

# How Governance Stirs the Representative Soup

*An empirical test of Michael Saward's Representative Claim Theory in contemporary urban governance contexts*

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The logo of Erasmus University, featuring the word "Erasmus" in a stylized, cursive script.

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## **Abstract**

This research investigates and explains the relationship between contemporary governance and political representation within the urban context of the city of Rotterdam. The shift from a *hierarchical government* to a *cooperative governance approach* (Pierre, 2000) raises the question how political representation is enacted, as electoral mechanisms become inadequate (Saward, 2005). The 'constructivist turn' in literature on political representation (Russo & Cotta, 2020) enables analysing representation by non-elective actors. However, current literature lacks a comprehensive understanding of the influence of contemporary governance contexts on the practice of political representation. This research, therefore, investigates three distinct modes of governance - co-creation, self-organisation and meta-governance - and explains how these modes influence the performance of political representation.

The used method of inquiry is the co-variational approach (Blatter & Haverland, 2012), where the cases vary in the independent variable and the dependent variable is measured. The opted theoretical framework to measure the dependent variable, political representation, is derived from The Representative Claim Theory: a theory articulated by political theorist Michael Saward (2006, 2009, 2010), which posits that representation is not a fixed relationship but rather a dynamic process where actors make claims to represent others. The empirical test consisted of one case study per governance mode: the Rotterdams Weerwoord (co-creation), the Leeszaal Rotterdam West (self-organisation) and the Nationaal Programma Rotterdam Zuid (meta-governance). In each case, the emphasised claim mechanism associated with the governance mode was identified and analysed.

The findings of this research suggest that governance influences political representation, because each governance mode 'asks' for a varying form of political representation to align with its operational needs, thereby trying to provide the demanded quality from the represented.

## **Keywords**

Contemporary governance, political representation, representative claim theory, co-variational analysis, comparative case study

## **Preface & acknowledgment**

During my studies, one of the most enjoyable experiences was interviewing people. I had the opportunity to speak with aldermen, civil servants, politicians, researchers, privacy officers, policy advisors, et cetera. It all started in the second month of my first year as a bachelor student in Public Administration, when I interviewed an employee of the Dutch Consumer and Market Authority. There, I saw a pattern appear that always stuck with me: all the people I spoke with are pleased to serve ‘the people’ and contribute to the public good. As a privacy officer from a small municipality brought it: *‘when I worked at a private company, anyone willing to pay was my goal to help. For my current ‘customers’ as civil servant, I just need to look out of my window’.*

However, when I interviewed citizens, this dedication was not always perceived the same way. This contrast left me wondering: how then, do civil servants try to perform acts on behalf of citizens? This question lingered until Dr. Sofia Pagliarin gave the lecture ‘Governance, Critique and Alternatives’ in September 2023, in which we discussed the article written by Hendriks (2009), called ‘The Democratic Soup’. In class, the suggestion was done that non-electives perform ‘political representation’, but how? An idea for a thesis was born, in which I could talk *directly* with individuals about how they try to act on behalf of citizens.

This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance of my supervisor, Dr. Paul Rabé. Paul’s genuine interest in this topic, as well as his clear guidance in the sometimes-overwhelming realm of academic writing allowed me to write a thesis I am proud of. I also would like to thank all the respondents in this research: you gave it a splash of colour. Moreover, the completion of this thesis marks the end for me as a student in Public Administration. Starting in covid-era was hard, but the years that followed made it all worthwhile. I would like to thank my fellow students in both the Bachelor’s and Master’s program: thanks for the laughs, coffee-breaks, heated discussions, metro-travels home and, occasionally, the few beers too many.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude and love to my girlfriend Jitske for being my best friend and support. It means the world to me.

Matthia Goedegebuur  
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## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>7</b>
1.1 <i>Background and problem statement</i> .....	7
1.2 <i>Research objective &amp; scope</i> .....	8
1.3 <i>Research question, methods &amp; reading guide</i> .....	9
<b>2. Literature review &amp; theoretical framework</b> .....	<b>10</b>
2.1 <i>Contemporary modes of governance</i> .....	10
2.1.1 <i>Co-creation</i> .....	11
2.1.2 <i>Self-organisation</i> .....	12
2.1.3 <i>Meta-governance</i> .....	13
2.2 <i>Political representation</i> .....	15
2.2.1 <i>The genealogy of representation</i> .....	15
2.2.2 <i>Constructing representation – Michael Saward’s ‘claim theory’</i> .....	15
2.2.3 <i>A typology of the representative claim</i> .....	17
2.3 <i>The construction of political representation in contemporary governance</i> .....	19
2.4 <i>Causal scheme</i> .....	21
<b>3. Methodological justification &amp; case study protocol</b> .....	<b>22</b>
3.1 <i>Research character: the co-variational analysis &amp; John Stuart Mill’s method of difference</i> .....	22
3.2 <i>Case selection procedure</i> .....	22
3.3 <i>Cases selected</i> .....	23
3.3.1 <i>Co-creation: Rotterdams Weerwoord</i> .....	23
3.3.2 <i>Self-organisation: Leeszaal Rotterdam West</i> .....	24
3.3.3 <i>Meta-governance: Nationaal Programma Rotterdam Zuid</i> .....	24
3.3.4 <i>Overview of the cases</i> .....	24
3.4 <i>Process design</i> .....	25
3.4.1 <i>Method one: desk research</i> .....	25
3.4.2 <i>Method two: interviews</i> .....	25
3.5 <i>Operationalisation</i> .....	26
3.6 <i>Analysis &amp; measurement criteria</i> .....	27
3.6.1 <i>Epistemological considerations</i> .....	27
3.6.2 <i>Coding</i> .....	27

3.6.3 Reliability, validity & study limitations .....	28
<b>4. Findings &amp; analysis .....</b>	<b>29</b>
4.1 Mapping the representative claim per case .....	29
4.1.1 Co-creation: Rotterdams Weerwoord.....	29
4.1.2 Self-organisation: Leeszaal Rotterdam West.....	32
4.1.3 Meta-governance: Nationaal Programma Rotterdam Zuid .....	35
4.2 Revisiting the construction of political representation in contemporary governance ...	38
4.2.1 The covariational table .....	38
4.2.2 Explaining the relationship: the quality of the governance .....	38
<b>5. Conclusion, discussion &amp; recommendations .....</b>	<b>40</b>
5.1 Revisiting the research question.....	40
5.2 New nuances in literature .....	42
5.3 Critics of Michael Saward's Representative Claim Theory.....	42
5.4 Study limitations, Recommendations for future research & recommendations for practitioners .....	43
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>55</b>
Appendix A: operationalisation of 'political representation' .....	55
Appendix B: characteristics per governance mode .....	57
Appendix C: analysed documents .....	59
Appendix D: interview guideline.....	61
Appendix E: detailed sample description .....	64
Appendix F: informed consent form .....	65
Appendix G: deductive codebook .....	67
<b>Endnotes .....</b>	<b>70</b>

## Foreword

This thesis was submitted to the Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences (ESSB) and the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS), Erasmus University Rotterdam, in fulfilment of the requirements for the master track 'Urban Governance'.

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Typology of relationships between citizen initiatives and government bodies.....	9
Figure 2: Causal scheme.....	17
Figure 3: RW-partners plant a tree to kick-off a new project.....	25
Figure 4: Interior of the Leeszaal.....	28
Figure 5: NPRZ-director Marco Pastors.....	32

## List of Tables

Table 1: Elements of claims on representation.....	14
Table 2: Covariational table.....	21
Table 3: Sample description.....	23
Table 4: Final covariational table.....	35

## List of Abbreviations

**RW** Rotterdams Weerwoord

**LZ** Leeszaal Rotterdam West

**NPRZ** Nationaal Programma Rotterdam Zuid

## 1. Introduction

Representation and 'doing government' as concepts are historically intertwined, originating in classical antiquity (Cammack, 2021) and advancing politically during the enlightenment (Manin, 1997). In early public administration (e.g. Woodrow Wilson, 1887), fair elections became the primary measure of political representation (e.g. Fukuyama, 1992).

Contemporary public administration links representation to democratic theory, where democracy involves more than elections (Urbinati & Warren, 2008). Additionally, the network governance paradigm, where 'doing government' occurs within a network of actors, provides more opportunities for non-elected officials to perform democratic acts, such as representation (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2015; Saward, 2009). The next argumentative step, as argued by Hendriks (2009), is to determine if these acts meet electoral standards. We should, pragmatically, '*craft the democratic scripts on how actors ought to perform representation in contemporary forms of governance*' (p. 710). However, the influence of the context (contemporary governance) on the democratic act (political representation) must be measured before judging democratic actions (Saward, 2005). This research, therefore, explains the relationship between contemporary governance and political representation.

### 1.1 Background and problem statement

In 2000, political scientist Jon Pierre wrote the heavily quoted phrase *from government to governance*, pointing out that 'doing government' shifts from a hierarchical approach to a cooperative strategy. Logically follows the question how political representation is guaranteed in governance, since actors qualify as autonomous with their own problem-perception (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2015). Consequently, the notion of politically driven perceptions of societal issues and their resolution through electoral representation becomes problematic when applied to governance contexts (Saward, 2005). As Saward (2005) writes after quoting Pierre's (2000) notion on the shift towards governance:

*We are not dealing here with a simple transfer of 'representative' politics from one type or domain to another, but rather a significant shift in the primary political sense of representation as a practice (p. 180).*

The low applicability of electoral representation in governance set a stream of literature in motion that tried to secure representation through an alternative democratic dimension (e.g.

Sørensen & Torfin, 2021; Mansbridge, 2003; Urbinati & Warren, 2008). However, existing literature lacks an encyclopaedic framework of representation mechanisms in contemporary governance (Näsström, 2014; Fossen, 2019; cf. Klijn & Skelcher, 2007). These theoretical paths, therefore, lack understanding of the differences in governance and its influence on political representation. Researching this relationship is needed before democratic acts can be qualified as sufficient (Saward, 2005).

This literature gap prompts the following problem statement: *the question of how modes of governance influence the shaping of political representation has not sufficiently been answered.*

## 1.2 Research objective & scope

The search for validated frameworks provides the main theoretical research objective, reached through explanatory verification of theory. This research will use *constructivist realism* as epistemological approach: *'the fundamental goal of social research should be to reveal the processes that underlie observed social phenomena'* (Cupchik, 2001, p. 10). In sum, the primary research objective is to contribute to theory by explaining which *processes* construct political representation as *social phenomena*, influenced by governance contexts.

These contexts lead to an academic and empirical scope, reflected in the selected cases (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). First and foremost, academics argue that governance theory is derived as an answer to the complexity of societal issues (Ansell, 2023a). Herein lies an academic scope, focussing on *governance initiatives* that (a) build on the government taking the promise of governance to cope better with complexity (Torfin & Ansell, 2021; Ansell, 2023b) or (b) give voice to the stronger becoming civil society to contribute in 'solving' complexity (van Veelen et al., 2021; Puerari et al., 2018; Uitermark, 2015). To be complete, one could add (c) *'the organisation of self-organisation'* (Jessop, 1998, p. 42) – the government trying to steer self-organising networks. These will be defined as (a) co-creation, (b) self-organisation and (c) meta-governance (§2.1).

As for the empirical scope, Blatter & Haverland (2012) suggest a cross-sectional analysis for comparing cases, differentiating in a spatial rather than a temporal dimension (p. 44). However, geographical location must not influence the dependent variable (see §3.2). One specific area will, therefore, be chosen as geographical scope, in which cases differentiate. This area will be urban<sup>1</sup> (Dente, 1990; Boudreau, 2016), namely the city of

Rotterdam. As shown by Noordegraaf & Vermeulen (2010), Rotterdam exemplifies an urban area where contemporary governance arises due to its socio-economic context (i.e. high wealth inequality) and industrial culture (i.e. harbour city) (p. 520), since these aspects create a 'changing urban landscape' (p. 521) in need of 'new governance outlooks' (p. 522).

