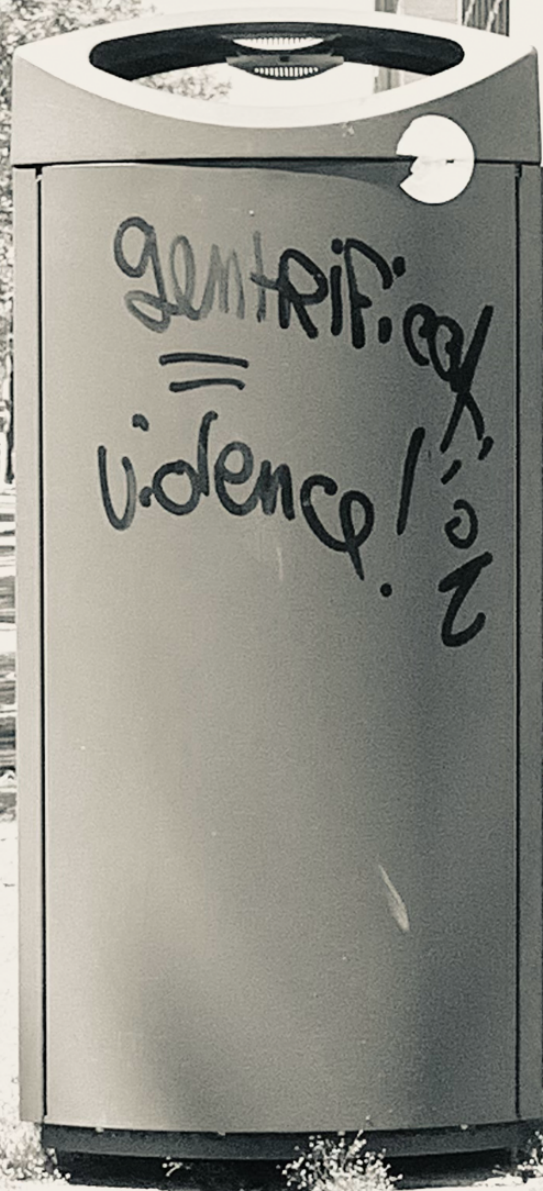


# The Paradox of Participation: What Top-Down Urban Planning Means for Perceived Legitimacy and Citizen Initiatives

A Case Study Analysis of State-led Gentrification in Rotterdam



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# Abstract

In this research, an answer was formulated to the research question on how legitimacy of top-down urban planning is experienced by involved stakeholders and what role citizen initiatives have in this context. In a times wherein citizen participation is normatively seen as essential for policy legitimacy (by politicians and policy makers), the city of Rotterdam had until very recently benefit by top-down urban planning efforts and gentrifying side effects. In the context of Rotterdam, there thus seems to be a paradox of participation. To answer this question a comparative case study has been conducted by looking at the top-down urban planning efforts in two cases, Fazantstraat (Vogelbuurt, Carnisse) and Tweebosbuurt (Afrikaanderwijk) in Rotterdam. Involved stakeholders and documentation has been interviewed or analysed.

The analysis showed that top-down urban planning has negative effects on the perceived legitimacy of these urban plans. This results in the rise or strengthening of CIs. CIs consequently positively impacts perceived legitimacy of the policy after they have involved themselves or tried to according to residents and CI leaders. This effect was not visible with policymakers. CIs however do seem to influence the likeliness that top-down urban planning will be used again in future projects, therewith changing the way of policy making in the urban environment. Besides, also context specific factors were identified which could have influenced the experienced legitimacy or stance of the respondents. These external factors included: affinity and identification they felt with the local political arena; the current state of the housing market in Rotterdam; historical comparison that some respondents had.

The results are generalizable and applicable for both cases, despite the fact that both cases have key differences. There were no major deviations between both cases in terms of outcomes. Additionally, all respondents referred to other on-going or past urban plans elsewhere in Rotterdam with the same sentiment. These results could therefore assist in designing policy making processes and plans in a more inclusive way as they are currently perceived within the city of Rotterdam.

**Key words:** state-led gentrification; citizen initiatives; output legitimacy; input legitimacy; urban redevelopment; urban planning; spatial planning; bottom-up resistance; public participation

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Problem statement

If you could travel back in time to the 80s or 90s of the last century and tell residents of Cool-Zuid that their neighbourhood would become one of the most attractive and well known areas in Rotterdam in less than 30 years, chances are high that they would say you're out of your mind. Cool-Zuid, the larger neighbourhood including the Witte de Withstraat in Rotterdam used to be a tightly connected working-class neighbourhood with a variety of problems in the eyes of the municipality (Lewis, 2016). As a result, the municipality formulated a plan where demolition or intensive renovation of housing in this area became the way to combat the socio-economic problems that the neighbourhood was having. Social mixing was the idea: attracting wealthier and higher educated people and revitalising the neighbourhood on social as well as economic areas (Haastrecht, 1998). This principle would later be known as state-led gentrification.

State-led gentrification was in terms of incidental state-interventions to gentrify an area not necessarily unique. The example of the Jordaan in Amsterdam also illustrates the use of it in other cities (Meershoek, 2015). However from a historical perspective, the use of state-led gentrification in Rotterdam can be seen as outstanding compared to other contexts in which it was applied. Until 10 years ago the conversation on urban development was concentrated around how Rotterdam could 'finally' ensure that the large majority of graduates from higher education would not leave the city (Wouters, 2010). The majority of the average income and education level of the residents were lagging behind in comparison to other major cities in the Netherlands, and the municipality could not seem to keep the students and young professionals after graduation inside its city borders (Hoogstad, 2009). Therefore it could be argued that gentrification, as explained before, would, for the municipality of Rotterdam, yield all the right results.

In a short amount of time, various neighbourhoods throughout the city became the target for state-led gentrification, and consequently gentrified quickly (Mohamud, 2016). Ultimately resulting in the desired outcomes: Rotterdam gained in popularity for tourists (NOS, 2015), but also became more successful in ensuring that high-potential students from its university remained in the city after their graduation (Mohamud, 2016).

Because of the municipal success of state-led gentrification, the application of this was incorporated into the vision document of the city council of Rotterdam. This document implicitly states that gentrification should be used to revitalise certain neighbourhoods (Gemeenteraad Rotterdam, 2016; Gemeenteraad Rotterdam, 2019). Top-down policy making on the urban environment, in the context of state-led gentrification, is thus seen by

the municipality as a solution to solve socio-economic issues in certain neighbourhoods, while prominent scientific literature emphasises the negative effects of gentrification of neighbourhoods (e.g. Hochstenbach & Musterd, 2018; van Gent & Boterman, 2018). This makes the context of state-led gentrification in Rotterdam unique compared to other cities in the Netherlands.

As time went on and these strong top-down revitalisation efforts expanded and intensified, these negative effects and citizen concerns on this systematic top-down policy making approach in the context of state-led gentrification, became also visible in the targeted neighbourhoods (Mohamud, 2016). Existing residents in those neighbourhoods targeted for state-led gentrification, had to move out often without prospect of returning to their neighbourhood resulting in negative social effects such as losing their circle of friends, relatives and families close-by. (Mohamud, 2016; Metselaar, 2020). To prevent this from happening, citizens organised themselves and voiced their unhappiness to the municipality regarding the transformations in their neighbourhood, often without substantial success (De Architect, 2012).

In two recent examples in Rotterdam, the Tweebosbuurt in Afrikaanderwijk and the Vogelbuurt in Carnisse, there was however more success from a citizen perspective. In both cases, residents organised and mobilised themselves into a local citizen initiative and successfully appealed the municipal decision for demolition, sending the city council back to the drawing board, (legally) enforcing the municipality to cooperate with citizens in redesigning the original plans (Liukku, 2020; van der Krol, 2020). This organisation of citizens can be seen as a form of a citizen(-based) initiative or CI in brief in which citizens mobilise or organise themselves in order to arrange or provide certain public goods or services for their own neighbourhood (Bakker et al., 2016; Edelenbos et al., 2016). While these two more recent examples of CIs experienced more success in terms of influence they had on the eventual policy outcome, these citizens were not involved in the initial decision the municipality made regarding the urban planning in the context of state-led gentrification (Liukku, 2020; van der Krol, 2020). Therefore, in both of these processes we can not truly argue that citizen participation was established, something that is being advocated for by citizens quite strongly (Recht op de Stad, 2021).

Citizen participation and involvement through bottom-up processes is however, on a variety of topics, gaining priority by the municipality of Rotterdam, also in the context on urban planning (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2018a<sup>1</sup>; Gemeente Rotterdam, 2021a). This increasing attention can be explained by looking at the movement in which citizen participation in modern democracies across the world becomes more and more valued by national or more local governments (Roiseland & Vabo, 2016). Consequently, this

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<sup>1</sup> Source is obtained from the IntraWeb of the municipality of Rotterdam and therefore not publicly available.

augmented valuation of public participation throughout modern democracies around the globe can be attributed to the (growing) scientific consensus that in a 'good' democracy, people subjected to all sorts of policies created by a governmental institution should deem the policy or the decision-making process of this policy as legitimate (Roiseland & Vabo, 2016). Which specifically means that the policy itself and the process towards formulation of this policy should be perceived as fair, appropriate and just (Tyler, 2006).

Thus, on the one hand we identify a municipal ambition for letting citizens participate in urban planning which is arguably essential for policy legitimacy. This ambition also seems to be visible by citizens subjected to top-down urban planning policies. On the other hand however, indications are that citizens in past and current cases did not experience this municipal ambition in practice and had trouble participating in the process. This is attributed to the other belief of the municipality in top-down decision making processes on urban planning in the specific context of state-led gentrification in Rotterdam to revitalise neighbourhoods.

State-led gentrification thus seems to find its history in the conviction that this strategy for urban (re)development projects is essential and needed to get the population change as wished by the municipality. However, citizens seem to have an opposite perspective and seem to value participation above top-down urban planning to experience policy legitimacy. This results in a paradox in the city of Rotterdam that claims to promote 'participatory urban planning'.

## 1.2. Research objective and questions

In this research I therefore will investigate how the legitimacy of this top-down urban planning is experienced by the stakeholders in two cases of current state-led gentrification Tweebosbuurt and Vogelbuurt in Rotterdam. Both cases have both similarities but also differences, especially looking at the way in which CIs presented themselves. In this research, I will focus especially on the contrasting world in this context of increasing use and ambition for citizen participation but the remaining top-down urban planning efforts by the municipality of Rotterdam. Also I will look into what this means for the degree to which citizens feel inclined to organise themselves and advocate for becoming actively involved in this decision-making process in their urban environment, hence, forming a citizen initiative as explained earlier and what role this experienced policy legitimacy has in a larger context.

In other words, the following research question has been developed:

*How is legitimacy of top-down urban planning experienced by involved stakeholders and what role do citizen initiatives have in this context?*

To answer this question adequately, the following sub questions have been formulated:

Theoretical sub questions:

- *What is top-down urban planning and who are the involved stakeholders?*
- *How can legitimacy be defined?*
- *What are citizen initiatives?*

Empirical sub questions:

- *How does top-down urban planning influence the experienced policy legitimacy of the involved stakeholders?*
- *How can the emergence of CIs be explained by looking at this experienced legitimacy of stakeholders?*
- *How can CIs influence the top-down urban policy process and what are the implications for experienced legitimacy of stakeholders?*

### 1.3. Scientific relevance

In other areas of public policy, cases have indicated that when citizens are unhappy with municipal decisions, this could have implications for their self-organising capacity (motivation). Or to put this more specifically, the top-down decisions that governments made on a variety of topics, have in the past led to the creation of motivation from within citizens to group themselves and become actively involved in the policy making process, trying to establish themselves as a legitimate actor, influencing the policy outcome or even revoking the earlier municipal decision (Coleman & Stern, 2018; Edelenbos et al., 2016).

This scientific relation aimed at above mentioned concepts have however been widely discussed on a variety of typical public administration topics, but is not yet widely incorporated into the context of top-down urban planning policies as state-led gentrification. Most of the recent research on this context namely seems to stress the possibilities of encountering negative social effects of gentrification instead of the implications for the experienced need for citizens to organise themselves into an initiative (e.g. Hochstenbach & Musterd, 2018; van Gent & Boterman, 2018). Those negative effects as extensively researched encompass phenomena like displacement of the ‘old’ residents of the neighbourhood, and disbandment of the existing social bonds and cohesion in



neighbourhoods (Atkinson, 2004; Lees, 2008; Marcuse, 1985; Van de Kamp & Welschen, 2019).

Furthermore, the literature that focuses itself on the topic of citizen action in top-down urban planning, primarily concentrates around the terminology for social opposition and right to the city, which classifies as streams within critical urban studies (e.g. Castells, 1983; Lefebvre, 1996). Where critical urban studies focus on motivation of citizens to oppose urban planning, this research might add to the scientific debate by emphasizing the interaction between state-led gentrification and involved stakeholders of this policy, focusing therewith more on the public administration approach to urban policy. Also, this research can be seen as scientifically relevant due to the unique context in which this relationship will be researched. This is due to the contrasting view on the ambition of citizen participation and the actual involvement of citizens in urban planning as earlier described.

## 1.4. Societal relevance

Practically, this research can assist policymakers in designing inclusive urban revitalisation efforts. Furthermore this can give insights to policymakers and urban planners to what extent their urban decisions influence the need for forming citizens initiatives and how policy legitimacy in the context of top-down urban planning is perceived. Also, it does not only show the perception, but also might shine some light on how legitimacy is constructed and deconstructed in this context and might shed light on the paradox of participation as discussed earlier. Additionally, the implications of this research may assist civil servants in the neighbourhood (boundary spanners) to identify the needs and intentions of self-organised citizen groups to streamline any future collaboration or negotiation, keeping in mind the much needed legitimacy that public institutions and policies need. Furthermore, this research might be able to support citizen initiatives to captivate their *raison d'être* which they can communicate to municipal stakeholders with the goal to streamline future collaboration.

## 1.5. Research outline

The main concepts of this research will be further conceptualised and their possible relationship to each other will be explained in chapter 2. In chapter 3, the methodology of this research and the design of the data-collection including the argumentation behind this will be given. In chapter 4, the results stemming from the data-collection will be analysed and a conclusion from these results will be drawn in chapter 5. In chapter 6, discussion of these conclusions will be taking place, highlighting the most important findings, limitations and suggestions for future research.

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1. Top-down urban planning

#### 2.1.1. Conceptualisation

Before an adequate answer can be given to the research question, we need to analyse and define the main concepts in-depth. To understand the concept of top-down urban planning in the context of state-led gentrification we first need to dive more into the context of this state-led gentrification itself to draw similarities with top-down urban planning. Ruth Glass (1964) was one of the first authors to define the concept by describing her observations of the housing market in the inner parts of the city of London. She described how these inner parts became invaded by the middle class, where they renovated and rehabilitated the available housing in poor condition. Because of this changing physical environment and demographics, the social character of the gentrifying district changed rapidly and underlined the process of displacement of the original working class occupants. This process of displacement was fed by the influx of the middle class into the inner-city, consequently driving the prices up. (Glass, 1964).

The definition by Glass (1964) was extensively used as foundation for research on gentrification processes for years to come. However, additional elements were also given in later research to the process of gentrification. Where the initial definition of Glass (1964) mostly seems to focus on the changing social character of the gentrified area due to a spontaneously changed demographic, attributed at collective individual renovations of the new occupants of the inner-city, other authors gave attention to the change in urban environment beyond the individual housing, such as changing amenities like shops and leisure availability and (the use of) public space because of the changed demographic, often labeling these changes as positive (Clay, 1979; Clay 1980; Bradway Laska et al., 1982).

This spontaneous process of gentrification became noticed by (local) governments. These governments saw in many of the cases primarily the positive aspects of what gentrification brought to neighbourhoods and saw that areas that were formerly known as underdeveloped neighbourhoods became lively and popular hotspots (Hackworth & Smith, 2001). To promote these developments, local governments actively initiated policies to promote and stimulate the process of gentrification in targeted neighbourhoods, transforming the concept of gentrification from spontaneous occurring processes towards a planned and actively steered occurrence (Hackworth & Smith, 2001; Lees, 2008; Uitermark et al. 2007).

