

# **Together a better Rotterdam**

A study of how city conversations contribute to the perceived legitimacy of the policy development process 'Samenleven Rotterdam'



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## Summary

Rotterdam is a super diverse city where it is crucial to feel free to be oneself. To collaboratively create inclusive policies, the municipality organized city conversations in collaboration with the organizations 'Ik Ben Wij' & 'Stichting Confro' and 'Open Embassy' from November 2022 to February 2023 to seek input from Rotterdam citizens for the development of the 'Samenleven' policy. High legitimacy is essential in this context, as it can lead to improved policy quality and increased policy support. This research explores how city conversations as a form of citizen participation contribute to the perceived legitimacy (by citizens and officials) of the policy development for 'Samenleven Rotterdam'. The study involves observations during various city conversations and semi-structured interviews with citizens, officials, and discussion leaders who participated in the city conversations.

It has been assessed that the city conversations do not contribute to an increased input-legitimacy, which involves factors related to the inclusiveness and representativeness of the policy-making process. A selection bias exists in which not everyone has the opportunity to participate. Some individuals are explicitly not invited due to potential tensions. The representativeness is also questionable, with mainly active, highly educated, and middle-aged individuals participating, along with organizations driven by subsidies.

Additionally, the city conversations do not contribute to an increased throughput-legitimacy, which involves factors related to the quality of the process. At times, the municipality has a defensive attitude during the conversations, giving the impression of an instrumental perspective toward citizen participation. The municipality namely often maintains its point of view, creating an illusion of participation, with citizens ultimately having less decision power than they perceive. It raises questions regarding the utilization of input from the conversations by the municipality, as the depth of engagement seems to lack.

This is the first time that the municipality of Rotterdam has embarked on large-scale citizen participation. Although there is much space for improvement, it represents a step in the right direction toward creating inclusive policies. The municipality has already achieved many positive aspects, as the process is transparent, and officials gain insight into the daily lives of Rotterdam residents. This research is critical, but once the municipality gains an understanding of the factors that contribute positively and negatively to participation's legitimacy, it can pave the way for the realization of impactful policies in the future.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Citizen Participation Rotterdam

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) have been important topics for the city of Rotterdam for a long time, especially after several developments that have shaped the city such as the Black Lives Matter (BLM) demonstration on the Erasmus Bridge, the new Civic Integration Act of the municipalities and the research on the colonial past (Achbar, 2022). At the national level, the topics surrounding D&I are also receiving widespread attention, such as the Dutch childcare benefits scandal 'toeslagenaffaire' or examples of sexually transgressive behaviour. The society is in a dynamic process where it is increasingly important to talk about different D&I topics and implement D&I policies to raise awareness. This is due to society becoming increasingly diverse in every field where this variety should be valued to achieve inclusion (Shore et al., 2011).

In this regard, Rotterdam is considered one of the most diverse cities in the Netherlands; it is also called a *super-diverse city*. Diversity has become so complex and varied that there is no majority norm (Crul & Scholten 2019). Different religions are practiced, as many as over a hundred languages are spoken and Rotterdam is the home to as many as 180 different nationalities (Crul & Scholten, 2019). In the past administrative period (2018-2022), the municipality of Rotterdam has set up the dossier 'Samenleven Rotterdam' followed by different types of action programs like 'the Rotterdam Approach to Status Holders', 'Relax. This is Rotterdam', 'the intensification program Rotterdam against Racism', the city program 'Our Colonial and Slavery Past and the City of Today', and lastly 'the Rotterdam Approach to Integration'. In the forthcoming policy period (2022-2026), the municipality aims to adopt a more integrated approach to D&I by developing comprehensive policies for the city. This approach seeks to combine separate programs and initiatives under a unified framework. The primary objectives outlined in the coalition agreement are as follows:

*'Anyone who lives in Rotterdam is a Rotterdammer and one that belongs in Rotterdam. In Rotterdam, we are open to all people. Our shared identity as a Rotterdammer, that is what we focus on, with respect for the differences.'* (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022).

The D&I action plan focuses on several central themes. It aims to enhance safety for the LGBTQIA+ community, implement measures to mitigate extremism, discrimination, and racism, and prioritize gender equality as a key aspect of the plan (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022).

The municipality wants to realize these D&I policies together with the people of the city, based on the agreement, "*inclusive policies can only be realized inclusively*" (Achbar, 2022, P. 3). The two pillars in the creation of the policy are science-based policy and participation. The municipality has gained much knowledge in the field of D&I through collaborations with organizations such as Radar Rotterdam, Erasmus University Rotterdam, and the Verwey Jonker Institute. In addition, the municipality actively promoted participation by organizing city conversations through open invitations that took place from November 2022 to February 2023 in collaboration with the organizations 'Ik ben Wij' & 'Stichting Confro' and 'Open Embassy' (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022). During these meetings, Rotterdammers, organizations, and the municipality interacted with each other to find out what is important to them in the field of D&I. 30 topics were discussed, covering 12 themes, each with approximately 2 to 4 city conversations (See Appendix 1). The input from the conversations will be included in the creation of the policy 'Samenleven Rotterdam' (Achbar, 2022).

The city conversations are part of a larger emerging process of citizen participation in the local policy-making process. Citizen participation is a way of policy-making that involves citizens directly or indirectly to achieve policy development, implementation, and evaluation through collaboration (Dinjens, 2010). Different forms of citizen participation can exist at different policy process stages (Arnstein, 1969). Citizen participation should complement representative democracy, allowing citizens to have more influence on policy (Van Houwelingen et al., 2014). By engaging with the citizens of Rotterdam, the municipality has a better grasp on how to ensure greater public support (Achbar, 2022).

The perceived legitimacy regarding the policy development process of the proposal 'Samenleven Rotterdam' plays an important role in the final policy's success. Legitimacy is about the support for the policy and the justification of decisions and their verifiability (Eshuis & Edwards, 2013). Legitimacy can be divided into *input-legitimacy*, *throughput-legitimacy*, and *output-legitimacy* (Scharpf, 1998). Input-legitimacy involves the degree of inclusion of different actors. Throughput-legitimacy implies the openness, fairness, and transparency of policymaking. Output-legitimacy is about the effectiveness and fairness of the policy outcomes (Torfing et al., 2012). It is generally believed that involving citizens early in the policy process can increase the legitimacy of the policy (Teisman & Edelenbos, 2004). However, how legitimate is the outcome if the same citizens participate in citizen participation every time? Is the process transparent enough for citizens? And are the interests of the citizens ultimately reflected in the policy? That the early involvement of citizens automatically leads to increased democratic legitimacy and better quality and support of the policy, can be seen as a simplistic

vision, as legitimacy is different for each citizen participation process (Teisman & Edelenbos, 2004). Also, legitimacy can be experienced differently by both officials and citizens. Officials can see citizen participation as a perfect process while citizens think about it differently if they feel that their opinions are not adequately represented. It is important to examine the perceived legitimacy of the city conversations. Therefore, this study focuses on the following question:

*How has the City Conversations Rotterdam as a form of citizen participation contributed to the perceived legitimacy (by citizens and officials) of the policy development of 'Samenleven Rotterdam'?*

Specifically, input-legitimacy and throughput-legitimacy will be addressed in this study, since this research is about policy development and not the implemented policy. The implementation of the policy will take place in late 2023 and cannot be included in this research due to the timeframe of the research. Based on input- and throughput-legitimacy, the insights gained will be presented to the municipality to give an overview of the perceived legitimacy of citizen participation processes, to make the municipality self-reflective.

## **1.2 Scientific relevance**

Extensive literature exists on citizen participation and legitimacy within a policy context. However, there is a significant dearth of research examining the relationship between city conversations and legitimacy. The lack seems to be due to the costly and time-consuming process to track all (or parts) of the process. Additionally, many studies describe citizen participation only from the government's perspective. For example, they discuss the benefits of citizen participation (Wagenaar, 2007).

According to the government, when citizen participation is properly implemented it is associated with increased legitimacy and quality of policy (Wagenaar, 2007). However, it is crucial to comprehend citizens' experiences about legitimacy to gain insights into the process and facilitate improvements. Interestingly, the exploration of these experiences among citizens and other stakeholders remains insufficiently researched (Bartels, 2015). Insufficient evaluation of participation processes, coupled with the multifaceted nature of factors influencing the process, makes it challenging to determine the effects accurately (Van Houwelingen et al., 2014). Given the high expectations placed on citizen participation by the municipality, it becomes important to gather insights into the legitimacy experiences of officials.

### **1.3 Societal relevance**

Too often the idea prevails in a municipality that citizen participation automatically leads to more legitimacy and is used as a means to implement policies, where ultimately the interests of the municipality are still favoured (De Graaf, 2009). As Minister Kasja Ollongren of the Dutch Ministry of Internal Affairs appointed: *‘To be honest, citizens' participation is most often used as a check in the box, while the policy improves massively through the involvement of citizens.’* (De Koster & Hendriksma, 2018). While citizen participation can increase the quality of policy, it is necessary to ensure that the quality of all elements in the process is well maintained (Mayer et al., 2005).

To increase the different types of legitimacy and ultimately the support and quality of the policy, it is necessary to gain insights into the citizen participation process. The municipality seeks to ascertain the progress and experiences of the city conversations, including those of citizens and discussion leaders. Furthermore, the insights of officials throughout the process are crucial, providing a comprehensive overview of their reflections on the entire process. By understanding the policy process, the municipality can create better and more effective policies in the future.

### **1.4 Reading guide**

Chapter 1 introduces the case of city conversations in Rotterdam and the perceived legitimacy. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework. Chapter 3 covers the method considering reliability and validity. Chapter 4 includes the analysis. The conclusion and discussion follow in Chapter 5, and finally the recommendations follow in Chapter 6.



## **2. Theoretical framework**

In this theoretical framework, the central concepts are explained and the interrelatedness is discussed. The concepts of citizen participation and city conversations, different perspectives for implementing citizen participation, the ladder of participation, and the different forms of legitimacy are discussed. Input- and throughput-legitimacy of participation are examined, showcasing how elements of citizen participation processes can contribute to legitimacy either positively or negatively.

### **2.1 Citizen participation and city conversations**

#### *Citizen participation*

An in-depth comprehension of citizen participation is essential to clarify how municipalities implement citizen participation. Dutch municipalities are encountering growing challenges in legitimizing themselves and their policy decisions. This is partially attributed to the decline in voter turnout during (local) elections since the 1990s (De Graaf, 2009). Consequently, municipalities are looking for other ways in which citizens can influence the choices made by the municipality.