### 1.3 Research question, methods & reading guide

This study will answer the following research question:

*How do contemporary modes of governance in the city of Rotterdam influence the act of political representation as performed by actors within those modes?*

This question allows explaining the relation of the independent variable (*contemporary modes of governance*) on the dependent variable (*political representation*). The empirical tests used to investigate this relation consist of a deductive, multiple case study approach (Yin<sup>2</sup>, 1984<sup>3</sup>). Specifically, this article will use a *co-variational analysis*: presenting empirical evidence of co-variation between two variables to infer causality (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). The cases researched using qualitative methods are the Rotterdams Weerwoord, the Leeszaal Rotterdam-West, and the Nationaal Programma Rotterdam-Zuid. The cases constitute the independent variable, and therefore all represent varying modes of contemporary governance in the city of Rotterdam.

Three sub-questions support the overarching research question, being a theoretical, empirical, and analytical question respectively:

- a) Which theoretical account of political representation makes measuring representation in a governance context possible?
- b) Which mechanisms of political representation manifest themselves in governance modes in Rotterdam?
- c) How can the observed manifestations explain the influence of contemporary modes of governance on political representation?

Chapter two (§2) will provide a literature review and theoretical framework, conceptualising the variables and showing their linkage. Chapter three (§3) justifies the methodology prior to the findings (§4), explaining the co-variational case study approach and presenting the cases. After the findings are presented per case (§4), a discussion and conclusion will end this research (§5).

## 2. Literature review & theoretical framework

This chapter specifies the independent (§2.1) and dependent (§2.2) variables using theory, which will *'also provide a priori plausibility for the expected relationships'* (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, p. 51, emphasis original). The expected influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable is described in §2.3 and shown visually in §2.4. Relevant theories are gathered through the *snowball method* (Babbie, 2014).

### 2.1 Contemporary modes of governance

Since Woodrow Wilson outlined public administration as a science (1887), scholars have tried to define modes<sup>4</sup> of governance, referring to tasks performed as given by 'politics' (Weber, 1919; Ansell, 2023a). However, the absence of a 'crisp' definition of governance (Ansell, 2023b) creates a conceptual puzzle when determining modes. Outlining necessary characteristics is therefore imperative. Three 'governance features' are defined below.

Firstly, Treib et al. (2007) state: *'most contributions [in defining governance] share a common concern for the relationship **between** state intervention and societal autonomy'* (p. 1, emphasis added). This research will therefore presume that governance modes take place on a scale *between* government intervention (i.e. pure hierarchical steering) and societal autonomy (i.e. no governmental involvement) (a). In addition, Treib et al. (2007) posit that labelling governance as either 'old' or 'new' offers minimal analytical value. What then, defines a mode on this scale as 'contemporary'? In this research, a mode is, with the use of *network theory*, seen as 'contemporary' when it emphasises *'patterns of social relations between (...) actors'*, clustering around a policy problem (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2015, p. 11) (b).

However, while governance, then, implies a networked process, analytical clarity often necessitates a focus on a singular institution. Owen-Smith & Powell (2008) provide an application for analysis on this intersection. They conclude, *inter alia*, that networks and institutions are co-constitutive, which makes it possible to rest on *'a key duality between relationships (the building blocks of networks) and categories (the building blocks of institutions)'* (p. 616). Thus, one can focus on categories (i.e. actors in institutions) to analyse network relationships.

Finally, this research adopts the proposition from pioneers in governance theory Jon Pierre & Guy Peters (2000) that, although cooperation in governance gives power to 'new' actors, the government remains *primus inter pares* (c).

These features conceptualise the independent variable into three modes: co-creation (§2.1.1), self-organisation (§2.1.2), and meta-governance (§2.1.3). An overview of these modes can be found in Appendix B. While not an exhaustive list (Ansell, 2023), these modes align with the research scope (§1.2).

### 2.1.1 Co-creation

Torring & Ansell (2021) and Voorberg et al. (2014) argue that co-creation implies the creation of public value<sup>5</sup> in a multi-actor setting, including citizens as end-users. Connections between actors in this multi-actor setting are '*formally equal*' (p. 6), but with unequal power resources (Torring et al., 2021). Here, it is argued that the centre of the power resources shifts toward the government (albeit slightly), as the government is *primus inter pares* (§2.1). The government, then, uses relevant actors to (co-)create public value, which is done by *creating new relationships* (Lund, 2018).

In these relationships, the actors (both governmental and non-governmental) need to be active and positively minded towards each other's objectives, as shown in Figure 1 (Edelenbos et al., 2016, elaboration in §2.1.2). To properly define co-creation, as opposed to self-organisation (§2.1.2), this research will take the role of public authorities in urban co-creation as defined by Lund (2018): '*the role of public authorities more broadly becomes that of the enabling state (rather than the regulating state), providing (...) arenas (...) to form and act*' (p. 10). The initiative to co-create always originates from the relevant public authority (cf. Edelenbos et al., 2016), *actively* participating in the 'arena' (Figure 1).

The argument thus far asserts that co-creation occurs in a multi-actor setting where the government initiates collaborative efforts to create public value. One question, then, remains: for what aims this public value? Voorberg et al. (2014) note after a literature review that *public innovation* is the aim of co-creation, which, according to Torring et al. (2021), delineates co-creation from regular collaboration: '*unlike collaborative governance, co-creation involves both organised stakeholders and lay actors, [e.g. citizens], in fostering innovative solutions to complex problems*' (p. 3, emphasis added).

In sum, co-creation implies the creation of public value (Torring & Ansell, 2021), aimed at using public innovation (Voorberg et al., 2014; Torring et al., 2021) to solve complex problems (Torring et al., 2021) through government-initiated relations (Lund, 2018) in which the government actively plays a role (Edelenbos et al., 2016).

### 2.1.2 Self-organisation

Boonstra & Boelens (2011) define self-organisation: '*initiatives that originate in civil society itself, via autonomous community-based networks of citizens outside government control which participate in developing the 'urban fabric' too*' (p. 1). Two remarks are needed to make this definition an analytical conceptualisation.

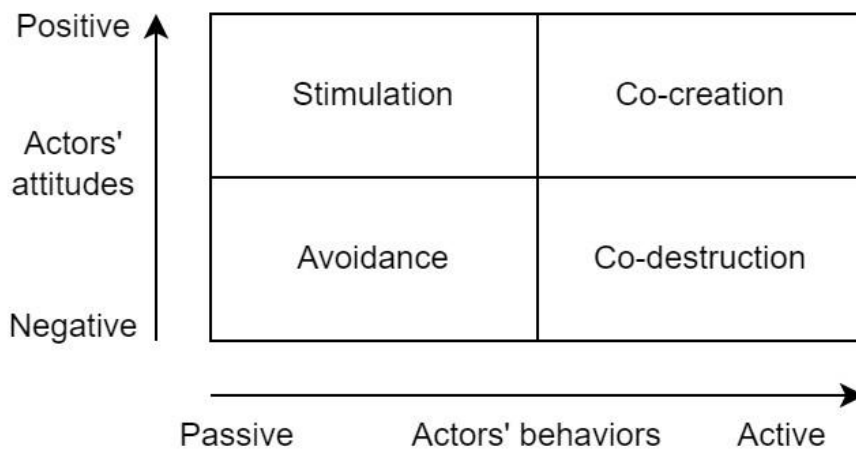
First, this research will take the proposition that the *collective action theory* (DeMarrais and Earle, 2017) clarifies the endeavours of individuals to organise themselves most effectively. By pursuing self-interest<sup>6</sup>, individuals build coalitions in relationships and institutionalise these. Developing relations costs resources on individual and institutional levels. Resource quantity therefore depends on the number of involved individuals<sup>7</sup>. Consequently, individuals seek the 'right' number of involved actors (i.e. costs) for the 'right' amount of result (DeMarrais and Earle, 2017).

Second, Nederhand et al. (2019, p. 1064) ask a justified question<sup>8</sup>: how realistic is the absence of the government in usually governmentally dominated policy sectors?<sup>9</sup> It can be argued that self-organisation does not take place in an institutional vacuum, but in a *public* context (Edelenbos et al., 2008; Nederhand et al., 2016). Edelenbos et al. (2016) categorise this context, outlining four types of relationships between citizen initiatives and governmental bodies (Figure 1, p. 55). However, accepting this typology completely would lead to conceptual problems with co-creation (§2.1.1). This article will, therefore, take the reading of self-organisation from Uitermark (2014, 2015), stating that the government demands public services from citizen initiatives, but remains rather passive itself (cf. Boonstra & Boelens, 2011). Possible relationships are, then, the following:

- a) Stimulation: positive attitude towards each other, but passive in behaviour;
- b) Avoidance: viewing each other negatively, but not interfering.

In sum, self-organisation indicates civil society initiatives (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011), in which citizens seek self-interest through collaboration (DeMarrais and Earle, 2017) in a public institutional context (Edelenbos et al., 2008). Governments and self-organising bodies stimulate or avoid each other (Edelenbos et al., 2016, nuanced using Uitermark, 2014, 2015).

**Figure 1: Typology of relationships between citizen initiatives and government bodies.**  
(Edelenbos et al., 2016, p. 55)



### 2.1.3 Meta-governance

The most cited scholar on meta-governance is Eva Sørensen (2005). Sørensen describes the government as a 'ruler' ('whether a king, an emperor, or a democratically elected body of politicians', p. 98), which finds it increasingly hard to exercise sovereign rule due to the blurring boundary between state and society. To maintain influence, more overall coordination of societal governance is needed – done by the *meta-governor* (Jessop, 1998, qtd. in Sørensen, 2005).

Gjaltema et al. (2019) conclude that policy instruments in meta-governance are applied indirectly: '*meta-governors use policy instruments to govern networks, which in turn govern society*' (p. 1770). The meta-governor, therefore, favours the objective of the network, but does not contribute to it directly. However, indirectly implementing policy instruments might still mean direct contact with stakeholders. One can use the distinction developed by Sørensen (2005) to specify the amount of interaction between the meta-governor and relevant actors - 'hands-off' interventions are performed at a distance, while 'hands-on' implies close interaction (Sørensen, 2005, p. 101, paraphrased):

- a) Hands-off framing – shaping the organisational context (Kooiman, 1993<sup>10</sup>);
- b) Hands-off storytelling – influencing the formation of political strategies (Bevir, 2011<sup>11</sup>);
- c) Hands-on support and facilitation – offering support (Rhodes, 1997<sup>12</sup>).

The literature review done by Gjaltema et al. (2019) gives two useful remarks on the work done by Sørensen (2005): first, Sørensen (2005) provides a fourth tool, called ‘hands-on participation’, implying that the meta-governor can participate according to the specific self-constituted rules of the network<sup>13</sup>. However, Gjaltema et al. (2019) exclude hands-on participation as a form of meta-governance due to unclear delineation of its means beyond mere presence in the network (p. 1770). Including ‘hands-on participation’, then, would mean that the distinction between hands-on participation and co-creation becomes troublesome, so it will also be excluded from this conceptualisation. Second, Sørensen (2005) argues that the performance of meta-governance ‘*can potentially be exercised by any resourceful actor—public or private*’ (p. 102). However, Gjaltema et al. (2019) show that most meta-governance cases contain *public* meta-governors (n=59/79, p. 1766).

In sum, meta-governance is a mode of governance in which a *public* actor (Gjaltema et al., 2019) tries to steer self-organising networks (Jessop, 1998, qtd. in Sørensen, 2005) by using framing or storytelling as policy tools ‘at distance’ or support/facilitation as a tool in interaction with actors (Sørensen, 2005). The meta-governor favours the objective of the network but does not contribute to it directly (Gjaltema et al., 2019).

## 2.2 Political representation

The independent variable has been conceptualised at this point, leading to the dependent variable: political representation.

### 2.2.1 The genealogy of representation

How to represent others' political desires has been a question throughout history, but in present-day political theory, representation via a representative legislative body has become *sine qua non* of contemporary democracies (Esmer & Okçuoğlu, 2018). Taking this approach, one could argue that political representation can only be done by 'electoral representatives'.

The rationale for electoral representation is expressed by Hanna Pitkin (1967), the most cited scholar in the field of political representation. The major impact of her '*The concept of representation*' (1967) is described by, among others<sup>14</sup>, Russo and Cotta (2020), stating that '[Pitkin's theory] became the standard reference for both normative theorists and empirical scholars' (p. 7). For Pitkin (1967), representation means 'to make present again', occurring when a political actor acts on behalf of others, making representation a kind of political assistance (Dovi, 2015). Pitkin later (2004) admitted that her book '*equated democracy with (...) representative government*' (p. 336). However, as de Wilde (2013) notes:

*Following recent developments in political theory, representation ought to be understood as a dynamic continuous process between represented and representatives, rather than as the static product of elections (p. 278).*

This '*constructivist turn*' in literature (Russo & Cotta, 2020) allows analysis of non-elected representatives (Rehfeld, 2006; Mansbridge, 2003; Saward, 2009). It makes, therefore, sense to use a constructivist account to analyse representation in contemporary governance. However, before defining representation as a construct, one should (a) choose a fitting constructivist lens and (b) define which elements make a construct.

