



**Promoting Effective Health Initiatives:
A Study on the Challenges of a
participatory process in
environmental health planning in a
Dutch disadvantaged neighbourhood**

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Preface

You are presented with the master's thesis, "Promoting Effective Health Initiatives: A Study on the Challenges of a participatory process in environmental health planning in a Dutch disadvantaged neighbourhood". This thesis represents the culmination of my Master's degree in Spatial Planning with a specialisation in Planning, Land, and Real Estate Development at Radboud University Nijmegen. From February 5, 2024 to July 25, 2024, I conducted my Master's Thesis at Wiebenga Consultants. During this period, I conducted research on the process of citizen participation in formulating an integrated vision for improving the healthy living environment in the centre of Hoensbroek. Citizen participation, especially in neighbourhoods with low socioeconomic status, has always been a topic of interest to me. This interest was fostered during my HBO Bachelor's in Built Environment, where it became increasingly evident that offering participation opportunities to citizens regarding physical interventions in their living environment is of paramount importance. In addition, during the Master's, my interest in area-based health planning grew. In my future field of work, I will have to address the challenges posed by an ageing population and deprived neighbourhoods where health is a significant concern. The knowledge and experiences I acquired during my HBO Bachelor's degree in Built Environment at Zuyd Hogeschool in Heerlen and my Pre-master's and Master's degree in Spatial Planning were applied for my Master's Thesis.

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the assistance of numerous individuals. I would like to extend my gratitude to Robert Dackus and Jaco Meuwissen for their invaluable assistance. In addition, I would like to express my appreciation for the information provided and the assistance rendered, which contributed to the successful completion of this Master's Thesis.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Emil van Eck, my graduation supervisor at Radboud University, for his invaluable support and guidance throughout the process of writing my Master's Thesis. His feedback and advice were instrumental in shaping the final product.

Lastly, I would like to gratefully thank the respondents who participated in my research. It is due to their contributions that this research has yielded such significant results.

In addition, it should be noted that I have dyslexia.

I sincerely hope that you will enjoy reading this thesis!

Laura Demandt
Nijmegen, July 2024

Summary

In recent years, the average health status of the Dutch population has improved by four per cent. However, residents of neighbourhoods with a low social economic status (SES) exhibit a slower rate of health improvement than those residing in neighbourhoods with a higher SES. In order to address this health inequality, integrated policies are being formulated at the local level with the goal to improve people's health by using environmental (health) planning. In the context of environmental (health) planning, it is becoming increasingly important to engage citizens in the policy-making process. However, a number of studies have demonstrated that citizens residing in areas of low SES tend to engage in these participatory activities at a lower rate, as compared to people from higher social economic status. The existing literature indicates that citizens of low SES encounter participation barriers when they attempt to participate. To improve the involvement of these residents, policy makers need to address their barriers. However, there is insufficient scientific literature on such participation process. It is not known when citizens experience barriers to participate and how they think that these barriers could be eliminated. This should be known to develop an optimal process for participation in a community.

This qualitative study employed a single case study to examine the participation process in the centre of Hoensbroek. Furthermore, it investigated the perceptions of citizens regarding the current participation process and their expectations for the optimal participation process.

The objective of this research was to analyse the existing participation process and to determine the perceptions of citizens with regard to this process. In order to contribute to this scientific debate, the following research question was formulated: "How can the current process of resident participation in the vision to promote a healthy living environment be characterised in the centre of Hoensbroek? And how is this process of citizen participation experienced by the residents of Hoensbroek?".

This qualitative research was conducted using a combination of semi-structured interviews, policy review, observation, and informal conversation. During the course of the research, both policy documents pertaining to the subject of citizen participation in the municipality of Hoensbroek and a number of other key documents that provided information on the participation process were analysed. During the course of the research, a meeting was organized by the municipality of Heerlen for local residents, regarding future plans for the city centre of Hoensbroek. The observation of this meeting was also part of this research. In addition, an informal talk was held with the policy maker of the Municipality of Heerlen to gain insight into the future development of the participation process.

The findings of this study reveal that the policy maker mention that the participation process in Hoensbroek has undergone significant evolution. It is now possible for citizens to engage in policy and decision-making processes relating to environmental (health) planning. The Heerlen municipality has provided opportunities for participation of citizens and entrepreneurs in the centre of Hoensbroek, with the objective of enabling them to influence the adoption of the memorandum of principles. The memorandum of principles represents a key component in the drafting of the vision, which is scheduled for adoption by the end of 2024. The participation methods applied by the municipality for the establishment of the memorandum of principles are one-on-one interviews and a residents meeting, organized for all residents. In employing these two participation methods, the Municipality of Heerlen utilized a range of participation techniques to elicit the desired input from citizens. The majority of respondents expressed positive sentiments regarding the participation methods employed. However, a number of respondents expressed reservations about the quality of the participation methods employed. The majority of respondents expressed discontent with the manner in which the information evening for residents was organised and the extent to which they were able to participate. In addition, respondents indicated that they perceived a lack of willingness on the part of the municipality to genuinely hear and consider their input.

The conclusion of this research is that, while the process of citizen participation has been evaluated as one that allows residents and entrepreneurs to exert influence, there is still room for improvement in meeting the participation needs of citizens and entrepreneurs in the centre.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Introduction to participation in environmental health politics

The health of the Dutch population has improved in recent years, as reflected in the four per cent increase in life expectancy. However, residents living in low socioeconomic status (SES) neighbourhoods experience slower health improvements compared to those living in higher SES neighbourhoods (Velze et al., 2020). This unequal health development is related to the health inequality experienced in the Netherlands (Wilderink et al., 2022). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health inequality refers to avoidable disparities in health outcomes between various groups of people that result from social inequalities (Corburn et al., 2015).

Research conducted by van Velze et al. (2020) and other scientists (e.g. Michels, 2019; Wang et al., 2023) indicates a relation between the median income of a neighbourhood and the health of its residents. Neighbourhoods with lower median incomes are associated with lower average health, while neighbourhoods with higher median incomes are associated with higher average health (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, 2022b). These health inequities are shaped by the conditions in which citizens live, grow, age and, work and by the accessible health systems. These conditions, in turn, are shaped by broader social, economic and political forces (Corburn et al., 2015). It is evident today that these health disparities are not distributed at random, but rather exhibit a consistent pattern. This consistent pattern is evident in geographic location and socioeconomic status (Corburn et al., 2015). The phenomenon has resulted in significant differences in life expectancy among residents of various neighbourhoods. Despite interventions that have improved the public health of Dutch residents in recent years, health disparities between population groups in the Netherlands persist. These spatial health disparities are evident when studying the disparity in life expectancy between residents of neighbourhoods with low (defined as those with the 20 per cent lowest median incomes) and high (defined as those with the 20 per cent highest median incomes) SES. Individuals living in low SES neighbourhoods have lower life expectancy because they are at higher risk of developing health problems, including chronic diseases, obesity, hypertension, and diabetes (Velze et al., 2020). Figure 1 illustrates that the difference in life expectancy between these two types of neighbourhoods increased by 25% at the end of the measured period (Velze et al., 2020). The figure illustrates the contrast in life expectancy between neighbourhoods with low and high SES based on median income. The blue line in the left diagram represents the national trend in life expectancy, while the green and yellow lines represent the trends in life expectancy of neighbourhoods with high and low SES, respectively. The diagram on the right side illustrates the difference in life expectancy between neighbourhoods with high and low SES (Velze et al., 2020).

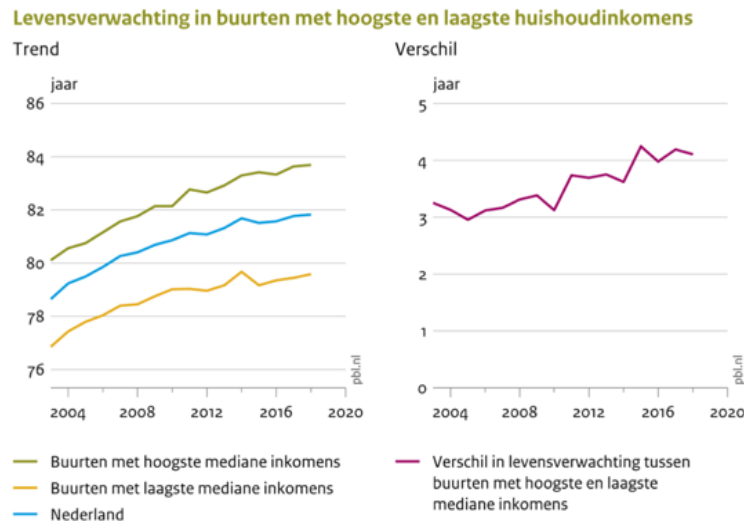


Figure 1, Life expectancy in neighborhoods with the lowest median income and those with the highest median income (van Velze et al., 2020, p. 15).

In recent years, there has been a notable increase in the implementation of policies that promote health through spatial interventions. This entails contemplating the potential of the spatial environment to encourage the adoption of healthy behaviours among individuals. An illustrative example is the design of public spaces to encourage exercise, with the aim of addressing the problem of rising obesity rates (Kruize et al., 2015). Wang et al. (2023) has demonstrated that interventions in the physical environment represent an essential policy instrument to reduce the adverse determinants originating from the physical and social environment. Since 1990, there has been a shift from quantitative to a qualitative focus. This shift has ensured that local customization has become of great importance, which is incidentally common in area developments. In addition, health promotion is increasingly being promoted using an integrated approach. Health promotion is not only promoted on an area-specific basis, but also across multiple policy areas (Kruize et al., 2015). This comprehensive approach is also consistent with the findings of Corburn et al. (2015), which indicate that the causes of poor health are often interrelated. For instance, the underlying causes of poor health include inadequate housing, discrimination, poverty, and other social inequalities (Corburn et al., 2015). An illustrative example of an integrated approach is the National Programme Liveability and Safety (Nationaal Programma voor Leefbaarheid en Veiligheid), launched in 2022 with the objective of addressing a range of issues, including poverty, housing, unemployment, health, and education. The objective of this policy programme is to promote a healthy and safe living environment through an area-based approach (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2022). Besides an earlier focus on locally tailored and integrated approaches, a shift from a top-down to a bottom-up approach is also taking place, with citizens increasingly being involved in integrated approaches (Kruize et al., 2015).

In addition to improving citizens' public health through local policy interventions that improve the quality of the physical environment (Wang et al., 2023), citizen participation in health promotion

initiatives is considered of great importance (Haldane et al., 2019; O'Mara-Eves et al., 2015). For instance, citizen participation can effectively alter citizens' health behaviours and encourage 'good' health behaviours, resulting in enhanced health outcomes for citizens (Rifkin, 2014). Moreover, participation has a positive effect on social capital, which can lead to greater empowerment of societies, which in turn can lead to better public health and reduction of health inequalities (Haldane et al., 2019). In addition, Baxter et al. (2023) identified a growing body of evidence indicating that a lack of influence on health decisions is a significant contributing factor to low health status. The concept of citizen participation lacks a consistent definition in the literature (Sarzynski, 2015). Conceptualizations of citizen participation range from less influential forms, such as information and consultation, to more empowered forms where citizens participate in the decision-making process (Arnstein, 1969; Glucker et al., 2013; Uittenbroek et al., 2019) The term "citizen participation" is defined in this research as a process in which local residents are invited by governments to influence decisions affecting their physical environment, regardless of their degree of power (Cunningham, 1972; E. Tonkens & Verhoeven, 2019).

Practitioners and planning academics consider citizen participation to be of significant importance in planning decisions, both in terms of practical considerations and theoretical reasoning. For instance, participation is of fundamental importance in the communication planning paradigm during consultations between stakeholders, citizens and agencies. In practice, citizen participation is regarded as a fundamental aspect of advancing the democratic process (Corburn, 2003; Laurian, 2004; van Dam et al., 2014). Participation forces agencies to be accountable to citizens, provides opportunities to incorporate citizen knowledge into decision-making, improves planning outcomes, and increases support for policy among citizens (Corburn, 2003; Laurian, 2004; Michels & De Graaf, 2010). In addition, citizen participation ensures that citizens have a voice in decisions that affect their daily lives, thereby increasing social capital (Laurian, 2004). One way of promoting citizen participation at the local level is to use decentralization (Kapiriri, 2003). However, the extent to which citizens participate in the participatory process is influenced by several factors, including their cultural, political, economic, and social environment, as well as their sense of competence and empowerment in relation to the ability to influence planning decisions (Kapiriri, 2003).

In the field of environmental health planning, Corburn (2003) has underscored the significance of incorporating local citizen knowledge. Corburn (2003) posits that the utilization of residents' knowledge is not a panacea for improving environmental decision-making. Nevertheless, for democratic and epistemological reasons, the knowledge of residents should never be disregarded by planners seeking to enhance the lives of citizens who are most vulnerable to adverse health outcomes and environmental exposure risks (Corburn, 2003). Researchers specialising in environmental health call for a larger role for the most disadvantaged people, who experience the greatest health effects and risks from

environmental exposure, in researching and describing solutions that reduce these effects and risks (Corburn, 2003).

Despite the growing recognition of the significance of citizen engagement in decision-making processes, the primary challenge remains to ensure that citizens are actually involved in these processes (Kapiriri, 2003). In particular residents of low-SES neighbourhoods are less likely to participate in democratic activities, including environmental decision-making processes (Baxter et al., 2023; Dacombe & Parvin, 2021; Solt, 2008; Termansen et al., 2023). As posited by participatory theorists, citizen participation not only enhances the democratic process but also improves the lives of those who engage in it (Dacombe, 2021). Dacombe (2021) argues that this is precisely why it is problematic that those citizens in society who would most benefit from participation, according to participatory democracy do not attend the participatory process. The reasons why residents in low-SES neighbourhoods are less likely to participate in citizen engagement may be attributed to a lack of time, commitment, and individual and community empowerment (Fung, 2009; Jakobsen & Andersen, 2013; Kapiriri, 2003; Pestoff, 2012; Vanleene et al., 2018). In addition, the cause may be that citizen participation policies have not been implemented. In addition, several potential barriers may arise, including cultural, social, economic, motivational, and attitudinal factors, which may prevent citizens from participating (Fung, 2009; Jakobsen & Andersen, 2013; Kapiriri, 2003; Pestoff, 2012; Vanleene et al., 2018).

As previously stated, there is a substantial body of scientific evidence demonstrating the significance of citizen involvement in the formulation of health-promoting policies. Corburn (2003) posits that populations most affected by health issues and environmental hazards should be afforded a greater participatory role in policy-making processes. Despite these interests, several studies (e.g. Baxter et al., 2023; Termansen et al., 2023) demonstrate that these citizens are less likely to participate due to various causes and barriers (Kapiriri, 2003). However, there is little scientific knowledge about what citizen participation in environmental health planning at the local level looks like when citizens in low-SES neighbourhoods experience these causes and barriers. In addition, there is little scientific knowledge on what citizen participation in environmental health planning at the local level should look like, according to the experiences of citizens in low-SES neighbourhoods in which they do not experience these causes and barriers. This research contributes to the scientific debate within environmental health planning by addressing the gap in knowledge regarding the current participation process at the local level in environmental health planning in low-SES neighbourhoods. Moreover, this research also contributes to the gap on how the participation process should be implemented to increase citizen participation rates in low-SES neighbourhoods.

To contribute to the scientific debate, the process of citizen participation in policymaking in the centre of Hoensbroek was analysed. The participation process was analysed using the three elements that,

according to Goodlad et al. (2005), play a role in the participation process. The three elements that were analysed are: the opportunities provided by the institutional context, the resources available for participation, and the methods and techniques used by the municipality to promote citizen participation in local health-promoting environmental policies (Goodlad et al., 2005). The municipality of Heerlen, located in the South of Limburg, encompasses the centre of Hoensbroek. In October 2023, the municipality of Heerlen initiated a vision to transform the centre of Hoensbroek into a healthy living environment. In the policy-making process, the municipality of Heerlen provides the opportunity for citizens and entrepreneurs of the centre of Hoensbroek to participate (Gemeente Heerlen, 2023). Consequently, this research was conducted at an early stage of the health-promoting policy process, during which opportunities for citizen participation were made available. The single case study was selected for analysis because Hoensbroek is a low-SES neighbourhood (Meyer, 2022), and the opportunity for citizen participation was made available (Gemeente Heerlen, 2023).

1.2 Research aim and question

The study employed a qualitative methodology with the primary aim of investigating what citizen participation in health-promoting environmental policies in low-SES neighbourhoods looks like and what this citizen participation should look like according to citizens in order to remove the causes and barriers that cause citizens to participate less. Whereby the focus of this research was to provide empirical insights that capture the specific experiences of citizens and entrepreneurs from the centre of Hoensbroek of the participation process within health-promoting environmental policy making. The first aim was to delineate the institutional framework within which citizen participation occurs. The second aim was to gain an understanding of the methods and techniques employed to facilitate citizen participation. The third aim was to identify the resources available to residents and examine how these resources are utilized within the institutional context. Based on the information obtained, the ultimate goal was to identify the experiences of citizens and entrepreneurs in the current participation process. In addition, to further determine what the future participation process should look like to ensure that possible causes and barriers to participation no longer exist.

To contribute to the research gap and achieve the research goal, the following research question was formulated:

"How can the current process of resident participation in the vision to promote a healthy living environment be characterised in the centre of Hoensbroek? And how is this process of citizen participation experienced by the residents of Hoensbroek?"

1. What are the characteristics of the institutional context of the process of citizen participation in which residents of Hoensbroek participate?
2. What methods and techniques are used within the institutional context to enable participation for Hoensbroek residents?
3. Within the institutional context, what resources are available to Hoensbroek residents?
4. What experience do Hoensbroek residents have within the institutional context, the use of the resources offered, and the methods and techniques used in participating in the process of citizen participation?
5. How does the future participation process should look like according to the residents to ensure that possible causes and barriers to participation no longer exist?

1.3 Research outline

To achieve the research aim and answer the research question, Chapter 2 presents a theoretical framework. Chapter 3 discusses the methods and methodology of this research, followed by a deeper insight into the single case, the centre of Hoensbroek, on which this research focuses. Based on Chapter 3, the research results are presented in Chapter 4. Finally, the results are evaluated in Chapter 5, which includes the conclusion and discussion.

Chapter 2 – Theoretical framework

This chapter presents a discussion of the theoretical framework. First, the connection between public health and environmental planning is addressed. Second, the shift from government to governance and how this shift contributed to the increasing importance of citizen participation in political processes is discussed. Third, the concept of citizen participation is explained. This section focuses on when and in what form citizens can participate in policy and decision-making processes. Fourth, the theory of democracy is discussed. Finally, the core concepts used to analyse the participation process are explained.

2.1 Public health and environmental planning

The fields of public health and environmental planning share a common origin in their efforts to prevent urban outbreaks of infectious diseases (Corburn, 2004). Despite this shared history, the two disciplines currently exhibit minimal overlap, which has contributed to a lack of a coordinated approach in addressing health inequalities in low-income areas. In the nineteenth century, environmental planning and public health developed in parallel, striving to mitigate the adverse consequences of urbanisation, industrialisation, and other societal transformations. These consequences included inadequate sanitation, unsafe working conditions, and substandard housing. In the late nineteenth century, the collaboration between these two disciplines underwent a significant shift. With the advent of germ theory, public health shifted its focus towards immunisation and laboratory research, while environmental planning adopted the Haussmann model to separate industrial and residential areas through zoning. The focus areas of these two disciplines experienced another transformation in the second half of the twentieth century with the emergence of the biomedical model of diseases. In the late nineteenth century, public health shifted its focus to individual risk factors such as physical activity and diet, while environmental planning began to focus on suburban sprawl and economic development. These shifts contributed to the separation of public health and environmental planning. The widespread adoption of environmental impact statements (EIS) and quantitative risk assessment led to the actual decoupling of these two disciplines. EIS and quantitative risk assessment are methods for analysing health impacts in projects. However, these methods resulted in a disconnect between public health and environmental planning due to their exclusive reliance on quantitative data, undue emphasis on carcinogenicity, exclusive practice among experts, and failure to consider the disproportionate hazardous exposures experienced by certain populations (Corburn, 2004).

Corburn (2004) posits that it is imperative to reestablish the nexus between public health and environmental planning to implement coordinated strategies that address health disparities in areas of

low socioeconomic status. One of the prerequisites for this reconnection is the introduction of a novel concept of participatory democracy, wherein citizens who have historically been excluded from decision-making are granted accountability. These individuals, however, bear the brunt of the consequences of inequality. This local environmental decision-making process provides an opportunity for these citizens to have their voices heard and ensures that health problems are defined, addressed, and analysed in a way that is meaningful to citizens (Corburn, 2003). The integration of local knowledge in environmental decision-making through citizen participation ensures the improvement of human health conditions, the local environment, and development (Corburn, 2005). As previously discussed in Chapter 1, citizen participation can effectively alter citizens' health behaviours and encourage "good" health behaviours, resulting in enhanced health outcomes for citizens (Rifkin, 2014). In addition, participation has a positive effect on social capital, which can lead to greater empowerment of societies, which in turn can lead to better public health and a reduction of health inequalities (Haldane et al., 2019). Furthermore, Baxter et al. (2023) has identified a growing body of evidence indicating that a lack of influence on health decisions is a significant contributing factor to low health status.

The practice of decision-making and research in public health and environmental planning is frequently subject to criticism for its exclusive reliance on professional knowledge, with the consequence that democratic participation is often overlooked. In addition, criticism also asserts that citizens are regarded by professionals as not understanding scientific and technical matters. This results in a loss of trust between professionals and citizens in their ability to understand and solve complex problems (Corburn, 2004). Nevertheless, an increasing body of scientific research indicates that within these two fields, expert judgments frequently lack crucial contextual information that must be augmented by citizen knowledge and experiences (e.g. Cornburn, 2002; Fischer, 2000; Heiman, 1997). To achieve democratisation within both public health and environmental planning, it is necessary to include citizens' knowledge and experiences in addition to expert assessments. Moreover, expert knowledge must not be separated from practical experience (Corburn, 2004).

As previously discussed in Chapter 1, there has been a notable increase in the implementation of policies that promote health through spatial interventions with a focus on locally tailored interventions in the Netherlands in recent years (Kruize et al., 2015). The physical environment is an key policy tool for promoting public health (Wang et al., 2023). The lifestyle and public health of residents in a neighbourhood are shaped by the design and layout of the social and physical living environment. It determines the extent to which individuals engage in social interaction, physical activity, and access to essential facilities such as supermarkets and medical care. In addition, the physical living environment, encompassing infectious disease risks, noise pollution, and air quality, also exerts an influence on public health (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, 2023). However, the quality of the social and physical living environment in low-SES neighbourhoods is frequently substandard due to increased air pollution, a lack

of green spaces, higher levels of urbanisation, and the high availability of fast-food restaurants, among other factors, which negatively affect citizens' health (Hin & de Hollander, 2023; Wilderink et al., 2020). It is crucial to acknowledge that, in addition to the impact of the social and physical environment on health, the selective inflow and outflow of residents and the loss of amenities play a significant role in the concentration of residents with low socioeconomic status in each neighbourhood. This phenomenon also results in lower health levels in these neighbourhoods (Hin & de Hollander, 2023; Wilderink et al., 2020). Besides the focus on local customisation, health promotion is increasingly being promoted using an integrated approach. In addition, governments have increasingly come to recognise the importance of citizen input in policy-making (Kruize et al., 2015). Local governments in particular are interested in collaboration with and input from citizens affected by policies. The rationale behind the introduction of participatory policy-making is that it is anticipated to narrow the gap between government and citizens, enhance support for policy decisions, reinforce democratic legitimacy and problem-solving capacity, facilitate the identification of cost-effective policy options and improve policy quality (Corburn, 2003; de Graaf et al., 2015). Furthermore, since the Environment Act came into force on 1 January 2024, municipalities are obliged to implement citizen participation. The objective of this participation obligation is to engage local residents in the design of the 'healthy' physical living environment (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, 2020).

In response to challenges that are detrimental to the physical living environment, local governments typically implement policies, plans, and/or visions with a high area-oriented orientation (Painter & Clarence, 2001). The objective is to implement a series of integrated area-oriented interventions that address challenges at the neighbourhood level, based on the policies, plans, and/or visions that have been established. The objective of area-focused interventions is to enhance the liveability of the area in question (Froding et al., 2012). Integrated area-focused interventions can address both the physical environment in the area concerned and households and individuals (Burgers & Vranken, 2004). In addition, area-based interventions may take the form of either informal or formal initiatives. A variety of stakeholders may be involved in the drafting of a policy, plan, and/or vision, including local government agencies, local citizens, and non-governmental organisations (Froding et al., 2012). As previously discussed in Chapter 1.1, it remains a challenge to effectively involve residents from low-SES neighbourhoods in processes to improve the physical environment (Kapiriri, 2003). It is evident that these citizens are less likely to participate in environmental policies, plans and visions that aim to promote health (Baxter et al., 2023; Dacombe & Parvin, 2021; Solt, 2008; Termansen et al., 2023). Studies have demonstrated that participation can be impeded by a multitude of factors, including cultural, social, economic, motivational, and attitudinal considerations (Fung, 2009; Jakobsen & Andersen, 2013; Kapiriri, 2003; Pestoff, 2012; Vanleene et al., 2018). Such factors as financial or transport-related challenges, distrust or fear of authorities, lack of incentive, lack of personal resources and mental capacity, lack of knowledge and skill, communication difficulties, lack of time, and lack of

information and awareness regarding health programmes have been identified as potential barriers to participation (Fung, 2009; Jakobsen & Andersen, 2013; Kipiriri, 2003; Pestoff, 2012; Vanleene et al., 2018). Additionally, it can be argued that citizen participation policies have not been implemented effectively. Despite understanding the barriers that prevent citizens from low-SES neighbourhoods from participating, there is a paucity of scientific knowledge regarding the nature of citizen participation in environmental health planning at the local level, particularly in relation to the experiences of citizens in low-SES neighbourhoods regarding these causes and barriers. In addition, there is a lack of knowledge regarding the optimal participatory process from the perspective of citizens, with the objective of reducing or eliminating the barriers.