Dinjens (2010) defines citizen participation as a way of policy-making in which citizens are directly or indirectly involved in local policy to develop, implement and evaluate policy through collaboration. In doing so, citizen participation creates new relationships between the government and citizens. The focus is neither on hierarchical structures nor on steering and obligation, but on interaction and deliberation (Van Gool, 2008). The citizen who has no administrative experience becomes an equal partner of the government and gains influence in the policy process. The government's expectations of the benefits of citizen participation are very high (Flinders et al., 2013), as they believe that citizen participation will reduce the gap between government and citizens (WRR, 2005). Additionally, it is believed that citizen participation can ensure better quality policies and greater support, as solutions are more in line with the daily reality of citizens (Propper, 2013).

Citizen participation can take place at different stages of policymaking (Leyenaar, 2009). For example, citizen participation in policy agenda-setting can ensure that citizens' priorities are addressed. In policy development, creative solutions from citizens can be brought forward. Lastly, in policy implementation, citizen participation can increase the willingness of citizens to comply with the established rules (Leyenaar, 2009).

Citizen participation can ensure that the representation of often excluded groups such as migrants, women, and, for example, the LGBTQIA+ community is strengthened (Leyenaar, 2009). This was not always the case. Up until the 1990s, involving migrants in local decision-making was perceived as weak and symbolic. Migrants were considered passive and disinterested in political processes (Schiller, 2023). However, such migrant involvement is now taking place, as migrant groups play a significant role in voicing local interests in politics. Consequently, more inclusive policies can be formulated (Schiller, 2023).

City conversations can be seen as a form of citizen participation that involves citizens in the policy development phase (Leyenaar, 2009). Great importance is given to these city conversations by municipalities, since in this way diverse perspectives of citizens around a theme can be brought forward (Bartels, 2015) Conversations can have four different functions (Stout & Love, 2015):

- Generating input on a particular issue
- Aligning goals and approaches to the participation process
- Preventing conflicts
- Generating support for the outcomes

To assess the legitimacy of the process, it is important to ascertain the underlying objectives of the conversations.

### ***Ladder of participation and motives municipality***

Citizens do not always seem to have that much influence, even though this is their assumption. A difference in expectations between citizens and the municipality may exist in how much influence citizens have in the participation process, which could affect the legitimacy of the process (Bovens, 2005).

Citizen participation can take place at different levels. This can be shown through the *ladder of participation* with eight degrees of citizen involvement (Arnstein, 1969). Within the ladder of participation, Arnstein (1969) distinguishes empty forms of participation (1 - 3) in which the citizen has barely any influence. Real power (6 – 8) in which citizens influence policy and tokenism (3 – 6) in which there is an illusionary influence. In tokenism, citizens believe they have influence, but in reality, it is the municipality that retains decision-making power over the policy (Arnstein, 1969). An example of this is the establishment of migrant councils,

providing migrants with a platform to express their concerns and interests in local affairs. However, their actual influence on local decision-making remains limited, rendering their involvement more symbolic (Schiller, 2023).

In Figure 1, manipulation occurs when officials deceive citizens by creating a process that gives the appearance of empowering them, but in reality is designed to withhold power from citizens (Arnstein, 1969). According to Arnstein (1969, p. 218), therapy is a type of non-participation where officials mainly set the agenda. During informing, the government implements policy autonomously and informs citizens only about their choices. As for consulting, the government determines the policy and allows citizens to make non-binding comments (Arnstein, 1969). Next, in placation, the citizen takes an advisory role (non-binding), but ultimately the government itself decides. In partnership, the citizen is a co-decision-maker within the framework. In delegated power, the citizen can decide and has an actual role in decision-making. It involves the transfer of authority and responsibility from officials to citizens on some topics. Finally, citizen control involves citizens having full control over the decision-making process without any interference from officials (Arnstein, 1969).

Various motives drive municipalities to invest in citizen participation, which could potentially account for the attainment of a specific level of citizen participation on Arnstein's (1969) ladder. There are two main motives for the municipality: the *instrumental approach* and the *democratic approach* (De Graaf, 2009). In an instrumental motive, citizen participation is used to achieve a policy goal; a municipality makes citizens feel that they influence policy, but in reality, they do not have any influence. When looking at the ladder of participation, it is also known as a degree of tokenism (Arnstein, 1969). In this motive, the municipality decides and follows its policy wishes (Hendriks & Tops, 2001). Here, citizen participation is only used to create support (De Graaf, 2009). Another view from the instrumental perspective is that citizens are only used for the knowledge and expertise that can serve as input to the policy process; also called content enrichment (De Graaf, 2009).

Another motive for the municipality to engage in citizen participation is the democratic approach (De Graaf, 2009). This is also called a heroic-interactionist approach by Hendrik & Tops (2001). The emphasis here is on the potential of participation to generate valuable interaction and promote emancipation. Citizen participation becomes an objective in itself. The municipality is committed to citizen participation as it is a moral right to involve citizens in the process (De Graaf, 2009). This is more towards the upper levels of Arnsteins ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969), where citizens have more significant influence.

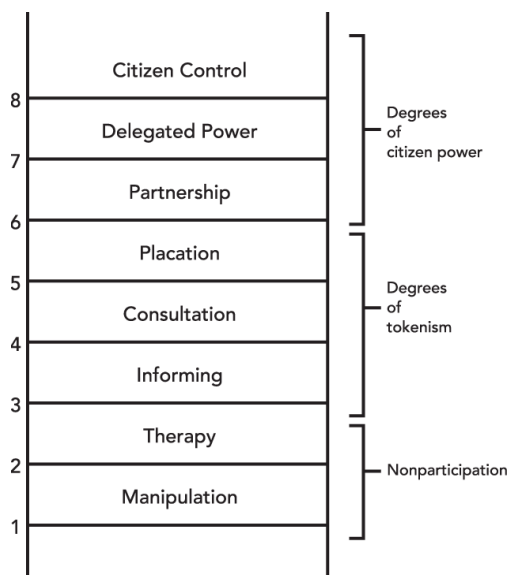


Figure 1: The ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969)

## 2.2 Legitimacy of citizen participation in policy development

An important aspect of citizen participation to be successful is legitimacy. According to Easton (1965, p. 107), legitimacy is "a legitimate authority, one that is recognized as valid or justified by those to whom it applies." Schmitter (2001) does not differ from this definition, appointing that legitimacy concerns the grounds on which members of democracy accept the decisions that are made and the results that are produced. Moreover, increased democratic legitimacy reduces the gap between citizens and the government (De Graaf, 2007). The knowledge and experiences that citizens have can lead to an increase in their problem-solving capacity, as different perspectives ensure that better solutions can be created that integrate the interests of citizens. As a result, the quality of the policy can be increased. Many of the wishes and interests can be incorporated into the actual policy, which increases support for the policy (De Graaf, 2007). Finally, delays are reduced as many of the citizens' perspectives are already included in the policy and less needs to be adjusted later. The policy process can thus be accelerated, bringing many benefits through high democratic legitimacy (De Graaf, 2007). A lack of legitimacy, therefore, can increase the gap between citizens and government, and reduce the quality and support for the policy. Reduced legitimacy means that policies are not effective enough (Mayer et al., 2005). In fact, a lack of legitimacy can even cause social unrest (Hendriks, 2009, p. 323).

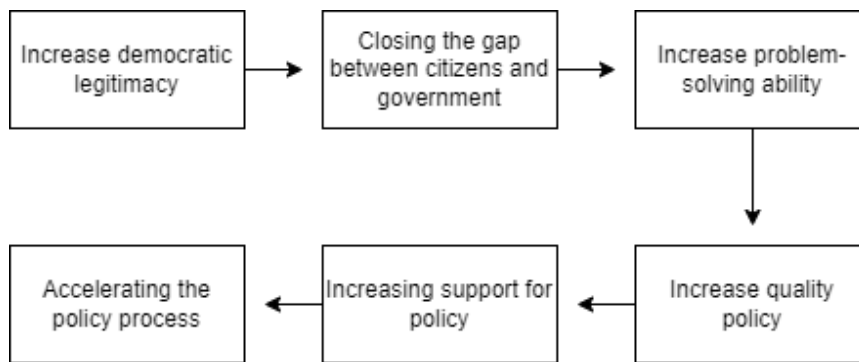


Figure 2: Flowchart legitimacy (De Graaf, 2007)

### Input- and throughput-legitimacy

To get a better understanding of the concept of legitimacy, Scharpf (1998) distinguishes three forms of legitimacy: input-, throughput- and output-legitimacy. This research focuses on input- and throughput-legitimacy. The policy development process is examined and not the implemented policy itself, as it does not take into force until the end of 2023.

#### *Input-legitimacy*

Input-legitimacy is about *"The inclusiveness and representativeness of the policy-making process"* (Bovens, 2005, p. 184). It is about how much there is real 'government by the people' (Scharpf, 1998). Bovens (2005) mentions that input-legitimacy is about the political values and norms that regulate the input of desires, preferences, and interests into a political system.

In citizen participation processes, the first important thing is the extent to which there are opportunities for citizen participation where citizens can put forward their wishes, interests, and preferences, and have them included in policy-making (Bekkers, 2007). The recruitment of citizens is important, as well as the method of promotion. For example, is the recruitment selective or is it widely promoted (Boedeltje & Cornips, 2004). Some citizens are especially important as they function as key figures, who have access to a variety of formal and informal networks and know what takes place on a local level (Omlo, 2020). Furthermore, it is important which channel is used to mobilize citizens' interests and perspectives (Bekkers, 2005). Specifically, input-legitimacy examines the level of satisfaction concerning accessibility and the opportunities individuals have had to engage in the process (Huys, 2006).

A second characteristic of input-legitimacy is the quality of representation of interests and preferences (Bekkers, 2007). All interests of different types of citizens should be represented during the participation processes. In reality, only a small group participates (Dreijerink et al., 2009). Many citizens are not interested in participation processes. Mainly

politically interested and highly educated citizens participate. It is a wrong assumption by the government that every citizen is politically interested, which the municipality should take into account (Van Gool, 2008). Especially middle-aged people participate in participation processes. Middle-aged people are generally more active in the neighbourhood and have resources such as social capital, human capital, and health that increase the likelihood of participation (Snel et al., 2018). Moreover, citizen participation is time-consuming, which can be a reason why citizens do not participate (Van Gool, 2008). The labour market position is a factor in this, in which retired individuals generally participate more in participation processes as this group possesses more available time (Snel et al., 2018). The lack of representativeness in participation activities can hinder input-legitimacy, as it may give the false impression of unity among active citizens on a particular topic, while significant tensions may exist among the whole population. (Bekkers, 2007).