### 2.2.2 Constructing representation – Michael Saward's 'claim theory'

First and foremost, it is beyond this research's scope to provide a detailed conceptual analysis of constructivist accounts on political representation. This research adheres to the *Representative Claim Theory* by political theorist Michael Saward (2006, 2009, 2010) to measure non-elective representation. Saward abandons Pitkin's (1967) political delegate-

trustee frame, by viewing representation as *claims to be representative*. Claimants present themselves as authorised representative by referring to a dynamic relationship with the claimed constituency: *'a representative claim is a claim to represent or to know what represents the interests of someone or something'* (Saward, 2010, p. 38). This perspective acknowledges that representation involves more than elections, questioning how actors construct and contest claims, thus engaging in a broader discourse including cultural, aesthetic & linguistical aspects (Saward, 2006; Fossen, 2019).

To use Saward's theory analytically, one should 'unpack' (Fossen, 2019) claims. Saward gives five elements, but these remain contested (de Wilde, 2013). This study will, therefore, utilize the typology developed by Guasti & Geißel (2019), which combines various conceptual<sup>15</sup> and empirical analysis to give claims essential elements (Table 1). Two remarks need to be made on these elements: firstly, the distinction between 'maker' and 'representative' makes it possible to make claims on behalf of someone else ('I claim that he represents them', cf. de Wilde, 2013). Secondly, Guasti & Geißel (2019) conclude that constituencies are often a normative scheme. Constituencies are, therefore, split out between human beings ('I represent you') and normative schemes ('I represent justice', cf. Pitkin, 1967). Normative schemes, thereby, serve as 'implicit' references to human beings (André et al., 2010<sup>16</sup>).

The argumentation to opt for the claim theory is derived from Nuske (2020), who outlines three reasons supporting this choice. First, Saward's work is considered as the most influential contribution on the constructivist approach (Schaap et al., 2012; Disch, 2015). Second, Saward's insights build on contemporary scholars (e.g. Young, 2020) and foundational theories (e.g. Pitkin, 1967). Third and most importantly, Saward's approach adopts a non-normative approach to representation (Nuske, 2020, p. 13), unlike alternative understandings<sup>17</sup>. Saward describes representation as an image-constructing act (Schaap et al., 2012), thereby leading to a *'more fine-grained understanding of representation's dynamics'* (Saward, 2010, p. 29). This approach aligns with the aim of this research, which seeks to understand how representation is performed, not to judge its quality<sup>18</sup>.

Concluding, this research will take *makers, representatives & constituencies* as inherent elements of representative claims. The debate is, therefore, focused on the 'linkage' between the maker and constituency: based on what grounds (i.e. linkage) can a maker perform a representative claim?

**Table 1: Elements of claims on representation.** (Guasti & Geißel, 2019, p. 102)

<b>Element</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Differentiation</b>
Claim makers	who speaks	(i.) elected representatives, (ii.) delegated representatives and (iii.) non-elected representatives.
Claim representative	who is expected to act on behalf of the claimed constituency	(i.) claim-maker identical with a claimed representative; (ii.) claim maker and claimed representative are different; (iii.) absent.
Claimed constituency	on whose behalf subject claims to speak	(i.) human being(s), interests; (ii.) normative scheme(s), values; (iii.) absent.
Claimed linkage	the claimed connection between the claim maker and the claimed constituency	(i.) referenced (either explicitly or implicitly); (ii.) denied; (iii.) absent.

### 2.2.3 A typology of the representative claim

At this point, the *representative claim* has been selected as lens to indicate political representation (a), consisting of a maker, representative and constituency (b, Table 1). What remains is the mechanism to base a claim on, *reflecting a relation between the maker and constituency*, which is ‘dynamic’ (Saward, 2006, p. 298). Referring to this linkage only as ‘referenced, denied or absent’, as done by Guasti & Geißel (2019, Table 1) is, therefore, insufficient. This research will abstract linkages from literature and explain how actors use these to perform representation. These make up the conceptualisation of political representation and will be assessed empirically.

Primarily, the most used claims in theory are ‘claims of social representation’ (Fossen, 2019), where the constituency lacks electoral representation due to its cultural nature and consequent geographical dispersion (Saward, 2005). Social representation claims can be split out in two ways: firstly, they can be ‘mirroring’ claims. For example, one might argue to advocate for the interests of working-class single mothers by emphasising the unique perspective gained from being part of that demographic (Saward, 2009). Another form is

what Saward (2009) calls ‘the word from the street’, referring to a claim to be representative by virtue of a large manifestation (e.g. protest, petition) that calls for political action (Parkinson, 2004).

Secondly, one can make a ‘claim based on expertise’: claiming representation of a group based on specialised expertise (Saward, 2009), therefore offering potentially overlooked insights on the constituency (Bevir, 2010). The differentiation, then, lies in what the expertise is about: distinctions are made between ‘administrative experience’ (Van de Bovenkamp & Vollaard, 2017) and knowledge on specific topics (e.g. environmental science, Saward, 2009).

This research will also include Saward’s ‘hypothetical consent’ as an expertise-based claim: Saward (2009) follows John Rawls’ thought experiment (*A Theory of Justice*, 1971), where one draws a social contract (specifying the state-citizen relation) in an ‘original position’, blind to personal facts (e.g. gender, class). As consequence, governance principles cannot be tailored to own advantage (Ryan, 1985). So, according to Saward (2009), ‘*a representative claim might be based on what people hypothetically would have agreed to in (...) an **original position***’ (p. 11, emphasis added). Hypothetical consent is included under ‘expertise-claims’<sup>19</sup>, since specific knowledge is essential for assessing what a constituency might agree to (Byskov & Hyams, 2022).

Thirdly, a political dimension in articles on democratic anchorage through non-elected representatives is clearly present (e.g. Sørensen & Torfing, 2005), resembling the ‘classical’ claim of representation (‘I represent them in political sense’). The conceptualisation is, therefore, a ‘political claim of representation’ (Guasti & Geißel, 2019, p. 102). These can either be based on political mandate (closely resonating Pitkin, 1967) or through the promise of ‘Democratic Stakeholder Representativeness’ as outlined by Jastram and Berberyan (2023). These authors give explicit indicators for the democratic legitimacy of stakeholder representatives, but it is enough for this research to underscore that these representatives derive legitimacy from *direct* contact with the constituency, instead of legitimacy through the political sphere.

Fourthly, a classical notion negatively formulated can be called a ‘claim of misrepresentation’ (Guasti & Geißel, 2019), which is possible when one makes a distinction between the claim maker and representative (cf. de Wilde, 2013). This claim implies that a maker accuses *another* representative of not representing the claimed constituency (Guasti

& Geißel, 2019; Saward, 2009). That will say, there is misrepresentation where there *should be* representation (Hayat, 2021). This research also argues that a 'claim of misrepresentation' can refer to a specific assertion of self-representation (e.g., 'I speak only for myself,' Hayet, 2021, p. 1042), because representation linguistically implies portrayal by another (Spivak, 2003), which is absent when one represents itself. This type of claim of misrepresentation entails, in Habermasian sense (1964), a claim to represent oneself in the public sphere due to lack of representation through other means.

Fifth, Saward (2009) argues that '*claims may be based on core aspects of a group's identity*' (p. 10). These 'deeper roots' claims can be based on tradition, referring to any political system that is defended through a '*a set of historical or traditional structures of leadership and authority*' (Saward, 2009, p. 10). Claims based on geographically specific politics are exemplary for this definition. This research will also include the principle of 'shared experiences' (van de Bovenkamp & Vollaard, 2017) as deeper roots claim, referring to shared experiences between the representative and constituency, arguing that an experience is a 'deeper aspect' of one's being.

Sixth and lastly; the distinction between *maker* and *representative* allows the maker to refer to the representative as linkage, when the maker constructs the representative as someone who embodies and/or articulates the interests of the constituency, thereby creating a relational linkage (Fossen, 2019). In this regard, the relation between the maker and representative is crucial, as the maker's endorsement of the representative connects them to the constituency. By doing so, the maker establishes the representative as a legitimate voice for the constituency, grounded in shared understanding and continuous dialogue between all parties involved (Fossen, 2019; Fossheim, 2022). These claims will be called 'stakeholding claims'.<sup>20</sup>

### *2.3 The construction of political representation in contemporary governance*

In a co-variational approach (as used in this research), expectations should be deduced from theory to indicate causal direction (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). Although the expectations should be 'plausible' (Blatter & Haverland, 2012; cf. Friedman, 1953), '*we do not try to determine empirically whether the assumptions formulated (...) actually hold*' (p. 52).

Therefore, phrasing expectations as hypotheses is unnecessary. Here, it will be argued why it is believed that contemporary modes of governance influence political representation. At

this point in academics, no research uses modes of governance as independent variable that provokes causality. However, combining the result from three inductive single case studies (Warren, 2008; Hendriks, 2009; Fossheim, 2022) that use a clear governance trajectory gives approximately the same result.

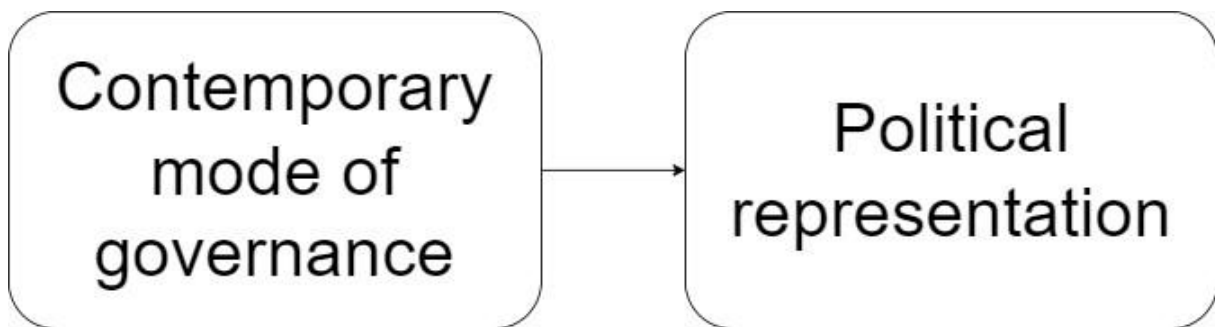
Warren (2008) uses a Canadian self-organising, semi-legislative body, resembling the definition of self-organisation (§2.1.2). Hendriks (2009) uses the Dutch Energy Transition Program as a case – exemplifying meta-governance (§2.1.3). Lastly, Fossheim (2022) uses urban development networks in Oslo, Norway, fitting the definition of co-creation (§2.1.1). All three authors conclude that representation is performed, but refer to another underlying mechanism for this performance. Additionally, the judgement on the democratic quality of the performed representation also differs. For example, Hendriks (2009) explains that actors perform descriptive representation, but only when politically necessary. These ‘descriptions’ are, according to Hendriks (2009, p. 709), decoupled from democratic means. Warren (2008) points to another mechanism, phrasing that representatives only can refer to a constituency when they share experiences or objectives in normative schemes. The concerns Warren (2008) has are similar to the ones Hendriks (2009) posits, pointing at the weak constituency accountability that self-organisation has (Warren, 2008, p. 24).

Fossheim (2022), on the other hand, can be read as very positive on how representation is performed in the researched setting, as long as *‘ongoing interactions between the representative and the constituency’* (p. 257) are ensured. This resembles a more classical notion of representation, where ‘elections’ are replaced by ‘ongoing conversation’. At this point, one can conclude that literature suggests that non-elective officials perform representation. However, the mechanism (i.e. linkage) that non-elective actors use to perform representation differs in literature cases. The only changing factor is the context, being the form of governance. One can therefore prompt the following expectation: *the democratic act of political representation is performed in diverse ways in different modes of governance, because each governance mode ‘asks’ for a different way to ‘speak’ on behalf of (the chosen) constituency. The dissimilarity in the type of representation lies in the varying underlying mechanisms, as chosen by the actor, giving ground to perform representation. Governance, therefore, influences political representation.*

## 2.4 Causal scheme

Figure 2 will show the relation between the two variables visually, based on §2.3. Note that no 'sign' (plus or minus) is included – although 'more' governance trajectories can imply 'more' representation, measuring this does not contribute to the objective of this research, because the goal is to seek for form instead of quantity.