2.2 From government to governance

The manner in which Dutch society is governed has undergone a transformation in recent years. In the past, society was typically governed by dominant forms of government-oriented governance (Stoker, 1998). Since the advent of governance in the 1990s, this mode of societal governance has undergone a transformation (Ansell & Torfing, 2022). The advent of governance was a consequence of a profound reassessment of the role of the state in contemporary society, precipitated by the emergence of several challenges. Firstly, the government was confronted with an increasing number of demands and expectations placed upon it by citizens. The challenge of meeting these expectations was compounded by the limitations of public resources. Secondly, there was a rise in individualism, which resulted in a decline in social cohesion and a weakening of shared values and norms. The governance of society and the resolution of collective issues became increasingly challenging. Finally, in the 1970s, governments were compelled to stimulate economic growth while simultaneously addressing inflation and fiscal constraints. This served to illustrate the constraints inherent in traditional forms of governmental intervention, thereby prompting a search for alternative approaches. In response to these challenges, neoliberalism emerged as a political philosophy that advocated for a reduced role of the state and greater reliance on market mechanisms (Ansell & Torfing, 2022).

This shift gave rise to a series of policy reforms, including privatisation, contracting out and market-based solutions. The prevailing view was that collaboration in partnerships and networks would result in enhanced efficiency, more effective fulfilment of citizens' wishes and superior services. The complexity of government tasks was identified as a barrier to their management by government actors alone (de Graaf et al., 2015). This evolving relationship between governments and society exemplifies the transition from government to governance (van Dam et al., 2014). Despite the fact that the role of government is no longer the dominant one, researchers (e.g. Pierre & Peters, 2005) maintain that government is indispensable and remains the highest authority within governance. For example, Pierre & Peters (2005) posit that the advent of governance has redefined the role of government. This shift in the role of government has resulted in a transfer of responsibility for policy-making from the government

to civil society and market players (Arts et al., 2006; Van Huijstee et al., 2007). Concurrently with the transition from government to governance, democracy underwent a shift from representative democracy, in which the prevailing assumption was that citizen participation in the political process should be limited to voting for leaders, to participatory democracy, in which the prevailing assumption was that the role of citizens is crucial in political decision-making (Michels, 2006; Michels & De Graaf, 2010). This shift in societal involvement in policy development has resulted in enhanced collaboration between the government and civil society (van Heffen et al., 2013).

2.3 Citizen Participation

As discussed in Chapter 1.1, the involvement of citizens in area-based health interventions represents a crucial strategy for enhancing public health outcomes (Attree et al., 2011; Baxter et al., 2023; Cyril et al., 2015; Termansen et al., 2023). Consequently, a significant number of countries in both the United States and Europe place a strong emphasis on the incorporation of a participation strategy within the context of area-based interventions (Burgers & Vranken, 2004; van Beckhoven et al., 2009). It is crucial for the efficacy and efficiency of area-based health interventions that citizens participate (WHO, 1997). Accordingly, the personal skills and social justice of those involved are enhanced through the process of citizen participation (Froding et al., 2012). In the context of urban citizen participation, two distinct forms of citizen engagement can be identified: political participation and citizen participation. Political participation is defined as activities that influence decision-making. In contrast, citizen participation encompasses the ways in which citizens engage in self-reliance, both informally and formally. This section will focus on political citizen participation (Block et al., 2010).

The concept of citizen participation in policy-making can be distinguished into three distinct generations. Lenos et al. (2006) observe that it is crucial to recognise that these three generations have not been mutually exclusive over time; rather, they represent a progression and 'extension' of citizen participation. The initial phase of citizen participation is characterised by involvement in decision-making processes initiated by empowered citizens, as exemplified by the 1970s. In the 1990s, the opportunity was created for citizens to participate even earlier in policy phases through the introduction of forms of interactive policy and co-production. Nevertheless, the government retains the prerogative to determine which issues citizens may address and the extent of their involvement. This is regarded as the second generation. The third generation of citizen participation emerged at the beginning of the 21st century, coinciding with an increased policy focus on informal citizen initiatives. The notion that both the government and civil society play a role in initiating and participating in policy is a central tenet of this generation. In other words, it is proposed that citizens should be in charge of both the content and the process (van de Wijdeven et al., 2013).

The political participation process can be conceptualised as comprising three distinct roles that citizens may assume (Lowndes 1995; Pratchett 1999; Beukenholdt, Daemen, and Schaap 2002). The first role pertains to the capacity of citizens to participate in representative democracy through the act of casting their vote in elections. The second role pertains to citizens as customers of local governments, which provide services to citizens. Such citizens may become active customers once they are invited to evaluate the quality of the services provided. The final role pertains to the participation of citizens in interactive policy-making processes. Subsequently, citizens are able to communicate their concerns, opinions, requirements and potential solutions to their municipality. In the most prevalent forms of citizen participation, citizens assume the role of advisers, while the municipal council retains the dominant position. In recent years, there has been a notable focus on enhancing participation rates, particularly among underrepresented groups such as women, young people, individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and ethnic minorities (Hendriks & Schaap, 2011). As indicated in Chapter 1, these groups encounter obstacles to participation, which ultimately leads to their absence from the citizen participation process in policy-making.

When a citizen participates

The reasons why citizens do or do not participate in political processes can be attributed to three factors, as identified by Verba et al. (1995). These are: invitation (being asked), motivation (wanting) and capacity (being able). The first factor is that of invitation or being asked to participate. Research conducted by Verba et al. (1995) indicates that citizens who are invited to participate in citizen activities frequently accept the invitation. The invitation to participate can be extended in a variety of ways, including by mail, email, personal contacts, voluntary organisations, or by visiting residents. The concept of invitation to participate is broad in scope. It is therefore key to consider that, in addition to citizens being explicitly invited to participate, they also need to feel that they are being invited (van de Wijdeven et al., 2013).

The second factor that determines whether citizens participate is their motivation. Citizens' motivation to participate can be explained by Verba et al. (1995) in terms of four types of 'motivators': three selective gratifications (material, citizen and social) and expected returns to action. The three selective gratifications can be seen as the 'returns' and 'benefits' that citizens expect from participation. The different motives of citizens to participate relate to their own and the public interest (Denters et al., 2013). In general, the Dutch population finds it difficult to express their own interests, but in practice it can be seen that citizens act according to their own interests (van de Wijdeven et al., 2013). The study by Denters et al. (2013) found that citizens act according to the general interest through citizens' initiatives, because these citizens' initiatives have purposeful and social objectives. Dissatisfaction and frustration are motivations that often recur in practice (van de Wijdeven et al., 2013). Residents are more likely to become active when a policy negatively affects them or when they perceive shortcomings or

deficiencies in public services. These dissatisfactions and frustrations can relate to both the content and the way decisions are made (van de Wijdeven et al., 2013). Expected efficacy refers to the expectation of citizens that they can actually exert influence. This expectation is related to trust in the participation process and/or institutions and trust in their own abilities. According to van de Wijdeven et al. (2013), the two factors: citizens' attachment to the neighbourhood and citizens' feeling that they can actually exert influence, play a key role in predicting the extent to which citizens participate. In addition to dissatisfaction, satisfaction also serves as a motivator. The research by E. H. Tonkens & Verhoeven (2012), for example, presents that the initiators of citizens' initiatives in Amsterdam are quite positive about the neighbourhood. Citizens' dissatisfaction should not stand in the way of thinking about how to improve the situation. Achieving attractive and visible results is also a motivating factor. Achieving (interim) results creates energy for participants to continue to participate and achieve further results (van de Wijdeven et al., 2013). It is also key that these (interim) results are presented to the neighbourhood. These results contribute to a positive atmosphere in the neighbourhood and increase the chances of increasing participation (van de Wijdeven et al., 2013).

The final factor that determines whether residents will participate is capacity. This factor refers to a citizen's capacity to participate. This capacity is influenced by the time a citizen has available to participate, whether the citizen can afford to participate (financially) and whether the citizen has the necessary skills to participate. High SES citizens tend to have more resources, such as available time, higher level skills and money, than low SES citizens. In addition, citizens with high SES have better access to institutions and have more social interactions (van de Wijdeven et al., 2013). Having the ability to participate also increases the likelihood of participation. This is reflected in the study by Hurenkamp et al. (2006). In this study, citizens with the ability to participate, also called active citizens, were mainly highly educated. These citizens often have the necessary bureaucratic skills, e.g. they often know how to find funding channels and how an approval process works (Hurenkamp et al., 2006). In neighbourhoods with low SES, active citizens are often also citizens with higher SES, as these active citizens have these (bureaucratic) skills. In multicultural participation, the language barrier is a key barrier that prevents citizens from participating (van de Wijdeven et al., 2013). Froding et al. (2012) found that participation in community-based health interventions was lower among migrants than among natives. In addition to language barriers, this is explained by possible cultural differences and a lack of trust in citizens (Froding et al., 2012). In addition, the daily life of citizens with low SES takes up a lot of their energy and time (van de Wijdeven et al., 2013). For example, Froding et al. (2012) found that citizens who are on long-term sick leave or unemployed are less likely to participate. It is suggested that this is because citizens focus only on their personal challenges and not on the challenges in their society, lack of social support and social exclusion (Froding et al., 2012). In addition to having the capacity, several studies (e.g. Hurenkamp & Tonkens, 2020; Wagenaar et al., 2010) illustrate that

citizens' self-perception and confidence in their capacity plays an key role in exercising political influence and the extent to which citizens are politically active.

Forms of citizen participation

The distinction between various forms of political citizen participation is a topic that has been extensively discussed in the academic literature. The most well-known forms of political citizen participation are elucidated through the lens of Arnstein (1969) participation ladder. The participation ladder posits that the higher a form of political citizen participation is on the eight steps of the ladder, the more citizens are involved in the decision-making process (Block et al., 2010). The lower steps of the participation ladder represent a situation in which citizens have little to no involvement in policy-making. The upper steps of the ladder reflect a more involved and active role for citizens in policy-making, with a partnership between citizens and public administrators. Arnstein (1969) proposed that citizen involvement should be as comprehensive as possible. This implies that citizen participation should occur at the higher levels of the 'participation ladder'. In this regard, Arnstein (1969) offered a critique of the citizen participation process in health planning, noting that it is often employed in a merely symbolic manner. In this context, citizens are perceived to possess minimal or no capacity to exert influence over the decision-making process (Arnstein, 1969). The extent of participation permitted to residents is contingent upon the willingness of public administrators at the local government level to incorporate participation in decision-making processes. These managers exert influence over the design of the participation process, including the allocation of resources, as well as the extent of citizen participation, which may be limited to a specific phase or may encompass the entirety of the decision-making process (Michels, 2006; Migchelbrink & Van de Walle, 2022). As outlined by (Bherer et al., 2016; Froding et al., 2012), the participation process is perceived as a top-down mechanism employed to incorporate citizen input into decisions pertaining to the public sector.

Despite Arnstein (1969) participation ladder being a global concept, Arnstein (1969) participation ladder is more commonly used in the Dutch context. The participation ladder is an analytical tool employed to operationalise and categorise policy initiatives (Block et al., 2010). Edelenbos & Klijn (2006) participation ladder is based on the work of Edelenbos (2000), which outlines the five roles that can be assigned to citizens in the process of citizen participation in policy-making. These roles are as follows: participate, advise, inform, consult, and co-produce. In addition, the participation ladder is also based on the work of Propper & Steenbeek (1999), who combined seven governance styles with the stages of the participation ladder. The aforementioned governance styles may be classified as collaborative, facilitative, delegative, consultative, participatory, closed authoritarian, or open authoritarian. Table 1 illustrates the positioning of Edelenbos & Klijn (2006) participation ladder in relation to the roles of citizens and interactive governance processes. At one end of the participation ladder, the government pursues independent policy, with the citizen being informed but not providing input. The opposite end

of the participation ladder represents a situation in which the citizen assumes the role of initiator, with the government assuming a facilitating role (Edelenbos et al., 2006). As with Arnstein (1969) participation ladder, the higher the form of political citizen participation on the ladder, the greater the involvement of citizens in decision-making processes (Block et al., 2010). Additionally, the participation ladder has been subject to criticism for being static and fails to acknowledge that the level of participation is contingent upon the stage of the decision-making process. During the participation process, citizens may ascend the participation ladder. In addition, this participation ladder is oriented towards the attainment of the higher levels, yet in certain policy contexts, the mere act of informing citizens is deemed sufficient (Block et al., 2010).

Degree of participation and styles of governance			
Participation ladder Edelenbos (2000)	Governance styles Propper & Steenbeek (1999)	Role if citizen	Role of governance
Co-decision	Facilitating style	Initiator	Provides support and leaves policy-making to participants
Coproducting	Collaborative style	Cooperation partner on the basis of equality	Governance works and decides with participant on the basis of equality
	Delegating style	Co-decision-maker: within constraints	Board decides on policy subject to proposed preconditions
Advising	Participative style	Advisor	Sets policy but is open to other ideas and solutions
Consulting	Consultative style	Consulted interlocutor	Sets policy and allows for comments, but does not have to draw consequences
Informing	Open authoritarian style	Target group of research/information, does not provide input	Pursues independent policies and provides information on them
Participant is not involved	Closed authoritarian style	None	Conducts independent policy and does not provide information

Table 1. Degree of participation and styles of governance by Edelenbos et al., p. (2006, p. 21).

2.4 Democracy

Political philosophers such as Schumpeter and Rousseau have sought to define the concept of democracy. In the ongoing discourse surrounding the definition of democracy, two distinct perspectives emerge. The first current is representative democracy, which is also referred to as Schumpeter's school of thought. The second current, which has been designated as Rousseau's school, is participatory democracy (Michels, 2006).

The advent of representative democracy can be attributed to the evolution of intricate societal structures during the twentieth century, which rendered direct citizen governance impractical. The defining feature of this system is the assumption that the role of the citizenry in the political process should be limited to the act of voting for leaders. In other words, citizens in this democracy bear the responsibility of electing a government that creates laws and policies (Michels & De Graaf, 2010). This level of participation is defined as indirect participation (Callahan, 2007). According to several political theorists, this form of democracy is considered the most realistic and effective (Callahan, 2007; Michels & De Graaf, 2010). This is because the public sector is not expected to elicit responsible decision-making from citizens. In this regard, proponents of representative democracy, such as Schumpeter, Sartori and Dahl, posit that citizens lack the requisite administrative, technical and political skills, time commitment and expertise to make effective decisions (Callahan, 2007; Michels, 2006). Dahl posits that an expansion in the political influence of lower socioeconomic groups may result in an increase in authoritarian beliefs, which could potentially result in a decline in democratic norms. Similarly, Sartori expresses concern that increased citizen participation in politics without the necessary institutional filters and protection of individual rights may ultimately lead to the emergence of totalitarianism. It is imperative to avoid totalitarianism, as it promotes political and economic stagnation, poses a danger to international and domestic peace and stability, and violates the freedoms and rights of individuals (Michels & De Graaf, 2010). The representative form of democracy reflects the prevailing thought and desires in a government-oriented approach (Callahan, 2007).

The declining voter turnout and the increasing complexity of decision-making processes have prompted questions about the effectiveness of representative democracy. In addition, several incidents have called into question the legitimacy of political leaders. This has resulted in a surge in demand for alternative democratic forms (Michels & De Graaf, 2010). These developments brought greater focus to the role of citizens in the political decision-making process, which was perceived as a means of holding elected leaders accountable for the decisions they make. It was furthermore proposed that citizens would gain greater influence and authority when their input and opinions were incorporated into the political decision-making process (Bherer et al., 2016). Indeed, according to Rousseau's view, it is of the utmost importance that every citizen participates in political decision-making. As citizens participate in the

formulation of rules and policies, they are, in effect, governed by self-imposed rules. Consequently, these rules are then universally accepted. Rousseau's ideas provided the foundation for the concept of participatory democracy (Michels, 2006). This shift towards participatory democracy is reflected in the rise of a governance-oriented approach to governance (Callahan, 2007).

Participatory democracy is characterised by several key aspects. Initially, participatory democracy is characterised by the view that the possibility of maximum citizen participation is crucial in political decision-making (Hilmer, 2010; Michels, 2006). This is not limited to voting and elections (Dacombe & Parvin, 2021), as it encompasses a broader range of activities and forms of engagement. Additionally, this form of democracy is characterised by the integral involvement of participants from the initiation phase of decision-making to the implementation phase (Moote et al., 1997). This degree of participation is defined as direct participation (Callahan, 2007). The characteristics of participatory democracy facilitate the implementation of decisions in a manner that is more readily accepted by all parties. This is because potential conflicts are resolved during the decision-making process, rather than during the implementation of decisions. In addition, there is shared responsibility, broad representation and continuous involvement of citizens, which collectively contribute to a more inclusive and transparent decision-making process. This can circumvent delays, such as those resulting from appeals and lawsuits, in the implementation of decisions (Moote et al., 1997; Moote & McClaran, 1997). Besides, proponents of participatory democracy posit that citizens possess the requisite expertise and knowledge to inform decisions pertaining to the public sector (Callahan, 2007).

The principal objective of the participatory democratic approach is to engage a substantial number of citizens or to ascertain their opinions prior to the formulation of decisions (Michels, 2011). In contrast to their previous role, public administrators are now expected to engage with citizens and facilitate their involvement in decision-making processes. These administrators are expected to foster cooperation, facilitate stakeholder dialogues, utilise participatory decision-making strategies, communicate effectively and reach agreement among divergent interests (Callahan, 2007). Since the 1960s, participatory democracy has provided a range of participatory techniques and discourses that have become central to policy domains around the world and to decision-making processes in various sectors of the community. This development is often referred to as the participatory turn (Bherer et al., 2016). It is crucial to recognise that this approach is not an end in itself; rather, it is a means of reducing social inequalities, achieving democracy and resolving complex problems (Vitale, 2006).

The opening of democracy to numerous voices, or in other words, the enabling of citizens to participate in democratic decision-making, can result in a range of benefits that are both extrinsic and intrinsic in nature (Dacombe & Parvin, 2021). The central tenet of participatory democracy theory is that affording citizens the opportunity to participate in their self-governance engenders increased feelings of

empowerment and political efficacy. Theorists posit that this sentiment arises from citizens exerting a substantial degree of control over the political, economic, and social institutions that directly impact their lives (Hilmer, 2010). The participation of citizens in the democratic process has three positive functions. The initial function of participatory democracy is educational in nature. It enhances the abilities of citizens to become proficient and engage in decision-making processes. The second function is integrative in nature. By participating, citizens may perceive that they have the capacity to influence decision-making processes, which may foster a greater sense of responsibility. The third function is that participatory democracy increases legitimacy (Dacombe & Parvin, 2021; Michels & De Graaf, 2010).

Nevertheless, there have been critiques of participatory democracy that have resulted in a period of disinterest. For instance, political theorists argue that those who espouse participatory democracy are overly optimistic in their assumption that citizens are both willing and able to actively engage in self-governance. These theorists argue that the world is too complex for citizens to navigate effectively, and that the decision-making processes themselves are perceived as inefficient and onerous (Hilmer, 2010). This leads to a withdrawal from the decision-making process, characterised by cynical apathy. Those who oppose participatory democracy view participation as an unrealistic ideal that is impractical in reality (Hilmer, 2010). Despite the criticism, participatory democracy is experiencing a resurgence due to the growing interest in the applicability of the theoretical principles and ideas underlying this democratic approach in the contemporary era. However, those who embrace participatory democracy face significant challenges as a result of findings from studies related to the dynamics of democratic participation (Dacombe & Parvin, 2021). Several studies (e.g. Baxter et al., 2023; Termansen et al., 2023) show that citizens with low SES are less likely to participate due to various causes and barriers (Kapiriri, 2003). These findings are that citizens with low SES do not participate, or participate to a limited extent, in democratic life raise questions about the claims of participatory democrats (Solt, 2008). However, there is little scientific knowledge on what citizen participation in environmental health planning at the local level looks like when citizens in low-SES neighbourhoods experience these causes and barriers. In addition, there is little scientific knowledge on what citizen participation in environmental health planning at the local level should look like, according to the experiences of citizens in low-SES neighbourhoods in which they do not experience these causes and barriers. Dacombe & Parvin (2021) propose that the discrepancy between actual political engagement and the objective of participatory democracy must be addressed in order to achieve participatory democracy.

2.5 Analysing the participation process

The perspective of "equality of status" and "due process" is useful in understanding the justification for citizen participation. Theorists who emphasize cultural and structural inequality, individual freedom and agency view citizen participation as a means of reducing the regulatory capacity and arbitrary power of the state. It is crucial to consider the distribution of power and the conditions under which participation occurs when organizing the participation process. It is similarly vital that the participation process is structured in a manner that demonstrates recognition and respect for the needs and perspectives of those involved, and that citizens perceive themselves to be able to participate on an equal footing and express their opinions (Goodlad et al., 2005).

It is widely accepted that citizens should participate in policy-making. As a result, many have been inspired to explore how to characterise a "good" participation process. One such participation model has been outlined by Goodlad et al. (2005), who identified three domains within the participation process. The domain are institutional context, resources and methods and techniques. The rationale behind the decision to employ this model for the analysis of citizen participation in the centre of Hoensbroek is that the model is specifically designed for the examination of participation processes in environmental interventions at the local level (Goodlad et al., 2005).

The first domain of analysis is the *institutional context* in which participation occurs. The institutional context refers to the way the environment is established by policymakers, project managers, and organisations in which citizens participate, among other entities. Goodlad et al. (2005) identifies four key variables that can influence the institutional context of the participation process: socioeconomic, political, and demographic characteristics of the area; citizens' ability to respond to participation opportunities; the participation history of the area; and the policy context within the local government (Goodlad et al., 2005). However, the institutional context can differ from one municipality to another, and even from one neighbourhood to another, due to the influence of cultural and social developments (Warren, 2009).

The second domain pertains to the *resources* that are essential for participation. Goodlad et al. (2005) posit that the availability of resources within the participation process can influence the extent to which citizens can engage in participatory activities. Such resources include financial support for neighbourhood organisations, training for professionals and residents, and community development staff. Furthermore, resources such as helping citizens participate in meetings and guiding citizens to have substantive discussions. In addition, resources can also be used where citizens learn to cope with the stress and expectations that come with participation (Goodlad et al., 2005). Such resources include assistance with participation in meetings, facilitation of substantial discussions, and clarification of the

role of citizens within the participation process. However, little attention is paid in practice to the provision of resources. This is because it involves additional costs to make these resources available (Goodlad et al., 2005).

The third domain pertains to the *methods and techniques* employed to design the participation process (Goodlad et al., 2005). Methods are ways that help collect opinions from people to ways that produce decisions and judgements that can be used for policy (Rowe & Frewer, 2000). In the Netherlands, several methods are employed by local governments, with voting being the most prevalent (Hendriks, 2001). Other examples of methods include surveys, prevention panels, public meetings, citizen panels, and citizens' juries. Techniques are the ways in which a method can be defined. A method can consist of several techniques. To illustration, a survey (a methode) can consist of certain types of questions that retrieve specific information desired (Rowe & Frewer, 2000).

Chapter 3 - Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological approach employed in this study. First, the research philosophy is presented, and then it delves into the applied research strategy, including the corresponding methods that have been used. It subsequently discusses the analysis of the obtained data and explains how validity and reliability were maintained, as well as how research ethics were addressed throughout the project. Finally, it presents the case study of the centre of Hoensbroek.

3.1 Research philosophy

Philosophy influences the ways in which researchers conduct their research. This can be inferred from the research methods they choose to answer their research questions and achieve their research goal (Moon & Blackman, 2014). Philosophy can be divided into three elements: ontology, epistemology and theoretical perspective. The first element, ontology, is the philosophical study of 'being' or of what constitutes 'reality'. The second element, epistemology, relates to how people can get to know and understand that 'being'. The relationship between 'thinking' and 'being' is not considered in the same way by philosophers and is therefore distinguished from each other. The third element, theoretical perspective, relates to the researcher's orientation while conducting the research (Moon & Blackman, 2014). These three elements are outlined and explained one by one below, within the context of this study.