Furthermore, participatory processes are language-based; as a participant, you have to be able to verbally express yourself well (Van Gool, 2008). This can be problematic for some migrants who have not yet fully mastered the Dutch language. Research by Snel et al. (2018) shows that people with a migration background are less likely to participate in city conversations. Simultaneously, individuals with a migrant background may encounter barriers to participation due to their relative distance from the political landscape. Individuals from migrant backgrounds may perceive that their participation in the conversation would not make a difference, as they may have already expressed their concerns numerous times before. This sentiment is not exclusive to migrants but can also be observed among other groups facing issues (Snel et al., 2018). The lack of trust in the government is a contributing factor (Fledderus, 2015).

The final characteristic of input-legitimacy is the extent to which there is an open agenda-setting process (Bekkers, 2007). All citizens should be able to put forward their perspectives. Thus, citizens can put certain issues on the agenda and the government does not only decide (Eshuis & Edwards, 2013). There must be room for different (conflicting) problem perceptions and possible solutions (Bekkers, 2007).

### ***Throughput-legitimacy***

Throughput legitimacy is about "*the quality of the decision-making process*" (Bovens, 2005, p. 184). It is about the process of transforming citizens' ideas, interests, and perspectives into more concrete solutions (Bekkers, 2007).

First, it concerns how collective decision-making and will-formation are achieved (Bekkers, 2007). Not a single particular opinion is expressed, but the process takes place through negotiations, where the goal is to create mutual benefit (Bekkers, 2007). All actors have the opportunity to put forward their opinions. Here, inclusiveness means that policymakers are open to the groups and engage with them (Schmidt & Wood, 2019). When the government relies on an *instrumental motive*, using conversations more as a tool and remaining convinced of their point of view, it does not benefit the throughput-legitimacy. In such cases, the government may be reluctant to deviate from its existing viewpoints, possibly due to the significant changes in rules and policies that would be required (Van Gool, 2008). Collective decision-making goes beyond the open agenda-setting process, where the central issue is the extent to which you can voice your opinion. Rather, collective decision-making is more about fair and honest cooperation between different actors (Schmidt & Wood, 2019).

Another factor to consider is the quality of participation (Bekkers, 2007). This aspect pertains to the values and norms considered during the deliberation process and upon which the participation of actors is founded. All relevant actors must have the opportunity to present their perspectives during the participatory process. Sufficient time must exist where all perspectives can be brought forward (Leyenaar, 2009). Everyone must take each other seriously (Leyenaar, 2009). Transparency of the process is a key issue (Bekkers, 2007). It is imperative that every participant has equal access to information, and all relevant information should be made publicly available. Even during the process, citizens are kept informed of any new developments and steps being taken (Mostert, 2003). Simultaneously, citizens can exercise their ability to hold political actors accountable for their statements made during the process (Schmidt & Wood, 2019). Ensuring a transparent process is essential, as any lack of transparency may lead to disappointment among citizens (Bleijenbergh, 2021).

The last characteristic is the extent to which checks and balances are embedded in the process that ensures the prevention of abuse of power by the parties involved (Bekkers, 2007). Important here, for example, is how the opinions of minority groups are being handled. In participation activities, are they pushed away by the majority, or is sufficient attention paid to minority voices as well (Bekkers, 2005).

<i><b>Input-legitimacy</b></i>	<i><b>Throughput-legitimacy</b></i>
- The extent to which there are opportunities for citizen participation in which citizens can put forward their wishes, interests, and preferences and have them included in policy-making	- How collective decision-making and will formation are achieved.
- The quality of representation of interests and preferences	-The quality and transparency of participation in the decision-making.
-The extent to which there is an open agenda-setting process	- The extent to which checks and balances are embedded in the decision-making.

Figure 3: Overview of input- and throughput-legitimacy (Bekkers, 2007)

## 2.3 Conceptual model

Based on the theoretical framework, the following conceptual model emerges:

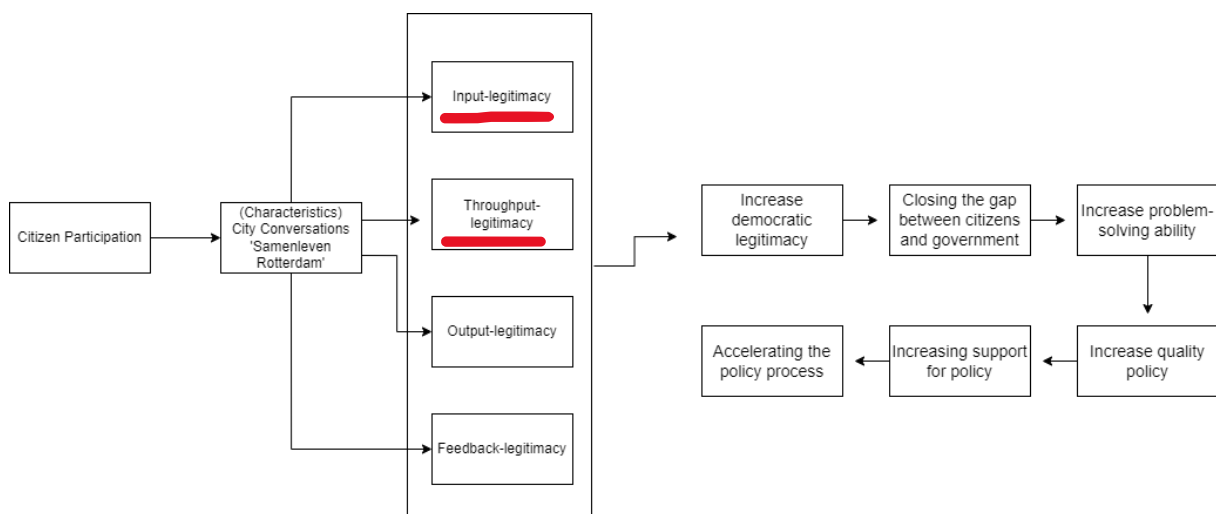


Figure 4: Conceptual model citizen participation and legitimacy

The perceived legitimacy of citizens, discussion leaders, and officials is considered in this research. Various aspects of the city conversations can have both positive and negative effects on the input- and throughput-legitimacy. Furthermore, the perceived legitimacy entails other consequences, such as enhancing policy quality and fostering support (De Graaf, 2007). Therefore a high level of perceived legitimacy is crucial.



## **2.4 Expectations**

Based on the literature, I can define the following expectations as regards citizen participation and its contribution to the perceived legitimacy of the policy in Rotterdam.

- The municipality is expected to primarily focus on citizen participation to gather input, with a particular emphasis on the democratic perspective. However, it is essential to take a realistic view, which also reveals the instrumental perspective, given that the municipality ultimately holds authority over the policy, not the citizens. The emphasis on the instrumental perspective may also explain why the level of participation on the ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969) may turn out to be lower than expected and tokenism may prevail.

### ***Input-legitimacy***

Regarding input-legitimacy, it is expected that equal opportunities for participation will be provided to all individuals (Boedeltje & Cornips, 2004). However, it is anticipated that mainly middle-aged and active individuals participate. Additionally, it is expected that few individuals with a migrant background take part in participation processes due to decreased trust in the government. Nevertheless, it is expected that the municipality offers sufficient opportunities for participants to express their concerns and perspectives.

### ***Throughput-legitimacy***

When examining throughput-legitimacy, it is anticipated that both the citizens and the municipality will collaboratively seek solutions. However, the extent to which this occurs depends on the municipality's motive for engaging in citizen participation and the stage of the ladder of participation at which the process is situated (Arnstein, 1969). It is expected that there is a high degree of transparency, which enhances the quality of the process.

## 3. Method

### 3.1 Research Design/Method

#### *Case*

This qualitative research was designed based on city conversations. The municipality of Rotterdam was specifically chosen, as they are currently developing the policy ‘Samenleven Rotterdam’ through input from the city conversations. It is the first time that the municipality has conducted such a form of citizen participation process on a large scale compared to the previous administrative period. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the municipality of Rotterdam has employed a significant number of city conversations (forty in total) to collect input for the policy, making it the first municipality in the Netherlands to undertake such a comprehensive approach.

#### *Data analysis*

To answer the research question, a qualitative study was selected. A qualitative approach was chosen, as it allows respondents' perceptions to be expressed (Bryman, 2016). It is about understanding and interpreting particular phenomena to gain a deep understanding. The use of a quantitative method was not appropriate, as the lack of context plays a role in the perceptions of officials and citizens (Bryman, 2016). Quantitative research is more about discovering patterns and evaluating them often in a numerical way (Bryman, 2016).

The research is a mix of deductive and inductive research. Deductive research involves a preliminary examination of existing theory to see whether reality can be linked to theoretical concepts (Doorewaard et al., 2015). This research focuses on several concepts: *citizen participation*, *city conversations*, *the ladder of participation*, *perspectives on citizen participation*, and *the legitimacy of citizen participation*. The research is focused on the municipality of Rotterdam, and for this reason, mainly Dutch literature in the field of citizen participation was chosen to be included. The operationalization of the concepts can be found in Appendix 2. The different main concepts were operationalized into different dimensions and indicators based on the literature. In this way, the different steps are clarified where the theoretical concepts were broken down into practical topics (Bryman, 2016). The concepts formed the basis for the semi-structured interviews. The research is also inductive, with no particular expectations set in advance. Inductive research is a bottom-up method where data is collected for theoretical insights (Doorewaard et al., 2015). Observations are often the starting

point, and in this research, observations at the city conversations were used initially to discover patterns (Creswell, 2014).

### ***Observations***

To investigate the legitimacy of the policy development, observations, and semi-structured interviews were used. A total of five city conversations were attended on different topics:

- Inclusive housing market (Stichting Confro & Ik ben Wij)
- Religious diversity: Muslim discrimination & anti-Semitism (Stichting Confro & Ik ben wij)
- New opportunities for old-comers (Open embassy)
- Woke & freedom of expression (Stichting Confro & Ik ben Wij)
- Rotterdam catches up with residents (Open embassy)

These five city conversations were selected for their diverse topics related to D&I (see Appendix 1) and were deemed to provide a representative overview of the entire range of topics discussed. The city conversations were attended, organized, and facilitated by two organizations: ‘Stichting Confro’ & ‘Ik ben Wij’, and ‘Open Embassy’. The former focused on conversations related to D&I, while the latter addressed topics about migration. Multiple conversations led by different organizations were chosen to gain a comprehensive understanding of how the discussions were conducted by different organizations and to observe potential variations in approach and outcomes. This also provides a representative picture of all city conversations. Present at these meetings were Rotterdam citizens, representatives of organizations, and officials of ‘Samenleven Rotterdam.’