Hackworth & Smith (2001) explain that governments feel inclined to facilitate gentrification in order to attract higher tax revenues. More affluent households would have to pay a higher amount of tax, resulting in more financial means for the municipality. Lees (2008) however uses a different explanation. She argues that gentrification is set as a goal by the local government to socially desegregate certain neighbourhoods and with that enhance the livability of the area and develop the neighbourhood. She explains this view by underlining that in European context, local governments receive their funds from the national government, removing the financial urge for European cities to attract more affluent people to neighbourhoods for solely financial motives. The objective for municipalities to gentrify is therefore oriented to socially mix an area in order to make the area “less segregated, more livable and ... [with] sustainable communities” (Lees, 2008, p. 2549). Uitermark et al. (2007) join this idea and add that government facilitated gentrification, or thus, state-led gentrification, is “a means through which governmental organisations and their partners lure the middle-classes into disadvantaged areas with the purpose of civilising and controlling these neighbourhoods” (Uitermark et al. 2007, p. 127).

Combining these views and different theories, we see that the municipal intention of state-led gentrification can be seen as a process in which policies will be put in place to socially mix certain neighbourhoods and ensure that formerly deprived neighbourhoods will be revived (Lees, 2008). In order to do this, a large role seems to be assigned to the middle-class or affluent young professionals, which are seen as katalysators to drive the revitalisation of these neighbourhoods (Glass, 1964; Uitermark, 2007). State-led gentrification will therefore in this research be defined as a government initiated process or plan in which a neighbourhood is targeted to socially transform towards an area with a higher social status. To do so, policies are brought in place regarding the urban context, aimed at attracting higher-income people in these often lower-income neighbourhoods.

This context of state-led gentrification can be seen as a top-down government policy instrument. In top-down policy creation and implementation, the government is the central actor and the actor with the eventual final say in the eventual policy outcome or in how this outcome will be achieved (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). The context of state-led gentrification as defined earlier and given a final conceptualisation in the previous paragraph seems to lend itself well for being a top-down policy instrument, impacting the lives of citizens present in these neighbourhoods and residents in targeted areas. Hence, top-down urban planning (efforts) therefore will be seen in this research in the context of state-led gentrification, answering sub question 1.

### 2.1.2. Top-down urban planning and legitimacy

While (local) governments initiate and coordinate top-down urban planning with the intention to change neighbourhoods for the better, these state-led gentrification processes do not only bring good. Middle-income groups into low-income neighbourhoods also have negative effects as displacement and financial burden for these low-income groups and arguably enhance the segregation between them (Glass, 1964; Atkinson, 2004; Lees, 2008; Pinkster & Boterman, 2017). Low-income, existing residents are faced with displacement through eviction, forcefully having to leave their communities. This leads to anger at the policy that resulted in eviction and at the authoritative body that made this decision, or they ought to have had protected them from this from happening (Pearsall 2012, Morris, 2017; Pinkster & Boterman, 2017).

In previous cases, people mobilised themselves to oppose the process of gentrification. This is because of the prospect that their neighbourhood developed into a place they do not recognise as their own, together with the fear of getting displaced and having to give up the social-circle in the neighbourhood (e.g. Robinson, 1995; Smith, 1996; Morris, 2017). It is more likely that state-led gentrification will result in citizen mobilisation, than spontaneous gentrification processes. These are not per definition government steered, as can also be seen in previous cases in Rotterdam (Metselaar, 2020).

In previous cases, top-down decisions that governments made on a variety of topics, have in the past led to the creation of motivation from within citizens to group themselves and become actively involved in the policy making process. Resulting in efforts to establish themselves as a legitimate actor, influencing the policy outcome or even revoking the earlier municipal decision (Coleman & Stern, 2018; Edelenbos et al., 2016). From this argument, these citizens would want to organise themselves because they do not feel that the policy outcome is legitimate, hence the reason they want to influence this (Pearsall, 2012; Coleman & Stern, 2018).

Top-down policies that were put in place without (substantial) consultation from those impacted were often viewed as illegitimate by the citizens that were subjected from these policies (Pearsall, 2012; Coleman & Stern, 2018). In the context of this research however, another factor should be taken into account. In the context of Rotterdam, more and more attention is given to bottom-up processes and citizen inclusion, as essential factors for creating policy legitimacy as argued by the municipality of Rotterdam and the involved housing corporation, depending on the case (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2018; Gemeente Rotterdam, 2021a; Vestia, 2020). Therefore I argue that it is likely that top-down urban planning in the specific context of state-led gentrification as conceptualised, leads to feelings of discontent with the process and policy decisions of the affected citizens, impacting their perception of the policy legitimacy. I argue this same relation for authoritative bodies (e.g.

the municipality of Rotterdam and housing corporation Vestia, depending on the case). Due to their context in which they portray participation of citizens as essential for creating policy legitimacy, the absence thereof will seemingly also impact the way in which these stakeholders perceive the policy as legitimate. It contrasts with popular belief of these authorities that citizen participation is crucial for generating policy legitimacy. However, it is likely that the perceived legitimacy of those affected by the top-down urban policy experience lower policy legitimacy of that designed policy than the policymakers themselves.

## 2.2. Policy legitimacy

### 2.2.1. Conceptualisation

Now that the relationship between top-down urban planning and perceived legitimacy has been generally explained, more attention and explanation is needed on the concept of policy legitimacy. In the literature much attention is given towards the concept of legitimacy and is approached from different perspectives. Suchman (1995, p. 574) for example says that “legitimacy is a generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions”. In this viewpoint, legitimacy is thus seen as some kind of authorisation by one group for an authority or an authoritative body to make certain decisions for this specific group of people. This definition of legitimacy finds agreement in another definition of the concept as given by Tyler (2006, p. 376): “the belief that authorities, institutions and social arrangements are appropriate, proper and just”. Hurd (1999) summarises this perception of legitimacy as simply an existing perception that one should obey another or the other’s decision when he sees the other or his/her decision as legitimate.

Within this perception of legitimacy, we also distinguish a certain element of power in the very notion of this authorisation. With legitimacy, authorities can ensure certain behaviour of other groups without having to put mitigating measures in place, like sanctions, to keep ‘people in control’ (Ford & Johnson, 1998; French & Raven, 1959). Following these definitions, when legitimacy is given to a certain authority or a certain authoritative decision, the perception of this decision is deemed appropriate or desired. This, according to above mentioned theories, consequently impacts the degree to which the body or policy holding the legitimacy, has some kind of power.

When we take above mentioned conceptualisations of legitimacy and apply this into the context and focus of this research as stated in the introduction, we note that the perception of legitimacy will be focused in this context on the degree to which top-down urban (planning) policies are deemed as legitimate by the involved stakeholders. To put this

specifically, in this context, policy legitimacy will be defined as the degree to which the stakeholders deem the (formation of) (top-down) urban policy as appropriate, desirable, proper and just. The element of power, as conceptualised earlier (Ford & Johnson, 1998; French & Raven, 1959), can therefore be translated into this same credibility of these urban policies in the context of this research: when people perceive the urban policies as legitimate, the policy will not be opposed and be therefore respected by those involved. This contributes to the degree of power and authority the policy carries on its own (French & Raven, 1959).

In the area of policy formulation however, variants on legitimacy can be identified. Several authors describe that there are two sorts of legitimacy: 1) input legitimacy; 2) output legitimacy. (Scharpf, 2009; Mena & Palazzo, 2012). Input legitimacy refers to the degree of which opportunities for citizens exist to participate in decision-making processes are perceived. Additionally, how these opportunities to participate materialise in influencing the agenda-setting procedure and if these groups of participants are an accurate representation of the target audience (Mena & Palazzo, 2012; Bekkers & Edwards, 2016). This form of legitimacy thus relates to the degree to which legitimacy is given by third, uninvolved, parties to the composition of people that are involved in the decision-making process. Output legitimacy on the other hand, relates to the degree to which the eventual policy effectuates: to which degree does the policy or decision actually work and solve the problems it was intended for and does the documentation and data supporting that decision deemed legitimate by the stakeholders (Scharpf, 2009; Mena & Palazzo, 2012)? Bekkers & Edwards (2016) add to this definition that output legitimacy also concentrates around the so called responsiveness of governmental decisions which materialises itself in the question: have the people been heard in their wishes regarding the eventual policy outcome?

Bekkers & Edwards (2016) and Schmidt (2012) however, argue that this dualistic view does not cover all the aspects that can be deemed legitimate. Both authors argue the existence of a third form of legitimacy, right between input and output: throughput legitimacy. Throughput legitimacy is more so oriented on the question as to how the collective decision-making process was established and how the quality of this participation in the collective decision-making process was ensured. This form of legitimacy thus focuses itself on the certain attributes that determine the quality of the procedure to come to the eventual (policy) decision (Schmidt, 2012; Bekkers & Edwards, 2016). Here it is more about the quality of participation and the interaction process between policymakers and policy recipients (how is the decision made).

Seeing these theories materialise, we see that primarily input and throughput legitimacy can be argued as somewhat overlapping categories. The very categorisation of throughput legitimacy also flowed from the concept of input legitimacy and both seem to stress the legitimacy in terms of involvement of all stakeholders (Schmidt, 2012; Bekkers &

Edwards, 2016). This research mostly focuses on the participation process and the interaction with stakeholders regarding the top-down urban planning efforts. Therefore I argue that regarding the concept of throughput legitimacy, would be the best fit of these two definitions in the context of this research. Also, a central topic in this research is the role to which citizens form initiatives and how this can be explained looking at the legitimacy they give to certain urban planning efforts. This seems, in the light of above explained theories, related to the concept of output legitimacy. In light of the relation as explained in 2.1.2. regarding top-down urban planning and the conceptualisation of legitimacy as given above, it seems likely that top-down urban planning (policies) negatively influence the degree to which the stakeholders deem the outcomes of (top-down) urban policy (output), as well as the participation process (throughput) as appropriate, desirable, proper and just, and therefore legitimate, also answering sub question 2.

## 2.3. Citizen initiatives

### 2.3.1. Conceptualisation

Furthermore, it is important to conceptualise the definition of citizen initiatives from the literature and how these citizen initiatives materialise in the context of this paper. The concept of citizen initiatives can be found in the interactive governance theory spectrum. As described earlier, citizen initiatives mostly are defined as initiatives organised by citizens in order to provide themselves with certain public goods or amenities (Bakker et al., 2016; Edelenbos et al., 2016). Key factor in this self-creation of certain goods or services, is that the process of citizen initiatives is described as a bottom-up approach in which citizens quite literally initiate the provision of the good or service, whereas in the general interactive governance theory, citizen participation could be organised or facilitated by the government (Roiseland & Vabo, 2016).

Edelenbos & van Meerkerk (2011) explain that citizen initiatives often focus themselves on arranging the presence of goods or services through a bottom-up approach with the aim of solving common problems between these citizens. A key factor in this definition is that citizens according to this definition often also take care of the achievement of the goals that these organisations set themselves. In doing so, they are deemed to be independent from other external actors such as governments or private external partners (Bakker et al., 2012; Denters, 2016).

Thaler & Levin-Keitel (2015) however use a different conceptualisation of bottom-up CIs and stress that these initiatives are not about providing the services or goods completely themselves but are more about opposing existing governmental decisions and forcing

government authorities to cooperate with their citizen initiative in order to develop certain plans and creation of desired deliverables. This conceptualisation of citizen initiatives is agreed upon by Edelenbos et al. (2017), while these authors add that “local stakeholder are not just about resisting governmental plans, but they are also much more about developing alternative plans and initiatives to substantiate their voices” (Edelenbos, 2017, pp. 61).

In this research, a combination of the last two conceptualisations on citizen initiatives will be used in the conceptualisation of CIs in this research. In the context of this research as described in the introduction, we see that CIs in our focus not necessarily want to arrange affairs completely themselves, but still see a role for local government or housing corporation applicable. (Recht op de Stad, 2021). Citizen initiatives will therefore be seen as bottom-up initiatives created by involved citizens with the goal to oppose existing governmental decisions or plans where they felt excluded from and develop actively alternative plans to facilitate a new outcome and get themselves involved in the decision making process.

With this conceptualisation derived from earlier mentioned theories, we see that the rise of CIs can be explained twofold, namely: a) discontent from exclusion in earlier decision-making processes that affected these citizens; and b) the desire to substantiate their own voices in the decision-making process (Thaler & Levin-Keitel, 2015; Edelenbos et al., 2017). When I include these explanations on the mentioned case, we see namely that the citizen initiatives as organised and portrayed in the introduction, was a response stemming from discontentment of earlier decisions the municipality made as described by Thaler & Levin-Keitel (2015) (e.g. Liukku, 2020; van der Krol, 2020). Additionally, we see that these formed CIs also want to participate and get more involved ‘from now on’ in the urban planning of their neighbourhood (Recht op de Stad, 2021), aligning with the theory of Edelenbos et al. (2017) as mentioned earlier. In this way, CIs as explained from theory, seem to be aligned with the way in which they resemble CIs in the context of this study.

Especially the incentive to establish CIs stemming from discontent is closely related to the absence of perceived legitimacy. Generally speaking, when people do not deem policies as legitimate, they are simultaneously unhappy with that specific policy (Tonkens et al., 2015). It is therefore likely that legitimacy and discontent as described above are somewhat interrelated in the context of this research. This strengthens the argument that the rise of CIs can be explained from a perspective of absence of legitimacy.

### 2.3.2. Citizen initiatives and legitimacy

This low perception of legitimacy of top-down urban policies or top-down urban planning as explained previously, seems to have consequences on its own as well. As briefly explained in the introduction (1.4.), theory hints that when citizens perceive the policy as negative or



when they do not support this, they are likely to form an initiative to oppose this policy (Coleman & Stern, 2018; Edelenbos et al., 2016). Based on this theory we could argue that when citizens do not feel the policy itself (relating to outcome legitimacy) or process (relating to throughput legitimacy) towards this policy is legitimate, that this influences their need to organise themselves into an initiative.

Also from the perspective of other stakeholders, this argumentation can be made. Tonkens et al. (2015) explain that initiatives started by citizens can only be formed when there is support or pathways to do this, given by the authoritative body involved. Roiseland & Vabo (2016) explain that authoritative bodies do this, because in a modern democracy, this would be beneficial for the legitimacy of the outcome and the policy process. Throughout the last few years, more normative consensus was laid that decisions are legitimate when citizens are actively involved in the process (Tonkens et al., 2015). We also see this returning in our cases in the visions of the authoritative bodies (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2018; Gemeente Rotterdam, 2021a; Vestia, 2020).

In this line of reasoning we could argue that thus initiatives by citizens are formed for a need of legitimacy, therefore it seems likely that also from a point of view of the authoritative stakeholders, including and enabling citizens to mobilise or organise themselves into an initiative, is done from the perspective that legitimacy needs to be heightened. Translating this into the context of this study, one could argue that when the legitimacy of the top-down urban planning policy is deemed low by the stakeholders, this influences positively the degree to which citizens want to mobilise themselves. Taking this all in mind, I argue that low perceived legitimacy of the top-down urban policies by the involved stakeholders thus leads to the motivation to form or organise citizens initiatives. In this way one could argue that citizens claim a bottom-up process not only on future urban projects but also on the projects that directly influenced this motivation retroactively.

However, as described in above mentioned paragraphs and the conceptualisation of CIs, it seems that CIs themselves also impact the perceived policy legitimacy in both output and throughput. CIs can be seen through the eyes of authoritative stakeholders as supporters for certain policies, further strengthening the legitimacy of these (Tonkens et al., 2015; Edelenbos et al., 2016; Coleman & Stern, 2018). As explained earlier, normative consensus along modern democracies is that citizen involvement in public-decision making 'belongs' in a legitimate democracy. The actual involvement or the enablement of authoritative bodies to let CIs participate, would in this line of argumentation contribute to the perceived legitimacy of the policy and the process towards the formation of this policy from the eyes of the authoritative body (Roiseland & Vabo, 2016).

