher degree of tokenism, since they also had a high number of cases for the municipality has the final say. As soon as the municipality has the final say, there is no citizen control. For citizen control the residents should have some input in the final plan that cannot be ignored (Arnstein, 2019).

Overall the initiatives in each neighbourhood are indeed practising citizen participation like the Municipality intended. However, the amount of tokenism and citizen control differs per neighbourhood. The neighbourhood where the municipality has little projects with final say (figure 6) have a higher degree of citizen control (figure 9). This makes sense since there are more partnerships and non-involvement of municipality projects in these neighbourhoods and thus more options for citizens to be involved in the final decisions. The same is true for the other way around, the neighbourhoods with more municipality as leader projects have also more tokenism projects.

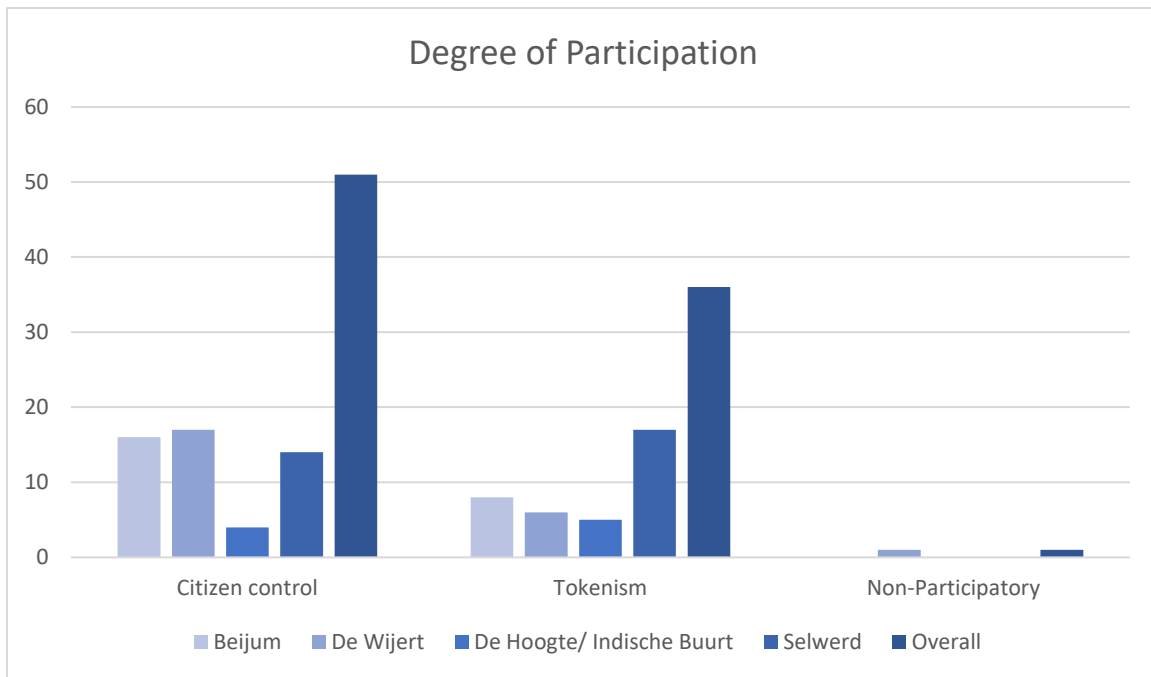


Figure 8: Degree of Participation of each project

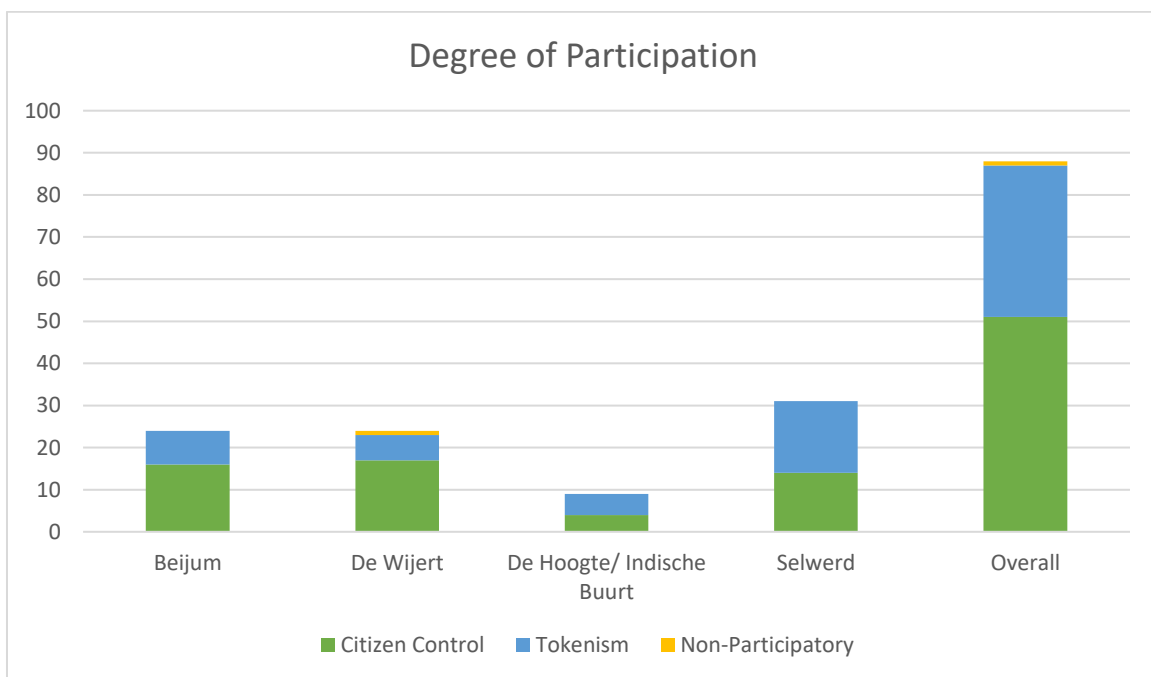


Figure 9: Degree of Participation of each project

Most of those projects with a final say to the municipality were bigger projects and it does make sense that these are tokenism projects since neighbourhoods cannot be conceptualized as singular entities who are united by a shared consensus about the future according to Davidoff (1965). Thus coming to an agreed solution with all residents involved becomes more complicated the more residents are involved. And in street redesign projects often a lot of stakeholders are involved. In that aspect informing residents and giving them the option to give feedback, even if it's not always taken into account, seems to be a most efficient manner time-wise. Short-term and half-hearted interactions in participatory planning are likely to lead to unsuccessful outcomes (Ianniello et al., 2019). Thus while there is tokenism involved, almost all cases had multiple questionnaires and/or information meetings. These are thus not half-

hearted attempts and could still contribute to successful participation and with a successful neighbourhood renewal outcome.

The respondents were asked to keep a case in mind while answering the questionnaire. Their answers show a higher number of non-participatory respondents. Figure 10 shows the respondents answers in a graph with the number of respondents on the y-axis and the degrees of participation on the x-axis. This is the result of a number of respondents answering the questionnaire while indicating that they were not involved with the project. These projects did have options for some type of participation but these respondents either did not know that, or were not involved by choice. Not everybody in the neighbourhood takes part in participatory planning and this does show that. Furthermore, the number of tokenism cases is high in comparison to those in the document analysis. This could be because some respondents had the same case in mind while answering, and not all cases that are covered in the document analysis are covered in the respondents' answers. However, looking at the answers some respondents had the same project in mind for Q4, while answering differently for Q7-8 (appendix 2) . This means even within the same project residents could experience it differently.