In the conversations organized by Open Embassy, non-participatory observations took place (Bryman, 2016). This was because a safe environment needed to be created where oldcomers could talk openly about the barriers they faced. In the conversations organized by Stichting Confro & Ik ben wij, participatory observation took place (Bryman, 2016). The role of a participant was expected as a researcher.

<b><i>Conversation</i></b>	<b><i>Date observation</i></b>	<b><i>Location</i></b>	<b><i>Duration</i></b>	<b><i>Key actors</i></b>
Inclusive housing market (Stichting Confro & Ik ben Wij)	13-12-2022	Hillevliet Rotterdam	90 18.00 – 20.00	-Citizens Rotterdam -Organizations housing

				-Municipality of Rotterdam	
Religious diversity: Muslim discrimination & anti-Semitism (Stichting Confro & Ik ben wij)	10-01-2023	Hillevliet Rotterdam	90	18.00 – 20.00	-Citizens Rotterdam -Municipality of Rotterdam
Woke & freedom of expression (Stichting Confro & Ik ben Wij)	30-01-2023	Hillevliet Rotterdam	90	18.00 – 20.00	-Citizens Rotterdam -Organizations -Municipality of Rotterdam
New opportunities for old-comers (Open embassy)	15-12-2022	Leeszaal Rotterdam West. Rijnhoutplein 3		17.00 -21.00	-Newcomers -Municipality of Rotterdam -Organizations
Rotterdam catches up with local residents (Open embassy)	17-01-2023	Leeszaal Rotterdam West. Rijnhoutplein 3		17.00 – 21.00	-Local resident -Municipality of Rotterdam -Organizations

Figure 5: Overview of attended observations

### **Interviews**

Observations were not enough to develop an in-depth response to the research question (Babbie, 2016). Eleven semi-structured interviews were conducted. The interviews comprised four citizens who actively contributed their input during the conversations, five officials responsible for policy development, and two discussion leaders from Open Embassy who played crucial roles in organizing the conversations and recruiting participants (See figure 6). Semi-structured interviews are interviews with a certain structure by pre-determined topics and questions, but there is also some flexibility by giving respondents room to suggest their answers (Bryman, 2016). Listening and probing were important to arrive at in-depth answers (Kvale, 1996). The construction of the topic list was based on the main concepts derived from the theoretical framework. To ensure comprehensive coverage, separate topic lists were developed for citizens, officials, and discussion leaders. The detailed topic lists can be found in Appendix 3.

Respondents were sent an information sheet and consent form in advance and these had to be filled in and returned before the interview started.

The interviews were recorded after permission (See appendix 4), transcribed, and coded using open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss, 1987). In open coding, labels were given to particular text fragments. In axial coding, connections were sought to the labels established during open coding by comparing codes. Finally, selective coding took place where the codes from axial coding were divided into overarching codes (Strauss, 1987). The coding of the interviews was executed in ATLAS.ti. The coding scheme can be found in Appendix 5 where the codes have been merged into overlapping codes related to citizen participation, ladder of participation, motives of the municipality, city conversations, and input- and throughput-legitimacy.

<i>Interviews</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Length</i>
Citizen 1	24-04-2023	30 min
Citizen 2	25-04-2023	45 min
Citizen 3	15-05-2023	70 min
Citizen 4 - Resident refugee boat and participant city conversation	19-05-2023	45 min
Official 1 - municipality Rotterdam	02-05-2023	45 min
Official 2 - municipality Rotterdam	04-05-2023	60 min
Official 3 - municipality Rotterdam	04-05-2023	45 min
Official 4 - municipality Rotterdam	10-05-2023	60 min
Official 5 - municipality Rotterdam	17-05-2023	60 min
Discussion leader 1- Open Embassy	02-05-2023	60 min
Discussion leader 2 - Open Embassy	17-05-2023	45 min

*Figure 6: Overview of Interviews*

## **3.2 Ethical Considerations**

The study encompasses several ethical considerations in its execution. Firstly, ensuring voluntary participation is of utmost importance (Bryman, 2016). To achieve this, prior permission was obtained from the organization and the municipality to observe the meetings, and an informed consent form was sent to the participants before conducting interviews. This process aimed to establish trust with the participants (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2018).

However, due to the publication of a critical journalistic article concerning the city conversations, observations were eventually prohibited, as participants no longer felt secure enough to openly share their thoughts. Consequently, during the next interviews, it was necessary to rebuild trust with the participants and assure them that the information collected would be used solely for research purposes and in an anonymized form. Participants were also informed that they had the freedom to discontinue their involvement at any point without facing any negative consequences (Bryman, 2016). Furthermore, the data obtained was collected and securely stored in a designated location.

## **3.3 Data quality**

### ***Reliability and validity***

Reliability and validity are essential aspects of scientific research. Reliability refers to the consistency of the data (Golafshani, 2003), which is ensured in this study by employing consistent methods for interviews and coding. Observers also maintained consistency by sharing insights and verifying their observations. By including observations of individuals who did not participate in the interviews, a comprehensive and accurate understanding of the city conversations was achieved, encompassing discussions and insights.

Validity, on the other hand, focuses on the accuracy of the measured variables with reality (Plochg & van Zwieten, 2007). Triangulation, using both observations and interviews, enhances the research's validity. Respondent validity was maintained during interviews through confirmation-seeking and probing to cross-check findings with participants' perspectives. Observing the interactions in a natural environment further supported the study's validity.

### ***Limitations research***

An important limitation to note is that this research is based on eleven interviews and observations involving a diverse range of actors. Notably, some of the interviewed citizens expressed negative views toward the participation process. Moreover, it is worth mentioning

that many citizens who were approached did not accept the invitation for an interview. Consequently, there is a risk that the research primarily captured the perspectives of citizens who had negative experiences with city conversations. This potential selection bias may result in a skewed (more negative) portrayal of the perceived legitimacy. For follow-up research, it is necessary to also chart more moderate experiences.

Another limitation may be that expectations were influenced too much by personal perceptions (Bryman, 2016). The research is partly deductive. Because of this, the interviews were sometimes entered with certain expectations and it was difficult for the researcher to remain neutral. However, this bias was countered by systematic feedback from co-researchers and the supervisor.

## 4. Analysis

This chapter highlights the results based on the interviews conducted with participants of the city conversations, discussion leaders, and officials working on the Rotterdam ‘Samenleven’ policy. These insights are being supported with insights from the observations. First, the motivations behind Rotterdam's commitment to citizen participation and city conversations are discussed. Finally, a link is made between the city conversations and to what extent these conversations contribute to the perceived legitimacy of the policy process.

### 4.1 Citizen Participation and city conversations

#### *City Conversations Rotterdam*

The municipality of Rotterdam demonstrates a growing dedication to citizen participation, actively involving citizens in the policymaking process (Boedeltje & Cornips, 2004). As highlighted by Flinders et al. (2013), the municipality of Rotterdam holds the belief that citizen participation processes yield significant benefits. There are great expectations that involvement will contribute to the enhancement of policy quality, as all officials mention. Recognizing the significance of the participation of Rotterdammers, all officials emphasize that *‘Inclusive policies can only be created inclusively.’* Citizen participation enables policies to align more accurately with residents' perspectives, as noted by Propper (2013). This dynamic fosters an egalitarian partnership between citizens and the municipality, transcending hierarchical structures and promoting an interactive relationship, as described by Van Gool (2008) in the theoretical framework. All officials acknowledge this transformative relationship, emphasizing the adoption of a bottom-up approach that incorporates the viewpoints of various stakeholders. *‘Policy is made from the bottom up, so you need the ears and eyes of society, of social organizations, but also of citizens, to shape policy. [...]’* (Official 4).

It is the first time that the municipality has engaged in citizen participation on such a large scale. The coordinator of the municipality's inclusive society project affirms that in the past, citizens' opinions were primarily considered after specific events, such as the BLM demonstration on the Erasmus bridge. However, for the development of new policies, there is a desire to proactively anticipate and co-create policy in collaboration with citizens. *‘If we are going to write that new policy, Let's not start asking citizens about the situation only when there has been an incident or event. We need to anticipate earlier’* (Official 1).

The main goal of the city conversations is to identify the blind spots mentions official 3 and to find out what is happening in the city. Therefore, the municipality mainly focuses on



gathering input as Stout & Love (2015) mention in the theoretical framework. The municipality wants to engage with citizens and, particularly with groups that are often underrepresented in civic participation processes such as citizens from migrant backgrounds, women, and the LGBTQIA+ community which corresponds to the development described by Leyenaar (2009) where underrepresented groups participate.

### ***Ladder of Participation and Motives***

Both citizens and officials may experience differently how much influence on the policy citizens have in citizen participation conversations which, according to Bovens (2005), affects the legitimacy of the policy process. It is noteworthy that all participating citizens in the city conversations perceive themselves as having a genuine influence. One citizen who attended two city conversations articulated her motivation for participation as follows: *"I want to make a change for my children."* (Citizen 1) and [...] *"How many decisions are made without Rotterdammers themselves and now that I am allowed to have a voice and decide, I want to be involved."* (Citizen 1). Citizen 3 who attended the conversation about newcomers agrees: *"I am a newcomer myself. I wanted to see what organizations wanted to do with Rotterdam. It is also a good time to put forward my own opinion."* (Citizen 3). Citizens participating in the city conversations expect that a significant portion of the input they provide will be integrated into the forthcoming policy. Nevertheless, two citizens express scepticism. For instance, citizen 1 articulates the following sentiment: *"I don't have full confidence in the government, because I still notice, even though I say that I have so much involvement, in the neighborhood, the municipality does not listen to us well."*

The municipality of Rotterdam considers the role of citizens differently. The municipality is listening to as many perspectives as possible and making inclusive policies together, four officials mention. There is a realization that they need to listen more and be more sensitive to how policy is shaped which corresponds to the democratic motive described by De Graaf (2009) in which participation is a moral right. Nonetheless, the question remains whether citizens' input is genuinely taken into account in policy implementation. It appears that the municipality leans more towards an instrumental perspective, as outlined by De Graaf (2009), wherein citizen input is utilized primarily to enrich policy content and foster public support. Citizens have less influence on the policy than expected. Official 4 who is skeptical about the new policy says the following about this: *"New policies don't exist. There are always ups and downs and real change is difficult. So a new policy doesn't exist. [...] But what you can do is that it is a confirmation of what you are already doing."* (Official 4). Citizens' input mainly

provides confirmation: “*We are not going to make a new policy, that was not the approach. We want more of a confirmation of whether we are going in the right direction.*” (Official 4). A discrepancy exists between the expectations of citizens and the municipality which can create disappointments:

[...] I think we had to provide a better framework at the beginning. I think people are disappointed because they don't see anything about improvements within the ‘Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning’ (WMO) <sup>1</sup> in the plan, for example, or that school transport is not mentioned in it (Official 5).