Additionally, from the eyes of citizens as stakeholders, their presence as a CI could also be beneficial for the way they perceive the policy process and outcome as legitimate.

Involvement of CIs in the decision-making process or the organisation of citizens in the larger spectrum of public policies positively influences the way in which citizens (feel that they) are able to voice themselves and engage deliberation on certain topics (Dryzek & List, 2002). This is in line with earlier portrayed paradox, namely that there is an environment in which this deliberation can take place. Michels & de Graaf (2010) argue that both these effects of CIs should be seen as instrumental to the development of perceived legitimacy for as well the policy formulation process, as well as for the eventual policy itself. Combining this with the previously mentioned throughput and output legitimacy, it therefore seems that the presence of CIs in the policy arena also positively effects the perceived throughput and output legitimacy that citizens have.

Specifically, translated into this study, the establishment of CIs in the top-down urban planning projects, would positively impact the output and throughput legitimacy of all stakeholders: the municipality or the housing corporation (depending on the case) and the citizens themselves finally answering subquestion 3.

## 2.4. Conceptual framework

To summarise, above mentioned theories have led to the creation of the following conceptual model as illustrated in figure 1. Theories have indicated that top-down policy making in the urban environment, in the context of state-led gentrification, expectedly results in a low throughput and output legitimacy as perceived by the stakeholders involved. Expectation is, as said earlier, that residents and (future) CI leaders will mostly .

Consequently, this low experience of policy legitimacy on both aspects arguably result on the basis of above mentioned theories in the emergence of CIs. The presence of these CIs in the policy arena, thereupon boost the perceived legitimacy by the involved stakeholders on the area of throughput and output legitimacy.

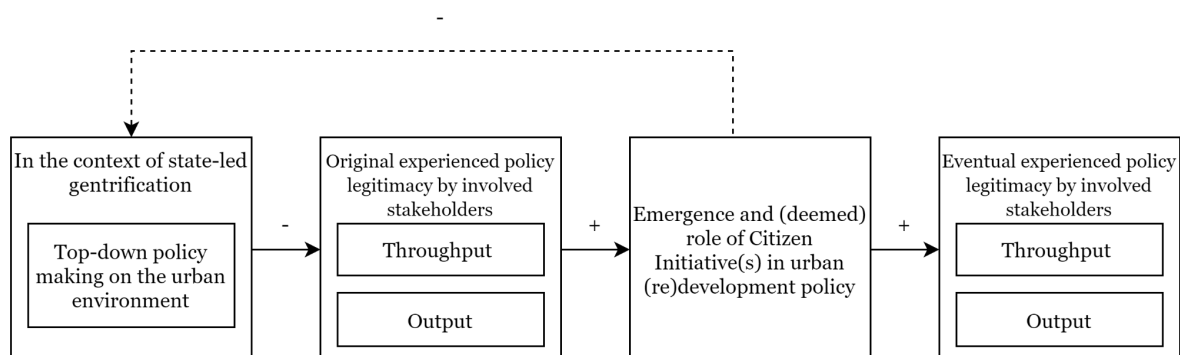


Figure 1. Conceptual framework derived from existing theory.

To summarise this model:

- The context of state-led gentrification leads to low experienced through- and output legitimacy
- Low through- and output legitimacy leads to the likeliness that CI(s) will emerge and seize/advocate for a role in urban (re)development policy
- Emerged and prominent CI(s) leads to high(er) experienced policy legitimacy
- Emerged and prominent CI(s) leads to lower probability of the use of top-down urban planning efforts by authoritative bodies.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Operationalisation

As portrayed in the theoretical framework, there appears to be a relationship between top-down urban planning efforts and policies in the context of state-led gentrification, the perceived legitimacy of the process towards these policies and the policies themselves; and the formation and inclusion of CIs.

To be able to give meaning and construe an insight into the perceptions of involved stakeholders, a multiple case study approach relying on qualitative data collection and analysis was chosen. Additionally, by using a qualitative approach also the exact role and motivations of the formation of CIs can be further investigated through the eyes of the involved stakeholders. In this way, the research question on how policy legitimacy of top-down urban planning is experienced by the involved stakeholders and how this perceived legitimacy can be explained by looking at the formation of citizen initiatives can be answered in the context of state-led gentrification in Rotterdam.

As a qualitative research method, interviews were conducted with a selection of involved stakeholders of both cases. Additionally, document analysis was done on policy briefs. The concepts of top-down urban planning, especially in the context of state-led gentrification, perceived legitimacy of these policies; and citizen initiatives (CIs) have been conceptualised in the theoretical framework. The operationalisation of these concepts can be retrieved in appendix I.

### 3.2. Case selection

For conducting this research, two cases have been selected: the case regarding state-led gentrification in the Tweebosbuurt in Afrikaanderwijk, Rotterdam and Vogelbuurt in Carnisse, Rotterdam. Both of these cases have happened already but are not yet completed, while (especially Tweebosbuurt) is already ongoing for quite some time. More so, this implies the complexity both cases and processes face, seemingly there are certain problems that are or remain unresolved until today. This research might shed more light on (a factor of) these problems.

Multiple cases have been selected due to the fact that it is difficult to generalise from one single case when conducting research (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Additionally, multiple-case studies are selected because of their suitability for replication but also for deeper understanding in the factors that led to the outcomes or important factors in both cases (Yin, 2009). Both of these cases entail testing of above mentioned theories in the case and context

of Rotterdam, implicating that the selection of both cases result in a multiple embedded case study.

In both of the cases a large friction is visible between the aimed spatial developments in the neighbourhoods and the satisfaction with those plans of the current residents. In the table as mentioned below, the main differences are portrayed between both cases.

Table 1. Key similarities and differences between both cases

<b>Similarities</b>	
Both projects are being carried out as a result of the <i>Woonvisie</i> and the project NPRZ	
Both cases are in Rotterdam South	
Communication and process design was done in the same manner	
Both projects have been heavily critiqued (nationally)	
<b>Differences</b>	
Fazantstraat, Carnisse	Tweebosbuurt, Afrikaanderwijk
Project is ongoing since September 2020	Project is ongoing since July 2018
Privately owned housing	Social housing
Demolition plans of 220 housing units	Demolition plans of 680 housing units
One authoritative stakeholder: the municipality	Two authoritative stakeholders: the municipality and the housing corporation Vestia
Municipality in the lead of spatial planning and communication with residents	Municipality has ownership for spatial planning, but leaves communication with citizens mostly to Vestia
Main arena protest: city council	Main arena protest: courtroom
Outcome: demolition cancelled	Outcome: demolition has started

It would be interesting to compare these cases and see which outcomes derived from the interviews are similar per case and how this possibly could be explained or generalised relating to the found relationships in the theoretical framework as explained earlier. This is interesting also to further dive into what this means for the legitimacy the policy process has and the eventual outcome means as perceived by the stakeholders. Also this would be interesting to compare both cases and see how the establishment of CIs in the process differs and see whether this has implications for this perceived legitimacy. The research approach of a case study allows for extensive investigation of a comparable phenomenon and how this

materialises in two different contexts. By using this research method, both cases can be compared and possibly construct a more general insight (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

### 3.3. Data collection and analysis

In total a number of 12 interviews were conducted divided over various different stakeholders derived from the two different cases. To ensure maximum generalisability for research, Creswell & Poth (2017) describe the need for representativeness of major actors in the studied cases. In all cases, stakeholders can be divided between residents (non-active), citizens who took action against a decision and established themselves in the discussion (CIs), and the policy makers themselves. To get a complete overview of the case it is important that non-active residents are being interviewed, to get a better understanding of the perceived legitimacy. Secondly, citizen initiative leaders are important to be interviewed to critically reflect on the role of these initiatives on the discussion and their own incentives. Thirdly, policymakers are of vital importance to be interviewed because the actions they take influence and seemingly trigger some sort of reaction within residents, thereby making themselves one of the largest actors in both cases. Because it could be expected that emotions and various views on problems or plans will easily be subjective of nature, an involved expert in both cases will also be interviewed to critically independently reflect on both of these cases. See table 1 for a schematic overview of the interviewed respondents

Table 2. Sample selection of interviews specified by case.

<b>Tweebosbuurt, Afrikaanderwijk in Rotterdam</b>	
Policymaker municipality of Rotterdam	1X
Citizen social housing	2X
Leader of citizen initiative	3X
Expert	1X
<b>Fazantstraat, Vogelbuurt, Carnisse in Rotterdam</b>	
Policymaker municipality of Rotterdam	1X
Citizen private owned housing	2X
Leader of citizen initiative	3X
Expert	1X

This research uses semi-structured interviews, because this allows to categorically discuss topics, decided upon beforehand, as visualised in appendix II. Additionally, leaves room to

go more in-depth on certain answers that respondents give. This way, the interview can be tailored to the nature of the responses of the respondents and can simultaneously be structured (Boeije, 2009). The interviews were recorded and transcribed based on these recordings. Consequently these transcripts were coded open, axial and selective, based on the constructed codetree as indicated in appendix III.

In addition to the conducted interviews, a policy document analysis was conducted to further be able to illustrate some of the authorities opinion in the discussion in both cases, but also to be able to explain some of the concepts as being elaborated upon in chapter 4 (results). To ensure a maximum accurate image from the stance of the municipality and the housing corporation Vestia as authoritative body in the case of Tweebosbuurt, document analysis was done on general policy documents giving more of a high-over image of the stance of these authorities in general. Additionally, more case specific documents were used to ensure some of the local context and illustration in both cases' debates. In table 2 an overview is given of the documentation as used, coded and referenced in the result section (chapter 4).

Table 3. Used analysed documents.

<b>General</b>	
<i><u>Nature of document</u></i>	<i><u>Reference in text</u></i>
NPRZ Uitvoeringsprogramma 2019-2022	NPRZ (2019)
Woonvisie 2030	Gemeenteraad Rotterdam (2016)
Nota Wijk aan Zet	Gemeenteraad Rotterdam (2021)
Toelichting op Wijkprofielen Rotterdam	Gemeente Rotterdam (2015)
<b>Case specific</b>	
<i><u>Nature of document</u></i>	<i><u>Reference in text</u></i>
Letter of Special Rapporteur United Nations Tweebosbuurt	Rajagopal et al. (2021)
Brief Gemeente Rotterdam aan bewoners Fazantstraat	NPRZ Wonen (2020)
Brief Gemeente Rotterdam Vraag en Antwoord Tweebosbuurt	Gemeente Rotterdam (2021b)
Vision document Recht op de Stad	Recht op de Stad (2021)
Interview of Robert Straver in TV documentary Opstandelingen	BNNVARA (2021)

### 3.4. Validity and reliability

To ensure validity of this research, member checking was applied as described by Creswell & Poth (2017). By using this approach, a respondent of the interview will be asked to reread the interpretations, findings and analysis of these findings as a result of the conducted interview. The respondent will consequently be asked whether these interpretations of the interviews are a good representation of the intentions of the respondent and whether the analysis of the interviews are aligning his or her opinions adequately. This way, findings can be translated as close to the intention of the interviewed respondent as possible and therefore will contribute to the internal validity of the research.

By using the samples as described in 3.3., a representative image can be portrayed of the involved stakeholders in both cases as described. This will further contribute to the external validity of this research (Creswell & Poth, 2017). By coding the transcripts and providing related documentation such as the transcripts, codetree and inclusion or exclusion criteria, reliability of the findings will be ensured.

### 3.5. Limitations and challenges

In this research some limitations and challenges can be identified. Both of these cases have generated much media attention and were discussed extensively. This resulted in difficulties to contact stakeholders involved in the policy side of these plans, such as housing corporation Vestia and spokespersons from the municipality of Rotterdam. Due to legal procedures and political sensitivity, these persons were unwilling or unable for interviews in this research. However also thanks to the publicness of both cases, much information was to be found in (official) documentation online. Policy documents as shown in table 2 were used to fill in this gap as well as possible.

Another challenge that is relevant for this study is that of the selection of respondents. In this research 12 interviews were conducted, Tweebosbuurt entailed social housing demolition of 588 residences, while Fazantstraat concerned the demolition of 216 residences, questioning the representativeness for the entire neighbourhood. Generally, finding respondents in this research in both cases has been for residents and CI leaders not that difficult, many people were willing to talk. Generally speaking, these are mostly the more engaged citizens/residents in these projects, since they're more than willing to shine their light on these plans. To mitigate this, uninvolved residents in the protests have been interviewed in both cases, to ensure not only protestors generalised the image of the entire neighbourhood.

One other limitation can be found especially in Tweebosbuurt. Since this case is already ongoing since 2018, many of the current residents in this neighbourhood were by



default reluctant to leave their houses (otherwise they would have left already), this might have resulted in a bias in the sample in this specific case. To mitigate this, also (soon to be) ex-residents have been interviewed in this case.

## 4. Results

The following section will look further into the findings of this research. Based on two cases as described in the earlier chapters, information was gathered and analysed through coding of the transcripts of the conducted interview with the respondents. Additionally, these interviews were supplemented with an analysis of policy documents (see appendix III and appendix IV). Since the general outcomes of both cases can be seen as generally similar, these cases have been taken together in this chapter.

Both cases however are somewhat different in the context in which this research has been conducted. Also, these cases seem in the context of Rotterdam widely important and recently gained some extensive coverage by renowned national and international media channels. To present the results in a clear way, it is therefore important to first contextualise both cases accurately. This is also needed to shed more light on the argumentation as to why the results are generalizable and what the key differences are between Fazantstraat and Tweebosbuurt.

### 4.1. Contextualisation

As discussed in the case selection (3.2.), both cases concern demolition projects and reconstruction of new housing in both of these neighbourhoods. To briefly explain some of the contexts as given in both cases, below mentioned figures will give more information on the context of both of these redevelopment plans for both neighbourhoods.

#### 4.1.1. Fazantstraat

In end September 2020, residents of the Fazantstraat were informed by letter of the renovation plans of their street and neighbourhood as a result of a decision that was taken by the mayor and aldermen earlier that month. In this plan, the municipality was the main actor since all of these residences were privately owned. The plans entailed the demolition of 216 residences and 8 commercial properties. In return 160 new residences were planned to be constructed, aimed at a higher price point than current housing available in the neighbourhood. Additionally, 51 residences that were not planned for demolition were planned to be mandatorily coalesced, resulting in larger apartments in existing building blocks, for fewer households.

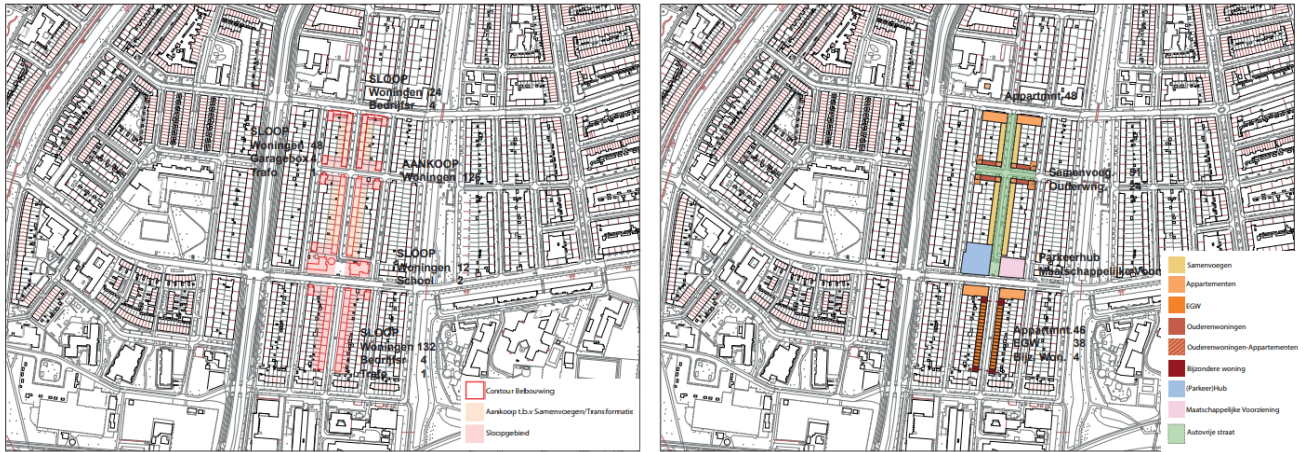


Figure 2. Overview of schematic plans Fazantstraat (source: Gemeenteraad Rotterdam, 2020)

Since all of the residences in the Fazantstraat are privately owned, the municipality can be identified as the authoritative actor in this plan. The municipality of Rotterdam planned to use the *Wet voorkeursrecht gemeenten* (Wvg), which gives them the possibility to force homeowners to sell their houses to the municipality. While the plan was prepared by the college of mayor and aldermen, it needed to be approved by the city council. The plan was not approved, partly due to the influence of citizens, strong opposition from parties not in the coalition within the council. To contextualise the process in which these plans took place, below mentioned timeline serves as illustration of the plan, communication with residents and current situation.