3.1.1 Ontology

Within ontology, there are two divergent viewpoints: realism and relativism. The first position, realist ontology, recognizes that only one reality exists that can be studied and understood. This reality is independent of human experience (Moses & Knutsen, 2019). In contrast, the second point of view, relativistic ontology, recognises the existence of multiple realities among distinct groups and individuals. Those with a relativist worldview contend that reality is relative in nature. Relativists posit that reality is not fixed and objective, but instead is a construct that emerges from and is shaped by human minds (Moon & Blackman, 2014). This study examined how the featured process of resident participation is experienced differently by various residents and/or entrepreneurs of the centre of Hoensbroek. The premise of this study was that residents and/or entrepreneurs construct their own reality. This has led to the idea that the process of resident participation can be interpreted in different ways based on cultural and social backgrounds, resulting in multiple realities. This premise aligns with relativism, a category of relativist perspective (Moon & Blackman, 2014).

3.1.2 Epistemology

There are three strands within epistemology on how knowledge about the empirical world can be obtained: objectivism, constructivism and subjectivism. The first perspective, objectivist epistemology, argues that an 'external' reality exists independent from individual experiences. Objectivists posit that objective reality, as it is discovered, is empirically generalisable, verifiable, and independent of social conditions and social thinking. In contrary, the second perspective, constructivist epistemology, holds that knowledge or truth is constructed through human involvement. The underlying concept is that no world exists without human activity. The third perspective, subjectivist epistemology, recognises that reality depends on how people understand and perceive reality. In this perspective, reality is seen as plastic and pluralistic. This research was conducted from a constructivist epistemological point of view. In this regard, it was assumed that different residents and/or entrepreneurs of the centre of Hoensbroek constructed meanings about the participation process in different ways. How the meanings are constructed is based on historical, social and cultural perspectives of citizens (Moon & Blackman, 2014).

3.1.3 Theoretical perspective

Theoretical perspective involves understanding the philosophical orientation with which the researcher conducts the study. The researcher's theoretical perspective is influenced by epistemological and ontological inclinations (Moon & Blackman, 2014). In light of the relativist ontological perspective, which acknowledges the existence of multiple realities, and the constructivist epistemological perspective, which does not recognise objective reality in the absence of human experience and involvement, this research was conducted from an interpretivist theoretical perspective. The interpretivist theoretical perspective is concerned with the understanding and explanation of social and human reality (Moon & Blackman, 2014). Interpretivists do not identify regularities that explain human behaviour; rather, they seek to trace the developments of phenomena (Crotty, 1998). Given that this research has concentrated on understanding the experiences of residents during the participation process, it aligns with the interpretivist theoretical perspective (Moon & Blackman, 2014).

3.2 Research strategy and methods

This research aimed to characterise the process of resident participation in the centre of Hoensbroek and to identify the experiences of residents and/or entrepreneurs about this process of resident participation. In order to achieve the research objective and answer the research question as outlined in Chapter 1.3, this study adopted a qualitative research approach. The selection of a qualitative research approach was based on the recognition that this approach allows for the exploration of participants' perceptions and experiences (Tenny et al., 2024). In this qualitative study, a deductive approach was employed to collect existing theories on participatory democracy and to characterise the participatory process of interactive

policy-making in low-SES neighbourhoods (van Thiel, 2014). A single case study was used as the research strategy for this study (van Thiel, 2014). This section first outlines and explains the strategy and then it describes the diverse research methods used within this strategy. These diverse research methods are: policy review, semi-structured interviews, observation and informal talk.

3.2.1 Single case study

A case study is an in-depth examination of a specific entity, a group of individuals, or an individual, employing one or more research methodologies (Gustafsson, 2017). In which a very comprehensive and detailed description is provided about the entity, group of people, or individual being studied (van Thiel, 2014) in order to define and understand the specific context of the case study (Gustafsson, 2017). A single case study was selected as the most appropriate methodology for this research. Yin (2009) defines a representative single case study as one that can capture the conditions and circumstances of a typical situation. The results of a representative case study can be informative for similar situations. A representative single case study offers an opportunity to gain insights relevant to other neighbourhoods with similar characteristics and contribute to a broader understanding of residents' experiences in citizen participation (Yin, 2009). Within this research, the single case study is the centre of Hoensbroek. This single case study examined how residents are engaged in municipal policy programme with the objective of promoting a healthy living environment. This study focused on the experiences of residents and/or entrepreneurs of the centre of Hoensbroek in the citizen participation process for the realisation of a healthy living environment in the centre of Hoensbroek.

The single case was selected based on a pre-established set of criteria to ensure that the case is representative and contributes to the existing body of knowledge on citizen participation in low SES neighbourhoods. The case had to meet two case criteria. The first criterion stipulated that the potential case must be targeted by / subjected to a municipal policy programme aimed at promoting a healthy living environment, wherein citizens were afforded the opportunity to participate in the programme. This criterion was selected precisely because it is crucial for citizens to be involved in environmental health programmes to promote a healthy living environment. Participation in such programmes has been demonstrated to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency (Haldane et al., 2019; O'Mara-Eves et al., 2015; WHO, 1997).

The second criterion stipulated that the municipal policy programme be related to a low SES neighbourhood, in order to examine the participation experiences of citizens from the low SES neighbourhood. This criterion was selected based on the findings of previous studies indicating that residents of low SES neighbourhoods are less likely to participate in environmental policies, plans, and visions that aim to promote health due to the presence of barriers (Baxter et al., 2023; Termansen et al.,

2023). The two case criteria were employed to select the case centre of Hoensbroek for this study. The case centre of Hoensbroek is further delineated in Chapter 3.6.

3.2.2 Policy review

To address the research question in Chapter 1.2, a policy review was conducted. During the policy review, an analysis was conducted on policy documents. Van Thiel (2014) refers to this as content analysis. The policy documents collected were utilised in this research to map the process of citizen participation in the case study of the centre of Hoensbroek. A particular focus was placed on the process of citizen participation; the means, methods, and techniques employed within the participation process; and the rationale behind the choices made regarding the participation process. The policy documents were gathered from a variety of sources, including policy documents of the Municipality of Heerlen, newspaper articles on the centre of Hoensbroek, and relevant documents on citizen participation in the centre of Hoensbroek obtained by Wiebenga Consultants (the consultancy firm involved in the participation process). Table 2 illustrates which policy documents and other relevant document were analysed.

Policy documents used and other relevant documents on citizen participation in the centre of Hoensbroek	
Policy documents:	Start note Approach Hoensbroek Centre (Startnotitie Aanpak Hoensbroek Centrum)
	Ò Gebrook: Urban district vision Hoensbroek 2025 (Ò Gebrook: Stadsdeelvisie Hoensbroek 2025)
	Participation Regulation 2015 Municipality of Heerlen (Participatieverordening 2015 Gemeente Heerlen)
	Memorandum Elaborating participation environment vision (Notitie Uitwerking participatie omgevingsvisie)
	Council proposal elaboration participation (Raadsvoorstel uitwerking participatie)
Relevant documents on citizen participation in the centre of Hoensbroek:	Invitation to residents' evening
	Presentation residents' evening
	Intermediate presentation by Wiebenga to the Municipality of Heerlen
	Letter after residents' evening

Table 2. Overview of policy documents analysed during policy review (made by author).

The policy documents referenced in Table 2 were accessed via the official website of the Municipality of Heerlen. In addition, these documents were also consulted via the website heerlen.bestuurlijkeinformatie.nl, which enables citizens to access all adopted policy documents. The relevant documents on citizen participation in the centre of Hoensbroek were obtained by Wiebenga

Consultants. The data obtained from the policy review served as input for the empirical results generated from the single case study.

3.2.3 Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interview was selected as the main source of data collection of this study, as it provides a means to obtain rich data from respondents. In this type of interview, the order of the questions in the interview guide may vary during the course of the interview. The semi-structured interviews were employed to elicit non-factual information and to verify factual information (van Thiel, 2014).

The interview questions were designed based on the information obtained from a policy review and the core concepts from the theoretical framework (van Thiel, 2014). The interview questions centred on respondents' perceptions and experiences of citizen participation, the historical context of citizen participation in Hoensbroek, a description of Hoensbroek, the organisation of the participation process in local decision-making in Hoensbroek, the provision of participation opportunities, and the involvement of citizens in the participation process. Additionally, respondents were requested to provide illustrative examples of their experiences with their ultimate residents' evening, with the aim of facilitating the interpretation of their responses.

For this study, four respondents with sufficient experience in the field of citizen participation were interviewed. These were respondents from housing corporation Woonpunt and Vincio Wonen, National Programme Heerlen-North and Social Side Up. The objective of the interviews was to obtain information about the process of citizen participation in a municipal policy programme aimed at promoting a healthy living environment in a low-SES neighbourhood. To interview with an asset manager the housing corporation Vincio Wonen and an interview a project developer the housing Woonpunt and were conducted. The two housing corporations were selected for their ownership of housing in Hoensbroek and their specific knowledge of the local community. Furthermore, these two respondents were selected for their specific knowledge regarding the manner in which residents of Hoensbroek participate in plans and programmes. The interviews conducted provided a deeper understanding of the institutional context of the citizen participation process at the centre in Hoensbroek. In addition, an interview with an programme maker of the National Programme Heerlen-North was conducted. The National Programme Heerlen-North is a program bureau that, in collaboration with its alliance partners, establishes objectives for a desired future for Heerlen-North, develops projects to achieve these objectives and provides guidance to the alliance partners in their projects. In addition, the program bureau collaborates with 19 other program bureau within the National Programme Liveability and Safety (Nationaal Programma Heerlen Noord, 2024). The respondent from the National Programme

Heerlen-North was selected because their operational area encompasses Heerlen-Noord, including Hoensbroek. Given that the respondent’s working area encompassed Hoensbroek, specific knowledge about the society in Hoensbroek could be obtained. This particular expertise was considered to be of significant value in mapping the institutional context of the citizen participation process in the centre of Hoensbroek. Furthermore, an expert interview with the initiator of Social Side Up was conducted. Social Side Up is a company that specialises in the engagement of vulnerable groups in the development of participatory projects and plans (Social Side Up, 2024). The initiator of Social Side Up was selected for the expertise in the field of citizen participation with vulnerable groups in project and plan development. The insights gained from this interview enabled the identification of potential resources, methods and techniques employed in the citizen participation process in the centre of Hoensbroek. For the interviews with these four respondents who have sufficient experience in the field of citizen participation, an interview guide was prepared in advance. This guide can be found in Appendix 1.

In addition to these four respondents, two respondents were interviewed to map the current and future process of citizen participation at the centre in Hoensbroek. The respondents included a policymaker from the Municipality of Heerlen and a consultant from the Wiebenga Consultants consultancy firm. Wiebenga Consultants is a company specialising in the field of real estate and spatial planning. The company offers expertise in the following areas: process and project management; vision and concepts; and feasibility and strategy (Wiebenga Consultants, 2024). The two respondents were interviewed according to a prepared interview guide, which can be found in Appendix 2.

In addition to the six respondents, 10 residents and/or entrepreneurs of the centre of Hoensbroek were interviewed to map their experiences of the current and future perspectives of the citizen participation process in the centre of Hoensbroek. During these interviews, respondents were also asked what, according to them, is needed in their physical environment to live healthier lives and how they would like to be involved in creating this desired physical environment. A proprietary interview guide was also prepared in advance for these 10 interviews, which can be found in Appendix 3. Table 3 provides an overview of the semi-structured interviews conducted during the study.

Overview of interviews conducted				
Respondent	Organisation	Date	Time	Length of interview
1	Gemeente Heerlen	29-04-2024	3:00 p.m.	1 hr and 30 minutes
2	Wiebenga Consultants	03-05-2024	1:00 p.m.	1 hr and 20 minutes
3	Vincio Wonen	13-05-2024	11:00 a.m.	55 minutes
4	Woonpunt	13-05-2024	2:00 p.m.	50 minutes

5	National Program Heerlen-North	17-05-2024	10:00 a.m.	1 hr
6	Social Side Up	21-05-2024	1:00 p.m.	53 minutes
7	Resident of Hoensbroek	20-05-2024	12:30 p.m.	35 minutes
8	Resident of Hoensbroek	21-05-2024	3:00 p.m.	34 minutes
9	Resident of Hoensbroek	21-05-2024	4:30 p.m.	29 minutes
10	Resident of Hoensbroek	22-05-2024	1:00 p.m.	52 minutes
11	Resident and entrepreneur in Hoensbroek	23-05-2024	11:00 a.m.	1 hr and 30 minutes
12	Resident of Hoensbroek	24-05-2024	12:00 p.m.	40 minutes
13	Resident and entrepreneur in Hoensbroek	24-05-2024	2:00 p.m.	1 hr and 17 minutes
14	Resident and entrepreneur in Hoensbroek	27-05-2024	10:00 a.m.	1 hr
15	Resident and entrepreneur in Hoensbroek	30-05-2024	09:00 a.m.	1 hr and 5 minutes
16	Resident of Hoensbroek	30-05-2024	10:30 a.m.	1 hr and 20 minutes

Table 3. Overview of interviews conducted (made by author).

The 10 interviewed residents and/or entrepreneurs of the centre of Hoensbroek were selected through a residents' evening and snowball sampling, which took place during this evening. At the residents' evening organised for the Hoensbroek centre the memorandum of principles of the vision, attendees were asked if they were open to an interview using interview invitations; see Appendix 4. In addition, interview invitations with pens were placed on the bar where attendees could leave their contact details if they were open to an interview. During this residents' evening, several citizens and/or entrepreneurs from the centre of Hoensbroek were asked if they were open to an interview. Some of these citizens and/or entrepreneurs proposed potential respondents who might be willing to take part in an interview. These were potential respondents who both attended and did not attend the residents' evening. This sampling procedure is also known as snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a method in which the researcher obtains information about potential respondents through selected respondents (Noy, 2008). The interviewed residents and/or entrepreneurs of the centre of Hoensbroek hail from diverse cultural backgrounds and span the age spectrum from 23 to 65+. Efforts were made to ensure an equal distribution between male and female respondents. All sixteen interviews were conducted in Dutch, as each respondent was proficient in the language. Consequently, the interview guides were also written in Dutch. The majority of the interviews (thirteen of sixteen) were conducted in the respondents' place of residence, business premises, or the SCHUNCK Library in Hoensbroek. Three interviews were

conducted online via Microsoft Teams. The interviews were transcribed and stored in Research Information Services (RIS). Additionally, the interviews were recorded and digitally archived in RIS.

3.2.4 Observations

Additionally, observations have been conducted for this study. The observation method is a research approach within the field of ethnographic research. This method involves studying individuals as they engage in their daily lives. In ethnographic field research, the researcher immerses himself in the social setting and observes the setting in a systematic and regular manner. Furthermore, the researcher participates in the social setting s/he observes (Emerson et al., 2011). In this study, however, only the social setting has been observed. The observations were recorded in field notes. Emerson et al. (2001) describe that "the field" in ethnographic research can have various meanings. For example, it can be defined as a geographical place or as "everywhere" where interaction takes place (Emerson et al., 2001). In this research, the term "field" is defined as the residents' evening on May 16, 2024, in Hoensbroek. On this evening, residents and entrepreneurs from Hoensbroek were invited by the Municipality of Heerlen to discuss the Hoensbroek centre the memorandum of principles of the vision.

During the residents' evening, various topics were considered, including the attendance of citizens. The observation not only considered the number of people in attendance but also their age, cultural background, gender, and where they sat or stood in the room. Additionally, the structure of the residents' evening was analysed. Furthermore, the opportunities outlined by the municipality and the consulting firm to hear residents' input and how residents took advantage of those opportunities were examined. Additionally, the perspective from which the residents' evening was held, was considered: whether it was from the residents' or the municipality's perspective. Furthermore, the attitude of the citizens during the residents' evening, the group dynamics during the residents' evening, and the ending of the residents' evening were also evaluated.

During this residents' evening, both the "participating-in-order-to-write" and the "experiential style" approaches to writing field notes were employed. In the "participating-in-order-to-write" approach, the researcher's objective is to document and observe events in the field, with the eventual goal of producing a detailed written elaboration of them. This approach was employed in order to ensure the documentation of significant events that would facilitate the achievement of the research objectives. In contrast, the "experiential style" approach entails the researcher's complete immersion in the field, with the objective of fully experiencing the events without the intention of documenting them. This approach was also selected to maximise the experiences of the participants at the residents' evening (Emerson et al., 2001). In advance of the residents' evening, an observation scheme was created to record the topics that were

observed during the event and to ensure that the research objectives in Chapter 1.2 were met. Appendix 5 depicts this scheme.

The residents' evening was held in a room at Café Amicitia, where the researcher assumed a central position at the back of the room, situated among the attendees, to observe the presentations of the municipality of Heerlen and Wiebenga Consultants. Additionally, the researcher's position allowed observing the attendees' reactions to the presentation. During the residents' evening, significant observations were recorded and subsequently transcribed into the observation scheme following the residents' evening. The observation scheme with the elaborated observations is stored in RIS.

3.2.5 Informal talks

An informal talk is a spontaneous conversation that is typically pre-arranged (Swain & King, 2022). Following the residents' evening and the interview conducted with the policymaker of the municipality of Heerlen, it was decided that an informal conversation should be held with the same policymaker. The purpose of this conversation was to address the question of how the future participation process for the vision of Hoensbroek centre should proceed. The reason for this informal conversation was that the policymaker had indicated during the preceding interview that the future participation process had not yet been fully developed. The municipality of Heerlen wanted to wait for the residents' evening first and only then give further substance to the participation process. Notes were taken during this informal telephone conversation and have been stored in RIS. This telephone conversation was not recorded.

3.3 Data analysis

Once all the qualitative data had been collected, it was subjected to thematic analysis (TA). TA is a method of interpreting, identifying, and analysing patterns of meaning within qualitative data. TA was selected for this study because it offers flexibility, facilitates the identification of patterns between and within data in relation to respondents' opinions, perspectives, and experiences, and allows the examination of behaviour. Furthermore, TA can be employed to analyse both small and large data sets, as well as a variety of data types, including interviews (Clarke & Braun, 2017). This section discusses how the data were analysed.

Policy documents and other relevant documents related to citizen participation in the centre of Hoensbroek were analysed by comparing these documents. Following the analyse of the policy document and other relevant documents, the qualitative data was subjected to a process of coding, which was conducted using TA. Codes serve to capture those features of the qualitative data that are of interest in answering the research question (Clarke & Braun, 2017). The transcripts of the semi-structured

interviews, field notes and notes of informal talk were subjected to both deductive and inductive coding in Atlas.ti. Deductive coding is a strategy in which the codes are derived from the theoretical framework. Inductive coding permits the identification of significant aspects of the data without the necessity of an established framework. Inductive coding was conducted in a stepwise manner. Initially, the data was subjected to open coding, and subsequently, axial coding (Azungah, 2018). Figure 2 provides an illustrative example of how the data were coded. Once coding was complete, the codes were re-examined to ensure that no similar codes were applied and no irrelevant data was coded. The resulting codes were then used to create themes. Themes represent larger patterns of meanings (Clarke & Braun, 2017). The themes with associated codes employed during the analysis of the interviews, field notes and notes of informal talk are presented in the codebook in Appendix 6. The results of the aforementioned analyses permitted the comparison of the coded data and the answering of the research questions set forth in Chapter 1.2 (van Thiel, 2014).

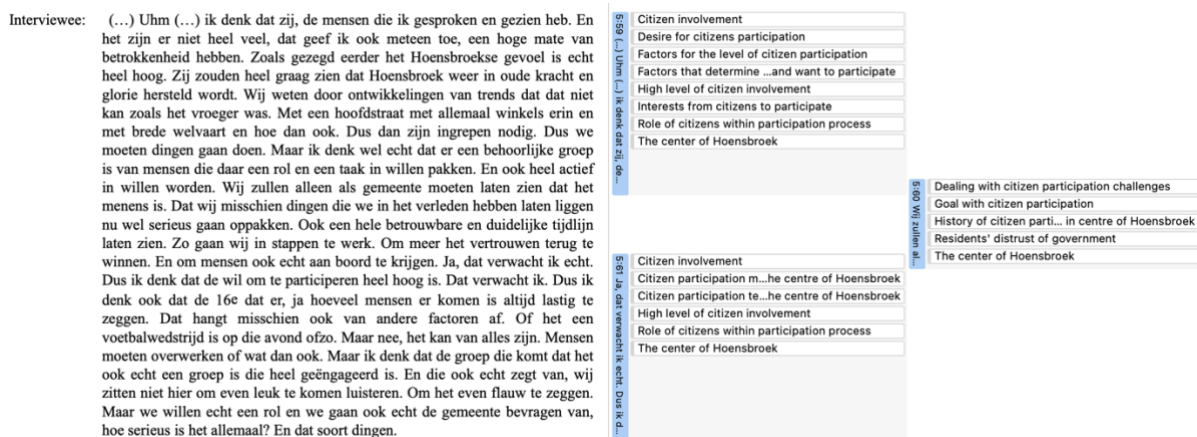


Figure 2. The process of transcript coding (made by author).

3.4 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are two crucial and interrelated elements that must be guaranteed in research (Golafshani, 2003; van Thiel, 2014). For instance, Lincoln & Guba (1985) posit that without reliability, there is no validity. Validity is comprised of external and internal validity. External validity refers to the extent to which the study can be generalised, while internal validity refers to the consistency of the study. The reliability of a study refers to the consistency and accuracy with which the concepts were measured. The greater the consistency and accuracy of measurement, the more representative and systematic the picture provided by the variables (Golafshani, 2003; van Thiel, 2014). This section discusses the methods employed to ensure the validity and reliability of the study.

3.4.1 Validity

The validity of a study cannot be fully guaranteed by any procedure or method. Nevertheless, there are various instruments that can mitigate the potential threats to validity (Coleman, 2022). The tools employed in this study include mechanical recording, the use of 'rich' data, member control, respondent validation, triangulation, and fair treatment (Anderson, 2010; Arksey & Knight, 1999; Birt et al., 2016; Bisman, 2010; Gray, 2021; Mays & Pope, 2000). First, the validity of the study was ensured by audio recording the semi-structured interviews. As stated by Gray (2021), the use of an audio recording allows the verification of the raw data.

Second, the validity of the data was ensured by transcribing the audio recordings of the semi-structured interviews in their entirety. The transcripts are considered 'rich' data because they provide a more revealing and deeper picture (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Coleman, 2022).

Third, validity was ensured through member checking, which involves the researcher informally confirming the accuracy of respondents during the interviews and informal talk (Gray, 2021). This reduces the likelihood of misinterpretation by the researcher, as the respondent is afforded the opportunity to either correct or confirm the interpretation (Anderson, 2010; Birt et al., 2016). During the course of the interviews, several respondents' responses to the interview questions were repeated by the researcher. In addition, member checking was conducted on the responses provided by the respondent during the informal talk. Furthermore, respondents were also asked to provide further clarification regarding their responses.

Fourth, the validity of the study was ensured through respondent validation, whereby the interviewed experts were permitted to review the transcript of their interview (Birt et al., 2016). Notably, none of the respondents provided any commentary on the transcripts.

Fifth, the validity of the study was ensured through triangulation, which involves comparing the results of diverse methods in order to confirm or formulate findings (Coleman, 2022; Mays & Pope, 2000). For instance, the current participation process was mapped not only through interviews with a policymaker and an consultant from the involved consultancy firm, but also by observing the residents' evening and having an informal talk. The use of multiple methods serves to demonstrate the completeness and confirmation of the findings (Coleman, 2022). Furthermore, the triangulation was achieved through interviewing residents and/or entrepreneurs of the centre of Hoensbroek from diverse cultural, gender, and age backgrounds. Additionally, not only was a policymaker consulted to map the current participation process, but also an involved consultant. This approach ensured that the perspectives of a diverse range of residents, entrepreneurs and policymakers were considered, rather than representing a single, narrow viewpoint (Coleman, 2022).

3.4.2 Reliability

In qualitative studies, demonstrating reliability is more challenging because statistical tests are not available (Coleman, 2022). Nevertheless, triangulation represents an additional means of ensuring reliability, as consistent findings derived from disparate methodologies and/or sources serve to substantiate the veracity of the conclusions reached (Coleman, 2022; Gray, 2021).

Firstly, reliability was ensured by utilising a structured interview design during the semi-structured interviews, which contributes to higher validity and reliability than a more flexible interview design.

It is argued that a structured interview design has higher validity and reliability than a more flexible interview design (van Thiel, 2014).

Secondly, reliability of the study was ensured by ensuring that the methodology was transparent to the reader. For instance, the interview guides and codebook were made available in the appendices. Furthermore, the research methods employed were delineated with the utmost clarity. This enables the reader to evaluate the credibility of the researcher's actions and reasoning (Arksey & Knight, 1999).

Thirdly, reliability was ensured by employing multiple coding, whereby the study data was analysed by independent qualitative researchers. In the study, this was accomplished by having the preliminary codes and themes reviewed by a fellow student and a supervisor, both of whom possess knowledge of citizens participation (Coleman, 2022).