Citizens perceive themselves as having substantial influence within the policy process, whereas the municipality adopts a more neutral stance, considering it crucial to develop policies inclusively but viewing the conversations as a means of confirmation (as indicated by three out of five officials). Ultimately, the municipality retains the authority to determine which aspects will be incorporated into the policy. This aligns with the *placation* phase outlined in Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation. In the placation phase, the citizen takes an advisory role, but ultimately the government itself decides (Arnstein, 1969). It is a form of tokenism in which there is an illusionary influence (Arnstein, 1969). The placation phase can affect the legitimacy of the policy process. This is highlighted in the next section.

To summarize, the municipality holds high expectations for the city conversations, as anticipated due to the perceived significant benefits of this interaction (Van Gool, 2008). As expected, the primary objective of these conversations is to gather input (Stout & Love, 2015). However, a novel insight emerges regarding the divergent perceptions of citizens and officials concerning the extent of citizens' influence on policy-making. Citizens tend to believe they possess substantial influence, while the municipality exercises discretion in incorporating input into the policy, having predetermined what will be included. This observation highlights the municipality's leaning towards an instrumental perspective (De Graaf, 2009). In terms of the ladder of participation, this phase aligns with the placation phase (Arnstein, 1969), where citizens primarily offer advice, while ultimate decision-making power rests with the municipality.

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<sup>1</sup> It is the duty of local government bodies to help people stay independent and live in their own homes for a lengthy period of time. The Social Support Act, or Wmo 2015 in Dutch, gives towns the authority to provide a range of in-home support and assistance options.

## 4.2 Legitimacy

Legitimacy of the participation process is important for successful policy implementation. When the process is perceived to be legitimate, the gap between citizens and government is reduced, more solutions are conceived, the quality of the policy is improved, the policy ultimately gains more support and the policy process is accelerated (De Graaf, 2007). In short, the legitimacy of the policy process is necessary for the policy to be successful. Consequently, the next paragraph discusses the input- and throughput-legitimacy of the citizen participation process regarding the 'Samenleven Rotterdam' policy.

### *Input-legitimacy*

Input-legitimacy is about "*The inclusiveness and representativeness of the policy-making process*" (Bovens, 2005, p. 184). Input-legitimacy can be divided into opportunities for citizen participation, quality of representation, and open agenda-setting (Bekkers, 2007). The subsequent section delves into the various aspects of input legitimacy.

### *Opportunities for citizen participation / Recruiting participants*

The starting point of the municipality is that it is important that everyone can participate in participation processes so that every citizen can ultimately influence policy. The municipality does this by publicly opening the invitation online whereby steering is countered:

We made sure beforehand that we would not control who attends which conversation, because then you are already going to determine from a position of power. We wanted to avoid that because we want it to be open and accessible. (Official 1).

The municipality has tried to maximize honest opportunities for participation and all officials opine that it went completely well. Nevertheless, concerns regarding the fairness of the recruitment process have been raised by two discussion leaders and three citizens. This presents a significant insight, highlighting the divergent perspectives on what constitutes a fair recruitment process. According to the two discussion leaders and three citizens, recruitment was primarily conducted through existing networks, organizations, and the involvement of neighbourhood managers who approached eligible candidates. Citizen 2 articulates the following perspective on the matter: "*There is a huge bias in the invitations. Not everyone is invited, but this happens through people's networks. Many people don't even know the city*

*conversations were happening.*'' (Citizen 2). Recruiting via key figures in formal and informal networks occurs frequently in citizen participation processes as Omlo (2020) states and may not necessarily influence the input-legitimacy, but it does if some people do not have the opportunity to participate. During the city conversations, certain individuals were not allowed to participate, due to concerns regarding the potential emergence of tensions. A discussion leader, who was involved in the recruitment of participants, sheds light on this matter, stating the following perspective: *''In reality, people are more negative about the refugees, but it was also a bit sensitive to invite these people explicitly. Then we decided not to invite them''* (Discussion Leader 2). The fact that active efforts were not made to engage with citizens by actively reaching out to the local neighborhoods is perceived as a missed opportunity, according to all officials.

In conclusion, a significant finding that arises from the study is the lack of fairness in participant recruitment. The invitations were biased, primarily extended through personal networks, resulting in some individuals being invited while others were not. This discrepancy contradicts the expectation of equal opportunities for participation (Boedeltje & Cornips, 2004).

### ***Quality of representation***

The diversity and representativeness of participants hold considerable importance for the input-legitimacy. The consensus among three citizens, two discussion leaders, and two out of the five officials is that the composition of participants in most conversations does not accurately reflect the diversity of Rotterdam. Especially higher educated citizens participate in city conversations compared to lower educated people, argues official 1. This matches the assumption of Van Gool (2008) in which he stated that mainly politically interested and highly educated citizens participate. This often includes already active citizens in the neighborhood and those who have the resources and time to be active: *''You don't see people who live in poverty and I get that, because maybe you have something else on your mind other than coming to a meeting like this.''* (Official 1). Citizen 2 agrees with this statement and mentions that everyone below the median is hardly involved: *''You get the elite at such a discussion and I think that's a shame. Everyone should be included.''* (Citizen 2). That mainly highly educated, middle-aged, active people participate in the conversations was also found in the observations. In the conversation about residents of the refugee boats <sup>2</sup>, it was noticeable that every participant was active in the neighborhood. During the observations, it became clear that the residents who participated were

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<sup>2</sup> During this discussion, local residents of two of the three emergency shelter locations (refugee boats) are asked to share their experience about accommodating newcomers in Rotterdam.

highly positive towards refugees and were involved in the organization of a neighborhood garden where newcomers work, or for example, were a buddy of a refugee.

An additional noteworthy concern raised by two officials and echoed by all citizens, which was also observed, is the recurring participation of the same individuals who are already actively engaged in various city conversations. This aligns with Van Gool's (2009) proposition that a limited number of interested individuals tend to participate in these processes. Citizen 2 expresses the following perspective on this matter:

During the introductory phase of the city conversation, participants were asked to introduce themselves and explain the origin of their names. After this round, the discussion leader impressively recalled and reiterated the names of all attendees, leaving me in awe of their memory capabilities. However, as the conversation progressed, I began to notice that a significant number of individuals present had participated in previous sessions. [...] I discovered that three-quarters of the attendees had been present on numerous occasions! Consequently, I reassessed my initial admiration for the discussion leader's name-recall ability, realizing that it may not have been as remarkable as I initially perceived (Citizen 2).

Three of the five officials assert that the conversations effectively reach the intended target group. However, this assertion is questioned by three citizens and two officials, thus revealing a discrepancy. For instance, during the conversation addressing anti-East Asian racism, an official notes the limited presence of Asian Rotterdammers and highlights that the individual who spoke the most was not of Asian descent. This observation aligns with the findings from the discussion on Muslim discrimination, where Muslim speakers were scarce and the experiences of discrimination were primarily conveyed by individuals who did not face this form of discrimination. Additionally, an official remarks that the group participating in the conversation on gender and sexual diversity displayed a notable level of homogeneity: *'It was a pretty white group. I also wanted more trans people in the group. Mainly because they are groups within the community where the issues are very different compared to the white gay man [...]'* (Official 5).

Intersectional insights do not emerge due to the lack of diversity in the group. Discussion leader 1 highlights that the municipality is already aware of the issues faced by the target group, leading individuals to become sceptical about sharing their experiences as they perceive no tangible action being taken. This lack of trust in the government aligns with Fledderus (2015),

stating that citizens do not engage in participation processes due to a lack of trust, which affects representativity.

In the interviews, both the municipality and the discussion leaders agree that the conversations concerning old- and newcomers were representative. However, two newcomers who participated in the discussions expressed their viewpoint that the nuances and distinctions among various groups of status holders were overlooked, resulting in them being perceived as a homogeneous group. *‘There are also groups among the status holders, and that distinction was not made in the discussions.’* (Citizen 3). Thus, representation within the migrant group must also be carefully considered.

Lastly, it is notable that numerous organizations subsidized by the municipality are actively participating in the conversations. However, their involvement primarily revolves around furthering their interests in securing future subsidies. This situation undermines the input-legitimacy of the process. A participant expresses this concern, stating the following: *‘Well the organization said that the municipality should put more effort into dialogues and then I thought you are just defending your market interests. That organization was committed to organizing dialogues.’* (Citizen 2).

Thus, the composition of the participants in the city conversations does not accurately reflect the diversity of Rotterdam society. A key finding here is that the target group relevant to specific situations of discrimination is not adequately represented, resulting in the reconstruction of these experiences by individuals who do not personally face such prejudices. Additionally, a noteworthy insight is that the presence of organizations in the conversations is disproportionately high, possibly driven by their desire to secure subsidies.

### ***Open agenda-setting process***

The last aspect of input-legitimacy is the open agenda-setting process (Bekkers, 2007). Citizens should be able to express their views (Eshuis & Edwards, 2013). The responses regarding the extent of space provided for citizens to express their perspectives varied among citizens, discussion leaders, and the municipality. Citizen 1 attests to having enough opportunities to raise topics of personal importance and expresses satisfaction with the municipality's ability to provide answers to her questions. Similarly, discussion Leader 2 concurs, affirming that all interests were adequately represented and expressed during the conversations.

Nevertheless, the same citizens and two officials mention that sometimes too many topics were covered and it was not possible to gain in-depth answers. Official 3 reflects that, in hindsight, it would have been more effective to address several related topics together. This

observation was also apparent during the observations, revealing that the municipality aimed to cover a wide range of topics, resulting in a checklist-like approach. Particularly in the conversations organized by 'Ik Ben Wij' & 'Stichting Confro', the discussion leaders expressed a desire to delve deeper into specific topics, but time constraints prevented thorough exploration, leading to interruptions and citizens being cut off from expressing their thoughts fully.

The expectation is that citizen conversations provide sufficient space for individuals to express their perspectives, even when conflicting views are present (Eshuis & Edwards, 2013). While participants can put forth their points, there are instances where time constraints arise due to the need to address a multitude of topics. Consequently, some participants may be cut off before fully expressing their viewpoints.

### ***Throughput-legitimacy***

Throughput legitimacy is about *"the quality of the decision-making process."* (Bovens, 2005, p. 184). Throughput-legitimacy can be divided into collective decision-making and will-formation, quality and transparency, and checks and balances. In the section below the different aspects of throughput-legitimacy are discussed regarding the city conversations in Rotterdam.