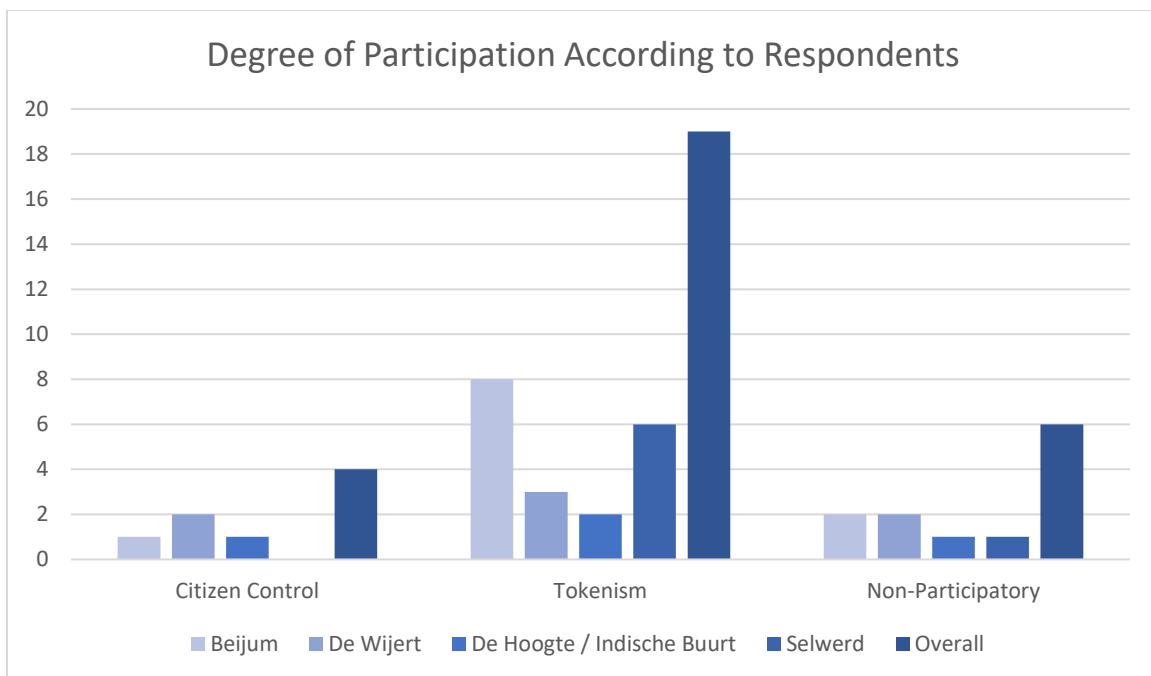


Figure 10: Degree of Participation according to Respondents

2.3 Outcome of Renewal Projects

The outcome of the Renewal projects in measured according to the factors of the municipality of Groningen. Figure 11 shows that all themes were represented in every neighbourhood with improved housing and reduced poverty the least. This could be that not all Neighbourhoods show or share when housing companies update their housing, and thus the reality could be higher. Further research into the housing companies would need to be done to determine that specifically.

The figure also shows that green space is the highest, or second highest in the number of projects it was incorporated in. This is because most projects would have green space added when the option was available. For example, in every instance of a redesign for a street more trees and green were added.

Overall, figure 11 shows the plans and what themes they were aimed at. However the documents only showed the plans and little of the actual implementation and results afterwards, thus while these themes were included in the planning, their successfulness in reality is hard to determine from document analysis alone.