**Figure 2: causal scheme**



### 3. Methodological justification & case study protocol

This chapter justifies the methodology prior to the findings (§4), outlining the co-variational approach (§3.1) and Yin's case study protocol (1984), covering case selection (§3.2 & §3.3) and data retrieval design (§3.4). After operationalising the dependent variable (§3.5), the data analysis methods are explained in §3.7.

#### *3.1 Research character: the co-variational analysis & John Stuart Mill's method of difference*

Theoretical expectations (§2.3) gave this research an explanatory, deductive character (Babbie, 2014), and data was collected through a *multiple case study*<sup>21</sup>. It is argued (§2) that the independent variable's *variety* likely influences the dependent variable. The *case study* approach is therefore the *co-variational analysis*, using the *method of difference*, derived from philosopher John Stuart Mill (1875) and as described by Blatter & Haverland (2012): the cases differ in the factor of interest (independent variable – contemporary mode of governance), while the effects (dependent variable – political representation) are measured, only the dependent variable is therefore operationalised (see §3.5). The argument develops, then, in the following way: *'if there is covariance (...) between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y), we can infer that X has caused Y'* (p. 42). Qualitative methods are used, as the main research question's 'how'-phrasing requires a non-numerical (i.e. 'qualitative') dataset (van Thiel, 2014).

#### *3.2 Case selection procedure*

The selection of cases is a crucial element for co-variational analyses (Blatter & Haverland, 2012), consisting of three necessary steps: first, cases should not be chosen randomly (Blatter & Haverland, 2012; Alford et al., 1995), since 'control' is sought over the potential causes, which are reflected in the cases (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, see §3.1). This research, therefore, gave each contemporary mode of governance (§2.1) a defined case. This also fits the second step, noting that cases should be picked on the independent variable<sup>22</sup>. Primarily because the cases represent varying contexts that influence the dependent variable (§3.1), but also because picking on the dependent variable would lead to selection bias. The dependent variable *'must vary 'freely' to identify the causal effect'* (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, p. 43).

The third step is identifying and controlling mechanisms that may influence outcomes, essential for drawing causal inference (Blatter & Blume, 2008). These mechanisms, derived from theory, function as control variables (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). After three theoretical-based control variables follows one that reflects the *cross-sectional comparison* of the cases (§1.2); there is a spatial dimension but no temporal (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, table 2.2). This research uses the following control variables:

- a) Geographical location – political theorist Julie-Anne Boudreau (2016);
- b) Sphere (either public or political) – philosopher Jürgen Habermas (1964);
- c) End-users – professor in public administration Eva Sørensen (2000);
- d) Temporal factor – ‘case dimension’ from Blatter & Haverland (2012).

The selection of cases is, then, done on the following principle: vary as much as possible in the independent variable, and as little as possible in the control variables (Blatter & Haverland, 2012; Blatter & Blume, 2008; Alford et al., 1995). See Table 2 on the (limited) variation of the control variables after the explanation of the cases.

### *3.3 Cases selected*

As noted in the introduction (§1.2), the case selection followed a specific geographical and academic scope. It can be said with reasonable confidence, based on the expertise of the researcher, that these cases accurately represent the independent variable (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, p. 68).

#### *3.3.1 Co-creation: Rotterdams Weerwoord*

A ‘weerwoord’ means ‘answer’ in Dutch. The Rotterdams Weerwoord (Hereafter RW) formulates an answer to climate change, by trying to reach pre-defined climate goals, asking for the ‘power’ of everyone: governmental bodies, business partners and citizens. Concretely, the RW provides ‘tools’ to cope with climate change, which are created and implemented in multi-actor settings (website Rotterdams Weerwoord, n.d., 03-04-2024). The RW as government initiative therefore crafts public value, through the multi-actor creation of (public) solutions, thereby fitting the definition of co-creation (§2.1.1).

### 3.3.2 Self-organisation: Leeszaal Rotterdam West

The Leeszaal Rotterdam West (Hereafter LZ) defines itself as *self-organising citizen initiative*. After the public library in Rotterdam West closed, citizens created a substitute, the Leeszaal – a concept translating to ‘reading room’. The LZ is, therefore, not only a library, but more a cultural hub (website Leeszaal Rotterdam West, n.d., 03-04-2024). A citizen initiative within a public domain fits the definition of self-organisation (§2.1.2)<sup>23</sup>.

### 3.3.3 Meta-governance: Nationaal Programma Rotterdam Zuid

The Nationaal Programma Rotterdam Zuid (Hereafter NPRZ) is a unique program in the Netherlands, combining regional and national funding to provide support for one specific area: Rotterdam Zuid. Six pillars are defined in which Rotterdam Zuid needs support to foresee in human needs. Within these pillars, the NPRZ tries to steer in the ‘right’ direction by supporting ‘partners’, since *‘concrete actions are carried out by the partners themselves’* (website NPRZ, n.d., 06-04-2024). This ‘steering’ fits the definition of meta-governance (§2.1.3).

### 3.3.4 Overview of the cases

Table 2 overviews the selected cases and serves as a schematisation tool for the co-variational approach (§3.1).

**Table 2: Covariational table**

Variable	Conceptualisation	RW	Leeszaal	NPRZ
Independent variable	Contemporary mode of governance	Co-creation	Self-organisation	Meta-governance
Dependent variable	Political representation	?	?	?
Control variable 1	Geographical location	Rotterdam	Rotterdam	Rotterdam
Control variable 2	Sphere	Political	Public	Political
Control variable 3	End-users	Citizens & municipality	Citizens	Citizens
Control variable 4	Temporal factor	2024	2024	2024

### 3.4 Process design

To gain a holistic understanding of the chosen cases, *triangulation* has been opted as a methodological approach, employing multiple methods to gather data (van Thiel, 2014).

#### 3.4.1 Method one: desk research

The first deployed method was a desk research, in which documents<sup>24</sup> gained from the three cases were analysed. The data was gathered through the websites of the three cases (see bibliography). After retrieving as many documents as possible, the analysed documents were selected on criteria provided by sociologist John Scott (1990, 2014) on the quality of document research (qtd. in Bryman, 2016, p. 544):

1. *'Authenticity: is the evidence genuine and of unquestionable origin?'*
2. *'Credibility: is the evidence free from error and distortion?'*
3. *'Representativeness: is the evidence typical of its kind, and, if not, is the extent of its untypicality known?'*
4. *'Meaning: is the evidence clear and comprehensible?'*

The selection of analysed documents is represented in Appendix C.

#### 3.4.2 Method two: interviews

The second conducted method where interviews, aiming at gathering the 'perception' of the interviewees. Van Thiel (2014) states that semi-structured interviews best capture perceptions. Therefore, this research conducted three to five semi-structured interviews per case, each lasting 45 to 90 minutes. After noticing the same answers for three interviews in a row, the procedure was considered done. De selections of respondents has been done by *purposeful maximal sampling*, and *snowball sampling* when in need of more respondents (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

An interview guideline (Appendix D) served as protocol and was briefly adapted per case. In all interviews, the theory by Yin (1984) has been applied, stating that concrete questions are needed to gain useful data – only asking abstract concepts is not sufficient. The 'topics/sub-topics' in the interview guideline (Appendix D) are, therefore, related to the dimensions of political representation, but made concrete per case. The related dimension for a topic is displayed in the footnotes of the guideline (Appendix D, footnotes). The

investigated sample is depicted in Table 3. A more detailed description, including demographic characteristics and setting, can be found in Appendix E, in line with APA guidelines. Any concerns about privacy are tackled by using an informed consent form (Appendix F).

**Table 3: *Sample description***

<b>Respondent code</b>	<b>Casus</b>	<b>Professional function</b>
R01	RW	Coordinator Neighbourhood implementation for the RW
R02	RW	Regional manager for the local water board – governmental partner and one of the initiators of the RW
R03	RW	Societal partner – aimed at making neighbourhoods climate adaptive. ‘District manager’ for one neighbourhood in Rotterdam on behalf of the RW
R04	RW	Private business partner of the RW – project-based company with an ‘ecological revenue model’. Multiple projects are in cooperation with the RW
R05	RW	Advisor Climate Adaption, partner of the RW on integrating inclusive climate action
R06	LZ	Volunteer at the Leeszaal, member of the Executive Committee, maker of the newsletter
R07	LZ	Co-founder of the Leeszaal
R08	LZ	Volunteer at the Leeszaal, member of the Executive Committee, organiser of events
R09	LZ	Neighbourhood networker in the area where the Leeszaal is situated, employee of the Municipality of Rotterdam
R10	NPRZ	Employee partner communication
R11	NPRZ	Employee in the pillar ‘Work & Home’, program control
R12	NPRZ	Coordinator daily programming education for the NPRZ, employee of the Municipality of Rotterdam

### *3.5 Operationalisation*

In the process described above, the cases reflect the independent variable, which is therefore not operationalised. Instead, the independent variable was assigned characteristics (Appendix B) used for selecting cases. Within these cases, the dependent variable, political representation, was measured. The operationalization of the dependent variable, detailed in Appendix A, outlines the (sub)dimensions representing political representation, as discussed

in §2.2.3. This research treats political representation as nominal variable (Babbie, 2014), implying that the dimensions are not individually necessary to perform political representation. One dimension implies one form of political representation, without any indication of a 'scale'.

### *3.6 Analysis & measurement criteria*

#### *3.6.1 Epistemological considerations*

How to say something about the dataset that is retrieved using the *case study protocol* (Yin, 1984) as described above? Inherently to empiricism in social science, the researcher creates the value of an empirical observation (Hume, 1739). This notion of 'the researcher in charge' is important to define the proper way of analysing data, leading to the following consideration.

After the 'constructivist turn' in literature (§2.2), one of the main criticisms of using 'claims' as conceptualisation of representation is the acceptance of the claim: I can claim to represent you, which does not mean you feel<sup>25</sup> represented by me (Disch, 2015). It makes, therefore, no sense to 'count' the number of claims, when not put against the amount of 'accepted' claims<sup>26</sup>. So, the focus is on the *implied* form (also see §2.4), not on quantity - the type of claim on which an actor (i.e. institution or individual) puts emphasis holds, therefore, more value. The judgement of these 'values' is done by the researcher, which might lead to bias (Babbie, 2014). To mitigate this bias, some of the data is peer-reviewed randomly. It was, then, up to the researcher to conclude which mode of governance implies which type of political representation, and why. The next section will reflect on how this 'value' is practically analysed.

#### *3.6.2 Coding*

Adding value to data in qualitative methods is, according to van Thiel (2014) done with a 'code', reflecting the operationalisation of the dependent variable (§3.5). The retrieved documents were left intact, and the interviews were transcribed. This bulk of text is coded using the software program *Atlas.ti*. The deductive codebook (appendix G) contains codes that reflect the indicators of the dependent variable (Appendix A), as well as one inductive code.

### 3.6.3 Reliability, validity & study limitations

The holistic understanding of the investigated cases provides a high internal validity, but a low external validity – also called ‘generalisability’ (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The deductive approach already solved this for a bit, since conclusions are generalisable in a specific academic context, often called analytical generalisation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Secondly, as Flyvbjerg (2006) notes: ‘*In social science, too, the strategic choice of case may greatly add to the generalizability of a case study*’ (p. 226). This research maximises the potential for identifying causality by choosing cases that exemplify different approaches to governance (§3.2), thus enhancing the external validity of the study. The reliability is covered by the rich description of the research methods used (Yin, 1984).

Further study limitations lie in the case study character and the theory of choice: making a causal inference with full confidence is close to impossible after a small *n* study with limited research per *n*. Also, the non-normative approach from Saward (§2.2.2) makes bias from the researcher possible, since there are no pre-described criteria that define if representation is performed. Lastly, the selection of cases is limited, since only one case per governance form is investigated, making *ex-post* identification of relevant variables close to impossible. These study limitations, as well as the earlier described bias (§3.6.1) are reconsidered in the concluding chapter.