Fourthly, the reliability of the study was enhanced by increasing the replicability of the findings (Bisman, 2010). In order to enhance the replicability of the study, the audio recordings and transcripts of the interviews conducted, field notes, and informal talk notes were made available in RIS. The accessibility of the interview guides guarantees the replicability of the interviewing process. The interview guides facilitate the replication of the research process by enabling the researcher to pose the same questions to respondents and thereby achieve consistent results. In addition, the availability of the observation schedule ensures the replicability of the observations made during the residents' evening. The schedule permits the researcher to focus on the same observation points during the residents' evening.

3.5 Research ethics

Qualitative research presents certain risks to respondents, which underscores the importance of researchers considering potential ethical issues before implementing their methodologies (Mack et al., 2005). Prior to conducting semi-structured interviews, ethical considerations were addressed in accordance with Bhattacharjee (2012) five points of ethical conduct. These five points are harmlessness

and voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, disclosure, reporting and analysis. At the outset of each interview, the pre-prepared informal consent form was presented to the respondent, who was then asked to confirm their understanding of the five points outlined. This section addresses the manner in which research ethics were safeguarded during this study, employing the five-point ethical guideline proposed by Bhattacharjee (2012).

First, the principle of harmlessness and voluntary participation was ensured by clearly informing the respondents at the outset of the interview that they were at liberty to decline to answer any question they deemed inappropriate. No further explanation was required. Furthermore, at the outset of the interview, the participants were informed that their participation in the study was entirely voluntary and that they were at liberty to withdraw from the interview at any time.

Second, informed consent was ensured by inquiring of the respondent at the conclusion of the informal consent form whether they had comprehended the aforementioned points, whether they consented to the audio recording, and whether they consented to participate in the interview. Should the respondents require further clarification, they were permitted to pose their queries.

Third, respondents were informed that their participation would be confidential and that their identities would be anonymized. They were informed that the interviews would be transcribed and that these transcripts and audio recordings would be accessible only to the researcher, the supervisor, and the second reader. In addition, respondents were informed that their data would be anonymized by replacing their names with "X" and other names that could be traced back to them with "X." This process reduces the likelihood of identifying the respondents. Furthermore, confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by archiving the collected data in a secure and internal archive (RIS).

Fourth, disclosure was ensured by telling the respondents that the research was accessible to everyone and that they would be sent the research.

Fifth, the integrity of the research was safeguarded by informing respondents that the audio recording would be transcribed and then subjected to analysis in order to establish patterns and findings. Furthermore, respondents were informed that their data would be used in the preparation of the study's results chapter.

3.6 Case description

Hoensbroek is a city district located in the Municipality of Heerlen in the south of the province of Limburg. The Municipality of Heerlen is renowned for its mining history (Gemeente Heerlen, 2024a).

The decline of the mining industry had a profound impact on the municipality. In particular, areas in Heerlen-North, where coal mines were located, have been significantly affected. Following the withdrawal of the mining industry, the municipality has been confronted with a series of challenges, including lower life expectancy rates, poor health, high unemployment, unsafe neighbourhoods, poverty, language disadvantages and inequality in opportunities. Heerlen-North is comprised of the districts of Heerlerheide, section of Heerlen city and Hoensbroek. Table 4 presents a comparison of the socioeconomic characteristics of Heerlen-North with those of Heerlen and the Netherlands (Meyer, 2022). The data demonstrate that Heerlen-North is confronted with more pronounced socioeconomic challenges in comparison to the Municipality of Heerlen and the Netherlands as a whole. For instance, it is evident that forty per cent of the residents are living in social housing. In addition, it is noteworthy that nearly half of the residents have attained a relatively low level of education. Additionally, the prevalence of energy poverty, reliance on welfare payments, disability and poor health is nearly twice the national average.

Socioeconomic characteristics of Heerlen-North presented in comparison with municipality of Heerlen and the Netherlands			
	Heerlen-North	Municipality of Heerlen	The Netherlands
Houses owned by a housing association	40%	37%	29%
Energy poverty	16%	13%	8%
Low literacy	20%	16%	12%
Low education level	45%	39%	29%
Assistance benefits	11%	9%	5%
Occupational disability	17%	14%	8%
Poor health	41%	36%	24%

Table 4. Socioeconomic characteristics of Heerlen-North presented in comparison with municipality of Heerlen and the Netherlands (Meyer, 2022).

The Hoensbroek district consists of five distinct neighbourhoods. These are Maria Gewandenterschuren, Mariarade, Hoensbroek-De Dem, Nieuw Lotbroek and De Koumen. The single case study focuses on the centre of Hoensbroek, which is located in the Hoensbroek-De Dem neighbourhood. The neighbourhood has a population of 6,890, with the majority of residents falling within the 45-64 age bracket, followed by those aged 65 and above (see Table 5). It is notable that the number of young people residing in this neighbourhood is relatively low. These figures indicate that the neighbourhood is experiencing an ageing population, a trend that is likely to persist in the future, given the significant proportion of residents in the 45-64 age category. Furthermore, the data indicates that the proportion of

individuals with a ‘non-Western’ migration background is relatively low (Stadsregio Parkstad Limburg, 2023).

Population figures in the Hoensbroek-De Dem neighbourhood	
Resident population	6.890
Population 65-plus	26%
Population in age group 45-64	28%
Population in age group 25-44	24%
Population in age group 15-24	11%
Population in age group 0-14	11%
Population with non-western migration background	11%

Table 5. Population figures in the Hoensbroek-De Dem neighbourhood (Stadsregio Parkstad Limburg, 2023).

A comparison of the health figures for Hoensbroek centre with those for the Municipality of Heerlen and the Netherlands as a whole reveals that the former suffers from a greater prevalence of health challenges and problems. Table 6 presents the health figures of individuals aged 18 and above from Hoensbroek centre, the Municipality of Heerlen, and the national average, based on 12 health characteristics. It is remarkable that approximately half of the residents surveyed rated their health status as either good or very good. This is below the national average. It is also noteworthy that only a quarter of the population in the centre of Hoensbroek meets the exercise guideline of at least 150 minutes of exercise per week, which could be achieved through activities such as cycling and walking. This low percentage of exercise is a contributing factor to the high prevalence of overweight and obesity in the centre, with over half of the population classified as overweight and twenty-four percent severely overweight. It is interesting to observe that the percentage of smokers is lower than the national average. It is also worth mentioning that nearly half of the residents of Hoensbroek are managing one or more long-term health conditions, with approximately half of these individuals experiencing significant limitations in their daily lives due to their health concerns. This prevalence is considerably higher than the national average. Additionally, the proportion of individuals in the Hoensbroek central area facing long-term illnesses, psychological challenges, an elevated risk of anxiety or depression, and feelings of loneliness is markedly higher compared to the Municipality of Heerlen and the national average.

Health characteristics of Hoensbroek centre presented in comparison to Heerlen and the Netherlands			
* Percentage of people 18 years and older			
	Hoensbroek centre	Municipality of Heerlen	The Netherlands
Perceived health good/very good	51%	59%	69%

Meets exercise guideline	33%	37%	47%
Overweight	61%	58%	52%
Severe obesity	24%	22%	17%
Smoker	27%	23%	18%
Drinker	69%	73%	77%
Physical health (one or more long-term conditions)	48%	43%	33%
Restricted due to health	50%	44%	34%
Long-term illness and restricted	49%	42%	31%
Psychological complaints	33%	29%	22%
High risk of anxiety or depression	17%	14%	10%
Loneliness	63%	56%	49%

Table 6. Health characteristics of Hoensbroek centre presented in comparison to Heerlen and the Netherlands (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, 2022a).

In addition to the socioeconomic challenges, health-related issues and other problems, the liveability, safety and economic functionality of the centre of Hoensbroek are also facing severe pressure. The centre has experienced a significant decline in retail occupancy in the recent years. The aforementioned vacancy rate has resulted in a reduction in the liveability of the centre, which in turn has led to an increase in undesirable safety situations in Hoensbroek (Adriaens, 2023; Gemeente Heerlen, 2023). In October 2023, the municipality of Heerlen announced its intention to address the aforementioned issues, including those pertaining to safety (Gemeente Heerlen, 2023). Chapter 4.1 provides a deeper examination of the challenges encountered by residents in the centre of Hoensbroek and the subsequent impact on their health. In order to develop long-term, sustainable solutions that effectively address these challenges, the municipality intends to establish a comprehensive vision by the end of 2024. The vision for the centre of Hoensbroek is to enhance the quality of life and make the centre more attractive. Making the centre more attractive will be achieved by investing in a more diverse range of housing, ensuring the centre's safety, developing 'good' shopping facilities, promoting cultural expressions, catering to the needs of the community, and allocating space for associations. Based on this vision, the Municipality of Heerlen will develop an integrated centre plan. The municipality's objective is to have the centre plan implemented by the third quarter of 2025 (Gemeente Heerlen, 2023). The Alderman of Spatial Planning and Restructuring posits an integral approach in which stakeholders can participate (Adriaens, 2023).

At the time of writing (June 2024), the Municipality of Heerlen is engaging in collaborative work with Wiebenga Consultants, with the objective of drafting a memorandum of principles. Wiebenga Consultants has been tasked to take on a 'kwartiermaker' role in the drafting of the memorandum. The firm has established an independent entity that will identify the necessary improvements to enhance the liveability of the centre. The memorandum of principles delineates the principal considerations that must be addressed to foster a healthy living environment. This note serves as the foundation for the vision of the Hoensbroek centre (Gemeente Heerlen, 2023).

Figure 3 illustrates the planning area Hoensbroek centre. The plan area encompasses the Hoofdstraat, Markt, Kouvenderstraat, Gebrookerplein, and the surrounding streets. The area delineated by the black dotted line represents the focus area. The surrounding streets and neighbourhoods outside the black dotted line constitute the working area, which exerts an influence on the focus area (Gemeente Heerlen, 2023). An illustrative representation of the central area of Hoensbroek is shown in Figure 4.





Chapter 4 – Findings

4.1 Integrated approach to Hoensbroek centre challenges

As discussed in Section 3.6, Hoensbroek centre is confronted with a multitude of challenges and problems that collectively exert considerable pressure on its liveability, safety and economic functionality. In addition, the centre is confronted with socioeconomic challenges and health issues (Adriaens, 2023; Gemeente Heerlen, 2023). This section presents the findings of the interviews with residents and entrepreneurs, focusing on their perceptions of the challenges at Hoensbroek centre. This chapter also explores what residents and business owners need to live a healthy life, as well as the measures needed to address these challenges.

During the residents' evening and the interviews, numerous citizens and entrepreneurs expressed concerns regarding problems at the centre. Mainly, they said that safety problems have reached a critical point where they can no longer be ignored. The repercussions of these problems in 2024 will be so profound that they will have a detrimental impact on the daily lives of citizens. For instance, residents and entrepreneurs stated that they are now less willing to leave their homes due to a perceived lack of safety on the streets. They indicated that being harassed by individuals undergoing treatment for mental health issues at a care facility located in the centre is a significant contributing factor to their not feeling safe. In addition, several respondents indicated during the interviews that they are reluctant to walk through the centre on their own, particularly in the evening, due to a perceived lack of safety on the streets. Furthermore, residents and entrepreneurs stated that they are unable to work from home and have disrupted sleep patterns due to noise pollution from the streets. In addition, one female respondent stated that she is not willing to let her child play alone in a playground which is one street away. The same female respondent explained that it is challenging for parents to raise their children in Hoensbroek centre due to safety concerns:

“It's hard for my child to grow up here. She has no siblings. If she wants to play outside, she goes to Aldenhof Park. We've tried that before, but it's not always safe. Because of the mentality of some of the kids there. She doesn't feel comfortable. I also don't feel safe enough to, for example, walk the dog alone at night or anything like that. So, my husband usually does that when he's there.”
(Respondent 15, personal communication, May 30 2024)

The respondents' accounts demonstrate the effects of unsafe feelings on mental wellbeing and healthy behaviours. As Diez Roux and Mair (2010) elucidate, residents' pervasive feeling of unsafety can have a deleterious effect on their mental wellbeing and healthy behaviours, consequently influencing their health. For instance, numerous studies have demonstrated that feelings of unsafety are typically

associated with reduced levels of physical activity (e.g. Bennett et al., 2007; King, 2008; Roman & Chalfin, 2008). Given the established relationship between safety and residents' health, safety can be conceptualised as a key indicator for measuring the impact of the social environment on public health. Consequently, the resolution of safety issues is regarded as a pivotal element in measuring public health within a given neighbourhood (Diez Roux & Mair, 2010).

The majority of the 10 residents and entrepreneurs interviewed indicated that the lack of safety in Hoensbroek centre has an adverse effect on their health. This became evident when the participants were queried as to what would facilitate a healthier lifestyle. The respondents indicated that the creation of an inviting outdoor environment would facilitate their need for a healthier lifestyle. They stated that an inviting outdoor environment is one where individuals feel comfortable and safe and are therefore willing to venture outside at times when they desire to do so. Furthermore, several respondents indicated that an enhancement of the green environment would facilitate an increase in physical activity and improve air quality. In addition, three respondents (two male and one female) indicated that the provision of fitness equipment in the area would be beneficial for enhancing their physical activity. Moreover, one male respondent indicated that the establishment of 'healthy' shops in the centre would be desirable. The male respondent posited that the accessibility of these shops would increase the consumption of healthy foods. Furthermore, several respondents articulated the necessity for more events in the city centre, citing that such events facilitate social interaction. For example, one (male) respondent explained that in Hoensbroek centre, several elements are interrelated to achieve a healthy and liveable centre:

"I like to live a healthy lifestyle and I think exercise is really important. Moving is about having the initiative to go somewhere. So there have to be good reasons to go outside. And your health status. Look, we are in a very poor region here. We are in the mining area. And those mining areas of the past attracted all kinds of people from outside the Netherlands, but also from within the Netherlands, to settle here. The work was well paid, and you did not have to worry about language. This created a certain society where there were problems. Problems in terms of adapting, being able to get used to it, and low literacy, which you run into socially and socioeconomically. I think you have to start getting people out from behind the front door, which also has to do with loneliness. Loneliness is also an issue for older people, but it is even more important for younger people in some ways. (...) And what I also just pointed out is that it has to become more attractive to come out. And you have to connect good shopping areas. You have to make nice terraces that are accessible to people. You have to have an attractive, safe living environment. People need to feel safe to be able to come outside and explore. Otherwise, they will stay where they are. I think it would be a good idea to develop certain initiatives in Hoensbroek to make it more attractive to make Hoensbroek look good. I think it would be good to have zones or areas where people can come together outside anyway. But also, they need to have good housing that they can live in independently for a long time. And

that still sometimes falls short. The homes here in Hoensbroek are pretty old, pretty run down, and pretty out of date, so they do not meet certain requirements. So, when I go in there on home visits from time to time, it is not hard to imagine that this 85-year-old woman does not come out here comfortably.” (Respondent 14, personal communication, May 27 2024)

The recommendations put forth by the 10 residents and entrepreneurs interviewed represent a call to action for the Municipality of Heerlen to adopt an integrated approach to promoting healthier lifestyles. An integral approach is regarded as the most efficient method for creating a healthy and liveable neighbourhood, as evidenced in planning literature (Lowe et al., 2018). Consequently, an integrated approach is becoming increasingly popular among policymakers. Improving health is regarded as a cross-sectoral issue that necessitates collaboration between a range of sectors, including housing, education, health services, transport and energy (Lowe et al., 2018). As discussed in Section 3.6, the Municipality of Heerlen seeks to create a healthy and liveable centre that integrally addresses safety issues, including addressing the imbalance in the housing supply, reducing vacancies in the centre and enhancing cultural offerings (Adriaens, 2023). The Municipality of Heerlen has already formulated four specific actions that contribute to achieving the objective of creating a healthy and liveable centre. The *Reuringregeling* refers to a financial contribution that residents and entrepreneurs may receive for initiating citizen initiatives that encourage social interaction and a vibrant community. The second action entails the provision of subsidies for the greening of facades and roofs. The third is the realisation of a safety facility on *Kouvenderstraat* by the end of 2024. The final action is the greening of the centre area (Gemeente Heerlen, 2024b). In the course of their interview, the policymaker from the Municipality of Heerlen explained that the municipality has not yet formulated any concrete actions aimed at achieving a healthy and liveable centre. This is because, first, the memorandum of principles needs to be established. The preliminary document delineating the principles is being drafted by Wiebenga Consultants. This document serves the purpose of furthering the vision for Hoensbroek centre. The memorandum of principles is based on research conducted by Wiebenga Consultants. The memorandum of principles ultimately contains recommendations from Wiebenga Consultants to the Municipality of Heerlen regarding the achievement of a healthy and liveable centre. In light of the challenges currently facing the centre, Wiebenga Consultants recommends that the Municipality of Heerlen adopt a programme-based approach:

“I think we should work from the programme. Because you are not only dealing with physical interventions, but also with other types of interventions: communicative, and on safety. This leads to lots of projects, which you then call a programme. Then you should actually have a programme manager whose task is to monitor the progress of all the different projects in the programme. And then all the project managers are on that. And that then comes together in the programme team. If you look at the issues that are there and what needs to be done, then that does seem to me the most logical thing to do.” (Respondent 2, personal communication, May 03 2024)

The consultant from Wiebenga Consultants recommends working with a programme manager who monitors the programme and project leaders who monitor the different projects within the programme. Lowe et al. (2018) indicate that leadership and informal networks within integrated planning are seen as essential facilitators to ensure good collaboration across sectors. The absence of these two facilitators, among others, can increase the complexity of implementing integrated planning. This is partly why the literature views the implementation of integrated planning as complex (Lowe et al., 2018).

4.2 The institutional context of the citizen participation process

This section presents an analysis of the institutional context of the current participation process at Hoensbroek centre. It begins by examining the Municipality of Heerlen's historical approach to organising the participation process. Subsequently, this section considers the contemporary perspectives of both the Municipality of Heerlen and the residents and entrepreneurs of the Hoensbroek centre regarding the concept of citizen participation. Finally, the organisational structure of the Municipality of Heerlen is discussed in relation to decision-making regarding the organisation of the participation process.

The concept of citizen participation is not new within the Municipality of Heerlen. The policymaker of the Municipality explained that, in the past, the process of citizen participation in a project or policy-making was quite mechanical. The process entailed up to three informational evenings, during which citizens were informed about the Municipality's developments. Subsequently, the Municipality proceeded with its own developments, operating under the assumption that its obligation to engage citizens in the decision-making process had been fulfilled. In addition to the aforementioned information evenings, the Municipality also organised neighbourhood walks, during which municipal representatives conducted guided tours of the area in question while engaging in dialogue with interested parties. During these informational evenings and neighbourhood walks, a variety of topics were discussed, including current developments in the area and future aspirations for the neighbourhood. Furthermore, the policymaker explained that feedback from citizens was seldom incorporated into projects and policies:

“It was only when there were some serious objections or even when a judge was involved that anything happened with the feedback from citizens.” (Respondent 1, personal communication, April 29 2024)

These mechanical participation processes, as organised in the past by the Municipality of Heerlen, are seen by Arnstein (1969) as an ‘empty ritual of participation’. Arnstein (1969) defines an empty ritual of

participation as one where citizens have minimal or no chance to influence the decision-making process. In these contexts, citizen participation is purely symbolic rather than actually creating power for powerless people in decision-making processes (Arnstein, 1969). The feeling that citizens have had minimal or no opportunities in the past to influence decision-making processes is also acknowledged by some residents and entrepreneurs who have lived in the Hoensbroek centre for a long time. For instance, one female respondent explained that she was fine with the Municipality not involving residents and entrepreneurs in developments for the centre in the past. However, the same respondent explained that she now appreciates that the Municipality offers the opportunity to participate in current developments for the centre:

“It is also the first time I have received an invitation from the municipality to go to such a meeting to see what has been done. Especially because there was also such a centre plan ten years ago (...) For me, it was then basically just done without having any influence. I'm totally fine with that too. Other decisions must have been made at the time by the municipality. But I really like being involved now. Especially also because the problems in the city centre now are very different from what they were then, ten years ago.” (Respondent 12, personal communication, May 25 2024)

According to van de Wijdeven et al. (2013), the increasing need for citizens and entrepreneurs to participate in centre developments may be related to the dissatisfaction prevailing among them. In addition to others, dissatisfaction and frustration are motivations that determine whether people choose to participate. In practice, dissatisfaction represents a common motivation for participation (van de Wijdeven et al., 2013). The involvement of individuals increases when issues arise in their neighbourhood, such as the presence of drug-related activities and crime (Foster-Fishman et al., 2009). The current problems at Hoensbroek centre can be seen as important motivators for the increasing need for citizen and entrepreneurial participation in comparison to this need a decade ago. Furthermore, the policymaker of the Municipality of Heerlen explained that the Municipality notes an increasing need for residents to participate in developments in their immediate environment. Especially the need for information about their living environment is very high, the policymaker explained. In addition to the desire of citizens to be involved in developments in their immediate environment, the Municipality of Heerlen recognises the importance of facilitating residents' role in environmental (health) planning. The Municipality of Heerlen has high ambitions regarding citizen participation in 2024. The policymaker explained that the Municipality has a great desire to listen to its residents. In doing so, the Municipality wants to involve its residents so they can talk about developments in their living environment. The Municipality has articulated this aspiration in its participation policy. The policymaker explained that the participation ladder is an important instrument for the Municipality to ascertain the extent to which citizens can contribute to policy and planning processes. The role of citizens may range from mere informants to active participants. These roles correspond to the ‘degree of participation and styles of

governance' of Edelenbos et al. (2006): from informing, where citizens are only informed and not allowed to give input, to co-decision, where the Municipality works and decides with participants. The policymaker also highlighted the importance of citizen and entrepreneurial participation for the future of Hoensbroek centre. They explained that citizen participation can significantly contribute to achieving successful outcomes:

“Because the residents and entrepreneurs are Hoensbroek and they will be using the centre. As we can pick things up and listen to them carefully. Because the residents and entrepreneurs are Hoensbroek and they use the centre. So as we can pick things up and listen carefully to them. Like, how they see certain things and what is important to them. If we can get their input we can give what they like. So if we are going to make a centre that nobody is waiting for. And everyone thinks of what have they put together now? Yes, then it's a complete failure. But the moment people say, Hey hey, finally a municipality that listens for once and does what we want. Then it is a success.” (Respondent 1, personal communication, April 29 2024)

It is not always the case that citizen participation will result in a successful outcome. In the absence of a well-designed and implemented participatory process, there is a risk of disappointment among participants, increased conflicts, increased distrust in government agencies and delayed decisions (Yang & Pandey, 2011). According to Yang and Pandey (2011), these potential risks are reasons why critics are sceptical about the results of citizen participation. Despite the fact that the Municipality of Heerlen considers citizen participation important because it contributes to achieving a successful result, the Municipality does remain critical of the input of citizens and entrepreneurs. For example, the policymaker explained that for the Municipality, it is not only important that the input of citizens and entrepreneurs aligns with the current situation but also with the trends and developments that citizens will notice in 10, 20 or 30 years' time. The policymaker characterises this as the ‘field of tension’ between the current perceptions of citizens and entrepreneurs and how these perceptions will develop in the future. The policymaker illustrated this tension within the participation process with the following example:

“For example, parking. You could ask in a neighbourhood, how do you guys view parking? Imagine, people say then everyone should have at least two, three parking spaces in front of their door. That's obviously the nicest thing for everyone, then you don't have to walk far. Only what you see is, mobility is changing. There are more and more electric bikes, because of the ageing population, maybe the need for cars will be less soon too. Greenery in a neighbourhood does a lot for your health. So if you have to choose between a parking space and greenery. Then you can also make the occasional trade-off: let's do more green. That's kind of the tension you're in. Often you run up against the image of ‘just do three parking spaces’. While you see a trend of more and more need for other developments.” (Respondent 1, personal communication, April 29 2024)

Despite the Municipality of Heerlen's offering participation opportunities to citizens and entrepreneurs at the Hoensbroek centre, some expressed during the interviews that the plans are already defined and ready to be implemented. This implies that citizens are merely requested to participate in the *bühne*. For instance, one male respondent explained that his experience is that the Municipality only listens to those with substantial business portfolios or high social status:

“If you have a big company then the Heerlen municipality is more than happy to listen to you. The municipality also listens if you have status, but the ordinary citizen is put aside.” (Respondent 11, personal communication, May 23 2024)

In addition to feeling powerless in affecting decision-making processes, residents and entrepreneurs conveyed a sense of distrust towards the Municipality of Heerlen. Each respondent stated that in the past, the Municipality had made numerous promises but had failed to deliver on many of them. This has resulted in the development of a political perspective that is typical of the average resident of Hoensbroek. To illustrate, one female respondent expressed a political perspective that is common among residents of Hoensbroek regarding the Municipality of Heerlen:

“I know exactly how people here think. We have a certain political perspective. There are a lot of people here who have lost faith in the municipality of Heerlen. So these people then think ‘well, they won't do anything anyway’. That political image is reinforced here in Hoensbroek though.” (Respondent 8, personal communication, May 05 2024)

The decline in trust in politics in Hoensbroek is not an exception; it is a phenomenon that is observed in numerous other Western societies (Hetherington, 1998). As a consequence of the reduction in political trust, the question of whether trust in political decision-makers or the political system is a requirement for participating in political life is frequently discussed within the field of political sociology. In this debate, two distinct claims are distinguished (Hooghe & Marien, 2013). The oldest argument put forth by Almond and Verba (1963) posits that citizens must possess a certain degree of trust in politics in order to participate in political processes. The presence of distrust inevitably gives rise to feelings of alienation, which in turn erode the legitimacy and effectiveness of the democratic system. This will ultimately result in democratic instability (Almond & Verba, 1963). The second claim put forth by Barnes and Kaase posits that distrust in political processes can serve as a motivating factor for citizen participation. The underlying premise is that citizens who perceive a lack of trust in the political system will feel compelled to engage in political processes (Hooghe & Marien, 2013). The findings of Hooghe and Marien (2013) lend support to the argument put forth by Almond and Verba (1963) that a lack of trust in politics does not necessarily result in a reduction in citizen participation but may, in fact, lead to an increase in political engagement. This phenomenon also appears to emerge at the Hoensbroek centre.