#### ***Collective decision-making and will-formation***

In the phase of collective decision-making and will-formation, the collaborative development of solutions is regarded as crucial (Bekkers, 2007). However, there is no consensus on this matter, as the ability to collectively arrive at solutions varied across different city conversations. Citizen 1, for example, mentions the following: *"You notice that you are not the only one with the problem. Together you can still work on the solution"* (Citizen 1). All officials emphasize the significance of collaboration, joint problem-solving, and constructive criticism in the participatory process. They further highlight the importance of active listening and self-reflection, as these factors contribute to the throughput-legitimacy of the process.

All officials agree that they should have an open mind toward citizens. However, three of the four citizens and a discussion leader mention that the officials sometimes had too much of a defensive attitude. Interestingly, the municipality does not acknowledge such defensive behaviour. This discrepancy in perceptions regarding the officials' defensive stance constitutes a notable and impactful insight, which directly influences the throughput-legitimacy. A participant, who is a newcomer, expresses the following sentiment: *'However when a question*

*was raised, the municipality tended to respond defensively instead of actively listening and engaging in constructive dialogue. I want to be heard.*'' (Citizen 3). Citizen 4 who attended the conversation about old- and newcomers and is a newcomer himself expressed that there is hardly any trust in the government and that the municipality does not listen to them.

The defensive attitude of the municipality is in line with the instrumental perspective in which the municipality is convinced of its position and does not want to deviate from it as Van Gool (2008) mentions in the theoretical framework. Although the promise is made that solutions will be developed collaboratively and citizens will have significant influence, the reality is that the municipality largely dictates the policy outcomes. Furthermore, two officials and the project coordinator assert that no new policy is being formulated, but rather the input gathered serves as a means of confirmation. The placation phase according to the ladder of Arnstein (1969) in which this process lies, does not contribute to the throughput-legitimacy. No shared decisions are made.

Concluding, several aspects of city conversations seem to negatively affect collective decision-making. The expectation is that the municipality searches for solutions together with the citizen, but it depends on the motive of the municipality (Van Gool, 2008). At first glance, it may appear that the municipality genuinely listens and engages in joint problem-solving; however, a crucial insight reveals the municipality's defensive attitude. The emergence of an instrumental perspective becomes evident, wherein the municipality remains convinced of its viewpoint and is resistant to deviation.

### ***Quality and transparency***

The quality and transparency of the participation process are considered crucial and can improve throughput-legitimacy according to Bekkers (2007). According to all citizens, discussion leaders and officials, the level of engagement in the process was adequate, with individuals actively listening to and valuing one another's perspectives. However, three citizens, one discussion leader and three officials noted that the conversations lacked depth. This highlights a discrepancy between the political will and the quality of the process. One discussion leader says the following about this:

And that's also a bit of how it politically and policy-wise works. Politics wanted to speak to as many people as possible, so then you have to respond to that from a policy perspective. Speaking to more people just doesn't directly mean better quality content. [...] (Discussion leader 2).



At the discussion about old- and newcomers organized by Open Embassy, there were eventually about 40 participants. Consequently, the discussions on various topics were conducted at a rapid pace, preventing a deeper exploration of individual statements. Thus, a larger number of participants in a session does not necessarily translate to improved quality, as the conversations lacked depth. Additionally, the constraint of limited time may impede the throughput-legitimacy, as suggested by Leyenaar (2009). There was a need for more extensive follow-up discussions, the discussion leaders mention. However, the insufficient budget allocated to the organizations hindered this possibility. The compressed timeframe resulted in considerable pressure and stress experienced by both organizations and officials involved, as noted in the interviews.

A significant outcome of the lack of in-depth exploration is the absence of concrete solutions derived from the city conversations, as reported by all officials. Instead, the conversations primarily served as a means of confirming the municipality's existing trajectory, the officials mention. This crucial insight hampers the throughput-legitimacy of the process. Furthermore, the abstract nature of the solutions poses a risk to accountability, as it becomes challenging to verify whether all aspects have been adequately incorporated into the policy. Official 4 expresses the following sentiment regarding this matter: “*Concrete suggestions would have been valuable, as they would provide a basis for increased accountability for the municipality.*” (Official 4). The observations also identified the abstract solutions. The city conversations often highlighted the importance of raising awareness as a potential recommendation. While this suggestion holds promise, further probing and questioning were necessary to elicit more specific and actionable answers.

All citizens and all officials acknowledge the high level of transparency throughout the entire process, which is a positive aspect contributing to the throughput-legitimacy. As Mostert (2003) asserts, all citizens must be well-informed about significant steps taken in the process and have access to relevant information. The municipality effectively fulfils this requirement by providing clear communication, such as notifying citizens about policy discussions in the council and making draft policies accessible for review.

Concluding, active listening and mutual respect among participants are prevalent, as expected, as they contribute significantly to the quality of the conversations (Leyenaar, 2009). Additionally, the transparency of the process is well-maintained, aligning with expectations and further enhancing the process quality (Mostert, 2003). However, a new insight reveals that the quality is compromised by the lack of in-depth answers during the conversations. Furthermore,

the most significant finding is the absence of concrete solutions that can be directly implemented into policy, with officials using the conversations more as a general policy direction.

### ***Checks and balances***

Checks and balances must be implemented in the process with an important role for discussion leaders to avoid abuse of power (Bekkers, 2005). It is essential to adequately represent the perspectives of groups that are often underrepresented. In response to this challenge, the discussion leaders have specifically implemented strategies aimed at achieving inclusivity and diverse representation: *"I believe the moderators were consciously attentive to who was speaking and who was not, and deliberately gave an opportunity for those who were not speaking to contribute."* (Citizen 2).

However, in some instances, the checks and balances implemented by the conversation leaders were compromised, particularly observed in the conversation facilitated by 'Ik ben Wij' and 'Stichting Confro'. In a specific conversation, the discussion leaders seemed to assume the role of participants, particularly when discussing topics that held significance for their respective organizations. For instance, when discussing issues related to young people with disabilities, the discussion leaders actively engaged in the conversation, expressing their perspectives and recounting instances of failures within the system. Despite an official addressing this concern with the discussion leaders, no corrective action was taken, likely due to it being one of the final conversations. The attending official who observed this situation shares the following insight:

During the conversation, it became apparent that the discussion leaders, who had recently been heavily involved with young people with disabilities, gradually transitioned from their roles as discussion leaders to active participants. They expressed their concerns and highlighted various issues that were not functioning optimally within the system. (Respondent 9).

Thus, the implementation of methods by discussion leaders to facilitate inclusive participation aligns with the expectation of preventing power abuse (Bekkers, 2005). Overall, the process functions adequately, but caution is required to prevent discussion leaders from assuming the role of participants.

## 5. Conclusion & Discussion

### *Conclusion & Discussion*

The municipality has embarked on large-scale citizen participation through city conversations, emphasizing the importance of collaborative policy-making. However, it remains to be seen whether the policy is truly co-created and perceived as fair and legitimate by all stakeholders. This research aimed to investigate how city conversations, as a form of citizen participation, contribute to the perceived legitimacy of the policy development process in 'Samenleven Rotterdam'. The study expected that various factors within the conversations, including participant recruitment, representativeness of perspectives, open agenda-setting, collective decision-making, quality and transparency, and checks and balances, may influence legitimacy in both positive and negative ways.

The municipality of Rotterdam wants to use the city conversations to respond and make policy earlier compared to the past where new policies were created after an event, for example, the BLM movement. However, for a policy to be successful, the legitimacy of the policy process plays a significant role (Scharpf, 1998). Increased legitimacy reduces the gap between citizens and the municipality, creates more solutions, improves the quality and support for the policy, and can accelerate the process (De Graaf, 2007). Thus, legitimacy is necessary for policy.

As the findings on the recruitment of participants, the representativeness of perspectives, and the open-agenda setting process showed, the Rotterdam City conversations generally do not contribute to increased input-legitimacy of the policy process. The municipality does mention that everyone is reached through the invitations, but a bias in the invitations exists whereby people are selectively recruited. This finding is consistent with what Omlo (2020) argues that recruiting often occurs within informal networks. Furthermore, the interviews reveal that some people were explicitly not invited because tensions can arise. This contributes negatively to input-legitimacy. The municipality, citizens, and discussion leaders admit that representativeness is questionable. Observations indicate a prevalence of highly educated, middle-aged, and active participants. This finding aligns with the expectation put forth by Snel et al. (2020) that active and retired individuals, who possess significant social and human capital resources, tend to participate more frequently in civic engagement processes. A new key insight is that the target group often does not participate, experiences of discrimination are reconstructed and intersectional discrimination is neglected. Furthermore, a noteworthy aspect that arises is the participation of organizations primarily driven by the intention to secure subsidies rather than focusing on the development of inclusive policies. Another significant

observation is the excessive number of topics covered during the conversations, which resulted in an overloaded agenda. The need to address numerous topics hindered the open-agenda-setting process, transforming the agenda into a mere checklist.

The findings regarding collective decision-making, quality and transparency, and checks and balances indicate that the Rotterdam City conversations do not contribute to an increased throughput-legitimacy of the policy process. While both citizens and officials emphasize the importance of finding solutions together, a new insight reveals that the municipality has a defensive attitude, unbeknownst to them, which poses a potential threat to throughput-legitimacy, as highlighted by Schmidt & Wood (2019). The municipality primarily adopts an instrumental perspective on citizen participation, creating the illusion of citizen involvement in decision-making, while, in reality, the process aligns with Arnstein's (1969) placation phase, where citizens have limited co-decision power. The city conversations appear to be employed as a means to generate support. Regarding quality and transparency, the process is adequately transparent. However, the conversations lacked in-depth answers and the solutions remained abstract. The presence of checks and balances, facilitated by conversation leaders' strategies, contributes positively to throughput legitimacy, although their assumption of the role of participants undermines this balance.

When both the findings on input-legitimacy and throughput-legitimacy are taken together, the city conversations do not necessarily contribute to increased legitimacy which can have positive effects on the policy process such as increased policy quality, increased support, and acceleration of the process. The conversations contribute mainly negatively to input-legitimacy and also to a lesser extent negatively to throughput-legitimacy. When examining the divergent perspectives of citizens, the municipality, and discussion leaders, it becomes apparent that there is a consensus among all actors that several aspects of the process are not functioning optimally. However, it is noteworthy that the municipality holds a more positive perception of the city conversations compared to citizens and discussion leaders. The municipality believes that genuine collaborative solutions are reached through conversations, contributing to the overall policy quality. In reality, however, these promises are not fulfilled, citizens point out. In particular, the argument that the municipality makes policy together with citizens and that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate is questioned because of the defensive attitude of the municipality. Citizens hold the belief that their input carries significant influence, which sets the stage for potential disappointment when reviewing the (draft) policy, as it is likely that a considerable portion of their input may not be incorporated. This mismatch between citizen expectations and the actual inclusion of their input can diminish public support for the policy.