## 4. Findings & analysis

This chapter will present the results of the empirical research, as elaborated on in §3. Section §4.1 details the data for the cases separately. Each case description includes a brief reflection on the independent variable (contemporary mode of governance, Appendix B), followed by the ‘unpacked’ representative claim, implying that all the elements that make up a claim (Table 1: maker, representative, constituency & linkage) will be discussed. This will be done in twofold: first, the elements regarding actors in the claim will be defined (maker, representative & constituency). Then, the linkage between the maker and constituency will be analysed using the conceptualisation of political representation (Appendix A).

After the data is presented per case, the co-variational table will be presented §4.2.1, analysing *if* the independent variable influences the dependent variable. Then, §4.2.2 will analyse *how* the independent variable influences the dependent variable.

### 4.1 Mapping the representative claim per case

#### 4.1.1 Co-creation: Rotterdams Weerwoord

The Rotterdams Weerwoord (RW) began as a municipal policy on water management but has since evolved into an institution functioning as a municipal body. Therefore, the municipality of Rotterdam is the public authority that creates an ‘arena’ by creating relationships because *‘adapting the city to changing climate asks something from us all’* (Program framework, p. 5, Appendix C). The roles in these

relationships are, as described in §2.1.1, formally equal, but actors differ in terms of power resources. For example, the municipality sets out the main ideas, while other governmental bodies contribute knowledge: *‘we [as water board] also contributed to the workshops, and responded on the intermediate products, the maps. So, we are a very hands-on partner. I just want to say that the municipality was more heavily represented’* (R02).

**Figure 3: RW-partners plant a tree to kick-off a new project** (Rotterdams Weerwoord, n.d.)



The societal and business partners of the RW engage more in the operational part of the RW, rather than in policymaking. The RW thereby tries to use the ‘power’ of everyone to co-create towards innovative solutions for climate adaptation. The innovative character was emphasised by various respondents, for example: *‘the [RW] really appeals to me because it is ambitious and connects a variety of transitions and societal challenges’* (R02).

In conclusion, the RW aligns with the definition of co-creation as outlined in §2.1.1, with the municipality of Rotterdam as *primus inter pares* (Pierre & Peters, 2000), and varying professional and lay actors as co-creators.

#### *Elements regarding actors in the representative claim: maker, representative & constituency*

The RW has an own ‘team’ functioning within the municipality, with strong political backing: *‘the council unanimously agreed with all the plans we made and set up in that implementation agenda’* (R01). This team is responsible for building and maintaining the relationships that (co-)create public value. These relationships are often formal, as described by one of the RW partners:

*Two times a year, I have a conversation with [the RW-project manager], then we just discuss; ‘these are my plans’, and then they respond with ‘this and that looks like an RW-activity’. After that, they provide me with support and subsidies* (R03).

The RW as claim maker can, therefore, be defined as a ‘delegated representative’ (Table 1; claim maker ii.), where the RW-team is accountable to the municipal government, and the partners are accountable to the RW-team. These claim makers, the RW and its partners, also act as representatives of the constituency (Table 1; claim representative i.).

Defining the represented constituency is more complex. While the program is intended for the entire city of Rotterdam, a specific focus on certain neighbourhoods through *‘unequal investments’* (R01 & R05) suggests focussing on those most affected by climate change. However, identifying these individuals is challenging, as one respondent stated: *‘the RW analyses and implements measures for the average Rotterdammer if there could be an average Rotterdammer’* (R05). Therefore, all residents of Rotterdam function as the constituency of RW.

### *Defining political representation: linkage between maker & constituency*

During the coding process, two claim mechanisms emerged (Appendix G): claims based on expertise and political claims of representation. The latter primarily emerged through references to the amount of professional contact (Van de Bovenkamp & Vollaard, 2017, Appendix A) between the RW and its constituency. However, this research argues that within the context of co-creation, 'professional contact' often functions as a conduit for claims rooted in expertise.

The RW operates through five different 'tracks' to achieve effective climate adaptation: new real estate, existing real estate, public space, linking societal transitions & making residents move to act. The shaping of these tracks is largely '*based on knowledge of climate effects on the city based on climate effect modelling*' (Program framework, p. 12, Appendix C). Consequently, partners meet others (as well as citizens) when relevant in a specific track, as illustrated by R02:

*It also varies a lot on the operational side who you will meet or not. Who do we mainly encounter? For our work as waterboard, often people active in the outdoor- or public space. And occasionally some residents' organisations or interest groups that are there working with the same track that also affect our work.*

This 'encounter' can be considered as 'professional contact' when involving Rotterdam residents. However, this contact primarily focuses on presenting possibilities for climate adaptation, as expressed by R02: '*but in the end, it is also important to talk with the residents, the owners. Just to explain the possibilities*'. Also, the opportunities for participation are questioned by some respondents: '*How do you contact people who you normally do not have at the table? Because our system is set up in such a way that people come who have the resources - people who feel good enough to participate*' (R05).

In essence, professional contact often serves to inform constituents about what they can do, rather than listening to what the claim maker can do for them. This was also evident in the desk study, as illustrated by the Implementation Agenda 2023-2026: '*It is not only about physical adjustments and associated measures, but also about changes in consciousness and behaviour, and sometimes also acceptance*' (p. 11, Appendix C).

To conclude, the RW as a claim maker refers to specialist knowledge on climate change needed to act for the constituency, thereby making a claim based on expertise.

#### 4.1.2 Self-organisation: Leeszaal Rotterdam West

The Leeszaal Rotterdam-West (LZ) has been identified as a case of self-organisation by Uitermark (2014, 2015) and the founders of the LZ (van der Zwaard & Specht, 2015, Appendix C), both emphasising that activities are performed in a public context. The typology by Edelenbos et al. (2016, see §2.1.2) has been used to analyse and define this public context. However, it has been noticed that the LZ and the municipality are willing to cooperate when needed (R07 & R09), but the LZ strongly prefers to maintain independence. The relationship between the government and LZ falls thus between a 'stimulating' and 'avoiding' approach, vindicating a third category in the typology developed by Edelenbos et al. (2016, see §2.1.2). Although not entirely accurate, the typology (Edelenbos et al., 2016) provides insights into the functioning of the LZ as a self-organising body. Due to its preference for independence, the LZ does not receive subsidies or governmental funds, thereby remaining a product of collaborative citizen effort.

In sum, the LZ remains a civil society initiative in which citizens seek self-interest through collaboration and, thereby, fits the definition of self-organisation as described in §2.1.2. An additional detail occurred during the research, as fully self-organising bodies also build on the principle of '*no detailed planning*'<sup>27</sup>, according to the LZ (van der Zwaard & Specht, 2015, p. 28, Appendix C, also emphasised by R07).

**Figure 4: Interior of the Leeszaal<sup>i</sup>**



<sup>i</sup> Picture kindly provided by Ella Vermaas (<https://www.ellavermaasfotografie.nl/>). Can also be found in van der Zwaard & Specht (2015, p. 64).

### *Elements regarding actors in the representative claim: maker, representative & constituency*

As described above, the LZ functions fully autonomously and, therefore, consists of non-elected representatives as claim makers (Table 1; claim maker iii.). These claim makers are the volunteers and co-founders of the LZ, also functioning as representatives of the constituency (Table 1; claim representative i.). The claimed constituency is more challenging to select since it is hard to define whether the LZ represents the residents of the immediate neighbourhood (the Old West in Rotterdam), all the citizens of Rotterdam or the normative scheme that a public library is a primary public provision. The interviewed co-founder of the LZ stated:

*We do not act for someone else. We make something that we find interesting, that we enjoy doing and that we think is useful or nice. But in principle, it is one of the neighbourhood facilities. (...). We don't think in terms of target groups (R07).*

This implies a normative scheme as constituency (Table 1; claimed constituency ii.), referring to the need to have a public library in the neighbourhood, thereby creating an indirect reference (André et al., 2010) to the residents of the Old West as constituency: *'everyone is welcome in the Leeszaal, but we are in the Old West. Please let us not forget what we started for. And the people in the Old West mainly feel at home in the Leeszaal'* (R06).

### *Defining political representation: linkage between maker & constituency*

During the coding process, three claim mechanisms emerged (Appendix G): claims based on social representation, deeper roots, and misrepresentation. The latter lies in the origins of the LZ, where the LZ, as the claim maker, accuses the government of failing to act on behalf of the constituency by closing the public library: *'We still tell the municipal library to open a neighbourhood library here, (...), because we are not a library, but we see [a neighbourhood-library] as a basic provision, just like healthcare centres'* (R07). However, if the government would, hypothetically, open a new library in the neighbourhood (which is still preferred by all the four respondents), the activities of the LZ would not cease: *'Suppose there was a branch of the library two hundred meters away, to what extent would that change the Leeszaal? I don't think much actually'* (R08). One can conclude, then, that the activities of the LZ are rooted in other mechanisms, extending beyond merely filling the gap left by the closed library.

The deeper roots claims mainly refer to the identity of the LZ, which embodies that of the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood networker ('wijknetwerker'<sup>28</sup> in Dutch) of the Old West explained: *'I enjoy this neighbourhood because there is a lot of self-initiative. People who don't sit and watch but take matters into their own hands'* (R09). How this character resembles the LZ is explained in the annual report 2023 (Appendix C) of the LZ: *'the Leeszaal started with the following principle: it can also be done differently, and perhaps we can make it ourselves, and it has become a place where people think together about alternatives to the existing order'* (p. 7).

However, the claims made are not solely based on the activist identity of the neighbourhood, but more on the demographic identity: *'The Leeszaal [started] with 60 volunteers and after three years had 115. They are a good reflection of this socially mixed neighbourhood'* (Van der Zwaard et al., 2018, p. 20, Appendix C). This leads to the emphasised claim: social representation. The 'mirroring claim' (Saward, 2009; §2.2.3) occurs the most as a social representative claim by a considerable margin (Appendix G). The founders of the LZ explain how this principle works (van der Zwaard et al., 2018, Appendix C): *'By first looking for thinkers/workers in a wide diversity of groups, the intended mixed audience has also been achieved. High and low educated, many different ethnic groups, different ages, men and women'* (p. 21). The diversity in the 'thinkers/workers' resulted in an equally diverse audience. R07 exemplified this point:

R07: (...) then a Chinese woman sees that a few Chinese women work here and thinks: *'Oh, I can do that too'*. Yes, that was done very consciously at the beginning.

Interviewer: *the diverse range of volunteers: I understand that part. That also represents who you want to do this for: 'everyone', I guess?*

R07: *yes, definitely.*

This illustration is taken further in van der Zwaard & Specht (2015, Appendix C): *'The number of Chinese volunteers is grown in two years from four to nine men and women; with that also grows the number of Chinese visitors'* (p. 134). To conclude, the LZ as a claim maker refers to societal categories covered among volunteers and can, therefore, act on behalf of the equally diverse constituency, thereby making a claim of social representation.

#### 4.1.3 Meta-governance: Nationaal Programma Rotterdam Zuid

The Nationaal Programma Rotterdam Zuid (NPRZ) very explicitly outlines policy instruments that govern networks of professionals to support residents of Rotterdam-Zuid in their human needs through references to ‘partners’ carrying out the work:

**Figure 5: NPRZ-director Marco Pastors (Kooyman, 2024)**



*Together, these partners ensure that the opportunities of [residents of Rotterdam-Zuid] are increased. How we want to increase these opportunities is described in the implementation plans. In other words: what will the partners of the NPRZ do to help the Rotterdam-Zuid grow and move forward? (Implementation plan, Appendix C).*

The meta-governance of the NPRZ includes both hands-on and hands-off approaches (Sørensen, 2005, nuanced in §2.1.3). The hands-on methods were explained by R10: ‘*What we do, is getting all those partners to work, to motivate them, to ask: ‘What is not going well? Can we help with anything?’ So, it’s precisely just facilitating’*. For the hands-off methods, the desk research indicated that the strength of the NPRZ lies in its financial character, making interventions of partners financially possible (Implementation plan, Appendix C). R11 nuanced this a bit and emphasised the indirect steering via the partners, taking ‘education’ as an example:

*[Too many people think the NPRZ is] a big pot of money. (...) Of course, we do all sorts of things here, but we don’t teach. (...) We only ensure that all partners do what is necessary. And that is sometimes possible... we have of course organised extra money in the meantime, but in the early years, we had almost no extra money (R11).*

To conclude, the NPRZ is a clear example of meta-governance (§2.1.3), using both hands-on & hands-off governance methods.