On 10 May 2024, the Municipality of Heerlen organised a residents' evening which was attended by citizens and entrepreneurs from the Hoensbroek centre. The residents' evening is further discussed in Section 4.3. Attendance was considerable, with approximately 200 individuals present (Adriaens, 2024). In the course of the interviews, several respondents indicated that they were amenable to the idea of regaining trust in the Municipality. However, they also emphasized the necessity of concrete actions to make this trust a reality. One female respondent explained that the large attendance at the residents' evening indicates a willingness among the public to regain trust:

“Something also needs to be done to live up to the trust in the municipality. But it does me good to see so many people who have hope that the problems in the centre will be addressed. That's why they were all there. Otherwise, people wouldn't have come. You don't go to a residents' evening if you don't think the issues will be solved. And now, I have never seen such a large attendance at an opportunity to participate in the future of the centre.” (Respondent 13, personal communication, May 24 2024)

A number of municipal officials and aldermen are involved in determining the participation of the Municipality in the decision-making process. To address issues at the Hoensbroek centre, the Municipality of Heerlen is involved because the mayor is responsible for ensuring safety and order at the centre. In addition, the alderman responsible for the economy and labour market, finance and sports, sustainability and Heerlen-North is involved because the issues in question pertain to a shopping area. For the entirety of the process at the Hoensbroek centre, one alderman is responsible. This is the alderman for management and maintenance, mobility, spatial planning and elderly policy. This is because spatial challenges are the primary concern. The mayor and the two aldermen collectively constitute the governance team, which convenes to deliberate upon matters such as the organisation of a residents' evening and the design of the invitation to such an event. At this juncture, the structure of the residents' evening, the content to be presented, the individuals responsible for presenting it and the measures the Municipality will offer are all discussed. In addition, individuals from various policy domains, including urban planning and housing, economics and society, collaborate to determine the optimal approach for engaging residents and entrepreneurs. Ultimately, the alderman responsible for the process has the authority to make final decisions regarding the specifics of the participation process. It is possible for various processes to overlap within the Municipality. Consequently, there is discourse regarding peer collaboration, whereby all parties involved in discussions with citizens, such as residents' evenings, are kept informed of each other's actions. The objective of this collaboration is to prevent citizens from being inundated with contact moments from the Municipality. In addition, the objective of this collaboration is to gain mutual awareness of the status of ongoing processes and identify which processes are currently underway. Given the significance of citizen participation, the council and the

college are well-positioned to facilitate it. Consequently, the council and the college are apprised of developments regarding the participation process.

4.3 Applied methods and techniques for citizen participation

At the time of writing (July 2024), the Municipality of Heerlen is in the process of adopting the memorandum of principles for the Hoensbroek centre. Prior to the drafting of the memorandum of principles, the Municipality of Heerlen provided the citizens and entrepreneurs of the Hoensbroek centre with the opportunity to participate. This is the only occasion on which residents and entrepreneurs have been able to participate thus far, as the Municipality is still in the early stages of addressing the challenges at the Hoensbroek centre (Municipality of Heerlen, 2023). This section outlines the methods and techniques employed by the Municipality of Heerlen to facilitate citizen participation in the memorandum of principles adoption process. It also discusses prospective methods and techniques that the Municipality plans to implement in the subsequent participation phase.

The Municipality of Heerlen provided its citizens and entrepreneurs with the opportunity to participate in the drafting of the memorandum of principles for the Hoensbroek centre. The Municipality's policymaker explained that the objective of providing opportunities for citizen participation was to afford citizens and entrepreneurs the opportunity to make contributions to the development of the centre. The objective was also to identify the interests, needs, sensitivities and perceptions of the public regarding the four action proposals. The policymaker explained that the Municipality of Heerlen had organised two participation opportunities for the citizens and entrepreneurs of the Hoensbroek centre. These were one-to-one meetings with key entrepreneurs and other major stakeholders, as well as the residents' evening. These two opportunities were the applied methods that allowed citizens and entrepreneurs to participate in the memorandum of principles. These two methods, along with the corresponding techniques, are outlined below.

First, in the early months of 2024, one-to-one conversations were conducted with a number of prominent entrepreneurs based at the Hoensbroek centre. Additionally, conversations were held with individuals who had previously expressed interest, including the following: those who own multiple properties in the Hoensbroek centre, those with a larger interest, a programme maker of the National Programme for Heerlen-Noord, an asset manager of the housing corporation Vincio Wonen and a project developer from the housing corporation Woonpunt. These interviews were conducted by Wiebenga Consultants. The municipal policymaker explained that the technique employed for the one-to-one conversations was that Wiebenga posed questions designed to elicit information concerning the current issues and sensitivities in, and opportunities for, the Hoensbroek centre. During these one-to-one conversations, potential solutions were discussed with representatives of the National Programme Heerlen-North and

the aforementioned housing corporations. In addition to the conversations conducted by Wiebenga Consultants, the alderman for management and maintenance, mobility, spatial planning and elderly policy also conducted one-on-one conversations with individuals residing at the Hoensbroek centre. The policymaker explained that the alderman held these conversations because he is a native of Hoensbroek and therefore able to make use of his extensive personal network. The technique employed for the one-to-one conversations was that the alderman posed questions designed to identify current issues and sensitivities, as well as opportunities, pertaining to the Hoensbroek centre. The consultant from Wiebenga Consultants explained that these conversations revealed that people are tired of talk and vision, have high urgency to address the issues and need clear communication from the Municipality on what is going to happen and how. One-to-one conversations are recommended by both the developer of Woonpunt and the initiator of Social Side Up, who posited that it is necessary to proactively approach individuals from underrepresented groups and initiate dialogue to ensure optimal outcomes. The developer of Woonpunt delineated the information he seeks to ascertain during one-to-one conversations:

“But I always like to have a personal conversation with residents. Just so [points to the setting we're in]. And having the conversation about what do you want? What is good about that neighbourhood? What needs to be changed? And why? Then you get to know those people and then you get to know the neighbourhood.” (Respondent 4, personal communication, May 13 2024)

Second, the Municipality of Heerlen organised a residents' evening on 16 May 2024. Prior to the evening, the initial plan was to organise a business breakfast, with the intention of speaking to all business owners first. Nevertheless, the decision was taken to provide direct information to both residents and entrepreneurs through a residents' evening, as explained by the policymaker. The Municipality's policymaker explained that the residents' evening had multiple objectives. The primary objective of the evening was to facilitate dialogue between residents and business owners regarding the current challenges. The second objective was to present four specific actions that could be implemented in the near future. These included the *Reuringregeling*, a subsidy for greening the facades, the establishment of a safety facility and the greening of the centre. The third objective of the evening was to ascertain the responses of citizens and entrepreneurs to the four concrete actions proposed. The final objective was to persuade citizens and entrepreneurs that this time the issues would be addressed. In the field of citizen participation, residents' evenings are typically classified as a type of public hearing, arguably the most common method of public participation. Nevertheless, this approach has been the subject of criticism, with the perception that it is often employed to create the impression of public participation while in fact there is limited commitment to integrating the input of the public into the decision-making process (Rowe & Frewer, 2000). Despite this, the policymaker clarified that the data

collected from citizens and entrepreneurs during the event would be incorporated into the memorandum of principles:

“Look, if 16 May will be applauded and people say ‘Good that's how you must go 100 per cent’. Then we're going to implement that, we're going to put everything into it. But if residents or participants say, ‘it's nice that you guys are presenting this, but we actually have a very different need’. Then we have to start thinking, how are we going to fit that in.” (Respondent 1, personal communication, April 29 2024)

Using the input of the citizens and entrepreneurs where the input influences the content of the memorandum of principles would, according to ‘degree of participation and styles of governance’ by Edelenbos et al. (2006), be defined as coproducing, where the Municipality applies a delegating style. The role of citizens here is that they are co-decision-makers within certain frameworks. This rung on the participation ladder is of high importance for citizen participation.

During the residents' evening, four techniques were applied. The first was that the Municipality of Heerlen extended an invitation via written correspondence to the residents and entrepreneurs at Hoensbroek centre to attend the residents' evening. The invitation was extended to residents and entrepreneurs within the designated focus area, as illustrated in Figure X. In addition to the invitation, the residents' evening was publicised one day in advance in *De Limburger*, the Limburg newspaper (Janssen, 2024). The policymaker explained that the remaining residents and entrepreneurs outside the focus area would become aware of the residents' evening through word-of-mouth:

“In the centre of Hoensbroek, word-of-mouth communication seems to work very well. This way of communication does not always work well in every area, so it is area-dependent. So if we start bringing letters around, the expectation is that the people who need to come and who need to hear it will hear it one way or the other.” (Respondent 1, personal communication, April 29 2024)

Inviting residents and entrepreneurs should not be underestimated, according to van de Wijdeven et al. (2013): It is not only about how citizens and entrepreneurs are asked to participate, such as by letter, newspaper or word-of-mouth; it is also about citizens and entrepreneurs being *invited*. This entails making citizens and entrepreneurs feel that their involvement and input are welcome and listened to (van de Wijdeven et al., 2013). The policymaker explained that the invitation is written to make the citizens and entrepreneurs feel that they are allowed to participate and that their input is welcome.

The second technique entailed that the Municipality decide upon the optimal venue for the residents' evening. The policymaker explained that the Municipality considers it crucial that the location in question is situated within the area pertaining to the residents' evening. In addition, the Municipality

considered the location's centrality and accessibility, with the objective of accommodating the majority of citizens and entrepreneurs. Based on these criteria, the residents' evening was arranged in a hall at Café Amicitia, located on the market in Hoensbroek Centre. Figure 5 illustrates the hall's configuration.



Figure 5. Hall's configuration (made by author).

The third technique applied was the provision of participation opportunities during the residents' evening. The evening was divided into four short presentations. At the end of each presentation, attendees were invited to pose questions or offer commentary on the material presented. Following the conclusion of the first presentation by Wiebenga Consultants, members of the public and local business owners were afforded the opportunity to provide feedback and pose questions regarding the interim results, including the field of study, the rationale behind the proposed centre, the intended features and qualities of the centre and the proposed action points. The second presentation by the Municipality of Heerlen permitted citizens and entrepreneurs to provide feedback and pose queries regarding the Municipality's approach to safety and criminality. The third presentation, also delivered by the Municipality of Heerlen, permitted reactions and inquiries regarding the existing concrete plans for the Hoensbroek centre. These included the prospective establishment of a safety facility, the accessibility of the *Reuringregeling*, subsidies for green facades and roofs and the green plan for the *Gebrookerplein*.

The final presentation, delivered by Wiebenga Consultants, permitted attendees to pose questions and offer reactions regarding the subsequent steps recommended by Wiebenga Consultants. For each presentation, the moderator provided the microphone to approximately five individuals who stood to share their experiences. Both men and women posed questions, with the average age of those sharing being above 50 years old. Individuals were afforded the opportunity to present their stories and pose queries. Subsequently, the individual responsible for presenting the topic responded to the questions. Furthermore, the Municipality identified several areas for further investigation and action, including the potential for adding crosswalks to the area. During the residents' evening, it was noted that there were a considerable number of individuals who expressed a desire to speak but were unable to do so due to time constraints. Within the field of participation studies, public hearings are regarded as a method of participation that is both controlled and limited in scope. In practice, public hearings are often perceived

as consisting primarily of testimony and presentations, with limited opportunities for citizen participation in debate. Consequently, the opportunity to engage in debate is often limited to a question-and-answer session (Rowe & Frewer, 2000). A similar situation appears to have occurred at the residents' evening held at the Hoensbroek centre. The representative from Wiebenga Consultants explained that the residents' evening cannot be considered a genuine opportunity for participation:

“Yes, participation opportunity, at least it is a meeting where we are going to present. Participation goes beyond that. Participation is basically that people participate. So, one thinks along or contributes to planting plants. You name it. Or people sit on a committee. That is really participation. The residents' evening is all about sending and hoping the audience receives it well. But the residents' evening actually has little to do with participation.” (Respondent 2, personal communication, May 05 2024)

The fourth technique was the potential for engaging in conversation with the mayor, the two aldermen, and the officials present at the end of the residents' evening. It was observed that not all citizens and entrepreneurs made use of this opportunity. One female respondent explained the reasons behind her decision not to make use of the opportunity as follows:

“We left. It was hot in the hall and it was late. If I had felt that the municipality would have listened after me, I would have stayed. But I didn't feel that the municipality really wanted to listen.” (Respondent 16, personal communication, May 30 2024)

The final technique applied was the option to subscribe to a list using one's email address, with the objective of remaining informed about future developments in the Hoensbroek centre. The policymaker explained that citizens and entrepreneurs will be kept informed about matters pertaining to prospective participation opportunities and the adoption of memoranda of principles. To illustrate, the policymaker explained that the Municipality sent a letter to those who had registered for the residents' evening.

The policymaker explained that the specifics of the prospective citizen participation process remain subject to modification. The intention is that subsequent to the adoption of the memorandum of principles, it will be communicated back to the individuals who registered at the residents' evening. The Municipality intends to use communication moments to inform citizens and entrepreneurs of the outcomes of discussions held during the residents' evening. It will also indicate which memorandum of principles will be used to develop a vision for the future of Hoensbroek. The policymaker explained that the specific method through which the Municipality intends to communicate has not yet been determined. Nevertheless, the Municipality has indicated its intention to create a cartoon illustration for citizens and entrepreneurs based on the textual description of the memorandum of principles. The objective of this cartoon is to provide a visual representation of the proposed direction for citizens and

entrepreneurs without explicitly stating, for instance, that from a specific house number onwards, the zoning will be changed to residential, and from that same house number onwards, the zoning will be designated for retail use. The Municipality intends to initiate a dialogue with residents and business owners based on the cartoon drawing, which will facilitate a conversation about the actual interpretation of the memorandum of principles. The Municipality's approach is to engage in dialogue before making decisions, as this allows for a more informed interpretation of the memorandum of principles. The policymaker explained that the Municipality prefers to enter into the conversation in the form of a discussion table, where the interpretation of the memorandum of principles for the vision can be discussed on a regular basis:

“Ideally, of course, you would like to get to a group of 10 to 15 residents and entrepreneurs (...). It doesn't have to be a fixed group, in the sense of a fixed membership. But that you organise a kind of platform or a discussion table. Where you can discuss things more easily. In the sense that you don't have to organise a lot. That you say on a regular basis you get together. We can discuss certain solutions. Which you then do end up verifying to a larger group. But of course it's nice to have a discussion partner. Who is easily accessible and who you can work with.” (Respondent 1, personal communication, April 29 2024)

The participatory discussion table is conceptualised in the literature as a focus group, wherein a small group of delegates convene to deliberate collectively on specific issues. The results of focus groups are typically explicit, which is a highly desirable quality. Nevertheless, this participation method is also the subject of criticism due to its lack of transparency. The typical practice of conducting focus groups in private results in individuals who are not part of the group being unaware of the specific topics under discussion. If the Municipality of Heerlen were to adopt this participation method, it would be essential to communicate the results of the discussion table to the wider public in order to guarantee transparency (Rowe & Frewer, 2000).

4.4 Resources made available in the citizen participation process

This section provides an overview of the resources employed by the Municipality of Heerlen to facilitate the participation of citizens and entrepreneurs in the Hoensbroek centre. The policymaker from the Municipality of Heerlen explained that he is convinced that citizens with low SES have a high organisational capacity to participate in the democratic process. However, he noted that participation is made more difficult for this group because they often lack the resources to do so. Furthermore, the policymaker observed that some citizens may experience difficulties in articulating their genuine preferences or, conversely, may choose to remain discreet. The policymaker explained that, during public consultations, it has been observed that the majority of participants are those who are more vocal

and articulate. However, the less vocal, or silent, citizens also have a desire to participate. The policymaker explained the resources employed by the Municipality to engage the silent citizens in the participation process:

“But there are also people who may not be so articulate, or who don't feel comfortable expressing themselves in a group. You also want to reach those. You will also have to walk over there yourself more and ask for things. And try to provide as much comfort as possible to express themselves.”
(Respondent 1, personal communication, April 29 2024)

In addition to the municipal resources that facilitate citizen participation, the Municipality itself does not have any further resources at its disposal. The policymaker explained that, as a result of budgetary constraints, the Municipality is no longer in a position to provide the same level of support to all members of the community as it once did. This highlights the importance of individuals taking the initiative to engage in the decision-making process, according to policymakers. However, the existing literature indicates that not all individuals are able to pursue this course of action due to a lack of capacity to participate. In low-SES neighbourhoods, citizen participation in political processes is significantly lower due to this lack of capacity (Parvin, 2021). In low-SES neighbourhoods, citizens tend to have a lower level of education, which is identified as a significant factor influencing their ability to engage in and contribute to citizen initiatives within political processes (Tonkens & Verhoeven, 2019). It is therefore strongly recommended in the literature that citizens from low-SES neighbourhoods be provided with professional assistance, such as development of citizen skills and facilitation of networking, in order to be able to participate and even present their own citizen initiatives (Tonkens & Verhoeven, 2019). For example, one male respondent explained that people in Hoensbroek require support to develop their own citizen initiatives:

“Do you know what it is? People in Hoensbroek are unknowing, they really don't know how to get an initiative off the ground. By putting certain people with experience together you get something off the ground. People just want to get a little push. It's not that people can't do it here. But people just lack experience so they don't have the courage to take up certain things.” (Respondent 11, personal communication, May 23 2024)

4.5 Residents' experiences with the current process of citizen participation in the Hoensbroek Town Centre plan

This section outlines the perceptions of citizens and entrepreneurs regarding the current participation process. First, the experiences of citizens regarding the invitation by letter are discussed. Second, the

experiences regarding the organisation and (content) structure of the residents' evening are described. Third, feedback from the residents' evenings are discussed. Finally, the ideal participation process, as perceived by citizens and entrepreneurs, is presented.

Perceptions of citizens and entrepreneurs about the invitation letter

As outlined in Section 4.3, residents and entrepreneurs from the focus area of Hoensbroek were invited by letter to a residents' evening held on 16 May 2024. The 10 residents and entrepreneurs who were interviewed were asked to provide their perceptions regarding the technique of invitation utilized for the residents' evening. Of the 10 respondents, six indicated that they had received the invitation. All six respondents expressed satisfaction with the invitation by letter and indicated a preference for similar invitations in the future. Some respondents indicated that the invitation was not required to be sent by letter on every occasion and that an email would also be an acceptable form of communication. Of the six respondents, one indicated that they had chosen not to attend the residents' evening. The reasoning behind this decision is explained later in this section. Of the other four respondents, two said they were not sure whether they received the invitation. Consequently, they were unaware that a residents' evening had been organised and did not attend. The remaining two respondents explained that they had heard at the last minute through other individuals that a residents' evening would be organised. However, these two respondents had not been invited through the aforementioned letter. The two respondents indicated that they were confused as to why they had not been invited, given that they live on the outskirts of the focus area. The respondents explained that they regretted being unable to attend the residents' evening. One of the two respondents indicated that she had not been made aware of the residents' evening until two days prior to its occurrence. The respondent indicated that the lack of advance notice for meetings constituted a significant barrier, as it was highly probable that other commitments would already have been made by the time the meeting was scheduled. A female respondent explained her lack of understanding regarding the rationale behind her noninvitation:

“In fact, I didn't think that evening came on that list of any citizen participation at all. Because if I had not been informed earlier and joined the citizens' initiative of the music school, I would not have even known that the residents' evening had taken place. And then I think, if I go to the centre by foot I will be in the centre in less than a minute. So what the municipality does there is apparently not important to me. I don't understand this. I told my neighbours, so my neighbours have been there too. But others said, if I am not even invited why should I go. Logical reaction too.” (Respondent 16, personal communication, May 30 2024)

As posited by Van de Wijdeven et al. (2013), the receipt of an invitation to participate in a given opportunity is a significant determinant of whether or not individuals will participate. The situation described above illustrates that the receipt of an invitation is perceived as a crucial element by citizens

and entrepreneurs in determining whether to participate. Despite the fact that some citizens and entrepreneurs did not receive an invitation, a number of them did attend the residents' evening.

Perceptions of citizens and entrepreneurs about the residents' evening

The 10 residents and entrepreneurs who were interviewed were asked to provide their perceptions regarding the organisation and substantive structure of the residents' evening held on 16 May 2024. Furthermore, respondents were asked whether they experienced any participation barriers. Of the 10 respondents, seven attended the residents' evening, and the majority of respondents expressed positive sentiments regarding the event. A number of respondents stated that the notable attendance of municipal representatives instilled confidence that the challenges would be addressed this time. For instance, one female respondent explained that she was positively surprised that even the mayor was present at the residents' evening:

“And I was also quite surprised to see the mayor even there. Positively surprised, then. Then I think, oh, apparently it's so important that the best man also takes the time and effort to be there.”
(Respondent 15, personal communication, May 30 2024)

Two of the seven respondents indicated that they were highly satisfied with the content of the four presentations that constituted the residents' evening. These two respondents indicated that they had no immediate suggestions for changes to future residents' evenings. However, the remaining five respondents were highly critical of the manner in which the event was organised as well as the structure (of the content). The majority of the criticism pertained to the organisation of the event. The respondents perceived a lack of preparation on the part of the Municipality, which they felt resulted in an unorganized event where a considerable number of attendees were compelled to stand for the whole duration. Moreover, the presenters' intelligibility was criticized, with the observation that their speech was challenging to comprehend during the evening. Some respondents indicated that the presenters were particularly difficult to understand from the back of the room. In addition, respondents noted that the presentation screen was not clearly visible to everyone. Furthermore, some respondents expressed surprise that a moderator from outside Heerlen had been hired to guide the evening. One male respondent explained why he felt the organisation of the residents' evening could be improved in the future:

“I think the presentations themselves were basically okay. I do think it could have been a bit bigger. In terms of sound and so on, it was obviously a bit poor. I think you should also make a setting like that, next time, where everyone can sit. So I think that makes it too chaotic when people stand up and there is a coffee table halfway down the hall. That coffee table should be pushed away in the back corner and should not become an important part of a meeting, I think. I think at a meeting, everyone should take a seat anyway and sit down as much as possible. That gives calm, overview

and also less buzz. I would also place an elevation in front of the people presenting, so that more people can see you. And the screen on which the presentation was shown just needs to be much bigger. It was just a television thing standing there, yes it was simply not it. And it was way too hot. It was just all just not good enough.” (Respondent 14, personal communication, May 27 2024)

A number of respondents explained that they did not feel that the Municipality listened to the residents and entrepreneurs during the residents' evening. The respondents indicated that they experienced this feeling from the council and municipal officials, who were facing away from the audience during the evening. This feeling was further shaped by the responses to the residents' and entrepreneurs' reactions and questions. One female respondent articulated her belief that the council and Municipality did not genuinely listen to the residents and entrepreneurs:

“Because the communication was also not really there between the citizens who said something and the answers that came from the municipality and consultancy. It was just vague. Like people weren't being heard. And again what I said, at that other meeting there was a flip over and comments from the audience, where people thought we should do something with that, that was noted. That doesn't mean something is done with it immediately. But then you residents also continue to contribute to the participation process. And then there is a dialogue. But now there was no dialogue.” (Respondent 16, personal communication, May 30 2024)

The perception of being unheard during participation opportunities is a common phenomenon, as identified by van de Wijdeven et al. (2013). According to the authors, the citizens and entrepreneurs did not feel heard because they were invited to participate but were not extended an invitation to provide input. There was a divergence of opinion regarding the structure of the residents' evening. A number of respondents indicated that they had expected to have more opportunities to participate. The respondents indicated that this expectation was created by the newspaper article which stated that citizens and entrepreneurs were permitted to contribute ideas (Janssen, 2024). In this regard, several respondents also expressed surprise at the existence of already-developed plans for the Centre. One female respondent explained that her expectation from this first residents' evening was that the Municipality would show interest in identifying the desires of citizens and entrepreneurs regarding the centre. However, the opportunities for citizens and entrepreneurs to pose questions and provide feedback were considered by the public as ‘real’ citizen participation opportunities. Despite this, respondents indicated that they had hoped for a setting that would allow for a more extended period of dialogue. To illustrate, one female respondent explained why she did not perceive the residents' evening as an occasion for participation:

“The residents' evening was an opportunity for citizen participation? It really went from entrepreneurs, we as a municipality want you on that long street. You as entrepreneurs need to move.