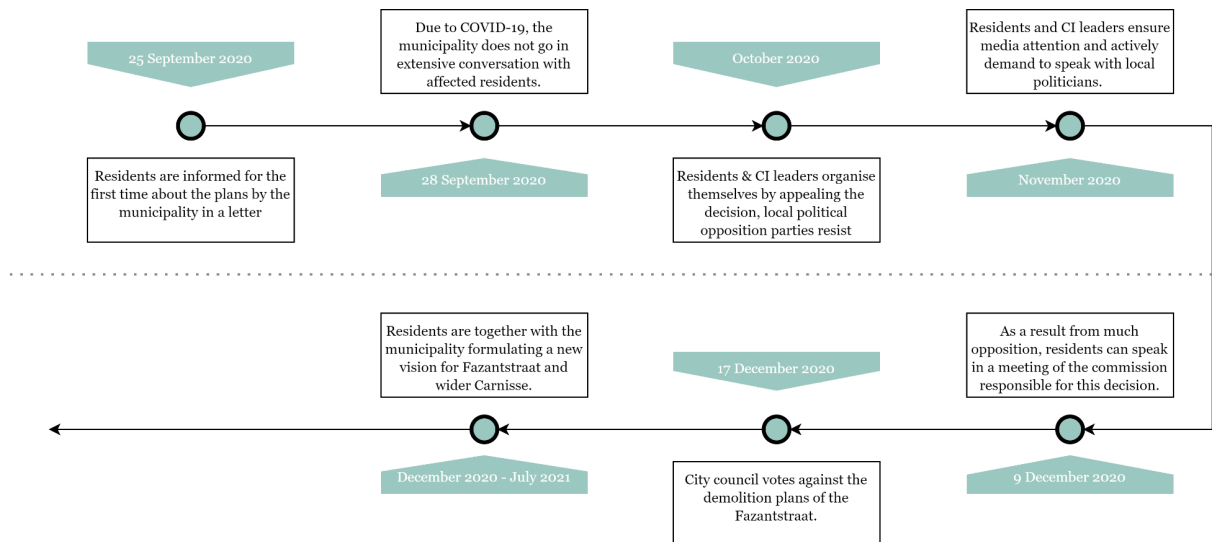


Figure 3. Timeline of plans Fazantstraat (source: author)

#### 4.1.2. Tweebosbuurt

In July 2018, residents of the Tweebosbuurt were informed by letter of the renovation plans of their neighbourhood. In these plans, a collaboration between the municipality of

Rotterdam and social housing corporation Vestia, 694 residences and commercial properties were planned to be renovated or demolished (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2018b). Of this number, 588 residences and commercial properties were planned to be demolished, of which 524 social housing residences owned by Vestia (Vestia, 2020). In return, 374 new residences will be constructed. Of this number however, 137 new social housing units will return. Social housing units in Tweebosbuurt will reduce with an amount of approximately 74%.

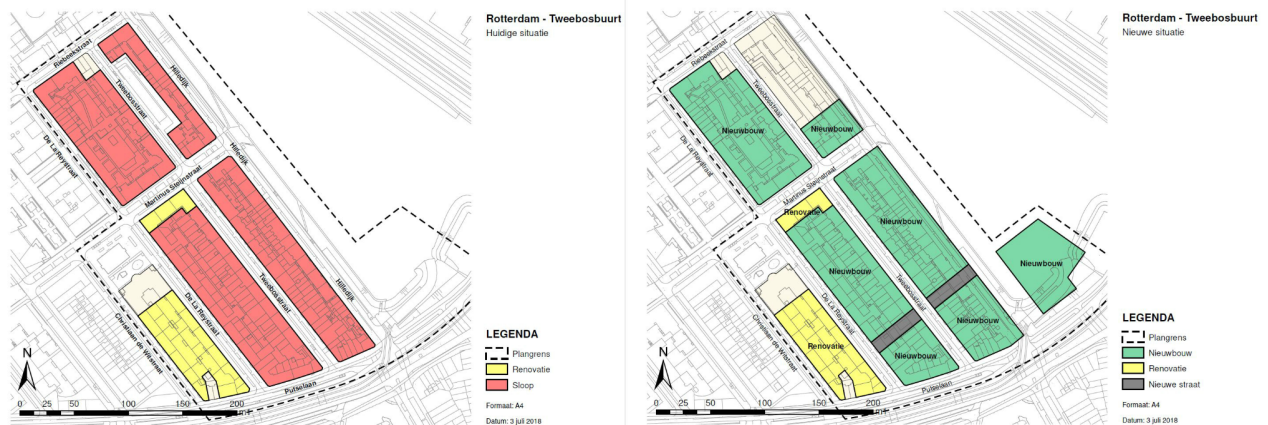


Figure 4. Overview of schematic plans Tweebosbuurt (source: Gemeente Rotterdam, 2018b)

Since most of the targeted residences are social housing and therefore property of Vestia, Vestia is the main actor in communication with residents, supported by the NPRZ and the municipality of Rotterdam (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2021b). These plans were communicated to the residents through a letter from Vestia and the municipality. After this letter, citizens tried (unsuccessfully) to prevent the city council from approving this plan. Residents started to organise themselves into CIs and start with legal procedures to try and revoke these plans. The first court ruling was in favour of Vestia, while the second was in favour of the residents. Despite the eventual outcome of these string of court rulings, the municipality (the mayor) approves the start of demolition of the neighbourhood by Vestia anyway. Organised CIs fail to stop the planned demolition and the last residents have given up.

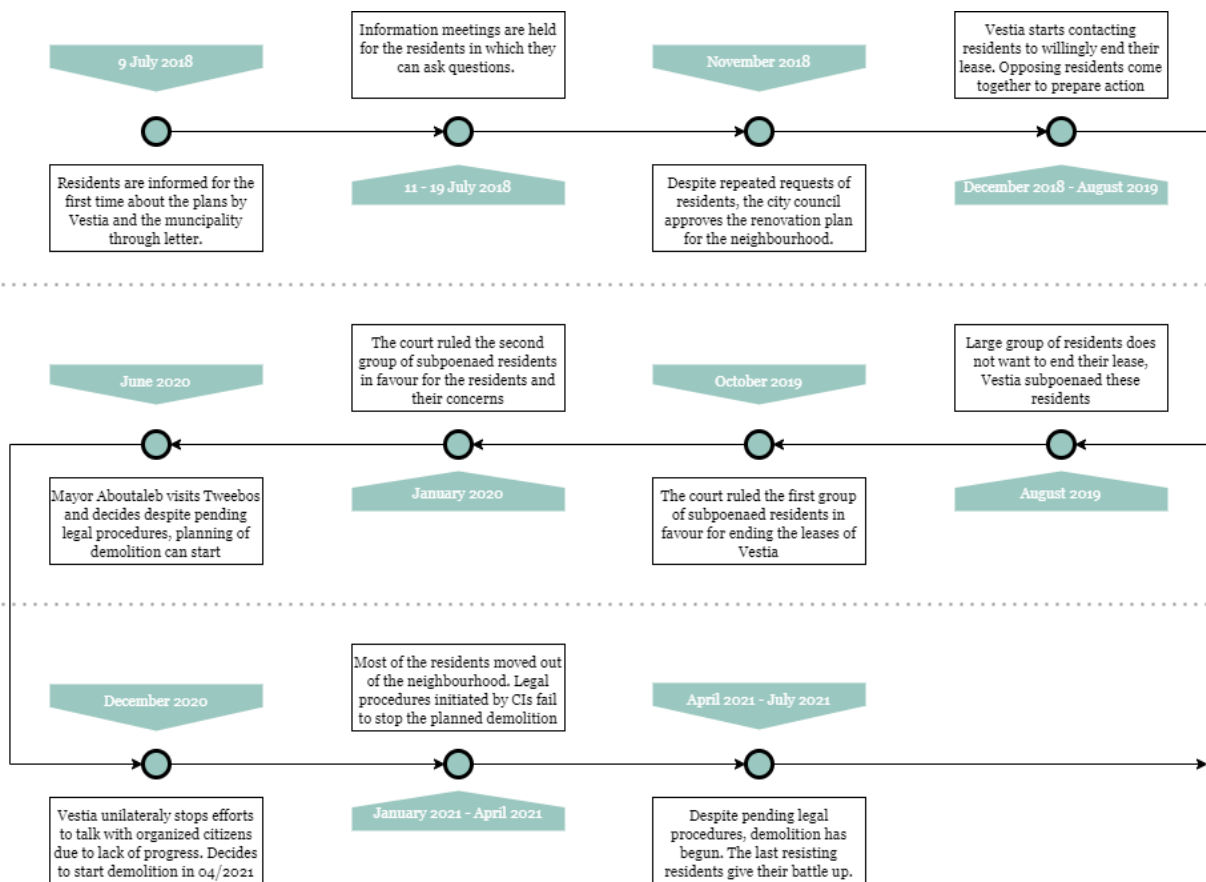


Figure 4. Timeline of plans Tweebosbuurt (source: author)

### 4.1.3. Key differences between cases

One of the primary differences between these cases is the fact that residents and the CI in the Fazantstraat were successful in preventing demolition and adjusting the plans, unlike the residents and CI in Tweebosbuurt. As a consequence, one of the differences between these cases can be found in the degree to which residents or CI leaders of Fazantstraat had more hope in a more structural change their uprising had on top-down urban planning, mostly attributed to the fact that they were successful in their opposition.

Another key difference between both cases is that the case of Tweebosbuurt entailed social housing which was owned by the housing corporation Vestia, while Fazantstraat concerns privately owned housing. This key difference was also already highlighted in the case study selection as described in chapter 3. However, indications are that this difference contributed to the nature of the process in which the CI tried to change the policy outcome and influence the process and the degree to which it was successful. Residents and CIs of Tweebosbuurt found themselves quite quickly in judicial and procedural conflict with the municipality but primarily the housing corporation Vestia, since they did not own the houses they live(d) in. Residents and CIs of Fazantstraat however, amended the outcome and

influenced this by putting pressure on the city council which eventually decided to discard the demolition plan as a result from this opposition.

As a result, a difference can be identified in the degree to which mostly residents per case had (negative) feelings towards a city council or a housing corporation. From the results it appeared that while there was definitely a certain level of distrust from residents and CI leaders towards the municipality (as complete institute) in the Fazantstraat, they were generally speaking more positive and understanding to this authoritative body as compared to the residents and CI leaders of Tweebosbuurt.

Another major difference becomes clear when looking at the timeline as composed above for both cases. In the case of Tweebosbuurt, the total time of the project took and still takes substantially longer as compared to the case of Fazantstraat. This also relates to the eventual decision making process, the scale of the project and the media coverage the plans received individually (Tweebosbuurt is the best known of the two).

Despite the differences as mentioned above, the results as collected through the interviews from both cases gave, except these differences, the same result. The results as described in chapter 4 can therefore be generalised for both of the selected cases and do not need major adaptation or contextual instructions.

## 4.2. Top-down policy making in the urban environment

In the interviews it appeared that all the respondents experienced to a high degree that top-down urban planning was applied in their specific case. In most cases, respondents in the role of residents or CI leaders experienced this due to the authority (municipality, housing corporation or both) being the main actor. CI leader (resp. 10) illustrates this claim by saying: it is really about sending a message to residents. *“If the municipality says so, then it will also happen ... if the municipality does not change it’s mindset, we can say whatever, but nothing will ever change”*. Another CI leader (resp. 11) adds to by saying: *“The housing corporation has long waited to communicate with us. They told us to wait until the municipality decided, after that there might be a possibility to talk”*.

This experience of one-sided nature of communication and decision making by the authorities was not merely a ‘feeling’ that CI leaders or residents had. Rajagopal et al. (2021) described exactly the lack of involvement of citizens and top-down urban planning in their fact based statement: *“Residents have not been involved in the planning and decision making for renewal plans and demolitions in their neighbourhoods in the context of the Housing Vision 2030”* (pp. 4). A statement also confirmed by the expert (resp. 7): *“there were a lot of people in general that had the feeling of being biked over and had some negative feelings accompanying this role that authorities took”*.

These quotations give an accurate indication of the results as found in the transcripts of the respondents and policy documentation. All respondents indicated that they experienced the large role that the municipality or the housing corporation (depending on the case) had in the plans that were formulated for these specific neighbourhoods. As the expert (resp. 7) briefly additionally indicated above, it seems that this top-down policy making also resulted in some negative feelings among citizens. Derived from the interviews, these negative feelings can be explained two-fold, derived from the conducted interviews with respondents, namely: bad perceived nature and timing of communication; and lack of transparency;

#### 4.2.1. Bad perceived nature and timing of communication

Communication in both nature and timing of communication appeared to be instrumental to indicate some of the general negative feelings respondents experienced towards top-down urban planning. A CI leader (resp. 5) for example indicated: *“I myself am pretty well educated, but I had to read this letter five times to get a clear picture in my head of what was going to be the idea. That was frustrating”*. Also a resident (resp. 9) added to this by saying *“You only get a letter with exclusively official ‘municipal’ language, without any clarity on the coming process! I was weeks in insecurity!”*.

Both of these quotations give a good indication of what all respondents experienced. The nature in which the official authorities communicated (per letter) was deemed inappropriate and led to frustration partly due to the message it contained but also the way in how it was communicated or the accessibility of it. Apart from the nature of the communication, also the timing of the communication in both cases led to frustration.

The resident (resp. 9) said on this point the following: *“apart from the bad communication of such a topic [by letter], it was also a very bad timing to give such a message. The letter was delivered right before summer holiday, you don’t send people on their well deserved holiday like that”* a point, which was underlined by another resident (resp. 8): *“We took the message of that letter and the emotional impact with us on holiday. We eventually returned earlier to the Netherlands because we just didn’t know how to move forward”*.

In all interviews, respondents indicated the same sentiment regarding the timing of the communication, regardless of the case they found themselves in. A CI leader (resp. 6) explains that this uniformity in resistance from the citizens can be explained as follows:

*In our role as initiative starters we often see these kinds of plans that are being dropped on citizens right before the summer holiday or at strategic times. This is just a strategy in the*

*policy making process. It isn't the first time we encountered this. It is some kind of blindsiding technique.*

The expert (resp. 7) indicated the importance of good communication in both nature and timing. She indicated that the way in which these plans were communicated in both cases were subjected to failing both criteria through which frustration developed:

*Obviously it was the conversation of the day, people were very unhappy about the timing but also the contents of the letter scared people. All kinds of judicial terms were named and also with respect to the legal consequences of the receiver of the letter in case of absence of corporation.*

That this communication led to some frustration among citizens, is also acknowledged by a policymaker as respondent. The policymaker (resp. 1) argues:

*I can imagine that the letter about the demolition plans really hit people like an earthquake. If maybe there are some rumours going around in the targeted area for quite some time then people find the decision easier to accept.*

These findings are representative for the entire group of respondents. Every respondent indicated to be very dissatisfied and even angry about the way in which these decisions were communicated but also the timely manner in which this communication was done, while even policymakers could understand the frustration in which this was undertaken.