### *Elements regarding actors in the representative claim: maker, representative & constituency*

Although the NPRZ functions *'independently'* (R11) from other governmental bodies, it is *'accountable'* (R10) to national government ministries. Thus, the NPRZ as a claim maker can be defined as a *'delegated representative'* (Table 1; claim maker ii.). Defining the *'representative'* and *'constituency'* is more complex. If the theory is correct, then the NPRZ favours the objective of the steered network and thereby acts on behalf of the constituency of the network (§2.1.3), being the residents of Rotterdam-Zuid. This theory is supported by empirical evidence: *'but everyone (referring to all NPRZ-employees) is also convinced that we (idem) represent the interests of the citizens of Rotterdam-Zuid'* (R11).

Distinguishing between the claim maker and representative (Guasti & Geißel, 2019, cf. de Wilde, 2013) proved fruitful in analysing the NPRZ since the network (i.e. *'partners'* in this case) functions as a representative of the constituency. A clear example has been given by R10, using *'education'* as an example: *'all agreements made within the NPRZ have been made with the schools, the employers, the housing associations. So, everything we do, all those interventions, originated from the schools, as they know what helps in [reaching the objectives]'* (R10).

### *Defining political representation: linkage between maker & constituency*

The partners being the representatives directly explains the linkage between the maker and constituency: stakeholding claims (§2.2.3) emerged as the most emphasised linkage (Appendix G), where the maker puts the representative forward as linkage with the constituency. This research found two usages of stakeholding claims, of which the first was heavily emphasised by the respondents:

*But I also think that our governance [implies] that we do not do anything that is completely out of touch with reality. [For example], healthcare institutions: if we think of something that is not at all the reality of an average family in Rotterdam-Zuid, a healthcare institution will say: 'Yes, sorry, but this is not what we see in the neighbourhood teams. You now think that this is good for the people, but we see behind the front door that we need this and that'* (R10).

In this case, the NPRZ as maker puts forward the healthcare institutions in Rotterdam Zuid as linkage with the constituency, the healthcare institution being the representative. As

mentioned in the theoretical framework (§2.2.3), this is only possible when continuous dialogue between all parties is established (Fossen, 2019), also between the representative and maker. R12 explained that this works via ‘steering groups’, consisting of involved partners, the director of the NPRZ and relevant NPRZ employees.

The second usage of stakeholding claims is a result of the mid-term review that the NPRZ underwent, conducted under the guidance of former Dutch Minister Martin van Rijn, which concluded that citizens of Rotterdam-Zuid need to feel more ‘ownership’ over the NPRZ (van Rijn, 2022<sup>29</sup>). One proposed solution was to build pathways for citizens to ‘participate’<sup>30</sup>. Citizens should be able to express their political desires via the partners, as expressed in the *Progress Report 2022* (Appendix C): *‘Applications [for participation] are made via the existing platforms for initiatives, such as the infrastructure for participation at the municipality’* (p. 3).

Additionally, two more points can be made in this case. First, the code ‘professional contact’ appears with high frequency as a political claim (Appendix G). However, this code only occurred during the desk study: while the NPRZ aims to demonstrate direct contact with the constituency, the respondents seldom confirmed this. Second, the occurrence of ‘hypothetical consent’ as a claim based on expertise is not notable in quantity, but significant in emphasis:

*For a lot of things, I don't have to ask residents what they think. It just must be better, period. Helping people towards work just happens in a certain, already specified way. If things need to be improved, I don't have to ask residents first: 'Do you also think things should be improved?'. I already know the answer (R11).*

However, it is hard to conclude whether the governance mode, being meta-governance, causes ‘hypothetical agreement’ (§2.4), because these claims seem to be based on the urgency to cope with the problems in Rotterdam-Zuid. It will, therefore, not be considered as an emphasised claim mechanism. To conclude, the NPRZ, as claim maker, puts forward another representative, being its own ‘partners’, as a linkage with the constituency, thereby making a stakeholding claim.

## 4.2 Revisiting the construction of political representation in contemporary governance

### 4.2.1 The covariational table

The covariational table (Table 4) visually presents the results. As outlined in §3.1, the co-variational approach works on the following principle: if there is covariance between the independent variable and the dependent variable, without interference from pre-defined control variables (§3.2), one can reasonably ‘infer that X has caused Y’ (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, p. 42). By applying Mill’s (1875) method of difference (§3.1) to the visual representation in Table 4, one can say with some confidence that the contemporary mode of governance influences political representation, as performed by the actors within the governance mode, since each mode results in a different form of representation, without inference from any of the control variables.

**Table 4: Final covariational table**

Variable	Conceptualisation	RW	Leeszaal	NPRZ
Independent variable	Contemporary mode of governance	Co-creation	Self-organisation	Meta-governance
Dependent variable	Political representation	<b>Claims based on expertise</b>	<b>Claims of social representation</b>	<b>Stakeholding claims</b>
Control variable 1	Geographical location	Rotterdam	Rotterdam	Rotterdam
Control variable 2	Sphere	Political	Public	Political
Control variable 3	End-users	Citizens/municipality	Citizens	Citizens
Control variable 4	Temporal factor	2024	2024	2024

### 4.2.2 Explaining the relationship: the quality of the governance

Blatter & Haverland (2012) emphasise the possibility the co-variational approach holds to contribute to theoretical debates due to its theoretical embeddedness. This approach, therefore, requires an identification of *why* X influences Y, as one should provide leverage between the variables, often derived from different bodies of literature. In other words, *why* do contemporary governance modes influence political representation? This is not tested in a deductive manner but needs an inductive argumentation. *Ergo*, a ‘creative jump’ (Boeije, 2009<sup>31</sup>) - a movement from empirical observation to theoretical insight – is needed to deduce why a specific form of governance ‘asks’ for any form of representation. The

suggestion lies in the one inductive code that Appendix G holds, namely the 'quality of the governance'.

Co-creation emphasises expertise, as it aims to address complex issues that require specialist knowledge. Self-organisation is driven by social representation, as it emerges from civil society and, therefore, must echo the community's demands. Lastly, meta-governance involves governing various stakeholders that are central to the decision-making process. Stakeholding claims, therefore, make it possible to rely on the active participation and expertise of these diverse partners to fulfil shared objectives. Concluding, *each governance mode 'asks' for a specific form of political representation to align with its own core principles and operational needs, thereby trying to provide the demanded quality from the constituency.*

## 5. Conclusion, discussion & recommendations

This chapter will start with answering the sub-questions, followed by the main research question (§5.1) as posited in §1.3. The answers to the research question(s) will then be used to nuance existing literature in §5.2. The following paragraph (§5.3) will provide a critical perspective on the theoretical framework used. This research will end with a brief reflection on the mentioned study limitations, followed by suggestions for further research and one recommendation for practitioners (§5.4).

### *5.1 Revisiting the research question*

*Sub-question A: which theoretical account of political representation makes measuring representation in a governance context possible?*

This research opted for the *Representative Claim Theory* by political theorist Michael Saward (2006, 2009, 2010), who uses a constructivist approach (de Wilde, 2013) to political representation. A ‘claim’ consists of two or three actors (Guasti & Geißel, 2019), being the claim maker (i.e. the one making the claim), the representative (i.e. the one ought to represent) and the constituency (i.e. the one being represented). The claim maker and the representative *can* be the same actor (Guasti & Geißel, 2019, cf. de Wilde, 2013), making two instead of three actors possible. Also, the constituency can refer to human beings *or* normative schemes (Guasti & Geißel, 2019, André et al., 2010, cf. Severs, 2012). The claim maker presents itself as an authorised representative by referring to a dynamic relationship with the claimed constituency. A diversity of these ‘linkages’ are derived from theory and used to measure the emphasised claim mechanism per governance mode. Herein lies the relevancy of Saward’s theory: it makes, due to its constructivist nature, measuring representation in non-elective settings possible without judging the quality of the performed representation.

*Sub-question B: which mechanisms of political representation manifest themselves in governance modes in Rotterdam?*

The empirical research revealed a different claim mechanism per selected case. Firstly, the Rotterdams Weerwoord (RW) was investigated as a case of co-creation. The RW is the climate adaptation program of the municipality of Rotterdam, in which the municipality creates and fosters relationships with diverse actors to co-create innovative solutions. The

RW, as claim maker and representative, refers to specialist knowledge on climate change needed to act for the constituency, thereby making a claim based on expertise.

Secondly, the Leeszaal Rotterdam-West (LZ) has been studied as a case of self-organisation. The LZ is a citizen initiative in a neighbourhood called *the Old West* in Rotterdam. It functions as a cultural hub, providing a library-like service as well as cultural events. The LZ, as claim maker and representative, refers to societal categories covered among volunteers and can therefore act on behalf of the equally diverse constituency, thereby making a claim of social representation.

Lastly, the Nationaal Programma Rotterdam Zuid (NPRZ) functioned as case of meta-governance. As program, the NPRZ seeks to provide support for specifically Rotterdam Zuid by combining regional and national funding to 'steer' (professional) partners in their work. Herein lies the emphasised claim: the NPRZ as claim maker puts another representative forward, being the partners, as linkage with the constituency.

*Sub-question C: how can the observed manifestations explain the influence of contemporary modes of governance on political representation?*

Using the empirical data (see the answer to sub-question B above), one can note that there is covariance between the independent variable (contemporary mode of governance, reflected in the three cases) and the dependent variable (political representation, the varying claim mechanisms). In other words, each contemporary mode of governance 'asks' for another form of political representation. It is, therefore, reasonable to infer that X has caused Y.

*Main research question: how do contemporary modes of governance in the city of Rotterdam influence the act of political representation as performed by actors within those modes?*

This research has demonstrated, using the co-variational approach (Blatter & Haverland, 2012) as method and The Representative Claim Theory (Saward, 2006, 2009, 2010) as theoretical framework, that the nature of political representation is not uniform across different governance modes but is instead closely tied to the operational dynamics of each mode. The explaining mechanism lies in the quality the governance mode tries to deliver. In other words, each governance mode inherently necessitates a specific form of political representation, as the nature of its operations demands a corresponding claim mechanism to fulfil the expectations and needs of its constituency —whether it involves the application of

specialised knowledge in the case of co-creation, the reflection of community diversity in the case of self-organisation, or the coordination of diverse stakeholders in the case of meta-governance.

### *5.2 New nuances in literature*

This research refines Hendriks' (2009) argument by suggesting that representation is not only performed when it is 'politically necessary' (p. 709) but also to meet the quality expectations of constituents. However, the findings are in line with Disch (2015), stating that claim making is too much 'speaking for' rather than 'acting on behalf of', partly due to the ambiguous nature of the constituency (§5.3). This ambiguity makes the 'ongoing interactions between the representative and the constituency' (Fossheim, 2022, p. 257) nearly impossible (§2.3).

Additionally, this research offers a more comprehensive understanding of claim mechanism by identifying various linkages between the claim maker and constituency, nuancing Guasti & Geißel (2019) who only refer to these linkages as 'referenced, denied or absent' (Table 1). It is thereby a further step in the identification of individually necessary elements to build up a claim (de Wilde, 2013; Kuyper, 2016; Thompson, 2012; Guasti & Geißel, 2019, §2.2.2).

Lastly, the conclusion that governance contexts influence representation nuances the single case studies identified in §2.3 (Warren, 2008; Hendriks, 2009; Fossheim, 2022), as well as other case studies that use the representative claim (e.g. André et al., 2010). By placing these claims in a broader perspective, this research acknowledges their relative value when not compared with other case studies or contexts.

### *5.3 Critics of Michael Saward's Representative Claim Theory*

The theory developed by Michael Saward (2006, 2009, 2010) has been praised as well as criticised often. What are, then, the new contributions to the theory that can be made after taking contemporary governance as context into account? First, the 'bracketing' (Saward, 2006, p. 297) of normative concerns, as Saward does, has made measuring non-elective representation possible. However, it has been noticed in this research that this results in an empirical disconnection between the actual performance on behalf of the constituency and merely claiming to do so (also noted by Severs, 2012 & Disch, 2015). This was further strengthened by the distinction between representing human beings and normative

statements (Guasti & Geißel, 2019), the latter implying an ‘indirect’ reference to the constituency (André et al., 2012, §2.2.2).