And you as entrepreneurs need to make the facades better. And then you guys will be fine. (...) And that's why I didn't see any participation.” (Respondent 16, personal communication, May 30 2024)

Despite the fact that the policymaker had previously explained in the interview that the information gathered from citizens and entrepreneurs during the evening would be used for the memorandum of principles, the residents and entrepreneurs nevertheless felt unable to contribute their input. This situation exemplifies the criticism levied against residents' meetings, which are often perceived as an inadequate avenue for public participation (Rowe & Frewer, 2000). Other respondents explained that they had expected more concrete plans. They explained that they felt the Municipality and the consultancy remained too unclear about the future of the Centre. One male respondent elaborated on his expectations prior to the residents' evening and how they aligned with the actual proceedings:

“The information in itself was basically okay. (...) I do think more people had hoped for bigger change already. And had thought, some more will have happened. The information during the residents' evening gave me a bit of the idea of, we're going to do something with greenery, we're doing a bit of safety behind the screens but you don't really see it yet. And you can sign up to make your facade green. That was what you actually came down to, briefly. I think people were like, we had hoped to hear more in this case. But anyway, there's no more to say.” (Respondent 14, personal communication, May 27 2024)

This situation, in which citizens and entrepreneurs had disparate expectations from the residents' evening, indicates that there was a discrepancy between people's expectations regarding the scope of participation and the actual scope. Weymouth and Hartz-Karp (2019) posit that this discrepancy is a common phenomenon observed across various global contexts. It is considered important to reduce this gap, given that it can lead to distrust in government and dissatisfaction among citizens (Weymouth & Hartz-Karp, 2019).

Perceptions of citizens and entrepreneurs on residents' evening reporting back

As previously outlined in Section 4.3, those who had registered would receive information about the residents' evening and future developments regarding the centre. In the course of the interviews, which took place one-to-two weeks after the residents' evening, the seven respondents who had attended the event expressed disappointment in not having received the email. The respondents indicated that a considerable number of residents and entrepreneurs are currently invested in the developments surrounding the centre and would like to receive mail from the Municipality. Respondents expressed surprise that it should take so long, but nevertheless, some maintained confidence that the mail will come. Other respondents indicated they want to receive the email first and then they will believe. For instance, one respondent stated

“I didn't receive an email about the residents' evening. That the mail says, for example, how nice that you attended. Or we are going to reflect. Or we've heard you guys. Or this is the summary of what we heard, is that indeed what you meant. Such a message from the municipality could already be a beginning. But I think within the municipality they also don't know who among them should take up this task. I am curious to see if we will hear anything more. I don't mind in itself being informed by e-mail but one e-mail should be sent.” (Respondent 16, personal communication, May 30 2024)

Future participation process

The 10 residents and entrepreneurs were also asked about their ultimate participation process. Of the 10, three (two male and one female) below the age of 30 stated that they were not interested in participating in the processes. These three respondents also stated that they had never engaged in policy-making processes with the objective of improving their immediate living environment. The two principal reasons provided for this lack of participation were the respondents' lack of time and their lack of interest in participating. This was also the rationale provided by the respondent for their absence from the residents' evening, despite having received an invitation to attend. For instance, a male respondent explained that despite recognizing the significance of engagement, he lacks the capacity to participate due to time constraints:

“Yes, I find it difficult on the one hand. It's kind of important to make an effort for the neighbourhood you live in. But right now, because I'm working, I'm in school, I have my hobbies like that. I don't see a way how I can contribute much to the centre for that right now because I'm too busy at the moment. So for now, I wouldn't necessarily say I would join a residents' meeting very soon. While I can say that I certainly do see the benefit of such a meeting.” (Respondent 9, personal communication, May 21 2024)

Political researchers have identified a decline in the level of political involvement among young people. This results in not only a reduction in political knowledge among younger generations but also a decline in interest in engaging in political activities (Quintelier, 2007). The reason for the reduced participation of young people in political processes is that they tend to favour alternative forms of engagement, such as demonstrations and the signing of petitions. Furthermore, young people also express a lack of interest in participating (Quintelier, 2007), as the three respondents under age 30 indicated. However, the existing literature does not identify lack of available time as a primary reason for the observed decline in political participation among adolescents and young adults. Nevertheless, van de Wijdeven et al. (2013) assert that among other factors, an individual's capacity to participate is contingent upon the availability of time.

The three young respondents indicated that in addition to a lack of time and interest, no specific barriers existed that prevented them from participating. As previously outlined in Chapter 1, lack of time and commitment are well-documented barriers noted in the literature (Fung, 2009; Jakobsen & Andersen, 2013; Kapiriri, 2003; Pestoff, 2012; Vanleene et al., 2018). Furthermore, all three respondents stated that no events had occurred previously that had influenced their interest in participating. As these three respondents had never previously participated, they were asked to identify factors that would motivate them to engage with the municipal programme. The two male respondents indicated that participation could become more appealing if the opportunity to participate online were also offered, such as attending an online admirers' evening or filling out an online questionnaire. The respondents indicated that the online participation option would eliminate the barrier of being obliged to participate at a fixed date and time. In addition, the female respondent indicated that the participation rate could be increased by the Municipality or consulting firm engaging with residents and entrepreneurs directly, as opposed to relying on surveys sent through the mail. The female respondent stated that

“If the municipality does not contact you personally by approaching you on the street, for example, then people participate less in political activities. The distance between the municipality and the citizen is then too big, I think. A lot of people here say ‘Never mind’, including myself. Then you get a letter [points to the voting pass]. Yes, then you're sitting looking at it and you think, it's not important, so I don't participate (...). I know people think like that here like ‘Oh well, you can send me something, but it will not be used anyway’.” (Respondent 9, personal communication, May 21 2024)

During the course of the interviews, the question was also posed as to what was required of the three respondents themselves in order to start participating. One male respondent indicated that he would be willing to participate if he had the time and interest. However, he did recognise the challenge of finding time to engage in such activities and stated that he would have to make time and interest available for them. The other two young respondents indicated that, despite being offered desired participation opportunities by the Municipality of Heerlen, they were not interested in participating. For example, one female respondent stated

“Yes, I'm just not that interested in it. I'd rather leave that to other people.” (Respondent 9, personal communication, May 21 2024)

Corburn (2003) posits that population groups most affected by health issues and environmental risks should be given greater participation in policy-making processes. Nevertheless, the aforementioned circumstances illustrate that despite the offer of participation opportunities, young citizens are

uninterested in participating due to a lack of time and motivation. This raises the question of whether municipalities should increase participation opportunities for young citizens if they do not participate.

The remaining seven respondents indicated a willingness to participate in the centre's future developments. However, within these seven respondents, two groups formed based on the extent to which they want to participate. The first group comprised four respondents, two of them female and two male. One female respondent was 65 or older, while the other three respondents were between 40 and 60. These four respondents are very entrepreneurial in their daily lives and participate in society in various ways. They indicated a desire to participate in a highly active manner. They also explained that they have a range of connections with individuals and are familiar with financial and legal processes. One male respondent described his involvement in the development of the centre:

“I am already involved. I am someone from a think tank, though. I am already talking to a few entrepreneurs. Through that fair, for example, which I organise. That way you get behind the doors of entrepreneurs everywhere already. (...) By having a direct connection with the municipality, you also get in touch quickly. Municipality, you really need to take a closer look at this problem. This is where the complaining really comes from. Involvement from my side, I think mainly that we have to start talking to each other. That entrepreneurs should start talking to each other and not compete. That there will be some kind of working groups for certain pieces. I would like to be involved with that as well.” (Respondent 14, personal communication, May 27 2024)

The second group comprised three respondents, two of whom are female. These respondents indicated a desire to be involved in the developments in the centre, albeit in a less active role than that of the group of respondents discussed above. These respondents indicated that they would prefer to be involved in the process by being well informed, for example, by attending a residents' evening. However, the respondents indicated that they should not be expected to contribute ideas because such ideas are not forthcoming. To illustrate, one female respondent delineated her desired degree of involvement as follows:

“I'm not very good at coming up with solutions. I see problems, but I find coming up with solutions difficult. Besides... How much time would I want to put into that? But on the other hand, I also really enjoy being involved in something. I won't be at the forefront, but I will be very happy to be involved. Yes.” (Respondent 15, personal communication, May 30 2024)

The majority of the 10 respondents indicated that, in the future, they would prefer the first part of the meeting or the first meeting with the Municipality to be used for informing residents and entrepreneurs about relevant matters. To illustrate, one female respondent specified the information she would require in advance of considering potential solutions:

“And indicate much more clearly what budgets are available. How much budget is there in total for the next five or 10 years? Is that vision you have is it for the longer term? How can we as residents and entrepreneurs contribute to the developments of the centre? What can we as residents and entrepreneurs expect in terms of participation opportunities and plans? I haven't heard and seen all that kind of thing back. The Hoensbroek Castle which is further away from the centre is mentioned. And a vacant music school which is a few streets away from the centre, no information is given about what the municipality is planning to do with it. Or the vacant police station which is actually in the city centre, there is also nothing about what use the building will get. For the municipality, it may all be clear. But for us as residents, it is not clear. And the building behind this, for example, where nothing is happening. Give information on that. Listen these are the bottlenecks that we as a municipality have seen. And indicate this information about the vacant buildings in the centre we as a municipality can and may share with you. And give information about the outline of the centre.”
(Respondent 16, personal communication, May 30 2024)

Following the provision of information by the Municipality to residents and entrepreneurs on a range of issues, respondents indicate a preference for the initiation of a dialogue. The respondents indicated a desire to expand the participation opportunities. For example, respondents indicated that they would be willing to participate in the brainstorming of potential solutions for the centre. There was a divergence of opinion among respondents as to whether the dialogue should be conducted collectively in a large group or in smaller, more intimate groups. One female respondent provided an explanation as to why, in her opinion, dialogue in smaller groups would lead to superior outcomes:

“I think there are a lot of people who would like to say something during a meeting, but don't stand up in a group like that and have their say. That's why I think having the dialogue in smaller groups works better. And if the conversation can only be held in larger groups, I think it would be nice to have the chance to write things down. To then be able to give them to the municipality.” (Respondent 8, personal communication, May 21 2024)

The respondents indicated that they perceived the Municipality's active listening as a crucial aspect of the dialogue. A number of respondents indicated that this feeling can be created when sufficient time is allocated for individuals to express their views and the Municipality representatives take notes on the discussions held with residents and entrepreneurs. Furthermore, respondents indicated that it is beneficial to be able to engage in direct eye contact with municipal representatives. Furthermore, respondents indicated that this also contributes to the creation of the feeling that one is being heard. Following each dialogue, respondents indicated a desire for feedback on the meeting and their input. During interviews, residents and entrepreneurs expressed that feedback provides the sense that the

Municipality is genuinely addressing challenges in the centre and that their views are being heard. One male respondent explained that he would appreciate feedback on his submitted ideas:

“Yes, personally I would like it if, even if your idea is thrown off course, you could see that it has been thought through and that it has been refuted or something. That you hear something in return or so, that a choice was made not to go into business with it, for example. Because if you don't provide that feedback, I think people won't really feel heard either. For example, if you say, I want there to be a McDonald's on this square, and you never see the McDonald's, did anyone listen to you or did they say, no, that's a bad idea. That's really the main issue. Not that I want a McDonald's here by the way, but (...) [laughter]. So I think mainly it's important to give that feedback then as to why or why not.” (Respondent 9, personal communication, May 21 2024)

Additionally, respondents expressed a preference for receiving feedback or information on developments via letter or email. The majority of respondents aged 30 years and older indicated a preference for receiving information in this manner. The rationale behind this preference is that it ensures that the information is not overlooked. In contrast, respondents in the under-30 age group indicated a preference for information sharing on social media platforms such as Instagram, citing the significant amount of time they dedicate to these platforms. In addition, all respondents indicated that they consider it important for meetings to be well organised. The respondents reached a unanimous consensus that the presenters should be clearly audible, that seating should be available for all attendees and that the event should be perceived as welcoming and inclusive.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion and discussion

This chapter presents the conclusions and discussion of the study. Firstly, the conclusions of the study are presented, which provide answers to the research question and sub-questions. Secondly, the discussion addresses short the research findings and recommendations for further research.

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the current process of citizen participation in formulating a vision for a healthy living environment in the centre of Hoensbroek. The objective of this research was to provide a detailed characterisation of the participation process and to ascertain the perceptions of citizens and entrepreneurs regarding the current participation process. The research question of this study was as follows: "How can the current process of resident participation to promote a healthy living environment be characterised in the centre of Hoensbroek. And how is this process of citizen participation experienced by the residents of Hoensbroek?" The research question, along with its associated sub-questions, is addressed in the following section.

5.1.1 Answer to sub-question 1

“What are the characteristics of the institutional context of the process of citizen participation in which residents of Hoensbroek participate?”

Historically, the municipality of Heerlen had employed a mechanistic process of citizen participation. The participation process comprised a maximum of three information evenings, which were designed to fulfil the municipality's goals to involve citizens in developments. Historically, the influence of citizens on policy and decision-making processes was minimal, unless they presented considerable objections or the Council of State was involved. Currently, the municipality acknowledges the significance of citizen participation in attaining effective outcomes and has set a high standard for achieving this goal. In order to determine the role of citizens, the municipality has formulated a participation ladder, which serves as a tool to achieve this ambitious goal. The roles that citizens can have in policy and decision-making processes are diverse, ranging from informing to Co-decision. However, residents and entrepreneurs have expressed skepticism regarding their roles within the participation process. Furthermore, a majority of residents and entrepreneurs in Hoensbroek express a lack of trust in the municipality of Heerlen. This lack of trust, which has been fostered by the municipality's perceived negligence, has led to the formation of a negative image of the municipality, characterised by the sentiment that 'the municipality of Heerlen is ineffective'. The ultimate decisions

regarding the participation process are made by the alderman for Management and Maintenance, Mobility, Spatial Planning and Elderly Policy. In collaboration with the mayor and the alderman for Economy and Labor Market, Finance and Sports, Sustainability, Heerlen-North, this alderman forms the steering committee that discusses the future direction of the participation process.

5.1.2 Answer to sub-question 2

“What methods and techniques are used within the institutional context to enable participation for Hoensbroek residents?”

The Municipality of Heerlen has employed a variety of methods and techniques to facilitate citizen and entrepreneur participation in the establishment of the memorandum of principles. At the time of writing this study, the municipality is in the process of establishing the memorandum of principles, which is part of the vision for the centre of Hoensbroek. The municipality of Heerlen has thus far employed two methods: one-on-one interviews and an information evening for residents. Wiebenga Consultants conducted one-on-one interviews, the first method, in early 2024 with key entrepreneurs, property owners, people with larger interests, programme manager of National Programme Heerlen-North, asset manager of housing corporation Vincio Wonen and project developer of housing corporation Woonpunt. In addition, the alderman for Management and Maintenance, Mobility, Spatial Planning and Elderly Policy also held one-on-one discussions with residents and entrepreneurs. In this technique, Wiebenga Consultants and the alderman prepared a series of questions in advance. The questions were designed to identify current problems and sensitive issues, as well as opportunities for the centre of Hoensbroek. Subsequent to these one-on-one discussions, the municipality of Heerlen hosted an information evening on 16 May 2024, second method used, which was addressed to citizens and entrepreneurs within the centre's focus area. In the course of this evening, four brief presentations were given by representatives of the municipality of Heerlen and consultants from Wiebenga Consultants. During the course of these presentations, the current challenges facing the centre were discussed, as well as four potential solutions that could be implemented to address these challenges. The method employed involved the implementation of four distinct techniques. The first step was to send an invitation to residents and business owners within the focus area to attend a residents' evening, which was communicated via letter. Second, the municipality prioritised accessibility and a central location in the centre when selecting the venue for the information evening. Third, the audience was then invited to participate in a question-and-answer session, during which a select number of citizens and entrepreneurs were permitted to inquire about or express their opinions regarding the material presented. Fourth, following the closure of the residents' evening, attendees were given the opportunity to speak with the mayor, two aldermen, members of the municipal staff, and advisors in a one-on-one setting. Finally, residents and

entrepreneurs were able to subscribe to a mailing list, which provided them with updates regarding the developments in the centre and allowed them to receive feedback from the residents' evening.

5.1.3 Answer to sub-question 3

“Within the institutional context, what resources are available to Hoensbroek residents?”

The Municipality of Heerlen has taken steps to facilitate the participation of citizens and entrepreneurs in the decision-making process by ensuring access to information. The municipality strives to disseminate information to citizens in a transparent manner. This is also done with the objective of enhancing citizens' capacity for self-determination and create an environment that is conducive to the expression of the views of those who may be considered 'silent' citizens. In this environment, the municipality of Heerlen also personally engages with these citizens, seeking to understand their perspectives. However, due to budgetary constraints, the municipality is currently unable to provide as many resources as it has done in the past.

5.1.4 Answer to sub-question 4

"What experience do Hoensbroek residents have within the institutional context, the use of the resources offered, and the methods and techniques used in participating in the process of citizen participation?"

The citizens and entrepreneurs provided their perceptions on the invitation to the information evening, the organisation and structure of the information evening for the residents and the information, which was sent after the meeting. In addition, citizens and entrepreneurs shared their experience on whether the meeting met their expectations. Among the 10 respondents interviewed, six received the invitation. The six respondents were satisfied by the way they received the invitation. Some of these six respondents indicated that an invitation by email was also a suitable alternative to a letter. Two of the ten respondents interviewed were uncertain as to whether they had received the invitation and thus did not attend the residents' evening. The remaining two respondents indicated that they had not received the invitation, and expressed disbelief at the apparent failure to notify them. The remaining two respondents were informed about the residents' evening by other citizens. The lack of invitation created the impression among citizens and entrepreneurs that the issues the municipality aims to address in the city centre are not of importance to them. This made them feel unwelcome and gave a sense of exclusion. The discovery of the meeting at the last minute constituted a barrier to participation. The seven respondents who attended the informative meeting generally looked back on the evening positively. For instance, the

respondents were pleased to see the representatives. However, five of these seven respondents provided criticism regarding the organisation and structure of the meeting. In particular, the organisation was perceived to be lacking in preparation and professionalism. In addition, the respondents indicated that they did not perceive the municipality to be genuinely receptive to what they had to say. The seven respondents expressed disappointment that two weeks after the residents' evening, they did not receive any message from the municipality of Heerlen. This dissatisfaction does not contribute to the existing distrust of the municipality. Furthermore, respondents stated that the provision of feedback from the residents' evening would be an effective strategy for restoring trust in the municipality. All respondents indicated that their expectations of the residents' evening were not met. Some residents and entrepreneurs had anticipated greater opportunities for participation in order to engage in dialogue with the municipality. Furthermore, the respondents were surprised by the concrete actions presented by the municipality. This led to the conclusion that the residents' evening was not perceived as an opportunity for participation by all residents and entrepreneurs. However, other respondents indicated that they had anticipated the presentation of more concrete plans that would effectively address the issues.

5.1.5 Answer to sub-question 5

"How does the future participation process should look like according to the residents to ensure that possible causes and barriers to participation no longer exist?"

Respondents had different expectations and wishes for the future participation process. Respondents under 30 indicated that offering online participation opportunities and being personally addressed to participate could increase participation rates. However, these respondents indicated that despite if the municipality offer them desired participation opportunities, they do not want to participate. The underlying cause is that these respondents lack the requisite time and interest to engage in political activities. The lack of time and interest represents a significant barrier to participation. The remaining respondents aged 30 and above indicated a necessity for comprehensive and transparent information regarding the centre. For instance, there is a requirement for information regarding specific developments involving vacant properties, the availability of financial resources, the roles and responsibilities associated with participation opportunities, and the management of expectations. In addition, there is a requirement for the provision of more opportunities for participation in order to facilitate a dialogue with the municipal authorities regarding the centre of Hoensbroek. Furthermore, respondents indicated a desire for feedback on meetings, expressing a need to understand the outcomes and actions taken regarding their input. Feedback and communication regarding developments in Hoensbroek may be conveyed in writing via email and social media. Last of all, residents and business owners expressed a preference for well-organized and structured meetings, where adequate seating is

provided, all participants can be heard clearly, and residents and entrepreneurs are invited and feel invited to participate.

5.1.5 Answer to research question

"How can the current process of resident participation in the vision to promote a healthy living environment be characterised in the centre of Hoensbroek? And how is this process of citizen participation experienced by the residents of Hoensbroek?"

The current process of resident participation of vision to promote a healthy living environment in the centre of Hoensbroek can be characterised as an evolving process. The participation process, which was previously structured in a more mechanical manner, has undergone a transformation, enabling citizens and entrepreneurs to exert a greater degree of influence over policy and decision-making processes. Even then, the current participation process will still be evolving. The roles that residents and entrepreneurs can assume range from Informing to Co-decision. The Municipality of Heerlen thus strives to provide residents and entrepreneurs the most possible involvement in policy and decision-making processes. Despite the methods, techniques and resources employed, the majority of respondents indicated they were not satisfied with the participation opportunities offered and their quality. The respondents indicated a desire for additional participation opportunities that facilitate dialogue between residents, entrepreneurs, and the municipality of Heerlen. In which the municipality of Heerlen gives residents and entrepreneurs the feeling that their input has actually been listened to and shows what happened to their input. In addition, future meetings should be better organised. However, the majority of respondents expressed positive memories of the information evening. Despite the evaluation of the citizen participation process as one that allows residents and entrepreneurs to exert influence, there is still room for improvement in meeting the participation needs of the citizens and entrepreneurs of the centre.

5.2 Discussion

The findings of this study contradict the existing literature, indicating that the level of interest in participation is also considerable among individuals from low-SES neighbourhoods. It can be reasonably deduced that motivation to participate is an important factor influencing participation among people from low-SES neighbourhoods. The barriers encountered by residents and entrepreneurs included a lack of time and interest, the failure to receive an invitation, and the discovery of a meeting at the last minute. However, these barriers were only reported by a small number of respondents. These results demonstrate a discrepancy between the findings of this study and those of previous literature, indicating that the extent to which individuals from low-SES neighbourhoods encounter barriers is not

as significant as previously thought. The results of this study contribute to the ongoing debate within the field of environmental health planning by addressing a significant gap in knowledge regarding the characterisation of the current participation process at the local level in environmental health planning in low socioeconomic status neighbourhoods. In addition, the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on citizens' perceptions of the participation process. Furthermore, this research also contributes to the existing gap in knowledge on how the participation process should be implemented to increase citizen participation rates in low-SES neighbourhoods.

Based on the research results, possible future (longitudinal) research could further explore the perceptions of a larger number of residents and entrepreneurs on the current and future participation process. For this study, ten citizens and entrepreneurs were interviewed given the time available. To get an even better picture of perceptions and increase reliability, more citizens and entrepreneurs should be interviewed. For this study, three young citizens who did not participate in the participation process were interviewed. To increase the representativeness of these three young citizens, a larger number of citizens and entrepreneurs of different age groups should be interviewed in future research. Another future study could further investigate how to characterise the participation process in other neighbourhoods in the Netherlands. This could include looking at citizens' perceptions of the participation process. This future research is important because this study only looked at the centre of Hoensbroek.

Chapter 6 - Bibliography

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Chapter 7 - Appendix

Appendix 1: Interview guide experts

Inleiding

Welkom bij dit interview. Allereerst wil ik u bedanken dat u de tijd heeft vrijgemaakt om deel te nemen aan dit interview voor mijn masterthesis van de Radboud Universiteit. Voordat we beginnen met het interview, krijgt u uitleg over wat het onderzoek inhoudt en hoe dit interview is opgebouwd. Vervolgens beslist u of u wilt meedoen aan dit interview.

Waarover gaat het onderzoek?

Mijn naam is Laura Demandt en ik volg de master Spatial Planning aan de Radboud Universiteit in Nijmegen. Dit interview is onderdeel van mijn afstudeeronderzoek. Mijn onderzoek gaat over het kenmerken van het huidige proces van bewonersparticipatie binnen een wijkprogramma ter bevordering van een gezonde gebiedsomgeving in het centrum Hoensbroek. Binnen het onderzoek richt ik mij op de ervaringen van de burgers en ondernemers over het huidige participatieproces bij een wijkprogramma voor het centrum van Hoensbroek. Het doel van mijn onderzoek is om een diepgaand inzicht te krijgen in de verschillende perspectieven die burgers in Hoensbroek ervaren bij het deelnemen aan lokale participatieprocessen voor het creëren van een gezonde leefomgeving. De onderzoeksvraag die centraal staat in het onderzoek is als volgt: "How can the current proces of resident participation of centre plan to promote a healthy living environment be characterised in the centre of Hoensbroek?" En hoe is dit proces of citizen participation experienced by the residents of Hoensbroek?

Wat wordt er van u verwacht?