In the case of Tweebosbuurt, the timing was an issue: the communication was done right before people went on their holiday, consequently not being able to participate in the meetings where more information was given on the projects, two days after the letter was sent. In the case of Fazantstraat, people were unhappy with the timing of the communication due to the very limited time they had to do something about it. As the policy maker indicated, the decision came out of the blue for many people and as the policy document indicates, time for people to oppose the decision was very limited.

Good communication thus seems to be of vital importance for the first perception that citizens have towards the plans of the municipality. Yet, NPRZ (2019) indicates it does not communicate itself with citizens, but leaves communication to its partners (such as housing corporations): *“The vantage point of communication within the NPRZ is that the partners of the NPRZ are in the lead of contact and communication of residents”* (pp. 11). Also in the Woonvisie 2030 (Gemeenteraad Rotterdam, 2016), the word ‘communication’ is not mentioned extensively and has not been made a topic. Solely in the Prestatieafspraken



Vestia (2020a), it is mentioned: “*Vestia wants to invest in communication with their residents*” (pp. 16), but does not specifically mention how or acknowledges the frustration that exists among current residents.

#### 4.2.2. Lack of transparency

Another issue that surfaced as a result of the top-down decision to redevelop the neighbourhoods as selected in this case entailed the lack of transparency on the plans of the housing corporation or the municipality. A resident (resp. 8) illustrates this frustration as follows:

*I contacted Vestia to ask if there were any plans for my apartment, since I wanted to do some remodelling and small renovations myself. The lady on the phone assured me that there were no plans for my building so that I could easily invest some money in my house if I wanted. Well, a good month later the letter arrived stating demolition of my home. You can imagine my anger.*

This sentiment was underlined by a CI leader (resp. 10): “*What the hell? Couldn’t they tell me beforehand? I just invested a lot of money in this house thinking I was going to live here for quite some time. I even asked them if it was wise to do so!*”.

Above mentioned citations illustrate well the general consensus of all the respondents in the categories of CI leader or residents about being unhappy about the way in which this plan was, according to their experience, communicated in a transparent way. A resident (resp. 3) claimed: “*Before I bought my house I checked the destination plan for the neighbourhood, but it didn’t say anything about expected demolition of the street. I thought I was going crazy*”. While a CI leader claimed (resp. 12): “*We requested endlessly information from Vestia, without success. We had to get the information in trial, then we finally saw why this decision was made.*”

This is a good indication of the effect that the perceived lack of transparency that these plans were going to be carried out had on the respondents in the role of CI leaders and respondents throughout both cases, something that also was concluded by Rajagopal et al. (2021, pp. 6): “*Residents were taken by surprise because Vestia had been communicating that there were no plans for renovation works or for the construction of new housing units in the neighbourhood*”. In the policy documents, the lack of urgency on transparency also becomes clear. In none of the analysed policy documents the word ‘transparency’ surfaces in the context of intended plans for neighbourhoods and the importance of information symmetry on this topic between all those involved.

Policymakers however indicate that use of top-down urban planning yielded desirable results in the past and do not seem to have negative associations with the use of top-down urban planning. The policymaker (resp. 1) indicates: *“In the past and also currently in other cases, this way of work [top-down] has proved to be extremely effective to tackle some of the problems that neighbourhoods face”*, and also in wider perspective the municipality as a whole deems governmental intervention needed: *“To ensure qualitative housing for people in Rotterdam, active governmental involvement and intervention is needed to enhance the liveability of neighbourhoods”* (Gemeenteraad Rotterdam, 2016, pp. 30).

### 4.2.3. Conclusion

All respondents, regardless of role and case experienced top-down urban planning and or policy making, in a context of gentrification. Primarily CI leader(s) or resident(s) experienced negative feelings towards this top-down way of urban planning. These negative feelings originated primarily through the nature and timing of the communication and the experienced lack of transparency on the plans. The policymaker and the expert both understood the frustration, primarily focused on the issue of nature and timing of communication. Transparency did not surface as an important topic through the policy analysis.

Additionally it seemed that while the policymaker understood the frustration that other respondents voiced, he himself did not necessarily have negative connotations with the concept of top-down urban planning. Also, top-down urban planning seemed through policy analysis to be regarded by the municipality as a useful tool to enhance living quality of neighbourhoods in Rotterdam

While these negative feelings are not directly associated with the legitimacy that respondents give, it is clear that these aspects affect the feeling that respondents have towards the plan or authorities. Therefore, I argue that bad perceived nature and timing of communication and lack of transparency moderate the relation between top-down urban planning and experienced legitimacy.

## 4.3. Throughput and output legitimacy

In the previous paragraph, slight indications were given that top-down urban planning efforts thus have led to frustration among CI leader(s) or resident(s). From interviews it however also appeared that CI leader(s) and resident(s) both experienced low legitimacy on throughput and output legitimacy of top-down policy making in the urban environment. To

ensure to be able to indicate the nature and reason for their low experienced legitimacy, throughput and output legitimacy were split in two categories.

### 4.3.1. Throughput legitimacy

Respondents indicated that the way in which the decision was taken, the actual process itself of top-down urban planning, directly impacted the low legitimacy they experienced with the plans for their neighbourhood(s) or the neighbourhoods they advocated for (citizen initiative leaders). Low experienced throughput legitimacy surfaced in both cases and was in both cases attributed to the feeling of an unfair or unjust process towards policy formulation or implementation regarding the urban plans for the area. Derived from the interviews, the nature of this lack of experienced throughput legitimacy can be explained following two different concepts: lack of human values; and lack of participation possibilities.

#### 4.3.1.1. Lack of human values

A large explanatory factor in this can be attributed to the experienced lack of human values that respondents experienced with top-down urban planning. A CI leader (resp. 4), explained this phenomenon as follows: *“top-down urban development is the core problem of all frustration. On the drawing board people decide on human values instead of consulting with the actual humans there. A strategy like this will never fulfill the actual needs of those involved”*. A resident (resp. 8) agreed and stated: *“If you make plans of redevelopment, ensure you have a good human picture of the people living there. Get in contact with them. Keep it humanised”*.

Not only did this result in low experienced legitimacy but it also led to resentment towards the authoritative bodies that made this decision. Resident (resp. 11), for example, felt betrayed by these authorities: *“This whole plan was made without any regard or respect for us as residents of this neighbourhood. This was just an orchestrated attack from the housing corporation and the municipality on the residents”*.

Additionally, the feeling of residents that the municipality and or housing corporation had some sort of a hidden agenda not in favour of these residents was a thought that a CI leader (resp. 6) supplemented with his conclusion: *“the municipality does not make these plans for the current residents. They do not care about these people”*. The expert (resp. 7) attributes this experienced lack of human values to in her opinion the structural and fundamental key difference between both the CI leaders and the residents and the policymakers:

*Residents or people who are affiliated within the neighbourhood have another perception of their neighbourhood. The policymakers look at the development plans from an economic*

*and urban planning perspective. Policymakers want to ensure that Rotterdam South becomes one of the best city areas of the four largest cities in the Netherlands. Residents and people on the ground will not easily look at their neighbourhood in this way, that gives conflict.*

That while human values and putting the current residents of the neighbourhoods at the central spot of the redevelopment plans of these neighbourhoods, is a seemingly large topic considering from the eyes of policymakers. NPRZ (2019) indicates this by stating: *“the main goal of the NPRZ is to enhance the current way of living of the current residents of Rotterdam South.”* (pp. 5). While the policymaker (resp. 1): *“we make these plans for the residents of Rotterdam South, it hurts from a human perspective to see that the plans you make to try and improve their neighbourhoods, are not being perceived that way by the people you do this for”*.

This perception can be identified throughout the line of reasoning of the municipality also looking at case specific documents. Gemeente Rotterdam (2021b, pp. 1) in the case of Tweebosbuurt indicates:

*The goal of this project is to enhance the living conditions and environment of people in Rotterdam South [...] this project is needed in Tweebosbuurt because here is a cluster of this environment, not suitable for the future and current quality standards and therewith enhancing the living environment of the people in Afrikaanderwijk.*

Which carries the same sentiment as the reasoning behind the plans in the Fazantstraat: *“We want to make your neighbourhood more resilient and attractive for current and future residents [...] this way we ensure the residents of Carnisse qualitative living standards”* (NPRZ Wonen, 2020, pp. 11-12).

While on the one hand CI leaders and residents thus experience a lack of human values in the process towards policy formulation, the policymaker and the policy documentation seems to have the ambition to keep human values in mind in this process, but also seem to have the belief that these plans result in better quality for the residents of Carnisse and Afrikaanderwijk.

#### 4.3.1.2. Lack of participation possibilities

Besides the human values element, respondents indicated that the lack of participation possibilities was also a large indicator for their low experience of throughput legitimacy. This related to the level that citizens indicated they were frustrated and deemed the plans illegitimate because they were not consulted beforehand. A resident (resp. 8) indicated: *“If*

*you're going to decide about a neighbourhood with people in it, you need to converse with these people before you make a decision!"*

This also related to the feeling of not being included in the process at all and being sidelined as another resident indicated (resp. 9): *"We were not involved at all! Only when the decisions were already made, we could 'participate'. You can't be serious if you deem that fair"*. This feeling of being sidelined and not being able to participate has results for the legitimacy residents will feel towards the process in the end, according to a CI leader (resp. 4): *"People had a semblance of having participated while the decisions were already set in stone. After a while, when people noticed, they realised: how did we in God's name fall for this scam"*.

Respondents thus experienced a lack of participation and connected this experience to feelings of the process being unfair or unjust. A CI leader (resp. 11) stated further that this feeling of illegitimacy also was a result of contrasting communication in the policy plans: *"The whole assignment of the program of the NPRZ is to make Rotterdam South better for and with the residents in these areas. I feel like they have completely let go of this task"*.

Considering this feeling by looking into the analysis of the policy documents, we find that participation is named quite often in all of these documents. Vestia (2020a) indicates: *"Vestia further will enhance and stimulate participation among renters on building blocks but also neighbourhood level. Additionally, Vestia will also make significant efforts to create any new forms of participation, depending on the needs of the residents"* (pp. 16). Whereas NPRZ (2019) indicates: *"Within the execution of the National Program, the current residents of Rotterdam South are of vital importance"* (pp. 9) and additionally state: *"Early and thorough involvement of the current and future residents are of vital importance to stimulate the integrality of the Housing Vision"* (pp. 58). Also, participation and involvement of citizens seems to be also according to the policymaker (resp. 1) very important to create a qualitative plan: *"You want to talk about the plan with people and ensure a detailed plan that you make together with these people. However, it also is quite important to consider when to talk to who about what"*.

Policy documents and the policymaker (resp. 1) thus indicate that participation and involvement of citizens (residents or CI leaders) is of vital importance for the integrality of the plans but also should be further developed and strengthened in the future. Despite this indication, residents and CI leaders did not experience that the authorities deemed their participation as necessary or even wished. The expert (resp. 7) underlines this perception: *"There were a lot of people in both cases that had something like: 'they' do not care one bit for us. People did not feel that they were being taken seriously"*. Something that is also confirmed by the director of housing of Vestia (BNNVARA, 2021) wherein he explains a different approach in the decision making process if he could do it all again:

*[if I could do something else] I would take more time with the residents. I think many people felt that they couldn't have had their say. If we would have had more time with these residents, I think that feelings of frustration among them would've been less.*

### 4.3.2. Output legitimacy

Aside from throughput legitimacy, respondents additionally indicated the actual decision itself that was taken, also directly impacted the low legitimacy they experienced with the plans for their neighbourhood(s) or the neighbourhoods they advocated for (citizen initiative leaders). Low experienced output legitimacy surfaced in both cases and was in both cases attributed to the feeling of an unfair or unjust policy decision. Derived from the interviews, the nature of this lack of experienced throughput legitimacy can be explained primarily by looking at the concept of supporting data that was used for the policy decision

#### 4.3.2.1. Supporting data applied for decision

Derived from the interview with the policymaker (resp. 1) and policy documentation, the data that was used entails a mix of different sources but relies heavily on the District Profiles as visualised by the municipality. The policymaker (resp. 1) indicates:

*The district profiles are divided in two parts, an objective and a subjective part. Both categories of these indicators are registered individually. Out of this data almost half of the people indicated that they would leave the neighbourhood if they made advancements in their own financial situation. This was instrumental for deciding that something needed to happen in Carnisse.*

The use of this profile and the applicability of these data derived from these profiles is confirmed to be used when constructing new urban plans according to the municipality themselves: *“these district profiles give input for the design of urban policies and plans”* (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2014 pp. 3). However, the applicability of these profiles on the specific context for the streets or neighbourhoods in both cases was being doubted and distrusted among residents and CI leaders. A CI leader (resp. 4) indicated the for him crucial lack of numbers to make these decisions:

*The problem with numbers is that an area can be objectively the poorest postal code of the Netherlands, as was the case for Crooswijk for a long time, while being one of the most socially resilient neighbourhoods of the city. There is a huge discrepancy between the quality of life that people experience and how we are able to express this in objective data.*

Or, as another CI leader (resp. 10) expressed: *“The data used to make this decision was data from the district profiles from the entire neighbourhood Afrikaanderwijk. They just extrapolated these numbers to Tweebos, but how can you do that accurately?”*. This concern that the data used to make the policy decision was not legitimate enhanced feelings of outcome illegitimacy among all of the respondents. The expert (resp. 7) also claims on this topic:

*I would argue it's more diligent to gather more information besides the quantitative data for the entire neighbourhood. I could imagine you would want to check the quantitative output through qualitative research based on the experiences of residents for example. That is the correct thing to do before deciding on a blissful profile of one street considering only quantitative data.*

This quote, is contrastingly enough also confirmed by the municipality themselves. As they earlier indicated that they could give input for urban planning, the municipality also states: *“results of the district profiles should be used as foundation and vantage point from which a conversation can be started with involved partners of the municipality and residents”* (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2014, pp. 3), implying that solely these numbers alone require some conversation with involved parties before being taken as sound foundation for plans.

Additionally respondents unanimously indicated that the policy decision regarding their neighbourhood (i.e. demolition) was made based on data they did not understand in the context of their neighbourhood or saw as fundamentally false. A CI leader (resp. 4) stated:

*The decision to demolish these buildings (in Tweebosbuurt) was made because these houses are not future proof according to the city council. While they have been renovated in the 80s and are more spacious and generally in better shape than the ones in the Fazantstraat.*

Furthermore, a resident (resp. 3) claimed that the official numbers that were indicated in the letter could not be applied to her street: *“the numbers and the image that these numbers produce on our street does not correspond with the actual situation [...] these numbers are surely an indication of the entire neighbourhood but not fully applicable on our street”*. The numbers that were communicated to the residents and (sub)sequentially to the CI leaders therefore led to some disbelief and feelings of injustice and unfairness on the policy or urban planning decision itself. Another resident (resp. 2) illustrates these feelings: *“We saw the reasons through which they formulated their plans. My initial response was how is this possible? Reasons they introduced were absolute nonsense”*.

Additionally, some of the indicators that are being used in the district profiles are somewhat contested. One of the indicators that impacts the liveability of a neighbourhood is the presence of people from different ethnological backgrounds relatively recently moved into Rotterdam. This is coupled directly to the expectation whether a resident can express himself or herself in Dutch and understand the language: *“Objective indicators that capture language capacities are unavailable. Therefore, we use background characteristics such as level of education and time of residence here in the Netherlands”* Gemeente Rotterdam, 2014 pp. 23). A consequence of this is thus that residents with recent foreign backgrounds and low perceived education negatively impact the indicator of *Capacities* of the district profiles, lowering the eventual score.