Second and crucially, this research was the first to use the elements depicted by Guasti & Geißel (2019) qualitatively. It has, therefore, been noticed that the constituency is often harder to define than in elective representation. This was, again, strengthened by the distinctions made by Guasti & Geißel (2019) and André et al. (2012) between human beings and normative statements. Consequently, talks on representation (‘on whose behalf are you acting and why’) tended to go towards talks on legitimacy (‘why are your actions legitimate’). A research suggestion for both critics will be done in §5.4.

#### *5.4 Study limitations, Recommendations for future research & recommendations for practitioners*

The recommendations for further research are based on the earlier mentioned study limitations (§3.6.3), the critics stated on the theoretical framework above (§5.3) and the answer(s) to the research question(s) (§5.1). First, the co-variational approach makes identification of causality possible, but, as noted in §3.6.3, the selection of cases stays limited. Future research should, therefore, consider to build a comparative analysis across more contexts (e.g. different urban areas, varying socio-economic conditions, et cetera). This would, ideally, be a longitudinal study, making *ex-post* identification of relevant variables possible.

The study limitations furthermore pointed out that researcher bias might be problematic in the non-normative approach as adopted in this research, and making a causal inference with full confidence is close to impossible after a small *n* study with limited research per *n*. The suggestion, then, will be done to combine the co-variational approach with ‘causal-process tracing’: *‘Hence, after the cross-case comparison has established that the independent variable of interest co-varies with the dependent variable, the researcher can delve into one or more cases to establish whether the causal process has actually unfolded as assumed’* (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, p. 213). Establishing a causal process within contemporary governance cases rules out some of the researcher's bias and underpins the detected causal inference.

Second, §5.3 showed that the lack of normative criteria and the distinction between explicit and implicit references to the constituency (Guasti & Geißel, 2019; André et al., 2012)

were flaws in the theoretical framework. One can suggest leaving out the distinction between human beings & normative statements as constituency (in line with de Wilde, 2013). However, *'representative claims are rarely explicit in governance'* (Hendriks, 2009, p. 693). Theoretical scholars, therefore, bear the task of developing an interpretive scheme that allows identification and normative judgement of direct *and* indirect references. Additionally, there is a need for empirical research to explore how these theoretical criteria can be applied in practice, particularly in governance contexts where representation is often implicit and indirect.

Third, as stated in the introduction (§1), it has been the goal to contribute towards a *'democratic script on how actors ought to perform representation in contemporary forms of governance'* (Hendriks, 2009, p. 710). At this point in academics, one can reasonably conclude from inductive research that non-elective actors in contemporary governance perform political representation (Warren, 2008; Hendriks, 2009; Fossheim, 2022). The contribution of this research lies in the varying identified mechanisms between the context, contemporary governance, and political representation as democratic act. Future research can, then, build a normative framework in a *'democratic script'*, considering that these should vary per governance context. This research would hereby suggest inductive research on varying contexts. In other words, what defines the influence of a governance context (e.g. social factors, historical factors, et cetera)?

Lastly, the theoretical embeddedness of this research results in mainly suggestions for further theory. However, the suggestions done above to take up a few steps towards normative criteria can easily resonate in practical applications for governance practitioners. It remains crucial for all governance professionals to engage in continuous dialogue with their constituents, first and foremost to validate their representative claims, but also to make a clear definition of the constituency possible in the first place. Such practices would, in turn, support empirical research on diverse constituencies.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: operationalisation of 'political representation'

Concept	Dimensions	Subdimensions	Indicators
Political representation	Claims of social representation (Saward, 2009)	Mirroring claims (rationale from Young, 2002, term from Saward, 2009)	References to similar category or categories between the representative and constituency (Saward, 2009)  Representatives ( <i>note plural</i> ) cover relevant societal categories and refer to this as linkage with constituency (Parkinson, 2004)
		Public deliberation claims (Parkinson, 2004)	References to big public manifestations calling for specific political action (Saward, 2009; Parkinson 2004)
		Claims based on expertise (Saward, 2006, 2009)	Claims based on (public) administrative experience (Van De Bovenkamp & Vollaard, 2017)
	Political claims of representation (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009; Guasti & Geißel, 2019)	Claims based on specialist knowledge (Saward, 2009)	References to specific knowledge needed to represent constituency (Saward, 2009)
		Claim based on hypothetical consent (Saward, 2009; Rawls, 1971, qtd. in Ryan, 1985)	Claim maker states that one can reasonable expect that the constituency approves representation, without the constituency clearly doing so (Byskov & Hyams, 2022)
		Claims referring to political mandate (closely resembles classical views on representation, e.g. Pitkin, 1967)	References to political actor directly giving mandate to representative  Reference to political actor indirectly giving mandate to representative
	Claims based on (estimated) legitimacy of included stakeholder representatives (Jastram & Berberyan, 2023)	Representative bears (non-electoral) consequences if constituency does not feel represented (adapted from Jastram & Berberyan, 2023)	

		References to amount of professional contact between representative and constituency (Van de Bovenkamp & Vollaard, 2017)
Claims of misrepresentation (Guasti & Geißel, 2019; Saward, 2009) <sup>ii</sup>	Mis-representation (Guasti & Geißel, 2019; Hayat, 2021)	Maker accuses another representative of not representing constituency (Guasti & Geißel, 2019)
	Representing oneself (Hayat, 2021; Hendriks, 2009)	Representative and constituency are the same (close to Saward, 2009; measured by Hayat, 2021)
Deeper roots claims (Saward, 2009)	Claims based on ties to tradition (Saward, 2009)	Reference to core aspects of the identity of the constituency (Saward, 2009)
		Reference to tradition of applied governance method (Saward, 2009)
Stakeholding claims (Saward, 2009) <sup>iii</sup>	Claims referring to shared experience (Van de Bovenkamp & Vollaard, 2017)	Reference to shared experience between representative and constituency (van de Bovenkamp & Vollaard, 2017; Saward, 2010)
	Claims based on the shared understanding of the constituency (Fossen, 2019)	Maker puts representative forward as link with the constituency, referring to the shared understanding between these three elements (Fossen, 2019)
	Claims based on the continuous dialogue between the representative and constituency (Fossen, 2019)	Maker puts representative forward as link with the constituency, referring to the continuous dialogue between these tree elements (Fossen, 2019)

<sup>ii</sup> Claims of mis-representation are only possible when the maker and representative are not the same actor (see §2.2.3).

<sup>iii</sup> Stakeholding claims are only possible when the maker and representative are not the same actor (see §2.2.3).

## Appendix B: *characteristics per governance mode*

Governance mode	Characteristic	Explanation	Source
Co-creation	Public innovation through public value creation	The goal of co-creation is to formulate an innovative answer to complex issues through public value creation	See Moore (2014) for public value, see Torfing et al. (2021) and Voorberg et al. (2014) for public innovation resulting from public value (co-)creation
	Governmentally initiated	The relationships used to co-create originate from a public authority, which thereby creates an 'arena' to co-create in	Lund (2018)
	Active government	The government remains active, and thereby <i>primus inter pares</i> within the created arena	See Edelenbos et al. (2016) for the active government and Pierre & Peters (2000) for the government as <i>primus inter parus</i>
Self-organisation	Civil society initiatives	Initiatives in the case of self-organisation always originate from civil society. The government can, then, choose to respond or not	Boonstra & Boelens (2011)
	Self-interest through collaboration in a public context	Individuals within self-organising initiatives seek for collective power, to ensure their own interest. This collective action takes place within an institutional, public context	See DeMarrais and Earle (2017) on the collective action theory, see Edelenbos et al. (2008) on the institutional context
	Stimulative or avoiding relation with the government	Self-organising bodies have a stimulating (positive but passive) or a avoiding (negative and passive) relationship with the government	Based on Edelenbos et al. (2016), nuanced with Uitermark (2014, 2015)
Metagovernance	Public actor steering self-organising network	The meta-governor is a public actor, which tries to steer already existing, self-organising networks	Principle of the meta-governor from Jessop (1998, qtd. in Sørensen, 2005), it being a public actor is concluded by Gjaltema et al. (2019)

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Specific tools at distance or in close interaction with actors	The meta-governor uses framing or storytelling as policy tools 'at distance', without interaction with the relevant actors. One can also support or facilitate the activities by the actor in close interaction	Tools defined by Sørensen (2005), nuanced by Gjaltema et al. (2019)
Favourable of the objective of the network	The meta-governor tries to steer the network in the direction it is already going, and therefore is in favour of the objective of the network, but does not contribute to it <i>directly</i>	Gjaltema et al. (2019)

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## Appendix C: analysed documents

All the analysed documents were retrieved from the websites of the cases. These websites are to be found in the bibliography.

Case	Documents	Author
Rotterdams Weerwoord	Parts from Program framework ('programmakader' in Dutch): foreword, summary, introduction, follow-up	Visser & Oosterholt (ed.)
	Implementation agenda 2023-2026 ('uitvoeringsagenda' in Dutch)	Verlinde, Visser, Knotters & Pienemans (ed.)
	Progress note 2022 ('voortgangsnotitie' in Dutch)	Het Rotterdams Weerwoord
	Webpage 'what we do': <a href="https://rotterdamsweerwoord.nl/wat-doen-we/">https://rotterdamsweerwoord.nl/wat-doen-we/</a> (02/05/2024)	Het Rotterdams Weerwoord
Leeszaal Rotterdam West	Annual report 2023	De Leeszaal
	Book chapter on the Leeszaal in report 'Voorbij de pioniersfase' ('Beyond the pioneering phase')	Van der Zwaard et al., 2018 (see bibliography)
	Book 'de Uitvinding van de Leeszaal' ('the invention of the Leeszaal') <sup>iv</sup>	Initiators of the Leeszaal (Specht & van der Zwaard, 2015, see bibliography)
Nationaal Programma Rotterdam Zuid	Parts from implementation plan 2023-2027 ('Uitvoeringsplan' in Dutch): foreword, introduction, chapter 2 ('Appealing ambitions, NPRZ on neighbourhood level and citizen allies'), chapter 8 ('Organisation and Finance')	Management NPRZ
	Progress report ('Voortgangsrapportage' in Dutch) 2023: introduction, chapter 1 ('Citizens in Rotterdam-Zuid: unnecessary backlogs'), chapter 2	Signed by Pastors (director NPRZ) &

<sup>iv</sup> This book is written by the initiators of the Leeszaal, and, according to the website of the Leeszaal (see bibliography), functions as an analysis of the institute as '*self-organisation, public space, learn- and working space and culture bazaar*'. It is not publicly available, but has its own page on the website. Maurice Specht, writer and initiator, also pointed the book out as example of 'what we do'. It is therefore analysed, but the only non-coded document. The book can be found by using the following ISBN: 978-90-78088-96-7. It is also included in the bibliography.

(‘neighborhood implementation and citizen involvement’), chapter 7 (‘safety’) and chapter 8 (‘organisation & finance’).

Aboutaleb (Mayor Rotterdam)

Press release progress report 2023 (‘Persbericht’ in Dutch, see one above)

Edwin Cornellise,  
advisor  
communication  
NPRZ

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## Appendix D: *interview guideline*

### *Checklist*

- Welcome, thanks for your time;
- Field of interest: representation in modern governance;
- Set up interview: couple of questions, recording, informed consent (promise anonymity), length;
- Instruction: no wrong answers, questions are ‘open’, add something when you feel for it;
- Introduction of myself.

### *Background:*

- Biographical: *can you introduce yourself briefly?*
- Descriptive: *explain you work environment: what does your (volunteer)work entail?*

### *Analytical:*

- What is the ‘target group’<sup>v</sup> of your organisation?
- Follow up questions:
  - When very broad definition (e.g. residents of Rotterdam) - *Define this group more specific: what is their background? What characteristics do they have?*
  - When very specific (e.g. single mothers) – *Why are specific these people in need of your (public) service?*

*Topic list:* aim to look at the link between the respondent and mentioned ‘target group’.

Possible questions split out between indirect (i.e. broad) and direct (i.e. related to indicators).

Topic	Subtopics	Question(s)
Employees/volunteers <sup>vi</sup>	Diversity	Can you explain the differences and commonalities between the employees/volunteers of [case]?
	Knowledge <sup>vii</sup>	Which knowledge is needed to perform the tasks as done by [case]?