Als u toestemming geeft, wordt er een geluidsopname en aantekeningen van dit interview gemaakt om de nauwkeurigheid van het onderzoek te waarborgen. De opname- en aantekeningen worden gebruikt als onderzoeksdata. Het interview zal ongeveer 60 minuten duren. In het interview zal ik u vragen stellen die betrekking hebben op het proces van burgerparticipatie dat wordt gebruikt in de wijk Hoensbroek. Een voorbeeld van een vraag is: 'Hoe wordt het proces van burgerparticipatie gekenmerkt?'

Vrijwilligheid

Uw deelname aan dit onderzoek is vrijwillig en u mag altijd nee zeggen. U bent niet verplicht om vragen te beantwoorden die u liever niet beantwoordt, en u kunt op elk moment tijdens het onderzoek uw deelname stopzetten en uw toestemming intrekken. Daarbij hoeft u niet aan te geven waarom u stopt. U kunt tot een week na deelname ook uw onderzoeksgegevens en persoonsgegevens laten verwijderen door een mail te sturen naar laura.demandt@ru.nl.

Wat gebeurt er met uw gegevens?

Uw deelname aan dit onderzoek is vertrouwelijk. Alle verzamelde onderzoeksgegevens worden gearchiveerd in een veilig en intern archief van het Radboud Universiteitnetwerk (RIS), volgens het protocol van de Radboud Universiteit. Dit protocol is in lijn met de Algemene Verordening Persoonsgegevens (AVG).

Opnames en aantekeningen van het interview worden gepseudonimiseerd, wat betekent dat de kans klein is dat via de data naar u terug te herleiden is, maar de mogelijkheid is er wel. Alle informatie die naar u als persoon leidt, wordt verwijderd uit de onderzoeksgegevens (zoals uw naam, contactgegevens of de namen van andere personen).

De lijst met deelnemers en pseudoniemen wordt versleuteld en opgeslagen op een beveiligde omgeving (RIS), waar alleen de onderzoeker en de twee supervisors toegang tot hebben. Zodra dit is gebeurd, werkt de onderzoeker alleen nog met de gepseudonimiseerde data voor dit onderzoek. Deze onderzoeksdata worden niet gebruikt voor andere onderzoeken. De opname, aantekeningen en transcript zullen voor zeven jaar worden opgeslagen op het Radboudnetwerk om wetenschappelijke integriteit te

waarborgen. Na deze zeven jaar wordt deze data automatisch verwijderd. De data worden niet gedeeld met of hergebruikt door andere onderzoekers.

Klachten

Mocht u desondanks klachten hebben of problemen ondervinden dan kunt u altijd contact opnemen met Laura Demandt. Ook kunt u een klacht indienen bij de [vertrouwenspersonen voor academische integriteit \(vertrouwenspersonen@ru.nl\)](#) of met de Commissie Wetenschappelijke Integriteit van de Radboud Universiteit (m.steenbergen@bjz.ru.nl, 024 3611578) Bestuurlijke & Juridische Zaken.

Als u vragen of klachten heeft over de verwerking van uw persoonsgegevens, kunt u deze eerst bespreken met Laura Demandt. U kunt ook contact opnemen met de Functionaris Gegevensbescherming van Radboud Universiteit (mijnprivacy@ru.nl). Of u kunt een klacht indienen bij de Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens.

Toestemmingsverklaring

Als u aan dit onderzoek wilt meedoen en akkoord gaat met de geluidsopname en aantekeningen, dan vraag ik u deze toestemmingsverklaring te ondertekenen. Door uw schriftelijke toestemming geeft u aan dat u de informatie heeft begrepen en instemt met deelname aan het onderzoek.

Heeft u verder nog vragen? Mocht u na afloop van het interview nog vragen hebben, dan kunt u met mij contact opnemen via laura.demandt@ru.nl.

Naam deelnemer:

Naam onderzoekster: Laura Demandt

Datum: 00-00-2024

Datum: 00-00-2024

Handtekening:

Handtekening:

Body of the interview guide (60 minuten):

Thema 1: Participative democracy at the local level (20 minuten)

In dit thema stel ik als eerste de vraag om u te introduceren. Vervolgens worden u vragen gesteld over de wijk Hoensbroek en als laatste gaan we in op jullie visie als X over burgerparticipatie bij besluitvorming.

Vraag 1.1: Kunt u uzelf introduceren?

- Welke functie/rol heeft u bij X?
- Wat zijn uw ervaringen met de betrokkenheid van burgers uit lage SES-wijken in participatieprocessen?
- Werkt u momenteel aan projecten waar bewoners (met een lage SES) kunnen participeren?
 - Zo ja, welke projecten, wat houden de projecten inhoudelijk in en wat zijn de doelstellingen?
 - Zo nee, bent u in het verleden bij projecten betrokken geweest waarbij bewoners konden participeren? Hoe waren uw ervaringen?

Vraag 1.2: Kunt u de wijk Hoensbroek beschrijven?

- Welke uitdagingen doen zich voor in de wijk en waarom?
- Welke kansen doen zich voor in de wijk en waarom?
- Wat maakt volgens u Hoensbroek uniek en waarom?
- Hoe is de saamhorigheid van de bewoners in de wijk en waarom?

Vraag 1.3: Hoe ziet het huidige woningbezit van jullie woningcorporatie in Hoensbroek eruit?

- Welke soorten woningen hebben jullie bezit in Hoensbroek?
- Voor welke doelgroep voorzien jullie in Hoensbroek woningen?

Vraag 1.4: Wat is jullie visie als X met betrekking op burgerparticipatie?

- Indien burgers nauw betrokken dienen te worden, waarom en tot welke resultaten heeft het geleid?
 - Hoe dienen deze burgers te participeren in besluitvorming en waarom?
 - Hoe dient de input van bewoners meegenomen te worden in beleidsvorming en waarom?
 - Hoe dient binnen burgerparticipatie omgegaan te worden met inclusiviteit en het vertegenwoordigen van een grote groep bewoners en waarom?
- Indien burgers niet nauw te betrekken, waarom?

Vraag 1.5: Hoe zijn jullie als woningcorporatie betrokken bij de plannen voor het verbeteren van de leefomgeving in het centrum van Hoensbroek en waarom?

Thema 2: Organisatie van participatieproces in lokale besluitvorming (20 minuten)

Dit thema gaat in op een onderdeel van het participatieproces. De vragen die worden gesteld hebben betrekking op de participatiemogelijkheden voor de bewoners in Hoensbroek die jullie als woningcorporatie zouden adviseren aan beleidsmakers.

Vraag 2.1: Welke participatiemogelijkheden voor bewoners uit Hoensbroek om te participeren en de deelname tot participatie te vergemakkelijken zouden jullie adviseren aan beleidsmakers bij beleidsvorming? Denk hierbij aan verschillende middelen, methoden en technieken.

- Welke specifieke voorbeelden kunt u noemen?
- Zijn er specifieke strategieën?
 - Zo ja, welke en waarom deze strategieën?
- Waarom en op welke wijze zijn voor deze participatiemogelijkheden gekozen?

Vraag 2.2: Hoe zouden deze participatiemogelijkheden volgens u georganiseerd dienen te worden binnen het participatieproces?

- Hoe en wanneer worden deze participatiemogelijkheden ingezet en waarom?
- Hoe krijgen bewoners kennis over deze participatiemogelijkheden en waarom?
- Hoe is de rolverdeling tussen de betrokken partijen bij het aanbieden van deze participatiemogelijkheden?
- Zijn er voorwaarden of criteria waaraan burgers dienen te voldoen om gebruik te mogen maken van deze participatiemogelijkheden?
 - Zo ja, welke en waarom?
 - Zo nee, waarom?

Vraag 2.3: Wat zijn uw ervaringen met het gebruik van de aangeboden participatiemogelijkheden door bewoners in Hoensbroek gebruikt? Denk bijv. aan de opkomst bij een bewonersavond.

- Is in het gebruik terug te zien dat de participatiemogelijkheden toegankelijk en inclusief zijn voor alle bewoners?
 - Zo ja, welke aspecten van deze participatiemogelijkheden maken het aantrekkelijk voor burgers om gebruik ervan te maken?
 - Zo nee, waarom worden deze participatiemogelijkheden niet gebruikt door de burgers?

Vraag 2.4: Welke participatiemogelijkheden zijn volgens u wel en niet effectief geweest in het verleden en waarom?

Thema 3: Betrokkenheid van burgers bij het participatieproces (15 minuten)

In dit thema stel ik u vragen over de betrokkenheid van burgers in Hoensbroek en hoe om te gaan met de mate waarin deze bewoners kunnen participeren.

Vraag 3.1: Welke rol of rollen zouden burgers in Hoensbroek volgens u in plannen die hun leefomgeving beïnvloeden willen vervullen?

- Hoe worden deze rollen in kaart gebracht?
- Hoe dient omgegaan te worden met de rolverdeling bij burgers met een lage SES?
- Dienen burgers volgens u ook deze rol te hebben in het participatieproces?

Vraag 3.2: Wat zijn volgens u de verklaringen waarom bewoners van Hoensbroek wel of niet participeren in plannen die hun leefomgeving beïnvloeden?

Vraag 3.3: Merkt u binnen de bewoners van Hoensbroek verschillen tussen groepen bewoners die participeren?

- Brengt dit effecten met zich mee voor het participatieproces?
 - Zo ja, welke effecten en hoe dient hiermee omgegaan te worden (sociale cohesie)?

Wetenschappelijke studies concluderen dat burgers met een lage sociaaleconomische status minder geneigd zijn om te participeren dan burgers met een hoge sociaaleconomische status.

Vraag 3.4: Hoe kijkt u aan tegen deze conclusies uit wetenschappelijke studies en waarom?

Vraag 3.5: Dient het participatieproces met burgers met een lage sociaal-economische status anders eruit te zien dan bij burgers met een hoge sociaal-economische status?

- Zo ja, waarom en hoe zien deze twee processen eruit?
- Zo nee, waarom?

Vraag 3.6: Hoe zou volgens u de deelname van burgers met een lage SES in Hoensbroek aan participatie vergroot kunnen worden?

- Is er een bepaalde strategie of zijn er meerdere initiatieven?
 - Zo ja, wat houden deze in?
 - Zo ja, welke rollen hebben de betrokken partijen?
- Wat is volgens u de beste aanpak om de participatiegraad van burgers met een lage SES te verhogen die visie en praat moe zijn?

Formele afsluiting (5 minuten);

We zijn aan het einde gekomen van dit interview. Ik wil u bedanken voor uw deelname aan dit interview!

Wilt u nog terugkomen op de antwoorden die u heeft gegeven?

Zijn er nog onderwerpen niet besproken die u wel van belang vindt?

Heeft u feedback op dit interview?

Werden de juiste vragen gesteld en waren de vragen duidelijk voor u? Kreeg u genoeg ruimte om uw vragen te beantwoorden?

Heeft u nog vragen voor mij?

Kent u nog andere contactpersonen, voornamelijk bewoners uit Hoensbroek die mogelijk over waardevolle informatie beschikken voor mijn onderzoek?

Dan is dit het einde van het interview; ik stop hierbij de opnames. Zodra ik het interview heb getranscribeerd, ontvangt u het transcript en kunt u het doornemen en eventueel terugkomen op de antwoorden die u heeft gegeven. Mocht ik na de transcriptie nog vragen hebben, kan ik hiervoor contact met u opnemen? Nogmaals bedankt voor uw deelname aan het interview en ik wens u een fijne dag verder!

Appendix 2: Interview guide municipality of Heerlen and Wiebenga consultants

Inleiding

Welkom bij dit interview. Allereerst wil ik u bedanken dat u de tijd heeft vrijgemaakt om deel te nemen aan dit interview voor mijn masterthesis van de Radboud Universiteit. Voordat we beginnen met het interview, krijgt u uitleg over wat het onderzoek inhoudt en hoe dit interview is opgebouwd. Vervolgens beslist u of u wilt meedoen aan dit interview.

Waarover gaat het onderzoek?

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Wat wordt er van u verwacht?

Als u toestemming geeft, wordt er een geluidsopname en aantekeningen van dit interview gemaakt om de nauwkeurigheid van het onderzoek te waarborgen. De opname- en aantekeningen worden gebruikt als onderzoeksdata. Het interview zal ongeveer 60 minuten duren. In het interview zal ik u vragen stellen die betrekking hebben op het proces van burgerparticipatie dat wordt gebruikt in de wijk Hoesbroek. Een voorbeeld van een vraag is: 'Hoe wordt het proces van burgerparticipatie gekenmerkt?'

Vrijwilligheid

Uw deelname aan dit onderzoek is vrijwillig en u mag altijd nee zeggen. U bent niet verplicht om vragen te beantwoorden die u liever niet beantwoordt, en u kunt op elk moment tijdens het onderzoek uw deelname stopzetten en uw toestemming intrekken. Daarbij hoeft u niet aan te geven waarom u stopt. U kunt tot een week na deelname ook uw onderzoeksgegevens en persoonsgegevens laten verwijderen door een mail te sturen naar laura.demandt@ru.nl.

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Opnames en aantekeningen van het interview worden gepseudonimiseerd, wat betekent dat de kans klein is dat via de data naar u terug te herleiden is, maar de mogelijkheid is er wel. Alle informatie die naar u als persoon leidt, wordt verwijderd uit de onderzoeksgegevens (zoals uw naam, contactgegevens of de namen van andere personen).

De lijst met deelnemers en pseudoniemen wordt versleuteld en opgeslagen op een beveiligde omgeving (RIS), waar alleen de onderzoeker en de twee supervisors toegang tot hebben. Zodra dit is gebeurd, werkt de onderzoeker alleen nog met de gepseudonimiseerde data voor dit onderzoek. Deze onderzoeksdata worden niet gebruikt voor andere onderzoeken. De opname, aantekeningen en transcript zullen voor zeven jaar worden opgeslagen op het Radboudnetwerk om wetenschappelijke integriteit te waarborgen. Na deze zeven jaar wordt deze data automatisch verwijderd. De data worden niet gedeeld met of hergebruikt door andere onderzoekers.

Klachten

Mocht u desondanks klachten hebben of problemen ondervinden dan kunt u altijd contact opnemen met Laura Demandt. Ook kunt u een klacht indienen bij de [vertrouwenspersonen voor academische integriteit](#) (vertrouwenspersonen@ru.nl) of met de Commissie Wetenschappelijke Integriteit van de Radboud Universiteit (m.steenbergen@bjz.ru.nl, 024 3611578) Bestuurlijke & Juridische Zaken.

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Toestemmingsverklaring

Als u aan dit onderzoek wilt meedoen en akkoord gaat met de geluidsopname en aantekeningen, dan vraag ik u deze toestemmingsverklaring te ondertekenen. Door uw schriftelijke toestemming geeft u aan dat u de informatie heeft begrepen en instemt met deelname aan het onderzoek.

Heeft u verder nog vragen? Mocht u na afloop van het interview nog vragen hebben, dan kunt u met mij contact opnemen via laura.demandt@ru.nl.

Naam deelnemer:

Naam onderzoekster: Laura Demandt

Datum: 00-00-2024

Datum: 00-00-2024

Handtekening:

Handtekening:

Body of the interview guide (60 minuten):

Thema 1: Participative democracy at the local level (10 minuten)

In dit thema stel ik als eerste de vraag om u te introduceren. Vervolgens worden u vragen gesteld over de wijk Hoensbroek en als laatste gaan we in op jullie visie als X over burgerparticipatie bij besluitvorming.

Vraag 1.1: Kunt u uzelf introduceren?

- Welke functie/rol heeft u bij X?
- Wat zijn uw ervaringen met de betrokkenheid van burgers uit lage SES-wijken in participatieprocessen?
- Werkt u momenteel aan projecten waar bewoners (met een lage SES) kunnen participeren?
 - Zo ja, welke projecten, wat houden de projecten inhoudelijk in en wat zijn de doelstellingen?
 - Zo nee, bent u in het verleden bij projecten betrokken geweest waarbij bewoners konden participeren? Hoe waren uw ervaringen?

Vraag 1.2: Kunt u de wijk Hoensbroek beschrijven?

- Welke uitdagingen doen zich voor in de wijk en waarom?
- Welke kansen doen zich voor in de wijk en waarom?
- Wat maakt volgens u Hoensbroek uniek en waarom?
- Hoe is de saamhorigheid van de bewoners in de wijk en waarom?

Vraag 1.3: Hoe gaan jullie als X om met de zojuist genoemde kansen en uitdagingen?

- Hoe worden bewoners meegenomen in deze kansen en uitdagingen (bewonersparticipatie)?

Vraag 1.4: Wat is jullie visie als X met betrekking op burgerparticipatie?

- Indien burgers nauw betrokken dienen te worden, waarom en tot welke resultaten heeft het geleid?
 - Hoe dienen deze burgers te participeren in besluitvorming en waarom?
 - Hoe dient de input van bewoners meegenomen te worden in beleidsvorming en waarom?
 - Hoe dient binnen burgerparticipatie omgegaan te worden met inclusiviteit en het vertegenwoordigen van een grote groep bewoners en waarom?
- Indien burgers niet nauw te betrekken, waarom?

Thema 2: Organisatie van participatieproces in lokale besluitvorming (30 minuten)

Dit thema gaat in op het participatieproces in Hoensbroek/gemeente Heerlen. Als eerste gaan we in op de geschiedenis van burgerparticipatie in gemeente Heerlen en Hoensbroek. Vervolgens stel ik u vragen over de organisatiestructuur en participatiemogelijkheden die geboden worden in Hoensbroek.

Vraag 2.1: Hoe is jullie strategie voor burgerparticipatie bij beleidsvorming in het verleden geweest in gemeente Heerlen?

- Hoe is deze strategie in Hoensbroek?
- Is deze strategie door de jaren heen veranderd en waarom?
 - Welke belangrijke gebeurtenissen of momenten hebben zich voorgedaan die de strategie hebben beïnvloed?
 - Hoe hebben deze gebeurtenissen of momenten de mate van participatie beïnvloed?
- Welke concrete voorbeelden van burgerparticipatie-initiatieven zijn in het verleden geïmplementeerd?
 - Waren er uitdagingen?
 - Zo ja, wat waren deze uitdagingen en hoe zijn deze aangepakt?
 - Waren er successen geboekt?
 - Zo ja, wat waren deze successen en welke factoren hebben bijgedragen aan dit succes?

U heeft het zojuist in het vorige thema gehad over programma X, ik wil nu op dit programma dieper op ingaan.

Vraag 2.2: Jullie als X zijn betrokken bij het participatieproces bij beleidsvorming, welke andere instanties zijn bij dit proces betrokken en waarom?

- Welke overheidsinstellingen/belangengroepen/organisaties/afdelingen zijn betrokken bij het participatieproces?

Vraag 2.3: Hoe ziet deze organisatiestructuur eruit en waarom?

- Hoe zijn de taken verdeeld bij het faciliteren van bewonersparticipatie en waarom?
- Hoe verloopt de samenwerking tussen deze verschillende betrokken partijen bij het faciliteren van bewonersparticipatie en waarom?
- Hoe waarborgen jullie coördinatie en communicatie tussen betrokken partijen en waarom?
- Hoe worden beslissingen genomen over het participatieproces en waarom?
- Hoe worden burgers meegenomen in de organisatiestructuur van het participatieproces en waarom?

Vraag 2.4: Welke voorschriften en regelgeving zijn van toepassing op het participatieproces voor (gezondheid bevorderd ruimtelijk) beleidsvorming in Hoensbroek/gemeente Heerlen en waarom?

- Welke wet- en regelgeving wordt er gebruikt om het participatieproces te organiseren en te handhaven en waarom?
- Welke protocollen, richtlijnen en/of beleidsdocumenten zijn vastgesteld die betrekking hebben op burgerparticipatie en waarom?

Vraag 2.5: Hoe worden deze voorschriften en regelgeving gewaarborgd en waarom?

Vraag 2.6: Zijn deze voorschriften en regelgeving beschikbaar voor betrokken partijen en bewoners?

- Zo ja, waar kan men deze vinden en waarom op deze plek?
- Zo nee, waarom zijn deze niet beschikbaar?

Vraag 2.7: Welke participatiemogelijkheden stellen jullie ter beschikking voor bewoners uit Hoensbroek om te participeren en de deelname tot participatie te vergemakkelijken? Denk hierbij aan verschillende middelen, methoden en technieken.

- Welke specifieke voorbeelden kunt u noemen?
- Zijn er specifieke strategieën?
 - Zo ja, welke en waarom deze strategieën?
- Waarom en op welke wijze zijn voor deze participatiemogelijkheden gekozen?

Vraag 2.8: Hoe zijn deze participatiemogelijkheden georganiseerd binnen het participatieproces?

- Hoe en wanneer worden deze participatiemogelijkheden ingezet en waarom?
- Hoe krijgen bewoners kennis over deze participatiemogelijkheden en waarom?
- Hoe is de rolverdeling tussen de betrokken partijen bij het aanbieden van deze participatiemogelijkheden?
- Zijn er voorwaarden of criteria waaraan burgers dienen te voldoen om gebruik te mogen maken van deze participatiemogelijkheden?
 - Zo ja, welke en waarom?
 - Zo nee, waarom?

Vraag 2.9: Hoe worden deze participatiemogelijkheden door bewoners in Hoensbroek gebruikt?

- Is in het gebruik terug te zien dat de participatiemogelijkheden toegankelijk en inclusief zijn voor alle bewoners?
 - Zo ja, welke aspecten van deze participatiemogelijkheden maken het aantrekkelijk voor burgers om gebruik ervan te maken?
 - Zo nee, waarom worden deze participatiemogelijkheden niet gebruikt door de burgers?

Vraag 2.10: Welke patronen of trends zijn zichtbaar in de resultaten die voortkomen uit deze participatiemogelijkheden en waarom denkt u dat deze tot stand komen?

Vraag 2.11: Welke participatiemogelijkheden zijn volgens u wel en niet effectief geweest en waarom?

Thema 3: Betrokkenheid van burgers bij het participatieproces (15 minuten)

In dit thema stel ik u vragen over de betrokkenheid van burgers in Hoensbroek en hoe om te gaan met de mate waarin deze bewoners kunnen participeren.

Vraag 3.1: Welke rol of rollen zouden burgers in Hoensbroek volgens u in de context die we juist hebben besproken willen vervullen?

- Hoe worden deze rollen in kaart gebracht?
- Hoe dient omgegaan te worden met de rolverdeling bij burgers met een lage SES?
- Dienen burgers volgens u ook deze rol te hebben in het participatieproces?

Vraag 3.2: Hoe houdt deze rol van burgers stand tijdens besluitvormingsprocessen en waarom?

Vraag 3.3: Wat zijn volgens u de verklaringen waarom bewoners van Hoensbroek wel of niet participeren in de context die we juist hebben besproken?

Vraag 3.4 Merkt u binnen de bewoners van Hoensbroek verschillen tussen groepen bewoners die participeren?

- Brengt dit effecten met zich mee voor het participatieproces?
 - Zo ja, welke effecten en hoe dient hiermee omgegaan te worden (sociale cohesie)?

Wetenschappelijke studies concluderen dat burgers met een lage sociaaleconomische status minder geneigd zijn om te participeren dan burgers met een hoge sociaaleconomische status.

Vraag 3.5: Hoe kijkt u aan tegen deze conclusies uit wetenschappelijke studies en waarom?

Vraag 3.6: Dient het participatieproces met burgers met een lage sociaal-economische status anders eruit te zien dan burgers met een hoge sociaal-economische status?

- Zo ja, waarom en hoe zien deze twee processen eruit?
- Zo nee, waarom?

Vraag 3.7: Hoe zou volgens u de deelname van burgers met een lage SES in Hoensbroek aan participatie vergroot kunnen worden?

- Is er een bepaalde strategie of zijn er meerdere initiatieven?
 - Zo ja, wat houden deze in?
 - Zo ja, welke rollen hebben de betrokken partijen?
- Wat is volgens u de beste aanpak om de participatiegraad van burgers met een lage SES te verhogen die visie en praat mee zijn?

Formele afsluiting (5 minuten);

We zijn aan het einde gekomen van dit interview. Ik wil u bedanken voor uw deelname aan dit interview!

Wilt u nog terugkomen op de antwoorden die u heeft gegeven?

Zijn er nog onderwerpen niet besproken die u wel van belang vindt?

Heeft u feedback op dit interview?

Werden de juiste vragen gesteld en waren de vragen duidelijk voor u? Kreeg u genoeg ruimte om uw vragen te beantwoorden?

Heeft u nog vragen voor mij?

Kent u nog andere contactpersonen die mogelijk over waardevolle informatie beschikken voor mijn onderzoek, zoals experts of bewoners van Hoensbroek?

Dan is dit het einde van het interview; ik stop hierbij de opnames. Zodra ik het interview heb getranscribeerd, ontvangt u het transcript en kunt u het doornemen en eventueel terugkomen op de antwoorden die u heeft gegeven. Mocht ik na de transcriptie nog vragen hebben, kan ik hiervoor contact met u opnemen? Nogmaals bedankt voor uw deelname aan het interview en ik wens u een fijne dag verder!

Appendix 3: Interview guide residents and/or entrepreneurs

Inleiding

Welkom bij dit interview. Allereerst wil ik u bedanken dat u de tijd heeft vrijgemaakt om deel te nemen aan dit interview voor mijn masterthesis van de Radboud Universiteit. Voordat we beginnen met het interview, krijgt u uitleg over wat het onderzoek inhoudt en hoe dit interview is opgebouwd. Vervolgens beslist u of u wilt meedoen aan dit interview.