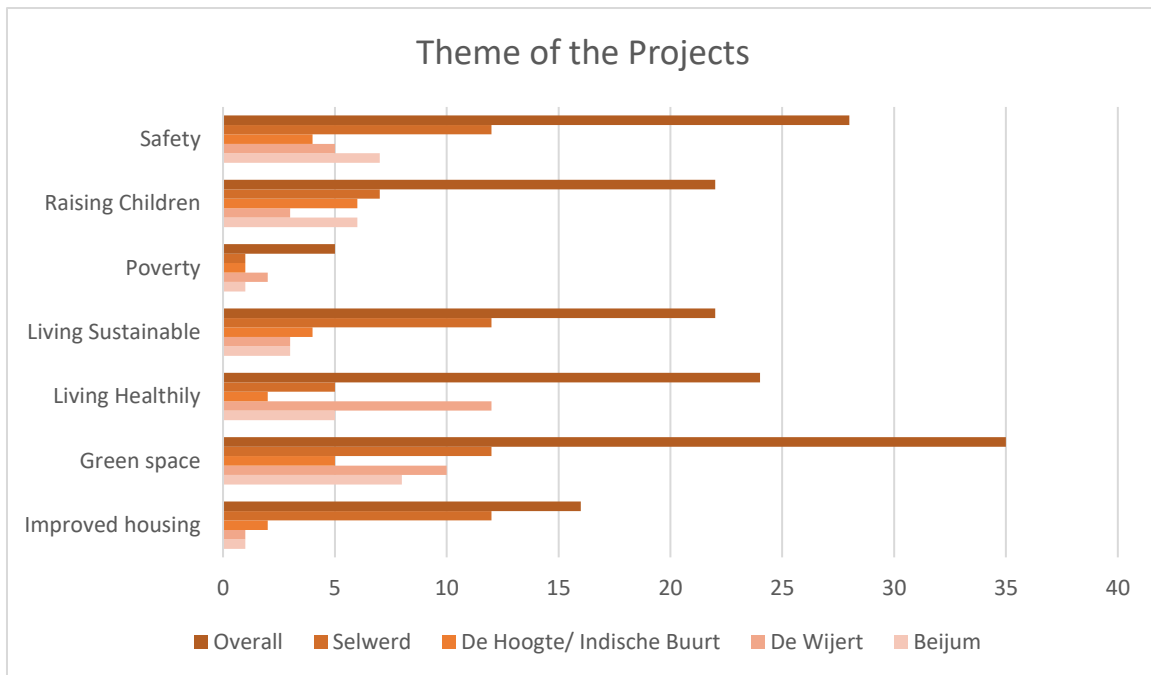


Figure 11: Number of Projects for each subcategory

While the questionnaire does not provide any significant statistical answers, it does show that the residents are not seeing the improvements that the projects hoped for. Each neighbourhood has a below average improvement score (figure 12) and the residents of Indische Buurt/ De Hoogte have a mean score of 2. There are only 4 respondents, thus not representative, but it is interesting that the neighbourhood that scored the lowest on the liveability index back in 2018 before the initiatives were implemented, has still the lowest score today.

Descriptive Statistics: Neighbourhood Improvement

Neighbourhood		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Beijum	Improved Housing	11	1	5	3,18	1,079
	Reduced Poverty	11	1	4	2,55	,820
	Improved Safety	11	1	3	2,36	,809
	Suitable to Raise Children	11	1	5	3,36	1,027
	Improved Sustainability	11	1	4	3,36	1,027
	Living Healthy	11	1	4	2,36	,924
	Average Improvement Score	11	1,3	3,8	2,864	,6360
	Valid N (listwise)	11				
Indische Buurt/ De Hoogte	Improved Housing	4	1	2	1,25	,500
	Reduced Poverty	4	1	4	2,25	1,500
	Improved Safety	4	1	4	2,00	1,414
	Suitable to Raise Children	4	1	5	2,75	2,062
	Improved Sustainability	4	1	4	2,25	1,500
	Living Healthy	4	1	3	2,00	1,155
	Average Improvement Score	4	1,0	3,5	2,083	1,2802
	Valid N (listwise)	4				
De Wijert	Improved Housing	7	1	5	3,00	1,528
	Reduced Poverty	7	1	4	2,57	1,272
	Improved Safety	7	1	4	2,71	,951
	Suitable to Raise Children	7	2	4	3,29	,951
	Improved Sustainability	7	3	5	3,57	,787
	Living Healthy	7	1	3	2,14	1,069
	Average Improvement Score	7	1,8	3,8	2,881	,6920
	Valid N (listwise)	7				
Selwerd	Improved Housing	7	1	5	2,86	1,773
	Reduced Poverty	7	1	4	2,29	1,113
	Improved Safety	7	2	3	2,57	,535
	Suitable to Raise Children	7	3	4	3,57	,535
	Improved Sustainability	7	1	5	3,43	1,272
	Living Healthy	7	1	4	2,00	1,155
	Average Improvement Score	7	1,8	4,0	2,786	,8428
	Valid N (listwise)	7				