This research has facilitated a reflective stance for the municipality towards the entire citizen participation process. By prioritizing and ensuring high levels of perceived legitimacy, various other benefits such as enhanced support, improved policy quality, and accelerated decision-making can be realized (De Graaf, 2007). It is through the establishment of a strong legitimacy framework that effective policy implementation becomes feasible.

### ***Limitations and future research***

This research is an extension of studies conducted on citizen participation processes in which legitimacy is often still underestimated. However, it must be taken into account that this research focuses on input- and throughput-legitimacy. To be able to measure the perceived legitimacy of the policy process, it is also necessary to include output- legitimacy. This is about the extent to which citizens' inputs are incorporated into actual policy and whether actors are satisfied with the policy (Bovens, 2005). However, this factor could not be included in this research because of the short time frame of the thesis and the definitive policy will be published in November 2023. However, for future research, it would be valuable to examine the actual policy outcomes and assess their alignment with the expectations set during the citizen participation process. Only through such an assessment a comprehensive and conclusive understanding of perceived legitimacy can be obtained. Moreover, it is essential to acknowledge that the findings regarding perceived legitimacy are specific to the municipality of Rotterdam. The research is not generalizable; however, this is not the objective of this qualitative study. It concerns a unique situation to gain and explain insights (Smaling, 2009). Each municipality organizes its citizen participation processes differently, and as such, the perceived legitimacy may vary across municipalities and different processes.

## 6. Recommendations

Several recommendations can be made to increase the perceived legitimacy of the policy process. When considering input-legitimacy, an active and targeted approach to participant recruitment is crucial for the municipality. Rather than relying solely on network invitations, engaging directly with residents in their neighborhoods should be prioritized. This approach necessitates allocating adequate budget and time to ensure an inclusive and representative participation process. Emphasizing the inclusion of genuine residents, with priority given to their participation over organizations seeking subsidies, is essential. Additionally, exploring alternative working methods should be considered to enhance the inclusivity of the process. The conversations were conducted in a short time frame which made it inconvenient for some people to participate. In addition, the conversations were carried out in the evening at a particular location in the center or in Rotterdam South. These locations are not nearby for all people, and to make them more accessible, the conversations must take place at several locations. Online working methods could also be considered that would enable talking to as many people as possible since many people have other responsibilities such as children or 'mantelzorg' (informal care) in the evening. Lastly, it is recommended that the municipality adopts a more active listening approach during the city conversations. Instead of predominantly presenting their statements, the municipality should utilize them as a foundation for initiating discussions. By prioritizing the voices and perspectives of citizens, the municipality can create a more inclusive environment where diverse viewpoints are heard and considered.

In terms of throughput-legitimacy, several recommendations can be put forward. Firstly, the municipality should establish clear expectations with participants from the outset, emphasizing that their input serves as an advisory rather than binding for policy-making purposes. This clarification will help manage potential disappointments. Additionally, it is crucial to limit the number of participants per conversation or consider scheduling additional sessions on the same topic. Smaller group sizes facilitate deeper discussions and allow for a more comprehensive exploration of ideas. Furthermore, combining city conversations with in-depth interviews involving individuals can foster the development of concrete and actionable solutions. Finally, it is imperative to enhance communication and coordination among the organizations responsible for organizing the city conversations. Currently, there is a lack of effective communication channels between these entities. Moreover, it is concerning that the conversations about "Integration" (addressing migration-related themes) have been kept separate from the discussions on "Living together" (covering D&I topics). While this might be

a deliberate policy decision, it raises questions about the message being conveyed to the public. It is worth considering the interconnectedness between migration-related themes and D&I, as they are closely linked. The municipality should refrain from using the city conversations solely as a means to develop inclusive policies, but rather prioritize attentive listening to the societal dynamics and concerns. By fostering effective communication and addressing the interrelated nature of these topics, the municipality can further enhance the inclusiveness and effectiveness of the citizen participation process.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1: Overview of city conversations

City Conversation	Topic
<b>1. When do I experience that the government is there for (people like) me?</b>	-Institutional inclusion (in staff and policy) -Scientific society policy -Digital inclusion -Facilitation: For and by Rotterdammers
<b>2. What do I need to have equal opportunities? (in a job application, at work, in education)</b>	-Labor Market -Education -Age Discrimination
<b>3. How can we prevent me from not getting a rental house because of my ethnicity?</b>	-Housing Market
<b>4. How can we organize the reception and housing of refugees, as best we can in the city?</b>	-Concerns about and support for shelter and housing in the city -Quality of reception and housing refugees -Discrimination on residence status
<b>5. How can new Rotterdam residents feel at home in Rotterdam?</b>	-Broader support for newcomers
<b>6. How can LGBTQI+ safely be themselves and have equal opportunities?</b>	-Sexual and gender diversity -Street safety
<b>7. How do we ensure equality of m/f/x and breaking gender roles?</b>	-Women's and Men's Emancipation -Street Safety
<b>8. What is needed for equality and well-being of Black Rotterdammers?</b>	-Anti-Black racism -Historical awareness -Police for All
<b>9. What is needed for equality and well-being of Asian Rotterdammers?</b>	-Anti-Asian racism -Historical awareness
<b>10. How can Rotterdammers safely and freely express their express their religion?</b>	-Muslim discrimination/Islamophobia -Anti-Semitism -Historical awareness
<b>11. What does it take for me to feel welcome in the city and with the municipality?</b>	-Validism
<b>12. How safe and free is it to express my opinion ? (woke and anti-woke)</b>	-Woke and freedom of speech
<b>Other topics (during or outside city conversation)</b>	-Safe and welcoming night hospitality -Inclusion in sports -Inclusion in the cultural sector -Living together in outdoor spaces -Inclusive coping with climate change

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Health impacts of and discrimination in care, welfare, youth</li><li>-Sharing knowledge</li><li>-Dealing with discrimination</li><li>-Exclusion through poverty</li></ul>
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## Appendix 2: Operationalization

Concept	Dimensions	Source	Indicators
<b>Citizen participation</b> <i>Definition:</i> A way of policy-making that involves citizens directly or indirectly in local policies to achieve policy development, implementation, and evaluation through collaboration (Dinjens, 2010).	<b>1) Ladder of participation (coproduction)</b> <i>Definition:</i> The categorization of citizen participation, each representing a different form of citizen participation. (manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power & citizen control. (Arnstein, 1969)	-Observations  -Interviews with officials  -Interviews with citizens.	-The interactions between citizens and officials during the city conversations.  -Officials do/do not use the perspectives of citizens in the decision-making. – What level of citizen participation?  -The feeling that citizens are involved in local decision-making
	<b>2) City conversations</b> Conversations can have four different functions (Stout & Love, 2015): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generating input on a particular issue</li> <li>• Aligning goals and approaches to the participation process</li> <li>• Preventing conflicts</li> <li>• Generating support for the outcomes</li> </ul>	-Interviews with officials	- the main purpose of the city conversations. What is done with the input.
	<b>3) Instrumental and democratic perspective on citizen participation</b>	-Observations	-Do officials listen to citizens during the city

	<p><i>Definition:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-An instrumental perspective on the coproduction of policy implies that the interactive policy is used as a means to achieve a policy goal.</li> <li>-An democratic perspective on the coproduction of policy implies that the interactive policy is used to create valuable and democratic interaction and participation in interactive policymaking to generate “valuable” democratic interaction and participation, to promote emancipation. It is a goal in itself. It is an intrinsic value. (de Graaf, 2009).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Interviews with officials</li> <li>-Interviews with citizens</li> </ul>	<p>conversations or do they just try to defend their own point of view (instrumental)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The design of the conversations more of a checklist or an open dialogue?</li> <li>-The interaction between officials and citizens.</li> <li>-The importance of the city conversations is often cited (democratic perspective)</li> <li>-The primary purpose of the city conversations according to officials.</li> <li>-The primary purpose of the city conversations according to citizens.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Legitimacy</b> <i>Definition:</i></p>	<p><b>1)Input-legitimacy</b> <i>Definition:</i></p>	<p>-Observations/interviews with citizens.</p>	<p>-The extent to which there are opportunities</p>



<p>A legitimate authority is one that is recognized as valid or justified by those to whom it applies' (Easton, 1965, p. 107).</p>	<p>“The inclusiveness and representativeness of the policy-making process” (Bovens, 2005, p. 184)</p>	<p>-Observations</p> <p>-Observations/ interviews with officials/interviews with citizens</p>	<p>for citizen participation, enabling citizens to express their wishes, desires, and preferences in the city conversations</p> <p>-The quality of representation of interest and preferences. Are weak interests also represented? And are some participants guided by particular interests?</p> <p>-The extent to which there is an open agenda-setting process. So that groups can have their views, interests, and their perspectives effectively bring to the public, thus ensuring that the political system has an eye and ear for the wishes and needs of groups in society.</p>
	<p><b>2) Throughput-legitimacy</b>  <i>Definition:</i>          “The quality of the decision-making</p>	<p>-Interviews with citizens/interviews with officials</p>	<p>-How collective decision-making and</p>

	<p>process'' (Bovens, 2005, p. 184)</p>	<p>-Interviews with citizens/interviews with officials</p> <p>-Observations/interviews with officials</p>	<p>will formation are achieved.</p> <p>-The quality of participation in the decision-making. Is the process transparent and can everybody's opinion be expressed?</p> <p>-The extent to which checks and balances are embedded in the decision-making. Is there a check for abuse of power and the certain interest of some organizations?</p>
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## *Appendix 3: Topiclist*

### **Topic list**

(Order may differ)

### **(interviews are being held in Dutch)**

#### **Introduction**

(Goal research, information, consent form)

#### *Citizens*

##### *General questions*

- Who are you? (Name, age ..)
- How long have you been living in Rotterdam?
- Are you working/unemployed/retired etc.?
- At which city conversation were you present and why did you choose this city conversation?
- What was your reason for participating in the city conversations?

##### *Citizen participation*

(explain the term first)

- How do you experience cooperation with the municipality?
- How do you see your role in the entire citizen participation process?
- Why do you think citizens' opinions are so important in policymaking?
- How much trust do you have in the municipality in terms of diversity and inclusion policymaking?

##### *City conversations (general)*

- How did you generally experience the city conversations?
- If you participated in multiple conversations, was there a difference between the conversations?
- What were your expectations of the town conversations beforehand?
- Did these expectations come true?