Waarover gaat het onderzoek?

Mijn naam is Laura Demandt en ik volg de master Spatial Planning aan de Radboud Universiteit in Nijmegen. Dit interview is onderdeel van mijn afstudeeronderzoek. Mijn onderzoek gaat over het kenmerken van het huidige proces van bewonersparticipatie binnen een wijkprogramma ter bevordering van een gezonde gebiedsomgeving in het centrum Hoensbroek. Binnen het onderzoek richt ik mij op de ervaringen van de burgers en ondernemers over het huidige participatieproces bij een wijkprogramma voor het centrum van Hoensbroek. Het doel van mijn onderzoek is om een diepgaand inzicht te krijgen in de verschillende perspectieven die burgers in Hoensbroek ervaren bij het deelnemen aan lokale participatieprocessen voor het creëren van een gezonde leefomgeving. De onderzoeksvraag die centraal staat in het onderzoek is als volgt: "How can the current proces of resident participation of centre plan to promote a healthy living environment be characterised in the centre of Hoensbroek?" En hoe is dit proces of citizen participation experienced by the residents of Hoensbroek?

Wat wordt er van u verwacht?

In dit onderzoek wordt u geïnterviewd door Laura Demandt. Als u toestemming geeft, wordt er een geluidsopname en aantekeningen van dit interview gemaakt om de nauwkeurigheid van het onderzoek te waarborgen. De opname- en aantekeningen worden gebruikt als onderzoeksdata. Het interview zal ongeveer 45 minuten duren. In het interview zal ik u vragen stellen die betrekking hebben op het proces van burgerparticipatie dat wordt gebruikt in de wijk Hoensbroek. Een voorbeeld van een vraag is: 'Hoe zou u het liefste willen participeren?'.

Vrijwilligheid

Uw deelname aan dit onderzoek is vrijwillig en u mag altijd nee zeggen. U bent niet verplicht om vragen te beantwoorden die u liever niet beantwoordt, en u kunt op elk moment tijdens het onderzoek uw deelname stopzetten en uw toestemming intrekken. Daarbij hoeft u niet aan te geven waarom u stopt. U kunt tot een week na deelname ook uw onderzoeksgegevens en persoonsgegevens laten verwijderen door een mail te sturen naar laura.demandt@ru.nl.

Wat gebeurt er met uw gegevens?

Uw deelname aan dit onderzoek is vertrouwelijk. Alle verzamelde onderzoeksgegevens worden gearchiveerd in een veilig en intern archief van het Radboud Universiteitnetwerk (RIS), volgens het protocol van de Radboud Universiteit. Dit protocol is in lijn met de Algemene Verordening Persoonsgegevens (AVG).

Opnames worden gewist zodra het gespreksverslag klaar is. De aantekeningen van het interview worden geanonimiseerd, wat betekent dat het nagenoeg onmogelijk is om de data naar u terug te herleiden. Wij doen dit door alle informatie die naar u als persoon leidt te verwijderen uit de onderzoeksdata (zoals uw naam, contactgegevens of enige vermelding van andere personen).

De lijst met deelnemers en pseudoniemen wordt versleuteld en opgeslagen op een beveiligde omgeving (RIS), waar alleen de onderzoeker en supervisors toegang tot hebben. Zodra dit is gebeurd, werkt de onderzoeker alleen nog met de gepseudonimiseerde data voor dit onderzoek. Deze onderzoeksdata worden niet gebruikt voor andere onderzoeken. De opname, aantekeningen en transcript zullen voor zeven jaar worden opgeslagen op het Radboudnetwerk om wetenschappelijke integriteit te waarborgen. Na deze zeven jaar wordt deze data automatisch verwijderd. De data worden niet gedeeld met of

hergebruikt door andere onderzoekers.

Klachten

Mocht u desondanks klachten hebben of problemen ondervinden dan kunt u altijd contact opnemen met Laura Demandt. Ook kunt u een klacht indienen bij de [vertrouwenspersonen voor academische integriteit](#) (vertrouwenspersonen@ru.nl) of met de Commissie Wetenschappelijke Integriteit van de Radboud Universiteit (m.steenbergen@bjz.ru.nl, 024 3611578) Bestuurlijke & Juridische Zaken.

Als u vragen of klachten heeft over de verwerking van uw persoonsgegevens, kunt u deze eerst bespreken met Laura Demandt. U kunt ook contact opnemen met de Functionaris Gegevensbescherming van Radboud Universiteit (mijnprivacy@ru.nl). Of u kunt een klacht indienen bij de Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens.

Toestemmingsverklaring

Als u aan dit onderzoek wilt meedoen en akkoord gaat met de geluidsopname en aantekeningen, dan vraag ik om uw mondelinge toestemming. Door uw mondelinge toestemming geeft u aan dat u de informatie heeft begrepen en instemt met deelname aan het onderzoek.

Heeft u verder nog vragen? Mocht u na afloop van het interview nog vragen hebben, dan kunt u met mij contact opnemen via laura.demandt@ru.nl.

Body of the interview guide (45 minuten):

Thema 1: Participative democracy at the local level (10 minuten)

In dit thema stel ik als eerste de vraag om u te introduceren. Vervolgens gaan we in op uw wijk Hoensbroek, uw participatie-ervaringen en hoe u het liefste wilt participeren bij besluitvorming.

Vraag 1.1: Kunt u iets over uzelf vertellen?

- Wat ist Ihre Familienzusammenstellung (partner, kinderen, huisdieren)?
- Wat is uw achtergrond? Waar bent u geboren?
- Wat zijn uw hobby's?
- Op welke vaardigheid bent u het trotst op?
- Hoelang woont u al in Hoensbroek?
- Waarom bent u in Hoensbroek komen wonen?
- Heeft u familie en/of vrienden in Hoensbroek of omgeving wonen?

Vraag 1.2: Kunt u de wijk Hoensbroek beschrijven?

- Wat vindt u het leukste aan Hoensbroek en waarom?
- Wat vindt u het minst leuke aan Hoensbroek en waarom?
- Wat maakt volgens u Hoensbroek uniek en waarom?
- Welke uitdagingen doen zich voor in Hoensbroek en waarom?
- Hoe zou u het contact met andere bewoners in Hoensbroek beschrijven en waarom?

In mijn onderzoek onderzoek ik waarom mensen wel of niet participeren. Burgerparticipatie op lokaal niveau is dat burgers zoals u en ik meebeslissen over dingen, zoals de indeling van een grasveld of de toekomst van het centrum. De manier waarop burgers participeren kan op verschillende manieren. Burgers mogen bijvoorbeeld hun ideeën bespreken met de gemeente, meebeslissen over keuzes die er zijn of alleen luisteren naar plannen die voor de wijk zijn. Het doel van participatie is dat burgers en experts samenwerken om tot betere resultaten voor de wijk te komen.

Vraag 1.3: Wat is voor u van belang om gezonder te leven in Hoensbroek?

Vraag 1.4: Hoe zou u daar betrokken bij willen zijn?

- Op welke manier wilt u participeren (bijv. bewonersbijeenkomsten en/of enquêtes) en waarom?
- Welke rol zou u willen hebben bij beslissingen over Hoensbroek en waarom?
- Hoe vaak wilt u participeren en waarom?
- Kunt u specifieke voorbeelden noemen van hoe u zou willen participeren?
- Hoe wilt u geïnformeerd worden over de participatiemogelijkheden en waarom?
 - Wanneer en hoe vaak wilt u geïnformeerd worden?
- Hoe en wanneer wilt u geïnformeerd worden over de resultaten uit de participatiemogelijkheden en waarom?
- Hoe dient volgens u omgegaan te worden met de informatie die u levert aan de gemeente voor beslissingen over Hoensbroek en waarom?

Vraag 1.5: Bestaan er al zulke participatieprocessen in Hoensbroek/binnen gemeente Heerlen, of niet en waarom?

Vraag 1.6: Heeft u in het verleden geparticipeerd in een wijk?

- Zo ja, aan wat voor activiteiten heeft u deelgenomen?
 - Waarom heeft u ervoor gekozen om te participeren in deze activiteit(en)?
 - Geldt deze bereidheid voor alle kansen die u krijgt om te participeren en waarom?
 - Welke mogelijkheden werden geboden om te participeren en wie zijn daar volgens u bij betrokken?
 - Hoe verliep het participatieproces bij deze activiteit(en)?
 - Wat vond u van het participatieproces en waarom? Wat is uw ervaring?
 - Wat ging goed en waarom?
 - Wat ging minder goed en waarom?
 - Zijn er momenten geweest dat u niet meer wilde participeren of u werd ontmoedigd/tegengehouden om te participeren en waarom?
 - Zo ja, waardoor? Zijn er bepaalde aspecten/gebeurtenissen die hiervoor gezorgd hebben?
 - Zo nee, waardoor denkt u dat het komt dat u niet ontmoedigd/tegengehouden werd om te participeren?
- Zo nee, waarom heeft u de keuze gemaakt om niet te participeren?
 - Welke mogelijkheden werden geboden om te participeren?
 - Welke specifieke elementen/gebeurtenissen hebben uw keuze beïnvloed?
 - Wanneer bent u bereid om te participeren?
 - Geldt deze bereidheid voor alle kansen die u krijgt om te participeren en waarom?
 - Waren er barrières waardoor u niet kon deelnemen, maar wel bereid was om te participeren?
 - Welke barrières waren er?
 - Hoe kunnen deze verholpen worden?

Thema 2: Organisatie van participatieproces in lokale besluitvorming en de betrokkenheid van burgers bij het participatieproces (30 minuten)

Dit thema gaat in op het participatieproces in Hoensbroek/gemeente Heerlen. Als eerste gaan we in op de geschiedenis van burgerparticipatie in gemeente Heerlen en Hoensbroek. Vervolgens stel ik u vragen over de organisatiestructuur en participatiemogelijkheden die geboden worden in Hoensbroek. In dit thema stel ik u vragen over de mate waarin jullie als burgers hebben en doen participeren.

Alleen voor burgers die al een lange tijd wonen in Hoensbroek:

Vraag 2.1: Hoe is de manier waarop jullie als burgers kunnen participeren in beleidsvorming veranderd in de afgelopen jaren?

- Welke belangrijke gebeurtenissen of momenten hebben zich voorgedaan die de mate waarin jullie als burgers participeren hebben beïnvloed?
 - Hoe hebben deze gebeurtenissen of momenten de mate van participatie beïnvloed?
- Hoe werd in Hoensbroek/ gemeente Heerlen burgerparticipatie vroeger gefaciliteerd door organisaties en/ of lokale autoriteiten?
- Welke concrete voorbeelden van burgerparticipatie-initiatieven zijn in het verleden gebruikt?

Vraag 2.2: Waren voor u uitdagingen om te participeren aan deze burgerparticipatie-initiatieven?

- Zo ja, wat waren deze uitdagingen en hoe zijn deze aangepakt?
- Zo nee, waarom waren er geen uitdagingen voor u om te participeren?

Voor alle burgers die in Hoensbroek wonen:

Vraag 2.3: Hoe ziet de huidige manier waarop jullie als burgers nu kunnen participeren in beleidsvorming voor het centrum van Hoensbroek eruit?

- Welke rol hebben jullie als burgers binnen het participatieproces?
- Welke participatiemogelijkheden worden beschikbaar gesteld voor jullie als burger? (middelen, methoden en technieken)
 - Kunt u specifieke voorbeelden noemen?
 - Hoe en wanneer mogen jullie participeren?
- Hoe worden jullie geïnformeerd over mogelijkheden om te participeren?
- Hoe worden jullie geïnformeerd over de resultaten die tot stand zijn gekomen uit de mogelijkheden om te participeren?

Vraag 2.4: Hoe vindt u de manier waarop jullie nu kunnen participeren en waarom?

- Wat zijn volgens u de sterke punten van het participatieproces en waarom?
- Hoe kan het participatieproces verbeterd worden volgens u en waarom?
 - Zou het aantal burgers dat participeert hierna toenemen?

Vraag 2.5: Welke uitdagingen er voor u om te participeren aan deze burgerparticipatie-initiatieven?

- Zo ja, wat waren deze uitdagingen en hoe zijn deze aangepakt?
- Zo nee, waarom waren er geen uitdagingen voor u om te participeren?

Vraag 2.6: donderdag 16 mei is er een bewonersavond geweest. Daarin werd duidelijk dat er onvrede is over de manier waarop jullie kunnen participeren. Hoe zouden jullie het vervolgpactietraject willen zien? Welke mogelijkheden zien jullie daarbij en welke beperkingen zien jullie daarbij (gewenste toekomst)

Mocht iemand niet participeren:

Vraag 2.7: Bent u op de hoogte of andere burgers wel participeren en hebben jullie het daarover gehad?

Vraag 2.8: Wat heeft u vanuit de gemeente nodig om wel te participeren?

Vraag 2.9: Wat kunt u zelf doen om wel te participeren?

Vraag 2.10: Hoe ziet een ultieme bewonersavond eruit? Kunt u dat voor mij schetsen/illustreren?

Formele afsluiting (5 minuten);

We zijn aan het einde gekomen van dit interview. Ik wil u bedanken voor uw deelname aan dit interview!

Wilt u nog terugkomen op de antwoorden die u heeft gegeven?

Zijn er nog onderwerpen niet besproken die u wel van belang vindt?

Heeft u feedback op dit interview?

Werden de juiste vragen gesteld en waren de vragen duidelijk voor u? Kreeg u genoeg ruimte om uw vragen te beantwoorden?

Heeft u tips voor mij als interviewer?

Heeft u nog vragen voor mij?

Kent u nog andere bewoners van Hoensbroek die mogelijk over waardevolle informatie beschikken voor mijn onderzoek?

Dan is dit het einde van het interview; ik stop hierbij de opnames. Zodra ik het interview heb getranscribeerd, ontvang je het transcript en kun je het doornemen en eventueel terugkomen op de antwoorden die je hebt gegeven. Mocht ik na de transcriptie nog vragen hebben, kan ik hiervoor contact met u opnemen? Nogmaals bedankt voor uw deelname aan het interview en ik wens u een fijne dag verder!

Appendix 4: Invitation interview residents



Ben jij iemand die graag jouw stem laat horen en wilt meedenken over de toekomst van het centrum van Hoensbroek? Of ben jij iemand die wilt meedenken en praten alleen door redenen dat het niet lukt? Of ben jij iemand die gewoon nog niet heeft nagedacht over wat jij kan betekenen voor het centrum van Hoensbroek? Dan ben ik opzoek naar jou!

Wil je een bijdrage leveren aan het onafhankelijke afstudeer onderzoek door deel te nemen aan een interview? Vul dan onderstaand uw gegevens in en dan wordt vrijdag 17 mei contact met je opgenomen. Wil je meer weten over het onderzoek stuur gerust een e-mail naar: laura.demandt@ru.nl

Uw contactgegevens

Naam:

Telefoonnummer:

E-mail adres:



Wie ben ik:

Laura Demandt

Master student Spatial Planning aan de Radboud Universiteit



Radboud Universiteit

Appendix 5: Observation scheme

Topics	Observations
Location description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Location ○ Date and time ○ Location accessibility ○ Attendance of organizations ○ Room set-up 	
Attendance of citizens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How many citizens ○ Citizens' average age ○ Gender ○ Cultural background ○ Where people take seats in the room 	
Structure of the residents' evening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How is the evening structured? ○ Was the residents' evening held from the residents' perspective or from the municipality's perspective? ○ What language was used during the evening? 	
What opportunities does the municipality provide for residents to provide input? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do residents use them? 	
Attitude of the citizens during the residents' evening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Seating/appearance of the residents ○ Silence / whispering / direct questions? ○ Attitude towards the municipality of Heerlen ○ Attitude towards the consultants ○ Attitude towards the centre plan 	
Group Dynamics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is there conflict? ○ Is there only "sending" to residents? ○ Are residents being asked to respond? ○ How do residents respond to the story of the community and the consulting firm? ○ Are groups forming among the residents' present? 	
End of the evening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do people "stay" in the venue? ○ Do people talk to each other? ○ Do people talk to the community and/or the consulting firm? ○ Do people leave immediately? 	

Appendix 6: Codebook

Analysis transcripts of respondents 1 to 6 (experts)

Codes grouped by Code groups

◆ Citizens involvement

- Citizen involvement
- Citizens feel unheard
- Citizens' negative experiences with citizen participation
- Decrease in citizen involvement
- Desire for citizens participation
- Factors for the level of citizen participation
- Factors that determine whether citizens can and want to participate
- General change in citizen participation
- High level of citizen involvement
- Increases in citizen involvement
- Interests from citizens to participate
- Low level of citizen involvement
- No barriers for citizens to participate
- Requirements for citizens to participate in the participation process
- Role of citizens within participation process
- Who participates

◆ Experts' experiences

- Citizen participation method challenges
- Dealing with citizen participation challenges
- Experts experiences in designing process of citizen participation
- Experts' criticism of citizen participation
- Experts' experience of citizen participation
- Experts' experiences on citizen participation capabilities
- Experts' positive experiences in citizen participation
- Negative experiences in citizen participation
- Potential citizen participation method
- Potential citizen participation resources
- Potential citizen participation technique

◆ Institutional context

- Citizen participation policy of Heerlen municipality
- Citizen participation vision of Heerlen municipality
- Collaboration in citizen participation process
- Decision making on participation process
- Demographic characteristics of citizens in the centre of Hoensbroek
- Designing process of citizen participation in the centre of Hoensbroek
- Experts' experiences on citizen participation capabilities
- Future of process of citizen participation
- Goal with citizen participation
- Heerlen municipality is developing a citizen participation process
- History of citizen participation in centre of Hoensbroek

- Hoensbroek
- Organisational structure within the municipality of Heerlen for citizen participation
- Parties involved in the process of citizen participation
- Political characteristics of municipality of Heerlen
- Process of citizen participation at the municipality of Heerlen
- Program Hoensbroek centre
- Residents' distrust of government
- Role of citizens within participation process
- Rules and laws on citizen participation
- Social economic characteristics of citizens in centre of Hoensbroek
- Tension field of citizen participation
- The centre of Hoensbroek
- Togetherness in Hoensbroek
- When involving citizens in plans

◆ **Methods**

- Citizen participation future method in the centre of Hoensbroek
- Citizen participation method in the centre of Hoensbroek
- Expectation of residents' evening
- High resident attendance
- Participation opportunity for centre of Hoensbroek entrepreneurs
- Positive experience with residents' evening
- Potential citizen participation method
- Residents' evening
- Use of offered participation opportunities

◆ **Methods - Residents' evening**

- Attendance of citizens
- Attitude of the citizens during the resident's evening
- Citizens' average age
- Cultural background
- End of the evening
- Expectation of residents' evening
- Group dynamics
- Language used on the residents' evening
- Location accessibility
- Room set-up
- Structure of the residents' evening
- where people take seats in the room

◆ **Resources**

- Citizen participation resources in the centre of Hoensbroek
- Potential citizen participation resources

◆ **Techniques**

- Citizen participation future technique in the centre of Hoensbroek
- Citizen participation technique in the centre of Hoensbroek
- Potential citizen participation technique

Analysis of transcripts of respondents 7 to 16 (residents and/or entrepreneurs)

Codes grouped by Code groups

◆ Desired participation process in Hoensbroek centre

- According to citizens and/or entrepreneurs, there is no participation process that meets their needs
- Citizen and/or entrepreneurs want to bring in their own citizen initiatives
- Citizen participation technique desired by citizens and/or entrepreneurs
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs do not want to participate in smaller groups
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs do not want to participate on difficult issues
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs have little contact with other residents from Hoensbroek
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs have no areas for improvement for future residents' evenings
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs interested in participating
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs preference of way to be approached for citizen participation
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs want online participation opportunities
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs want personal interaction during the citizen participation process
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs want to be personally asked to participate
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs want to participate in smaller groups
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs want to see progress
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs want to think creatively or possible solutions
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs' desire to participate in decision-making
- Citizens' and/or entrepreneurs' desired method of citizen participation
- Compensation
- Higher desired involvement of citizens and/or entrepreneurs in the centre of Hoensbroek
- Invitation to residents evening Hoensbroek center
- Level of information desired by citizens and/or entrepreneurs on citizen participation opportunities
- Lives entire life in Hoensbroek
- Lives in Hoensbroek for a long time
- Low interest from citizens and/or entrepreneurs to participate
- Making participation interesting for youth
- Method desired by citizens and/or entrepreneurs to communicate results of residents' evening
- Municipality needs to listen to citizens
- Participation opportunity desired by citizens and/or entrepreneurs
- Residents' evening desired by citizens and/or entrepreneurs to participate
- Role desired by citizens and/or entrepreneurs within the citizen participation process
- Timeline for citizen participation desired by citizens and/or entrepreneurs
- What do citizens and/or entrepreneurs think is needed from the municipality to increase their participation?
- When citizens and/or entrepreneurs want to participate

◆ Factors that influence the way you can participate

- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs are not interested in participating
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs are not interested in what happens in Hoensbroek
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs are not living in Hoensbroek for a long time
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs are willing to participate
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs distrust governance

- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs do not feel taken seriously
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs do not have time to participate
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs do not see their own value in citizen participation
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs experience no encouragement from people in environment to participate
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs feel excluded from the citizen participation process
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs feel heard by the municipality
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs feel the municipality pays less attention to Hoensbroek
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs feel they are not allowed to make decisions
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs have no connection with government
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs make time for citizen participation
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs participate in participatory process to pursue all interests
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs reasons for not participating
- Creating interest among residents and/or entrepreneurs
- Factors that, according to citizens and/or entrepreneurs, determine interest in participating
- Factors that, according to citizens and/or entrepreneurs, determine whether you can and want to participate
- Negative experiences of citizens and/or entrepreneurs with residents' evening
- Regaining citizens' trust
- Residents in neighbourhood do participate
- The barriers that citizens and/or entrepreneurs experience when they want to participate

◆ **Healthier life in Hoensbroek centre**

- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs needs to live healthier lives
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs want to participate physically during the citizen participation process
- Factors affecting healthier living negatively
- How citizens and/or entrepreneurs want to be involved in creating a healthier environment

◆ **Institutional context in Hoensbroek centre**

- Centre of Hoensbroek
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs are willing to participate
- Has not been living in Hoensbroek for long
- High connection between Hoensbroek residents
- High involvement of citizens and/or entrepreneurs in the centre of Hoensbroek
- Hoensbroek
- Political characteristics
- Socioeconomic status of citizens
- Young person

◆ **Participation history in Hoensbroek centre**

- Change in the process of citizen participation
- Citizen participation is not seen as a highest priority by citizens and/or entrepreneurs
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs have also previously participated
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs have never been invited to participate before
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs have never participated before
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs positive experiences with previous participation opportunities
- Experiences of citizens and/or entrepreneurs with participation history

- Negative experiences of citizens and/or entrepreneurs with previous participation opportunities

◆ **Participation process in Hoensbroek centre**

- Centre of Hoensbroek
- Citizen participation method in the centre of Hoensbroek
- Citizen participation technique in the centre of Hoensbroek
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs are willing to participate
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs critical of citizen participation
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs do not feel taken seriously
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs do not make use of the participation opportunities offered
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs do not want to use the participation opportunities offered in the future
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs experience no barriers to participate
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs feel excluded from the citizen participation process
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs feel heard by the municipality
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs feel not heard by the municipality
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs feel the municipality pays less attention to Hoensbroek
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs feel they are not allowed to make decisions
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs image of citizen participation
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs interested in participating
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs objective of participation
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs still have confidence in the municipality
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs understand the process behind the scenes
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs were not aware of the residents' evening
- Entrepreneurs have a negative experience with one-on-one meetings prior to residents' evening
- High involvement of citizens and/or entrepreneurs in the centre of Hoensbroek
- Hoensbroek
- Interest to participate is from entrepreneur is greater than residents
- Method of communication used on residents' evening results
- Method of communication used on results of participation sessions
- Political characteristics
- Socioeconomic status of citizens
- The degree to which citizens and/or entrepreneurs use participation opportunities
- The extent to which input from citizens and/or entrepreneurs is used in decision-making
- The usual suspects participating in the participation process
- Young person

◆ **Residents' evening**

- Age categories separated at residents' night
- Citizen participation method in the centre of Hoensbroek
- Citizen participation technique in the centre of Hoensbroek
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs are willing to participate
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs critical of citizen participation
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs do not feel taken seriously
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs do not make use of the participation opportunities offered

- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs do not want to use the participation opportunities offered in the future
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs experience no barriers to participate
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs feel excluded from the citizen participation process
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs feel heard by the municipality
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs feel not heard by the municipality
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs interested in participating
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs positive experience with residents' evening
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs still have confidence in the municipality
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs want residents' evening minute
- Citizens and/or entrepreneurs were not aware of the residents' evening
- Citizens' and/or entrepreneurs' expectations about residents' evening
- Method of communication used on residents' evening results
- The degree to which citizens and/or entrepreneurs use participation opportunities