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<sup>v</sup> Constituency

<sup>vi</sup> Claims based on social representation

<sup>vii</sup> Claims based on expertise

Politics <sup>viii</sup>	Governmental level ( <i>adapt per case</i> )	RW: how many governmental levels are involved in your plan? RW: how is your political mandate guaranteed? LZ: can you explain your relationship with the municipality? NPRZ: to which stakeholders are you accountable?
	Public valuation ( <i>only for the LZ</i> )	Can you explain more about the principle of Public Valuation? ( <i>refer to the book, p. 48</i> )
	Mis-representation <sup>ix</sup>	RW: should climate adaption be a problem from the municipality? Why (not)? LZ: what tasks do the Leeszaal perform that would otherwise not be there? NPRZ: do you have the feeling that you're fulfilling a national governmental duty? Why (not)?
Identity <sup>x</sup>		What values are at stake for your specific target group? What are those values based on? How do these influence your work?
	Pre-defined identity ( <i>only for the LZ &amp; NPRZ</i> )	( <i>Only for the LZ</i> ) Refer to quote <sup>xi</sup> : what defines the 'clear identity' of the LZ? ( <i>Only for the NPRZ</i> ) Refer to quote <sup>xii</sup> : how does the centrality of Rotterdam-Zuid reflect on the NPRZ?

<sup>viii</sup> Political claims of representation

<sup>ix</sup> Claims of mis-representation

<sup>x</sup> Deeper roots claims

<sup>xi</sup> 'A place with a clear identity, but not as a parochial domain of a specific group' (van der Zwaard & Specht, 2015, p. 32).

<sup>xii</sup> 'The residents of Rotterdam-Zuid are central to the implementation of the National Program' (Implementation plan, Appendix A, p. 10).

Stakeholding <sup>xiii</sup>	Stakeholders	How close do you co-operate with stakeholders? – ask further for relationship stakeholders and constituency/target group.
Written book/article ( <i>only for the LZ</i> )		Refer to quote <sup>xiv</sup> : which ways have you found to pay attention to the comments of the public?

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<sup>xiii</sup> Stakeholding claims

<sup>xiv</sup> *'Organizers of public spaces and public events must pay attention to comments from the public. The only question is how. We have not yet found a fixed form (...)' (Van der Zwaard & Specht, 2015, p. 76).*

### **Appendix E: *detailed sample description***

All the functions of the respondents can be found in Table 3.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Case</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Education level</b>	<b>Setting</b>	<b>Time recorded (hour/minutes)</b>	<b>ICF Signed</b>
R01	RW	10/06/2024	Male	Applied science (Bsc)	Rotterdam Town Hall	01:12	Yes
R02	RW	06/06/2024	Male	University (Bsc)	Office of local water authority	00:58	Yes
R03	RW	12/06/2024	Male	Applied science (Bsc)	Online	00:40	Yes
R04	RW	24/05/2024	Female	University (Bsc)	Online	00:48	Yes
R05	RW	24/06/2024	Female	Applied science (Msc)	Rotterdam Town Hall	00:58	Yes
R06	LZ	06/05/2024	Female	Applied science (Bsc)	Respondent's home	01:28	Yes
R07	LZ	08/05/2024	Female	University (PhD)	Leeszaal	01:16	Yes
R08	LZ	15/05/2024	Male	Arts school (BA)	Leeszaal	01:01	Yes
R09	LZ	12/06/2024	Male	Applied science (Bsc)	Neighbourhood hub of the Municipality	1:02	Yes
R10	NPRZ	21/05/2024	Female	University (Msc)	NPRZ office	01:15	Yes
R11	NPRZ	23/05/2024	Female	University (Bsc)	NPRZ office	00:50	Yes
R12	NPRZ	06/06/2024	Female	University (Bsc)	Rotterdam Town Hall	00:55	Yes

## **Appendix F: *informed consent form***

### **Introduction**

To complete my master's degree in Public Administration, Urban Governance, I am writing a thesis in which I investigate political representation in forms of modern governance. To this end, I am interviewing several respondents within different cases in the city of Rotterdam, namely the Leeszaal Rotterdam West, the Rotterdams Weerwoord, and the National Program Rotterdam South. I want to know from these individuals whom they aim to represent through their work and on what basis this is done. I am conducting this research alone; therefore, below are my contact details in case further contact is needed:

Matthia Goedegebuur

[matthiagoedegebuur@student.eur.nl](mailto:matthiagoedegebuur@student.eur.nl)

06 21277167

### **Data Collection**

To answer my research question, I conduct a literature review and interviews. I will fully transcribe these interviews. To do this carefully, I will record the interviews.

### **Potential Discomfort and Risks**

There are no physical, legal, or economic risks associated with your participation in this study. You are not obligated to answer all questions. Your participation is voluntary and can be terminated at any time.

### **Confidentiality and Data Protection**

The collected data will be used for aggregated data analysis, and confidential information or personal data will not be used in the research findings. The data will be stored in a secure location for one year.

### **Data Sharing**

I will share the data with my thesis supervisor, Dr. Paul Rabé, for the purpose of researching and writing my master's thesis, which is required for the completion of my studies at the Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Erasmus University.

### **Voluntary Participation and Individual Rights**

Your participation is voluntary, and you can stop at any time. During your participation in the study, you have the right to request more information about data collection and analysis. Additionally, you have the right to withdraw your consent and request the deletion of your data before the dataset is anonymised or the manuscript is submitted for publication. You can achieve this by contacting Matthia Goedegebuur.

If you have any complaints regarding the processing of personal data in this study, please feel free to contact Matthia Goedegebuur.

*Consent Form 'Political Representation in Governance'*

By signing this consent form, I confirm that:

- I am informed about the purpose of the study, data collection, and data storage as described in the information form;
- I have read the information form or it has been read to me;
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study; the questions have been sufficiently answered;
- I voluntarily give consent to participate in this study;
- I understand that the information will be treated confidentially;
- I understand that I can terminate participation or refuse to answer questions at any time without any consequences;
- I understand that I can withdraw my consent before the dataset is submitted for approval.

Furthermore, I give consent to:

- I give consent to record the audio of the interview;
- I give consent to transcribe my interview;
- I give consent to use quotes from my interview.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G: *deductive codebook*

*Codebook one: codes per dimension*

	Case 1: Het Rotterdams Weerwoord	Case 2: Leeszaal Rotterdam-West	Case 3: Nationaal Programma Rotterdam Zuid	Totals
Claims of social representation	1	18	3	22
Claims based on expertise	35	1	22	58
Political claim of representation	29	4	21	54
Claim of misrepresentation	0	13	0	13
Deeper roots claims	3	14	0	17
Stakeholding claims	10	0	23	33
Inductive code: quality of governance	9	11	8	28
Practical codes	14	9	11	34
Totals	101	70	88	259

Codebook two: codes per indicator

Dimension	Indicator	Case 1: Het Rotterdams Weerwoord	Case 2: Leeszaal Rotterdam-West	Case 3: Nationaal Programma Rotterdam Zuid	Totals
Claims of social representation					
	Similar categories covered	1	16	3	20
	Similar category	1	1	0	2
	Public manifestation	0	1	0	1
Claims based on expertise					
	Professional position	3	0	5	8
	Specialist knowledge	31	0	10	41
	Hypothetical consent	1	1	9	11
Political claims of representation					
	Direct political mandate	7	0	2	9
	Indirect political mandate	3	1	6	10
	Non-electoral consequences	0	0	0	0
	Professional contact	20	3	13	36
Claims of misrepresentation					
	Accusation of non-representation	0	11	0	11
	Being own representative	0	2	0	2
Deeper roots claims					
	Identity	1	10	0	11

	Governance tradition	2	3	0	5
	Shared experience	1	2	0	3
Stakeholding claims					
	Shared understanding between representative/constituency	1	0	7	8
	Dialogue between representative/constituency	9	0	16	25
Inductive code					
	Quality of the governance	9	11	8	28
Practical codes					
	Quotes	11	5	11	27
	Useful in interviews	3	4	0	7
	Totals	104	71	90	265

## Endnotes

All references in the endnotes are to be found in the bibliography.

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<sup>1</sup> It is worth mentioning that studies on political representation are rarely put in an urban context (cf. Squires et al., 1989).

<sup>2</sup> The case study approach from Robert Yin is noted as ‘positivist’ by, among others, Steenhuis & Bruijn (2006).

<sup>3</sup> Robert Yin is the most cited academic on conducting case studies. His book ‘Case Study Research’ gets published again once a while, 2018 most recently. This research will refer to the original work, published in 1984.

<sup>4</sup> Term ‘modes’ from Treib et al. (2007).

<sup>5</sup> Voorberg et al. (2014) use ‘long lasting outcomes’ as a synonym of public value. Theoretical ground and ‘inventor’ of public value is from Prof. Mark Moore, see Moore (2014) for an overview.

<sup>6</sup> Closely resembles *game theory*, see Ostrom (2008).

<sup>7</sup> Closely resembles *complexity theory*, see Gerrits (2012).

<sup>8</sup> Done while citing Taylor (2007).

<sup>9</sup> Also note the remark on the government as *primus inter pares* (Pierre & Peters, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> Referring to rational choice theory.

<sup>11</sup> Referring to social constructivist theory.

<sup>12</sup> Theoretical point from pioneer in Governance theory, Rod Rhodes.

<sup>13</sup> Sørensen (2005) refers to Mayntz (1991) for a rationale.

<sup>14</sup> See Dovi (2015) for the most detailed description.

<sup>15</sup> The article by Guasti & Geißel (2019) uses conceptual analysis of Saward’s (2005, 2009, 2010) theory from different disciplines, for example public administration (de Wilde, 2013), political theory (Kuyper, 2016) & political philosophy (Thompson, 2012).

<sup>16</sup> English discussion of André et al. (2010) can be found in Severs (2012).

<sup>17</sup> Alternative understandings in constructivist literature would be Rehfeld (2006) & Mansbridge (2003). Contemporary but not necessarily constructivist understandings would be Young (2002) and Urbinati (2014).

<sup>18</sup> Saward (2006) states the following on this matter: *‘Although my approach initially brackets normative as well as taxonomic concerns, challenging our received ideas about political representation matters. (...) careful revisiting of the theory, based around the representative claim, can open our eyes to new and extra modes and styles of representation’* (p. 298).

<sup>19</sup> Michael Saward (2009) puts claims based on hypothetical consent under ‘deeper roots’.

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<sup>20</sup> Michael Saward (2009) puts stakeholding claims under ‘social representation’ (although using a synonym, being ‘wider interest and new voices’), but based on Fossen (2019), stakeholding claims make up an ‘own’ linkage.

<sup>21</sup> It is worth mentioning that using cases in qualitative research offers benefits twofold (Schoch, 2019): in the process, one can carry out ‘*research within the confines of space and time*’ (p. 246), while collecting diverse types of data. In terms of outcome, the case study ‘*provides a comprehensive understanding of a bounded unit*’ (p. 246).

<sup>22</sup> In contrast with many comparative studies (Garson, 2002).

<sup>23</sup> It is also worth mentioning that the Leeszaal already has been used as a case of self-organisation by Justus Uitermark (in his inaugural speech in 2014 and an academic article published in 2015).

<sup>24</sup> Existing documents are primary data, according to van Thiel (2014).

<sup>25</sup> The notion of feelings of representation is relevant, but stems from another body of literature. See, among others, Noordzij et al. (2021).

<sup>26</sup> For a conceptual debate see Chapter 4 in Guasti & Geißel (2019).

<sup>27</sup> Van der Zwaard & Specht (2015) elaborate on this topic. Core point: ‘[If you write an action plan beforehand], *you’re mainly trying to convince people instead of making something together*’ (p. 28).

<sup>28</sup> The ‘wijknetwerkers’ are civil servants, working for the municipality. They try to inform other departments within the municipality about the needs of ‘their’ neighbourhoods, and help citizens when in need of a ‘face’ within the local government. While writing this article, Rotterdam is the only Dutch city with ‘wijknetwerkers’.

<sup>29</sup> This document is not included in the document analysis, since it did not fulfil the criteria written down in §3.4.1.

<sup>30</sup> See, among others, Michels and De Graaf (2010) for a discussion on the Dutch participation policy.

<sup>31</sup> Referring to Peirce (1931) for a rationale.