Figure 12: Neighbourhood Renewal Improvement

2.4 Citizen participation in relation to neighbourhood projects

Overall, the data shows that there is a high degree of citizen participation in these neighbourhoods, or at least the option for citizens to do so. The forms of citizen participation are either tokenism or citizen control, with slight variations for the majority depending on the neighbourhood. Given that the data shows that Beijum and de Wijert have the most citizen control (figure 9) a higher improvement should be seen in these neighbourhoods (figure 12). Beijum has an improvement score of 2.9 which shows that the improvement is around neutral. De Wijert also has an improvement score of 2.9. Thus while these are the highest scores for all neighbourhoods, it is not a great improvement. These improvement scores are not representative of the whole neighbourhood and thus further research would need to be done to actually see its success.

The municipality has continued this program and has even added other neighbourhoods to the initiative (Municipality of Groningen, n.d.), which would indicate that they see the initiative as a success. The relation between the high degree of citizen participation and the success of these projects is, however, not clear from the data from this study.

3 Conclusion and Discussion

3.1 Discussion

Overall the municipality does include residents in the renewal of their neighbourhoods. The degree to which they are involved differs depending on the scale of the project, but they do try to include the residents as much as possible. However, these overall neighbourhood programs have given the residents the option to initiate projects themselves, which would otherwise not be possible or harder to do. Thus while not all projects are citizen control projects, the overall initiative has given residents options to voice their thoughts and problems as well as propose projects themselves.

This study shows that there are a lot of projects initiated, but that the success of the project is harder to measure. The municipality still funds the initiative every year and has included new neighbourhoods since last year which might indicate that they do see the project as successful. However, this study does show, however limited the data are that the residents do not see the improvements in their neighbourhoods.

Thus when answering the overall question of

“How has the participation of residents of four vulnerable neighbourhoods of the Municipality of Groningen helped to create more successful neighbourhood renewal projects initiated by the municipality?”

The direct answer would be that the municipality aims to include the participants as much as possible. The municipality funds an implementation plan for each neighbourhood which gives room for smaller ‘citizen power’ projects. The reason that most projects fall under tokenism instead of citizen power is that the residents do not have a final vote or say in these projects; they can voice their opinion but the decision is ultimately up to the project group of the municipality. However, the successfulness of these projects cannot be proven and thus the answer only relates to how the project works and not necessarily to the relationship between citizen participation and successful neighbourhood renewal. The citizen participation progress itself could be seen as a success since they were neither Short-term nor half-hearted interactions (Ianniello et al., 2019), however, the success of the outcome is harder to measure. Ianniello et al. (2019) explains that “on the one hand, citizen participation allows for the enrichment of solutions, broadens the alternatives, fosters accountability and transparency, and facilitates a tailor-made ‘localization’ of the decisions taken; on the other, there is still little evidence that it can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of decision-making.” This exactly the finding of this study. The citizen participation fosters good relations with the municipality and gives residents the option to provide solutions but the real successfulness of the outcome is still unclear.

3.2 Conclusion

All in all this study shows that the Municipality of Groningen tries to give their neighbourhoods freedom within limits to create neighbourhood renewal. In almost all projects the residents could give their opinion, but in some cases they also had a final vote. These were often smaller projects. This study also shows that while the municipality has continued the program since its initiation in 2018, it’s successfulness cannot be fully proven.

Future research can be done into the reaction of the residents. The sample size for this paper was small, and a bigger sample size will give a more representative insight into the feelings of the community. A bigger sample size would help to show whether there is a relationship between successful neighbourhood renewal and degree of participation. But not proven in this study. In addition, with a bigger sample size more thorough comparison between the neighbourhoods can be made to see whether the initiative works similarly in all neighbourhoods, or if the success is neighbourhood depended. If all neighbourhoods have enough respondents, the relationship between degree of participation and successful neighbourhood renewal can be individually tested in each neighbourhood and those results

could then be compared to see if success is neighbourhood dependent, or if the initiative is the deciding factor. In addition, a more thorough sample size would also help to see if a significant portion of the neighbourhood actually does participate in citizen planning, or that they were given the option but do not participate themselves.