This method is highly contested and also the implications of methods like these were heavily criticised by Rajagopal et al. (2021, pp. 8): *“In Rotterdam South a significant proportion of the residents are migrants or have a minority and immigrant background. This may impact discriminatory distinction, which impairs the exercise of the right to adequate housing”*

All residents and CI leaders experienced these same feelings towards the use of data and the way in which this data was accurate in their perception. General consensus exists among the respondents, regardless of the case, that the way in which data was collected and applied on the neighbourhood was not representative and consequently significantly impacted the way in which these respondents regarded the policy outcome as unfair or unjust, something that also was seen by Rajagopal et al. (2021).

Additionally, the policymaker (resp. 1) stated that: *“the signals of residents that said that they couldn’t identify their street with the district profiles that were used as motivation for the plans are signals in which the municipality could have done more to investigate these concerns”*. Indicating with this quote that also the legitimacy of the policy outcome is somewhat negatively impacted by the current usage of the data as foundation to make decisions. In none of the policy documents are any implications or suggestions mentioned for the legitimacy implications the current strategy has on the policy outcome legitimacy.

### 4.3.3. Conclusion

The first empirical sub question entailed the question of ‘how top-down urban planning influences the experienced policy legitimacy of the involved stakeholders’. As can be concluded from the empirical evidence as mentioned earlier, we see that both throughput legitimacy and output legitimacy are deemed mostly illegitimate by the majority of the respondents. No specific deviations were found between both cases.

Experienced throughput illegitimacy mostly can be attributed to what respondents call the lack of human values, which closely relates to the feeling of being overlooked and



disregarded or seen as unimportant by the authorities (the housing corporation and/or the municipality). Second, this can be attributed to the lack of participation for citizens while they would deem this fitting and even necessary.

Top-down urban planning as experienced therefore seems to negatively affect both of these aspects which ultimately results in an experience of throughput illegitimacy. Policy documents and the policymaker (resp. 1) also underline the need for the presence of both concepts to establish throughput legitimacy, however, citizens did not experience this from the policymakers.

Experienced output illegitimacy mostly can be attributed to what respondents indicate as the inapplicability or irrelevance of the supporting data that was used to support the policy decision. All respondents regardless of the case indicate that the usage of quantitative data and specifically the district profiles are not adequate for making these kinds of (re)development plans. While the policy documents do not question this method specifically in terms of illegitimacy or representativeness, the policymaker (resp. 1) specifically acknowledged the questionability of the vital role of this tool for future projects.

## 4.4. Citizen initiatives

As described in the previous paragraph, respondents experienced low legitimacy or even illegitimacy in output and throughput. Deduced from interviews, it however also appeared that CI leaders felt initiated to start and operate a CI. Residents also felt more inclined to become more active in their neighbourhood. To explain this phenomenon accurately, I will discuss how CI leaders became motivated to form and operate a CI, how residents feel inclined to become more active, and what the influence was and is of this CI.

### 4.4.1. Motivation and operation of citizen initiatives

In the interviews, CI leaders indicated that they became active due to the fact that they were dissatisfied with either the process of the policy formulation or potential outcomes of the policy itself. A CI leader (resp. 6) explains his main motivator by looking at the process side: *“The decision was communicated like this and the municipality gave the residents no chance to go somewhere to discuss. That is a real shame [...] so we looked into organising some kind of protest to assist these residents”*.

Whereas another CI leader (resp. 10) became more triggered through the policy outcomes and the implications that these outcomes accompanied:

*The policy was formulated due to the negative associations that people had with the Afrikaanderwijk, one of which was the large presence of immigrants. I could not believe*

*what I read... An immigrant? That is what I am. Is the policy formulated to get rid of me?  
Well this immigrant will show you.*

And was also supported by yet another CI leader (resp. 4): *“I took action because I read the plans and thought. They can’t do this, this is not a solution!”*. These two quotes illustrate some of the sentiment and can explain some of the incentive for people to become more active or eventually become CI leaders. However, most of the empirical findings as to why CIs were formed or citizens took initiative any other way to become more active can be attributed to the feeling they had on how the decision was taken.

A resident (resp. 8) indicated that the way in which the decision was taken was the largest motivator to become more active: *“the way in which the decision was taken, has motivated me to become active in the tenants sounding board of Vestia, more so than the actual decision itself”*. While another resident (resp. 9) supplemented this by saying: *“People really felt offended, the audacity that the authorities had to pass them in this process. That was for a lot of people a trigger to resist in any way”*. A citation that was also confirmed by yet another resident (resp. 2): *“If they would have included the people more than they did and the outcome would’ve stayed the same, I think that residents such as myself would’ve had much less suspicion.”*

The expert (resp. 7) exclaimed her suspicion as to why : *“I think that people who felt treated badly by the municipality and housing corporation triggered some kind of fighting spirit in residents and eventual pretty prominent faces of the opposing voices”*.

While the large majority of the respondents thus indicate that their resistance is a product of the feeling they experienced by being sidelined on such an important topic for themselves, the policymaker (resp. 1) experienced initially that people resisted this way due to the decision itself: *“The decision to demolish existing houses is obviously a very unpopular one, this will always trigger people to resist. This can be attributed largely to the Not-In-My-Backyard principle”*. However, also this respondent acknowledged that also the process towards the policy decision was of vital importance which sparked resistance among citizens: *“The criticism that residents were not invalid. Urban development is mostly a process which happens in cooperation with those who live there, that didn’t happen now. I can understand how that led to resistance.”*

#### 4.4.2. Conclusion

To answer the subquestion ‘how can the emergence of CIs be explained by looking at this experienced legitimacy of stakeholders?’ We can conclude that while eventual policy itself or the decision that was made triggered some kind of resistance, most of the reason for citizens

to become more active and or organise themselves into a CI relates to the feeling that respondents got by not being included in the decision making process.

While the message that their houses were going to be demolished definitely impacted the way in which people wanted to organise themselves, it concerns their living environment after all, this seems to be moderating the larger relation: the way in which they felt that the process was undertaken without consultation of themselves.

Moreover, the throughput illegitimacy that citizens (CI leaders and residents) experienced directly impacted the emergence of CI's in a positive way. Output illegitimacy that was experienced, impacted this relation and drove people to organise themselves into a CI even more.

#### 4.4.3. Effects of citizen initiatives

Now that the motivation for the rise of CIs is explained, the outcomes of CIs and the effects that they bring will be highlighted. Through interviews, respondents indicated mostly to see or experience effect of CIs through two factors, 1) the effect of CIs on top-down urban planning efforts in the current projects but also in the looming future; and 2) the effect of CIs on the eventual perceived legitimacy.

##### 4.4.3.1. Effect on top-down urban planning

Primarily residents and CI leaders, regardless of the case, indicated some hope and expectation that their efforts would have some substantial result in future projects regarding urban planning and the way in which this would be shaped. Expectations generally consisted from the feeling that top-down efforts would be toned down in the future and more emphasis would be laid on inclusion of CIs and residents in creating urban policies and planning. One resident (resp. 9) indicates: *“The counterpower through the resistance, I hope and also think a bit that it made some changes [...] change is in the air. I think in future projects there would be more room for counterpower”*. while also a CI leader (resp. 10) said to experience that their CI created some momentum for the degree to which political leaders and policymakers deemed citizens important for urban development plans in the future:

*Recht op de Stad really now has some back door to politicians and we get actively invited in discussions on future plans, the same goes for housing corporations. I feel like we have some momentum to change the way of work to a more inclusive one, valuing each stakeholder and his or her opinion.*

This is a claim that further is strengthened by the quote from another resident (resp. 2). She stated that expectation was that their protest successfully ensured some pivotal role in future

projects and urban planning at large: *“I think that the process [of urban planning] will be structurally different. In our neighbourhood we now are some kind of a pilot I think for the municipality to see how it can be done differently”*.

These expectations were also made by the expert (resp. 7): *“Obviously the city council is intending on making some changes from top-down ideas on urban planning to a more bottom-up approach. Giving more attention to citizens. The nota ‘Wijk aan Zet’ they made is a good example of this”*. With this, the expert (resp. 7) indicates that a shift in importance of citizens is imminent in their own urban environment. Looking into the nota of Wijk aan Zet, published in the late stages of the frictions in both of these cases, we see also the reason of the initiating councilwoman to propose this plan:

*In past years we spoke to many local actors in neighbourhoods. In these meetings, a lot of positive energy played roles but also many times frustration and annoyance were voiced regarding the plans of the municipality [...] the current way of work is unable to move with the ideas of residents in neighbourhoods, that is why we need to reflect on our governance model for making decisions in neighbourhoods.*

*Gemeenteraad Rotterdam (2021, pp. 1)*

While this nota does not specifically relate to the top-down urban planning environment, it acknowledges the frustration and annoyance of citizens on the way of policy making in neighbourhoods and states that the municipality should look for new innovative ways to reduce this negative perception. In a larger perspective we could argue that counterpower therefore influenced some of the perceptions of the policymaker with respect to policy making in neighbourhoods. This can also be applied in the case of top-down policy making in the urban environment.

The policymaker (resp. 1) also indicates that the rise of CIs are likely to affect the way of work in future projects regarding urban planning:

*Numerous times this top-down way of work was very successful in past projects. Now we see growing discontent and uprising of citizens throughout various cases. I think it would be a natural decision to look into the possibilities on how to change the policy process on these kinds of projects.*

CI leaders and residents felt that the presence and voice of CI(s) will likely contribute to a change or different vantage point through which future urban planning efforts will be shaped by the authorities. The expert indicated that this is likely due to the city council’s nota in which new roles for neighbourhoods and citizens are named and attributed, which is also

confirmed by the nota itself and the policymaker involved in urban planning efforts. The presence of CIs with a certain degree of counterpower in the area of urban planning are therefore deemed likely to have affected negatively the likelihood in which top-down urban planning efforts will occur in future urban plans.

#### 4.4.3.2. Effect on eventual perceived legitimacy

In terms of outcome legitimacy respondents indicate to see a change in the legitimacy as they themselves perceive this. A CI leader (resp. 5) indicated: *“We see a change in scale of these projects. Since Crooswijk, most of these projects are now being done building block by building block. That is a result from the enormous uprising and has made the policy somewhat better”*. Through this citation the respondent indicates that the policy outcome was influenced by the involvement of the CI and that resulted in a better outcome.

Also however in throughput legitimacy respondents indicated that CIs influenced the experienced fairness or justness of the policy process. A resident (resp. 3) said on this topic: *“After our protest, I feel like something has changed, also in our relationship with the municipality. We now truly work together towards a new plan with the policymakers. I feel like we are being taken much more seriously now.”* This feeling is also acknowledged by a CI leader (resp. 10): *“They [the municipality and housing corporation] really listen to us now. I feel like now we are part of the discussion [...] and our initiative really ensured that new position in that discussion”*.

CIs thus seem to have had positive impact not only on the output legitimacy, but also has contributed to higher experienced throughput legitimacy. That throughput and output legitimacy are interconnected and equally important in this relation can be derived from the quote from a resident (resp. 8): *“Now that they [the CI] are involved, I feel more that me and my neighbours have more of a possibility to think and decide also on these important topics. I feel like now we can also somewhat influence the decisions”*. With this quote, the presence of the CI on the stage contributed to the feeling of being included which ultimately resulted into feelings of justice and fairness on the process but also through that the expectation and hope of impact on the outcome of the policy.

While residents and CI leaders are likely to experience higher legitimacy as a result of the presence of a CI, the policymaker did not necessarily experience this and additionally would see some difficulties in the policy process with the involvement of CIs:

*It is extremely difficult due to very conflicting perceptions. Also you could ask questions of how representative a CI is for the general view of an entire urban project, in the Fazantstraat, only 21 people participated to speak in the commission while the plan was for*

*approximately 220 houses. You might ask whether the influence they had is thus a representative distribution.*

#### 4.4.4. Conclusion

Now that the effects of CIs have been displayed, we can shortly answer the last empirical subquestion of ‘How can CIs influence the top-down urban policy process and what are the implications for experienced legitimacy of stakeholders?’.

As mentioned in earlier paragraphs, CIs seem to have had significant effect on the way in which involved residents and CI leaders experienced legitimacy (throughput and output) on urban planning in a positive way. These findings are generalizable for the entire population of CI leaders and residents. The policymaker however did not fully agree on this point where questions were put of the representativeness that CIs have for the entire population subjected to urban transformations.

Where all respondents however did agree upon entailed the fact that the involvement and resistance or counterpower negatively affected the likelihood in which future top-down urban planning efforts would be made in the context of Rotterdam. All respondents agreed to the expectation that the projects as discussed in these cases but also other past projects have generated much negative attention that the viability of top-down urban planning is contested among all respondents and policy documents.

### 4.5. Contextual factors and impact

Now that all the empirical sub questions have been answered, some key findings need to be shared that were a product of the conducted interviews and seem of relevance for the context in which these findings were made. Through conducted interviews three aspects were found that recurred often in the analysis of the transcripts which might be explanatory to some of the mechanisms as illustrated in the conceptual framework so far: housing market; political climate and identification; historical comparison and references.

#### 4.5.1. Housing market

Currently there is a national shortage of housing by 330.000 houses. Various respondents indicated that the lack of adequate housing immediately impacted the way in which some respondents felt outcome illegitimacy. The expert (resp. 7) proclaims: *“The average resident gets in times like these not really much when they get bought out of their own homes by the municipality, definitely not in times like these”*, a feeling which is also in the context of social housing confirmed by a resident (resp. 9): *“There is no adequate alternative for people*

*when their house gets demolished. Now they pay 500 euros a month for a large house, which will, in the most advantageous scenario, rise to 750 for a new and smaller house.”*

Due to the context of the current housing market it is therefore more difficult for people to get, if their house will be demolished, a qualitative same place for the same amount of money. The policymaker (resp. 1) also acknowledges this:

*Residences and the land they're on have experienced an unbelievable growth in value the past few years. When the Woonvisie 2030 or the Uitvoeringsplan NPRZ was composed, nobody counted on this. I can imagine that this also might have been a reason for people to act so intensely on the current plans.*

These citations give a good example of the general consensus as found throughout all of the analysed data. Moreover, it therefore seems likely that the current situation of the housing market in Rotterdam negatively impacted the way in which the output legitimacy of the plans was perceived.

#### 4.5.2. Politics and political identification

Another factor that recurred in many of the conducted interviews that appeared to be of large importance was the degree to which respondents experienced the political climate as present in the city council and the degree to which these politicians and aldermen (could) identify themselves with the population, according to the respondents.

The feeling exists among CI leaders and residents that the politicians are not able to identify themselves anymore with the people they make policy for as illustrated by a CI leader (resp. 4): *“The current coalition in the city council is out of touch with the common man. A segmentation has risen between education and income. They don't understand that if the garbageman is gone, that it will definitely stink in the city”.*

This element, the feeling that politicians are out of touch with the people they made policy for, is an element that was recurring in many of the interviews. A resident (resp. 8) stated: *“In all these plans and misery that everyone went through, we didn't see the politicians responsible for all of this. They don't come into the neighbourhood and make contact with us. Yes, only when elections are just around the corner”.*

This experience is explained by yet another resident (resp. 9): *“We live in current local political times with a certain element of reciprocal alienation. The politicians are estranged from certain groups of citizens but also the other way around”.* This alienation or estrangement of local politicians was experienced primarily by residents and CI leaders throughout cases.

This feeling respondents had resulted in the experience that they felt that the plans were not made for them and had another agenda than solely helping the current residents. A resident (resp. 9) indicated for example: *“They [the municipality] just want to get rid of us. They want to make this neighbourhood yuppie-friendly. They want us labourers gone”*.

The feeling that these plans were not made for the current residents in both cases was recurring in other interviews as well. A CI leader (resp. 12) stated:

*They argue that with the plans we will ‘be better’. Why do we need to get better? Is forcefully moving people from their homes and dispersing them across the city beneficial for us? [...] It is merely that this place has become more interesting to live in, so political parties such as CDA and VVD now want their own people in these neighbourhoods.*

To some extent these feelings recurred in multiple interviews. Policy analysis however indicated a contrasting viewpoint. Analysis on the NPRZ (2019) policy file had as main take away point in which specifically was named that the changes that were made and going to be made in both cases are done for the current people in Rotterdam South: *“Residents in Rotterdam South have a central position [...] the program is aimed at strengthening the position of residents in Rotterdam South, together with people from the neighbourhoods”* (NPRZ, 2019, pp. 9). Political decisions to execute the NPRZ, thus seem to do so with keeping the current residents in a central daylight.