### *Input-legitimacy*

- How were you informed that the city conversations were taking place (actively approached/looked up yourself, letter, digitally, through someone else)?
- Have you participated in citizen participation activities before? (Give examples).
- How did you experience the accessibility of the city talks? (in terms of language, concepts, but also accessibility of the location, the time when the city conversations took place, etc.)
- How did you experience the representativeness of the participants in the city talks? (i.e. different groups, was this similar to the composition of Rotterdam in terms of diversity)?
- How did you experience the turn-out of the city conversations? (Numbers of participants?).
- How did you find the distribution of different interests during the city conversations? Were there many different interests or did the interests coincide? (How did you perceive the role of the moderator in this).
- Were the different topics (the list that the moderator presented) relevant to you during the city conversations?
- Were you able to introduce your own topics and how did you feel the moderator dealt with them?

### *Throughput-legitimacy*

- How did you experience the opportunity during the city conversations to express your own opinions? (did discussions arise etc?)
- How did you experience the interaction with the municipality during the conversations? (was there any tension, or openness municipality, did the municipality listen well?)
- How was everybody heard during the city conversations and was there enough time to bring up all perspectives? (Did all perspectives come forward? Or were a few people mainly speaking?).
- How did you experience the guidance of the city conversations provided by the discussion leaders? (was everyone involved?)
- How did you experience the entire process? Was it clear what was happening with the input from the conversations and is this still clearly communicated now?
- Did you feel that you were taken seriously during the conversations?
- Do you feel that something is being actually done with the input?

### *Output-legitimacy*

- Are you satisfied with how your interests are reflected in the actual policy?

-What is your support for the policy?

### *Final questions*

-How did you generally experience the city conversations?

-What can be improved in the future?

-Do you feel that your views are being taken into account?

-Do you have anything else you would like to share about the city conversations?

## **Topic list**

(Order may differ)

### *Officials/discussion leaders*

#### *General questions*

-Who are you?

-How long have you been working in the field of D&I within the municipality?

-How long have you been working on 'Samenleven' policy?

-Have you attended previous civic participation talks?

#### *Citizen participation*

-What is the reason why the municipality of Rotterdam is committed to citizen participation?

-What were the expectations before the city conversations?

-Does the municipality of Rotterdam have previous experience with citizen participation processes on a larger scale?

#### *City conversations*

-How did you generally experience the city conversations?

-What was the main purpose of the city conversations?

-How did you perceive the role of citizens during the city conversations?

-To what extent is the input from citizens actually incorporated into the policy and was this clearly communicated to citizens?

### *Input-legitimacy*

- How did you communicate the city conversations to the public and what worked well and what didn't? (What format, active approach?)
- How did you experience the diversity of citizens during the conversations? (and the turnout)
- How did you ensure that vulnerable groups were also reached for the city conversations? (the target groups )
- Many topics were covered, why were these particular topics chosen?
- How was it ensured that citizens could also bring up topics that were important to them?
- How did you find the distribution of different interests during the city talks? (What did you think of the role of the discussion leader in this?)

### *Throughput-legitimacy*

- How did the municipality ensure that you entered the discussions with an open mindset (not with a particular policy goal)
- How did you experience the discussions between the citizens and the municipality (where did tensions arise)?
- Did you find that everyone's perspectives were well expressed, or did some of the citizens take the lead in this?
- Many topics had to be covered during a single conversation. Did you feel there was enough time to discuss everything?
- How did the conversations help gather input?
- How did you experience the transparency throughout the process (clarity of the process, completeness of information)
- How was it made clear to citizens who were responsible for the process and who was responsible for the results?
- How did you generally experience the entire process and what could be improved?
- What is now being done with the input from the conversations?

### *Final questions*

- How did you generally experience the city conversations?
- How did you as a municipality learn from the city conversations and what would you do differently in the future

# Informatie en toestemming

## Informatie

### **Introductie**

Ik ben Laura van Vliet en volg op dit moment de master Governance of Migration and Diversity aan Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam. Ik doe onderzoek naar de ervaringen rondom de stadsgesprekken 'Samenleven Rotterdam'. Deze informatie wordt gebruikt om de stadsgesprekken te evalueren en om concrete aanbevelingen te kunnen doen.

Voor verdere vragen ben ik bereikbaar via:

Mail: 617325lv@eur.nl

Telefoonnummer: 0657064932

### **Data collectie**

Tijdens vijf stadsgesprekken ben ik aanwezig geweest om te observeren. Verder bestaat de data collectie uit interviews. Deze interviews zullen online of fysiek plaatsvinden en na toestemming worden opgenomen en uiteindelijk weer worden verwijderd. De interviews zijn volstrekt vertrouwelijk en informatie wordt niet gedeeld met derden. In het onderzoek wordt u anoniem genoemd, tenzij u toestemming heeft verleend om uw naam te gebruiken.

### **Potentieel ongemak**

U hoeft geen vragen te beantwoorden die u niet wilt beantwoorden. Verder is deelname vrijwillig en kunt u op elk moment stoppen.

### **Vertrouwelijkheid en bescherming van data**

De verzamelde gegevens zullen worden gebruikt voor een geaggregeerde analyse en er zal geen vertrouwelijke informatie of persoonlijke gegevens in het onderzoeksresultaat worden opgenomen. De gegevens worden opgeslagen op een beveiligde locatie voor 7 jaar. Echter goed om te benadrukken nog een keer is dat alle data volledig geanonimiseerd wordt.

### **Delen van data**

De data wordt gedeeld met M. Schiller (mijn supervisor van Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam). Hierin wordt u anoniem genoemd. (Pseudoniem) De thesis wordt gedeeld met M. Schiller met als doel om de thesis te beoordelen voor het afstuderen van de studie Governance of Migration and Diversity aan de Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences.

### **Vrijwillige participatie & individuele rechten**

Uw deelname is vrijwillig en u kunt altijd stoppen. Wanneer u deelneemt aan het onderzoek, heeft u het recht om meer informatie te vragen over de gegevensverzameling en -analyse of om uw toestemming in te trekken en te vragen dat de gegevens worden verwijderd voordat de dataset wordt geanonimiseerd. U kunt uw rechten uitoefenen door contact op te nemen met Laura van Vliet.

Als u klachten heeft over de verwerking van persoonsgegevens in dit onderzoek, kunt u contact opnemen met Laura van Vliet.

## Consent Stadsgesprekken Rotterdam

Met de ondertekening van dit toestemmingsformulier bevestig ik dat:

- Ik ben geïnformeerd over het doel van het onderzoek, de gegevensverzameling en de opslag zoals uitgelegd in het informatieblad;
- Ik heb het informatieblad gelezen, of het is mij voorgelezen;
- Ik de gelegenheid heb gehad vragen te stellen over het onderzoek; en de vragen voldoende zijn beantwoord;
- Ik ga vrijwillig akkoord met deelname aan dit onderzoek;
- Ik begrijp dat de informatie vertrouwelijk zal worden behandeld;
- Ik begrijp dat ik op elk moment kan stoppen met deelname of kan weigeren vragen te beantwoorden zonder gevolgen;
- Ik begrijp dat ik mijn toestemming kan intrekken voordat de dataset ter goedkeuring wordt voorgelegd.

Verder geef ik toestemming tot:

	JA	NEE
<u>Ik geef toestemming om het interview op te nemen</u>		
<u>Ik geef toestemming om mijn antwoorden te gebruiken voor quotes in de scriptie van de student (Anoniem, pseudoniem)</u>		
<u>Ik geef toestemming om de bij mij verzamelde gegevens te bewaren en in gepseudonimiseerde vorm te gebruiken voor al het verdere onderzoek dat er later mee gedaan kan worden.</u>		
<u>Ik geef toestemming om mijn naam in het onderzoek te benoemen</u>		

Naam deelnemer: \_\_\_\_\_

Datum: \_\_\_\_\_

Handtekening:

\_\_\_\_\_



Appendix 5: Code scheme interviews

Themes (Selective)	Subthemes (Axial)	Codes (Open)
<b>Citizen participation</b>	<i>Importance of citizen participation</i>	-Respond to developments
		-Little contact with the municipality
		-Encourage more relationships
		-Doing it together / experience
<b>Ladder of participation</b>	<i>Expectation municipality</i>	-Municipality retains the right to decision
		- City conversations provide direction/collect ideas
		-No new policy/confirmation
	<i>Expectation citizen</i>	-Sense of co-decision/guidance policy
		-Low confidence (status holder group)
	<i>Discrepancy expectations</i>	-Manage expectations (misjudged)
		-Involvement
		-Sceptical
<b>Motives citizen participation (Municipality)</b>	<i>Instrumental</i>	-No new information municipality - checklist citizen participation
		-No new policies will be made
	<b>Democratic</b>	-Inclusive policies are created inclusively
<b>City conversations</b>	<i>Goals</i>	-Gathering (input)

		-Do not write policy in your own space
		-Separation of organizations city talks not logical
		-Really listening to citizens
<b>Legitimacy</b>	<i>Impact of city conversations</i>	-More support policy
<b>Input-legitimacy</b>	<i>Opportunities for citizen participation</i>	-More active recruitment needed
		-Invite more real residents (not the right audience is being reached now)
		-Invited participants via own network/snowball effect
		-Bias in invitations / Some people are not invited on purpose.
	<i>Quality of representation</i>	-Group not representative (non-usual suspect is absent) -Lack of cultural diversity  -Status holders are considered one group (old and newcomers are seen as the same - generalization)
		- Especially active citizens present
		-Every time the same participants present
		-Many organizations present for subsidies
		-Target group missing
		-Defending one's own interest

		-More theoretically educated instead of practically educated
		-Low trust government ( migrant group)
		-Not very accessible
	<b><i>Open agenda-setting process</i></b>	-Overasserting one's opinion.
		-Too many topics for discussion/limited room for individual input
		-A too large group for meaningful input
		- Not being able to introduce own topics (target audience)
<b>Throughput-legitimacy</b>	<b><i>Collective decision-making and will formation</i></b>	-Lack of depth / No concrete solutions
		-Problem budget
		-Discussions/tensions necessary
		-Uniform opinions due to lack of diversity
		-Same people speaking each time (depends on set-up)
		-Attitude municipality - listening/reflecting
		-Attitude municipality defensive
		-Prior knowledge municipality is missing
		-Finding solutions together

		-City conversations as appearances do together.
	<b><i>Quality and transparency</i></b>	-Lack of accountability due to non-concrete solutions
		-Cutting off participants/not taken seriously
		-Language Barrier
		-Commitment and listening to each other
		-Good transparency follow-up process (Updates)
		-Difference between political will (as many participants as possible) and quality
		-Too intensive process (time) -a checklist
	<b><i>Checks and balances</i></b>	-Distribution of who is speaking ( Discussion leader)
		-Negative experience of discussion leader / Leadership of discussions varying
		-Different perspectives highlighted
		-Repeatedly highlighting the same point/not intervening
		-Discussion leader as a participant