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Appendix 1: List of Analysed Documents

De Wijert

Aardgasvrij-Klaar de Wijert
Artistieke & culturele Wijk
De Wijkdeal nieuwsflits februari 2021
De Wijkdeal nieuwsflits november 2021
Elkaar Ontmoeten
Gezond & Gelukkig de Wijert
Herinrichting van Lenneplan
Historische Plekken & Projecten
Inrichting van Straten & Parkeren
Kleur & Beleving
Muziek, Zang & Dans
Schoonhouden van de Wijk
Sport- en Spelactiviteiten
Woningverbetering & Herontwikkeling
Uitvoeringsprogramma Wijkdeal de Wijert 2023
Verbeteren Groenonderhoud
Verduurzamen van Woningen
Verkeersplannen
Verslag Wijkdealcafé 2019
Verslag Wijkdealcafé februari 2020
Verslag Wijkdealcafé januari 2020
Verslag Wijkdealcafé December 2020
De Wijkdeal nieuwsflits april 2022
De Wijkdeal nieuwsflits december 2021
De Wijkdeal nieuwsflits februari 2022
De Wijkdeal nieuwsflits januari 2022
De Wijkdeal nieuwsflits juli 2022
De Wijkdeal nieuwsflits juni 2022
De Wijkdeal nieuwsflits maart 2022
De Wijkdeal nieuwsflits mei 2021
De Wijkdeal nieuwsflits mei 2022
De Wijkdeal nieuwsflits juli 2020

Beijum

De Beijumer september 2020
De Beijumer oktober 2020
De Beijumer januari 2021
De Beijumer augustus 2020
De Beijumer december 2020
De Beijumer november 2020
De Beijumer april 2020
De Beijumer december 2019
De Beijumer feburari 2019
De Beijumer januari 2020

De Beijumer november 2019
De Beijumer oktober 2019
De Beijumer juni 2020
De Beijumer maart 2020
De Beijumer mei 2020
De Beijumer mei 2021
De Beijumer april 2021
Uitvoeringsprogramma Beijum Bruist 2023

Selwerd

Berken- & Beukenlaan
Betaald Parkeren
Bomen Hofje Prunesstraat
Boomspiegels
Borg Selwerd
De Beukenhorst
Dragant (Duindoornflat)
Duurzaam wonen
Eglantierstraat
Energiecoaches
Fietspad lang Ringweg
Glasvezel in Selwerd
Herinrichting Warmtenet
Mispellaan
Mobility Mentoring
Nieuwbouw De Huismeesters
Nieuwbouw Nijstee fase 1
Nieuwbouw Nijstee fase 2
Omgeving Populierenlaan
Park de Es
Park Selwerd
Project 'MiSPELplein;
Renovatie Esdoornflat
Renovatie Kornoelje- en Vlierstraat
Selwerd op de Koffie
Selwerd-Oost
Selwerd-West
Selwerd0Zuid
Speelplein Nettelboschje
Uitvoeringsprogramma Sunny Selwerd 2023
Veiligheid
Verkeer Eikenlaan
Voortuinen
Wandelroute Oud-Selwerd
Welkom in de Wijk
Werk in de Wijk
Werkplaats Sunny Selward
Wijkfeest

Wijkschouw Veiligheid
Wijkrestaurant de Duindoorn

De Hoogte/Indische Wijken

De Boomhut van Lukas
De groene Weken
Floresplein
Groen West-Indische Buurt
Kinderwijkstemdag
Raamexpositie Korrezon 2022
Spoorgroen
Uitvoeringsprogramma Mooie Wijken 2023
Update Bedumerweg
Update Molukkenplantsoen
Verkeersveiligheid
Wijkhub Asingastraat

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

1. In welke wijk woont u?
 - Beijum
 - Indische Buurt/ De Hoogte
 - De Wijert
 - Selwerd

2. Hoe lang woont u al in deze buurt? Geef het antwoord in jaren.

3. De gemeente investeert voldoende in mijn wijk.
 - Likert Scale van 1 sterk mee oneens tot 5 sterk mee eens

4. Mijn indruk van de gemeente is goed.
 - Likert Scale van 1 sterk mee oneens tot 5 sterk mee eens

5. De communicatie van de gemeente naar mijn wijk is goed.
 - Likert Scale van 1 sterk mee oneens tot 5 sterk mee eens

6. Kunt u een project noemen dat plaatsvond in uw wijk waar u aan mee doet/gedaan hebt? Houd dit project in gedachten bij het beantwoorden van de volgende paar vragen
 - Noem het project