Woonvisie (2030) however, states that one of the major incentives to transform urban areas in Rotterdam is to attract new ‘young potentials’ and students: *“One of the major aspects of the marketing strategy of Rotterdam is to attract students and young potentials [...] we intensify efforts together with housing corporations to transform and create more adequate housing for this target audience”* (Gemeenteraad Rotterdam, 2016, pp. 34).

Where the NPRZ on the one hand imply that the plans are made from the perspective of the current residents, the Woonvisie implies to primarily lay emphasis on attracting a new kind of citizen towards the city. CI leaders and residents mostly agree on the perspective of the second situation as mentioned in the policy documents and feel little connection or understanding of local politicians, mostly associated with the current municipal coalition.

Therefore, the political climate and the experienced political identification that respondents feel, is likely to affect the degree to which legitimacy for the policy is experienced since they did not feel compassion or understanding in the process of policy formulation, nor do they feel that the politicians are capable of representing their needs as they feel a degree of alienation between themselves and these politicians. A CI leader (resp. 12) formulated this clearly: *“Initially we thought the city council would just say this couldn’t*



*be the plan as intended and that they would understand our frustration, but they did it anyway [...] they don't care about us".*

### 4.5.3. Historical comparison and references

Finally, the last contextual influence that can be identified as derived from the data as collected entails the historical comparison and references that people had in the context of urban planning and development throughout the years. In practically all of the interviews, references were made to different times when these kinds of projects worked quite differently in Rotterdam, the so-called 'Stadsvernieuwingsperiode' in the 80s and 90s of the previous century. During this period, residents were much more involved in the plans for neighbourhood (re)development in Rotterdam as respondents indicated en masse. A CI leader (resp. 5) indicated for example:

*It was so different in the 80s. I sat at the table and have learned so incredibly much about housing. Participation was really essential back then. Residents could come and actively design their own neighbourhood or street. It's a large difference as compared to the current situation".*

A CI leader (resp. 10) reminisced about this particular period and even idealised it as compared to the current situation: *"Public servants worked in the Stadsvernieuwingsperiode so much better. They really tried to tackle these issues with the residents themselves. It hurts me to see where we're now if I compare it with back then".*

In practically all of the interviews conducted with CI leaders or residents that experienced the Stadsvernieuwingsperiode, we see that they compared this period to the current situation and process of how things are arranged with some kind of melancholy. The expert (resp. 7) explains this as follows: *"People that experienced the Stadsvernieuwingsperiode and that you interviewed probably idealise that period quite a lot. I also have heard these stories and also was present during this period while I also think, let's not romanticise this period."*

CI leaders and residents thus seem to have been affected by their, according to the expert, somewhat romanticised image of the Stadsvernieuwingsperiode and the seemingly more participative process of which urban (re)development plans were made.

## 5. Conclusion

Through qualitative policy document analysis and semi-structured interviews based on two different cases regarding top-down urban planning efforts in Rotterdam, answers were formulated as to how these top-down urban planning efforts influenced the involved stakeholders' experienced legitimacy of these plans. Consequently, this research has looked into the effect that the experienced legitimacy might have on the formulation and operation of citizen initiatives (CIs) and what the effects of these might be on the experienced legitimacy and top-down urban planning efforts. Moreover, in this research, an answer to the following research question was formulated: *How is legitimacy of top-down urban planning experienced by involved stakeholders and what role do citizen initiatives have in this context?*

Derived from the interviews, it appears that all respondents experienced top-down urban planning efforts. Primarily CI leaders and residents proclaimed to have negative associations with top-down urban planning, an effect that was moderated by the experienced lack of transparency of the plans and the nature and timing of communication on these. All respondents indicated however that top-down urban planning efforts negatively impacted the experienced throughput and output legitimacy. Lack of transparency and nature/timing of communication on the plans appeared to be an extra moderator on this already existing relationship. Experienced throughput illegitimacy mostly was attributed to the experience that respondents had regarding the feeling that human values were disregarded in the policy making process and the discontent stemming from the lack of desired participation. Experienced output illegitimacy however could be attributed to the negative perception respondents had towards the data or documentation that was used as support for the policy decision. And the feeling that the results of this data or arguments in favour of the redevelopment plans implied that the current residents (working class) had to make place for the new 'elite'. While this relationship proved to be strongest with CI leader(s) or resident(s), also the policymaker could imagine illegitimacy on these topics.

Additionally, contextual factors were found that influenced the degree to which respondents experienced legitimacy. Data indicated that the current housing market in Rotterdam influenced the experienced output legitimacy negatively. While the political context and the experienced lack of identification of politicians or political leaders influenced experienced legitimacy negatively. These findings could only be generalised for the CI leaders and residents themselves.

The negative experienced legitimacy consequentially impacted the way in which citizens wanted to organise themselves. Experienced throughput illegitimacy especially affected the rise of CIs as residents and eventual leaders indicated en masse to be most

motivated to change the experienced policy process. Output legitimacy, or the decision that was made also impacted the rise of CIs, but served more as a catalysator of the main relationship between throughput illegitimacy and the rise of CI. Hence, experienced output illegitimacy can be concluded to serve more as a moderator for that relationship. Data collected from the interview of the policymaker and the policy documents confirmed the strong relationship between experienced throughput illegitimacy of residents and eventual CI leaders and the rise of CIs. However, the moderating role of output illegitimacy as derived from the conducted interviews with the residents and CI leaders were weaker in the interview of policymaker and available policy documentation.

The emergence and operations of CIs consequently had effects on the perceived legitimacy of the respondents as interviewed but also had some further implications for top-down urban planning efforts in the future or current cases. CI leaders and residents primarily experienced more throughput and output legitimacy after a CI stepped in or opposed the plans. The policymaker claimed this also had implications for the representativeness of the policy itself which could ultimately lead to feelings of lower urban policy legitimacy from the policymaker. All respondents however, regardless the role, indicated that counterpower that CIs brought and the discussion in which they established themselves, affected their perceived likeliness of the usage of top-down urban planning in future projects negatively.

As a result derived from the conducted interviews and policy analysis, the following conceptual model can be defined, as already gradually explained in chapter 4. While the conceptual model differs visually quite a lot from the conceptual model as established in chapter 2 (figure 1), the core elements of both conceptual models are similar and corresponding. The changes that were made in the conceptual model as composed below in figure 5, all concern contextual influences that were discovered to explain some more of the relations or perceptions that stakeholders had. Also, some of the concepts, like throughput and output legitimacy were more defined and conceptualised as to the deeper experienced layer of where they came from. This resulted in the following final conceptual model.

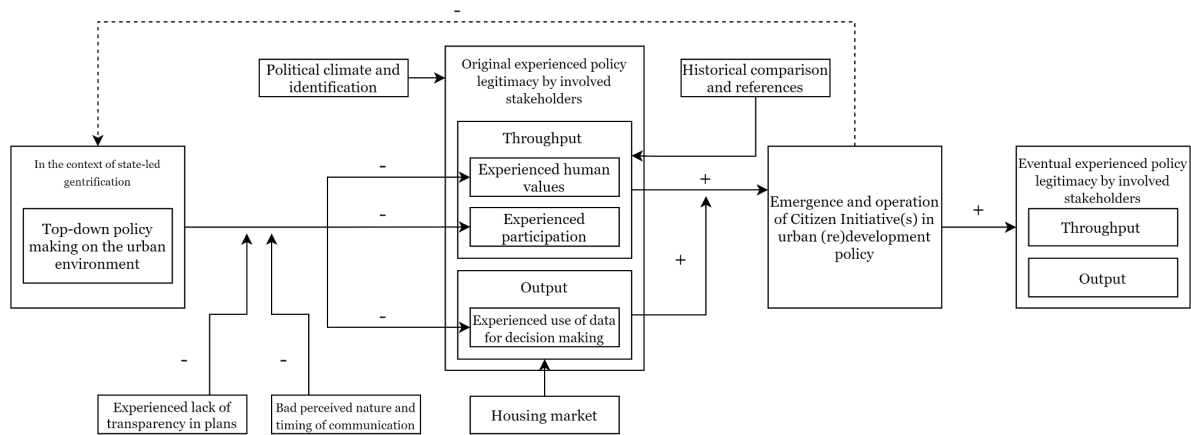


Figure 5. Complete conceptual framework, as a complete result from conducted research

Concluding can be said that top-down urban planning has negative effects on the perceived legitimacy of these urban plans. This results in the rise or strengthening of CIs. CIs consequently positively impacts perceived legitimacy of the policy after they have involved themselves or tried to according to residents and CI leaders. This effect was not visible with policymakers. CIs however do seem to influence the likeliness that top-down urban planning will be used again in future projects, therewith changing the way of policy making in the urban environment.

## 6. Discussion

In this research, semi-structured interviews were held with important stakeholders in the area of urban development and top-down urban planning in two cases in Rotterdam South. Consequently, these interviews were supplemented by analysing a variety of policy documents as portrayed in table 3, chapter 3. The goal of this research entailed to find out what the influence was of top-down urban policy making or urban planning on the perceived legitimacy of these stakeholders and to investigate what role citizen initiatives played in this context. To study this, two cases were selected: the Fazantstraat in Carnisse, and the Tweebosbuurt in Afrikaanderwijk. Between these cases, similarities were found in the initial urban planning process, the majority of the involved stakeholders and perception of these stakeholders. However, some key differences were also noticeable between these cases as described in table 1, chapter 3. Despite these differences, the results are generalizable and applicable for both cases, there were no major deviations between both cases in terms of outcomes. Additionally, all respondents referred to other on-going or past urban plans elsewhere in Rotterdam with the same sentiment. Both of these reasons can be seen as proof that in case of repetition of this research in the context of top-down urban planning in Rotterdam the same results would be applicable when other cases would be selected within the city.

Despite this, there are some critical remarks that need further discussion attached to this research. Initially it was the intention of the research to conduct fifteen interviews in total, of these fifteen interviews, the original intention was to interview four policymakers involved in these cases. One policymaker for the municipality of Rotterdam and one policymaker of the housing corporation Vestia for the case Tweebosbuurt, and two policymakers for the municipality of Rotterdam for the case Fazantstraat. Despite repeated requests, only one policymaker wanted to cooperate in an interview, without being able to record the interview.

This lack of policymakers among the respondents naturally has implications for the validity of this research. To bridge this gap, policy documents were analysed to still ensure to include municipal perception in these cases. The policy documents however treated housing and policy making in the urban environment as more general themes without very specifically entering into detail about these specific cases as selected in this research. By using policy documents and the inability to adequately question involved policymakers of both projects in the same representativeness, the question could be posed whether the vision of the municipality or the policymakers of the municipality accurately is displayed.

This inability to find respondents on the side of the policymakers however, also has some implications within this research which already was verbally confirmed by the one

policymaker that did want to participate in the amended form. Both cases carry currently great societal discussion and also have some legal implications as some of the lawsuits are still ongoing. While writing this thesis, the United Nations has formally requested reconsideration of the municipality of Rotterdam regarding the demolition of Tweebosbuurt since it is considered a violation of human rights according to the special rapporteur of social housing. Bi-weekly, news items were released in national news channels regarding Tweebosbuurt or other related top-down urban planning cases in Rotterdam. During the period in which interviews were transcribed, a documentary aired regarding exactly these two cases on national television about citizen initiatives and their battle against top-down urban planning by the municipality. All this coverage implies the huge social discussion that was and still is ongoing on this topic, which also, set aside from the legal implications, has negative effects on the willingness of policymakers or advisors on this topic to talk to third parties about this process.

Aside from the critical remark regarding the representativeness of policymakers or advisors in this research, another critical comment can be made about the representativeness of the respondents as used in this research. Contacting and planning interviews with residents and CI leaders happened quite quickly and easily. These categories of respondents seemed eager to talk and reflect on their position and this conceptual model. However, the people that immediately want to tell their stories are generally speaking most likely to be the people that have strong feelings as a result of what they experienced. Additionally, in total 5 people were interviewed in either their role as resident or as CI leader, whereas the scale of each case consisted of 220 and 600 housing units. It is a legit question to ask whether therefore the sample of respondents in these categories are somewhat representative for the entire cases as discussed, since there is a risk that the loud minority might have been vital in determining results in this research following this argumentation.

From the interviews and policy analysis it appeared that top-down urban planning has negative effects on the perceived legitimacy of these urban plans. This results in the rise of CIs. CIs consequently positively impacts perceived legitimacy of the policy after they have involved themselves or tried to according to residents and CI leaders. This effect was not visible with policymakers. CIs however do seem to influence the likeliness that top-down urban planning will be used again in future projects, therewith changing the way of policy making in the urban environment. This result was largely in agreement with the result as derived from the theory as described in chapter two. The sole difference is that perceived output illegitimacy does not seem to have a direct relationship with the motivation to form a citizen initiative, but more seems to moderate the relationship between experienced throughput illegitimacy and that same motivation. Additionally on the conceptual framework

as derived from theory, this research further contributes some contextual and explaining moderating variables that explain some of the mechanisms a little more in depth.

The identification of these factors provides opportunities for creating more inclusive and participatory forms of urban planning in neighbourhoods in Rotterdam and perhaps other cities. To put this in a more specific example: in Fazantstraat the municipality now is looking at how to compose a local housing vision for the neighbourhood in close cooperation with current residents. Findings from this research could be implemented by policymakers, in inclusive urban planning efforts to ensure maximisation of eventual policy legitimacy, which arguably could have positive implications for the relation between the municipality and citizens and therewith might restore some of the damage that the trust perception has received from negative experiences CI leaders and residents indicated in this research.

In case of future research it would be advised to replicate this research with a significant augmentation in sample size, considering various validity concerns as raised earlier in this chapter. Additionally, a suggestion would be for future research to solely focus on the experiences of policymakers or advisors regarding this topic. Due to the fact that this research has not been able to adequately capture their personal experience, future research might add to this and might be able to contest the conceptual framework as derived from these results or complement this.

Also, the role of politicians and local political parties would be advised to study further in future research. Through conducted interviews, local politics seemed a hot topic and was named quite a lot. The role of these politicians and their experiences might be useful to further look into in future research for ensuring a more complete picture. Furthermore, it would be advised to further look into the context in which the city of Rotterdam is really unique in the generalisability of these results. It would therefore be useful to compare the findings of this study to another city and a (perhaps slightly) different context in comparative research.

Next to a case study between various cities, it might also be interesting to conduct a longitudinal research over other top-down urban planning efforts in the context of Rotterdam such as the one in Gerdesia-Midden. By doing so, the entire process can be captured accurately and possible shifting perspectives from stakeholders could be identified, pinpointing an exact image of 'turning' points and 'key' events as they progress.

Also, it might be interesting to conduct a more historical comparative research between the context of policy making in the urban environment in the times of the so-called 'Stadsvernieuwingsperiode', and current urban planning efforts. This period seemed to be of importance in the recollection of some of the respondents. This way changes in procedure in urban planning can be identified and put into perspective, but also can shed more light on the evolution of gentrification in Rotterdam. Rotterdam used to be a working class city, and

many of the respondents as interviewed reminisced that Rotterdam 'used to stand up for their citizens'. It might therefore be of more interest to look into the gentrification context of Rotterdam and the state-led nature of this more in detail in a descriptive manner.

Additionally, this research has touched upon the materialisation of the paradox of participation in the urban environment, in particular the city of Rotterdam. This paradox ties into the very notion of the normativity in which modern democracies and its policy makers deem participation as somewhat vital for policy legitimacy, and is wanted by those subjected to these policies. But also shows the municipal desire for state-led urban planning efforts in the context of Rotterdam. It might be interesting for future studies to look more into this paradox to be able to explain this seemingly difficult topic better in order for more valued urban policies by all involved stakeholders.

Finally, this research focused on the throughput and output legitimacy as experienced by stakeholders. However, as theory indicated, input legitimacy can be identified as another type of legitimacy which refers to the degree of opportunities for citizens to participate in decision-making processes. While this concept has not been elaborated upon in this research, it might be relevant for future research to take input legitimacy into account. A result of this research is that the rise of CIs negatively impacts the likeliness that top-down urban planning efforts will be done in the same manner in the future, possibly increasing space for citizens to participate in this process. In doing so, it seems that the concept of input legitimacy will be touched, taking the close connection between throughput and input legitimacy into account.



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# Appendix I: Operationalisation of concepts

Concept	Definition	Dimension	Indicator
Top-down urban planning	<p>“A government initiated process or plan in which a neighbourhood is targeted to socially transform. This is tried to be achieved by bringing policies in place regarding the urban context, aimed at attracting higher-income people in these often lower-income neighbourhoods.”</p> <p>(Derived from a combination of Glass, 1964; Uitermark, 2007; Lees 2008)</p>	Government initiated process or plan to transform a neighbourhood	1. The degree to which the government formulates the plan for redevelopment of neighbourhoods.
			2. The degree to which the government organises the process of involved actors in execution of this plan
		Element of displacement of residents	3. The degree to which an authoritative existing residents experience displacement (as defined by Lees, 2008)
			4. The degree to which authoritative bodies wants to attract a <i>different</i> category of residents
			5. The degree to which an authoritative body wants more social mixing (as defined by Lees)
		Decision-making by authoritative body and involvement of decision-making actors by authoritative body	6. The degree to which an authoritative body wants has final say in decision making
			7. The degree to which an authoritative body decides the role of external stakeholders in process
			8. The degree to which an authoritative body decides the selection of stakeholders in the process.
			9. The degree to which an authoritative body manages the stakeholders in the process.
Policy legitimacy	<p>“The degree to which the stakeholders deem the (formation of) (top-down) urban policy as appropriate, desirable, proper and just.”</p>	Perceived throughput legitimacy	10. The degree to which the stakeholders perceive the policy formulation process as desirable
			11. The degree to which the stakeholders perceive the policy formulation process as appropriate
			12. The degree to which the stakeholders perceive the policy

	(Derived from Tyler, 2006)		formulation process as proper
			13. The degree to which the stakeholders perceive the policy formulation process as just
		Perceived output legitimacy	14. The degree to which the stakeholders perceive the urban planning outcome itself process as desirable
			15. The degree to which the stakeholders perceive the urban planning outcome itself process as appropriate
			16. The degree to which the stakeholders perceive the urban planning outcome itself process as proper
			17. The degree to which the stakeholders perceive the urban planning outcome itself process as just
Citizen initiatives	Bottom-up initiatives created by involved citizens with the goal to oppose existing governmental decisions or plans where they (according to their own beliefs) were excluded from and develop actively alternative plans to facilitate a new outcome and get themselves involved in the process.  (Derived from a combination of Thaler & Levin-Keitel, 2015; and Edelenbos, 2017)	Citizen initiative to oppose earlier made decisions	18. The degree to which citizens experienced their participation was desired in the past / the degree to which policymakers deem citizen participation as important
			19. The degree to which citizens felt activated to <i>do something</i> / the degree to which policymakers saw
			20. The degree to which citizens had the feeling they could change something
		Citizen initiatives to ensure participation in the future	21. The degree to which citizens experienced that they were <i>being listened to</i>
			22. The degree to which citizens experienced difficulties finding a forum to engage in conversation with authoritative bodies
			23. The degree to which citizens experience themselves in future urban policies

## Appendix II: Topic list

Questions	Topics
<p>How do you experience housing in the Tweebosbuurt/Vogelbuurt (Fazantstraat) in its current state and why</p>	<p>Current experiences with neighbourhood / general feelings towards current state (i.e. also indicates affinity)</p>
<p>How do you feel towards the definitive plans of demolition and construction of new housing and why? How would you describe this in terms of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Just (eerlijk/netjes)</li> <li>- Desired (gewenst)</li> <li>- Appropriate (passend)</li> <li>- Proper (acceptabel)</li> </ul> <p>How have these definitive plans affected the way in which you wanted to take action? /</p> <p>How do you see the way in which citizens responded to the eventual plans? (for policymakers and experts)</p>	<p>Current experiences and feelings on policy making in the urban environment</p> <p>Legitimacy of the policy outcome</p> <p>Policy outcome effects on need to mobilize or take collective action into a CI</p> <p>Perception on CI as a response to policy outcome</p> <p>Legitimacy of CI into plans</p>
<p>How would you describe your own role in these plans? How or what was your involvement?</p>	<p>Throughput legitimacy of top-down policy making in the urban environment</p>
<p>How would you describe the division of roles between the people involved in the making of decisions to demolish and build new housing in terms of...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Just (eerlijk/netjes)</li> <li>- Desired (gewenst)</li> <li>- Appropriate (passend)</li> <li>- Proper (acceptabel)</li> </ul> <p>What do these concepts mean to you?</p>	<p>Throughput legitimacy and CI establishment or</p> <p>Need for other roles than assigned in top-down policy making</p>
<p>Does your current role differ from the role you desired?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If so, how?</li> <li>- If not, why not?</li> </ul> <p>(Experts only reflect on the role of the stakeholders or the way they see the division thereof)</p> <p>Has this impacted the way in which you wanted to take action?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes, how?</li> <li>- No, why not?</li> </ul>	<p>Throughput legitimacy and CI establishment</p> <p>CI establishment reason to take mobilize themselves</p>
<p>How have, in your experience, had the actions that citizens took in the plans affected...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The plan itself</li> </ul>	<p>CI operation and implications for throughput/output legitimacy</p>

- The way in which the plan was constructed
  - *Indicators such as: in communication, transparency, feeling of being more included, feeling of being taken seriously*

How do you feel should this have had more/less impact and why?

## Appendix III: Codetree

1. Top-down urban planning	1.1. Role assignment	1.1.1. Role valuation
		1.1.2. Wish for different role
		1.1.3. Municipality main actor
		1.1.4. Housing corporation main actor
		1.1.5. Citizens main actor
	1.2. Communication	1.2.1. Timing of communication
		1.2.2. Nature of communication
	1.3. Transparency	1.3.1. Decision came as surprise
		1.3.2. Information (a)symmetry
2. Experienced legitimacy	2.1. Throughput legitimacy	2.1.1. Human values
		2.1.2. Nature of process (un)fair/(un)just
		2.1.3. Participation valuation
		2.1.4. Complexity in process
	2.2. Output legitimacy	2.2.1. Nature of (un)fair/(un)just of decision
		2.2.2. Data application
		2.2.3. Complexity in outcomes
		2.2.4. Confirmation bias
3. Citizen initiative	3.1. Motivation	3.1.1. (Dis)satisfaction with process
		3.1.2. (Dis)satisfaction with outcome
		3.1.3. (Dis)trust in authorities
	3.2. Operation	3.2.1. Professionalisation
		3.2.2. Community building
	3.3. Effects	3.3.1. Power or role shift
		3.3.2. Outcome influence
		3.3.3. Process influence
		3.3.4. (Il)legitimate representative
	4. Contextual	4.1. Housing market

factors	4.2. Political opportunism	
	4.3. COVID-19	
	4.4. Alienation	
	4.5. Historical comparison	
	4.6. Identification	

## Appendix IV: Code application and occurrence

Code	Count	Example quote
Role valuation	9	<p><i>“So we have the feeling that we have created some kind of momentum that was in a role talking to other stakeholders.”</i></p> <p><i>“I feel very involved and engaged, and being taken seriously.”</i></p>
Wish for different role	46	<p><i>“I wish they would’ve involved citizens from the beginning”</i></p> <p><i>“I feel we should be sitting at the table where the decisions are being taken.”</i></p>
Municipality main actor	52	<p><i>“I feel like the municipality was the orchestrator of this plan.”</i></p> <p><i>“The municipality is responsible for gathering information and initiating communication with us.”</i></p>
Housing corporation main actor	33	<p><i>“Housing corporations Woonstad, Vestia, Woonbron and Havensteder are, with more than half of the entire housing ownership in Rotterdam South, important partners for the NPRZ.”</i></p> <p><i>“Vestia was in charge of holding brief meetings with tenants but critical questions remained unanswered.”</i></p>
Citizens main actor	20	<p><i>“NPRZ is there first and foremost for the residents in Rotterdam South.”</i></p> <p><i>“By ensuring that residents are the central point for our policy, we ensure going in the ‘right direction’.”</i></p>
Timing of communication	21	<p><i>“This letter was received by many of the residents right before the holiday, by total surprise.”</i></p> <p><i>“The timing of this communication, right before public holiday?! Very unbecoming. You don’t treat your own tenants this way.”</i></p>
Nature of communication	83	<p><i>“I myself am well educated and work for the national government, but even I had to read this letter thrice to somewhat understand it.”</i></p> <p><i>“You need to know what you communicate, how that is perceived by your target audience. That is vital for good communication.”</i></p>

Decision came as surprise	28	<p><i>“The Fazantstraat really impacted like a shockwave. By finding a letter in your mailbox like that. I can understand the surprise.”</i></p> <p><i>“We read the letter and immediately thought... No this can't be... The municipality couldn't have signed off on this right?!”</i></p>
Information (a)symmetry	44	<p><i>“Eventually, in court, we got the possibility to finally look into some of the underlying documentation of which their claims were built!”</i></p> <p><i>“Apparently, some of the arguments that were made were not researched well enough. The municipality could do more qualitative research in investigating these claims.”</i></p>
Human values	52	<p><i>“They don't look at the human lifes that are hidden behind these numbers!”</i></p> <p><i>“They should realise, you don't only destroy social housing, you destroy human lives!”</i></p>
Nature of process (un)fair/(un)just	56	<p><i>“That was a very strategic and unfair move of course. People didn't have the decent opportunity to defend themselves.”</i></p> <p><i>“You really noticed in the meetings with Vestia, that it was just a ploy. The decision was taken a long time ago and there was no true room for listening to our plans.”</i></p>
Participation valuation	83	<p><i>“Involvement of residents in an early stage of the process. That is what is needed!”</i></p> <p><i>“If you look at the NPRZ report, you read: we want to put residents first. Listen then to our needs!”</i></p>
Complexity in process	19	<p><i>“A lot of time went into this. I did not have any knowledge on this topic or how these decisions were taken.”</i></p> <p><i>“To really engage people to become active in this process is quite difficult. They have to want it themselves but also have to have some feeling of how it works.”</i></p>
Nature of (un)fair/(un)just of decision	48	<p><i>“The residents of this neighbourhood have a better plan than the housing corporation, it is cheaper, but still they carry on and are able to do so.”</i></p> <p><i>“You don't fix anything with demolition. The reasoning they have for fixing these problems is per definition not accurate.”</i></p>



Data application	81	<p><i>“I didn’t recognize the image they portrayed in the initial plans as communicated to us.”</i></p> <p><i>“They argued there was less social cohesion. How are they so sure about that? That doesn’t have to mean anything right?”</i></p>
Complexity in outcomes	31	<p><i>“Sure, but with demolishing every privately owned building, you’ll only ensure that more people will go to those sketchy landlords...”</i></p> <p><i>“They say, these houses are not meant to last 300 years. And sure, I mean I can imagine. But you cannot demolish an entire neighbourhood like that! Apparently this doesn’t work this way, we saw that in Crooswijk!”</i></p>
Confirmation bias	3	<p><i>“These numbers were only used as legitimation for the municipality to do ‘something’ with this neighbourhood.”</i></p> <p><i>“We could not easily gain access to people in the Fazantstraat through [Dutch] surveys. So we assumed a lot of East-European migrant workers lived here.”</i></p>
(Dis)satisfaction with process	49	<p><i>“People unanimously agreed that the way in which this decision was decided upon was very bad.”</i></p> <p><i>“You don’t play with people like that this way! People really felt threatened by how this process was organized.”</i></p>
(Dis)satisfaction with outcome	51	<p><i>“Aside from the homes: people probably will find their luck someplace else. But they shouldn’t forget. Thanks to their ‘ambition’ a lot of talented young people now will find their luck somewhere else that could’ve been of real value for this neighbourhood.”</i></p> <p><i>“I made a survey because I thought... I can’t be the only one who feels so strongly about this!”</i></p>
(Dis)trust in authorities	50	<p><i>“The housing corporations just want to sugar coat the people to ensure they have the final say in the end.”</i></p> <p><i>“Public opinion, and thus the city council, is nowadays that you have to be a petty criminal to live in social housing.”</i></p>
Professionalisation	34	<p><i>“If the SP didn’t come to assist us with general stuff, organising a CI would have been more difficult and long.”</i></p> <p><i>“Eventually, managing a CI is more about network</i></p>

		<i>management than actively protesting yourself.”</i>
Community building	46	<p><i>“Aboutaleb goes one or twice per week into the neighbourhood to chat with locals. That is very important to build social cohesion.”</i></p> <p><i>“The demolition has brought large actors within our group much closer to each other.”</i></p>
Power or role shift	51	<p><i>“You see that something changed. We now also actively get involved to see whether we want to participate.”</i></p> <p><i>“Recht op de Stad could be an excellent fit to strive for their participating members in a network with housing corporations and the municipality.”</i></p>
Outcome influence	50	<p><i>“That is one of the outcomes we managed to establish. Our message has come across to the general public.”</i></p> <p><i>“We really did something, because the municipality now looks for us to see how we can proceed together.”</i></p>
Process influence	50	<p><i>“Thanks to what we did we could experience the process and also influence it in a way that me and my neighbour for example could say what we thought and could ask questions.”</i></p> <p><i>“Now we are involved also in the data collection, so we were involved in making a new survey for the neighbourhood to get some general overview of experiences, different from the district profiles.”</i></p>
(Il)legitimate representative	25	<p><i>“In the Fazantstraat, 20 people contributed as speakers while it concerned 220 residences that were going to be demolished. You cannot generalise an image based on that representativeness.”</i></p> <p><i>“Surveys were conducted, but only 25% of the population also was a participant. Therefore you might ask questions to what extent this opinion is generalisable.”</i></p>
Housing market	51	<p><i>“It has proven to be difficult to get the same quality of housing for the same amount of money as when these plans were designed.”</i></p> <p><i>“We are in a situation in which 330000 housing units are short in this country. We first need to do something about that.”</i></p>

Political opportunism	59	<p><i>“They just want to make a different neighbourhood here as opposed to the neighbourhood there already is. I find it horrible.”</i></p> <p><i>“They only want yuppies in the neighbourhood, because they bring more money in.”</i></p>
COVID-19	10	<p><i>“They also did it in COVID-19 times, how can you do that to organise a meeting for 20 people in a population of 220?”</i></p> <p><i>“Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, we made the decision not to go visit people at home but communicate through letters.”</i></p>
Alienation	59	<p><i>“It all relates to the segmentation that politicians actively participate in. The well-educated decide over the low-educated.”</i></p> <p><i>“So the image politicians and policy makers have over the city is from a planners and urban designers perspective, with viewing-lines across the city and districts and mobility hubs. They don’t really care about the humans already living their lives there.”</i></p>
Historical comparison	25	<p><i>“It was so different in the 80s. I sat at the table and have learned so incredibly much about housing. Participation was really essential back then. Residents could come and actively design their own neighbourhood or street. It’s a large difference compared to the current situation.”</i></p> <p><i>“People that experienced the Stadsvernieuwingsperiode and that you interviewed probably idealise that period quite a lot. I also have heard these stories and also was present during this period while I also think, let’s not romanticize this period.”</i></p>
Identification	22	<p><i>“Policy makers should first identify the group of people for which they really want to process these changes. After that they can gather identification of each wish of each major stakeholder such as ourselves.”</i></p> <p><i>“They are creating bubbles with their policy, because due to the policy they initiate, they ensure more of ‘their’ people come to live in the neighbourhoods they feel affinity with.”</i></p>