7. In welke mate bent/was u betrokken bij dit project?
 - Helemaal niet betrokken
 - U ontving alleen informatie (van de gemeente) over het project
 - U had de optie om feedback te geven op het project
 - U had de optie betrokken te zijn bij het maken van beslissingen voor het project
 - U initieerde het project

8. In welke van de volgende stelling(en) over het gekozen project kunt u zich vinden?
 - De project leiders leggen alleen hun visie uit en proberen steun te vergaren
 - U kreeg informatie over het project, maar had geen optie om feedback te geven
 - Er was een vragenlijst, werkvergadering, en/of optie tot vragen stellen
 - U kon advies geven, maar het uiteindelijke besluit werd door de project leiders genomen ongeacht het advies
 - Het maken van plannen en besluiten wordt verdeeld tussen de projectleiders en de buurtbewoners (bijv. een gelijke stem in een commissie)
 - De buurtbewoners hebben de meerderheid in de commissie
 - De Buurtbewoners regelen alles in het project

9. De gemeente was betrokken bij dit project.
 - Likert Scale van 1 sterk mee oneens tot 5 sterk mee eens

10. In hoeverre was de gemeente betrokken bij dit project?
 - Likert Scale van 1 sterk mee oneens tot 5 sterk mee eens

11. Ik voel me meer betrokken in wat er in de buurt gebeurt na deelname aan dit project.

- Likert Scale van 1 sterk mee oneens tot 5 sterk mee eens
- 12. Ik zou in de toekomst nogmaals meedoen met een buurtproject.
 - Likert Scale van 1 sterk mee oneens tot 5 sterk mee eens
- 13. Zijn er naar uw weten buurtprojecten geweest om woningen in uw wijk te verbeteren?
 - Ja
 - Nee
- 14. De woningen in mijn wijk zijn verbeterd in de laatste 5 jaar.
 - Likert Scale van 1 sterk mee oneens tot 5 sterk mee eens
- 15. Zijn er naar uw weten buurtprojecten geweest om de welvaart in uw wijk te verbeteren?
 - Ja
 - Nee
- 16. Mijn wijk is welvarender geworden in de laatste 5 jaar.
 - Likert Scale van 1 sterk mee oneens tot 5 sterk mee eens
- 17. Zijn er naar uw weten buurtprojecten geweest om de veiligheid in uw wijk te verbeteren?
 - Ja
 - Nee
- 18. Mijn wijk is veiliger geworden in de laatste 5 jaar.
 - Likert Scale van 1 sterk mee oneens tot 5 sterk mee eens
- 19. Zijn er naar uw weten buurtprojecten geweest om uw wijk te verbeteren voor kinderen?
 - Ja
 - Nee
- 20. Mijn wijk is een prettige plek voor kinderen om op te groeien.
 - Likert Scale van 1 sterk mee oneens tot 5 sterk mee eens
- 21. Zijn er naar uw weten buurtprojecten geweest om uw wijk te verduurzamen?
 - Ja
 - Nee
- 22. Mijn wijk is duurzamer geworden in de laatste 5 jaar.
 - Likert Scale van 1 sterk mee oneens tot 5 sterk mee eens
- 23. Zijn er naar uw weten buurtprojecten geweest om de gezond wonen in uw wijk te verbeteren?
 - Ja
 - Nee
- 24. Ik voel me gezonder door verbeteringen in mijn wijk.
 - Likert Scale van 1 sterk mee oneens tot 5 sterk mee eens

25. Dank u wel voor het beantwoorden van de vragenlijst. Ik waardeer uw antwoorden enorm. Als u wilt, kunt u nog meer informatie geven over buurtprojecten en uw rol daarin.
- Mogelijkheid antwoord te typen