

Resident Participation in Urban Development: Rhetoric, Practice, and Tradition

A Comparative Analysis Between Rotterdam and Liverpool

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List of Tables and Figures.....	2
Preface.....	3
Abstract.....	4
Chapter One: Introduction.....	5
1.1 Introduction.....	5
1.2 Research Question.....	6
1.3 Research Strategy.....	7
1.4 Relevance.....	7
Chapter Two: Theoretical Lens.....	9
2.1 Introduction.....	9
2.2 Administrative Traditions.....	9
2.3 Resident Involvement.....	12
2.4 Convergence.....	13
2.5 Conclusion.....	14
Chapter Three: Methods.....	15
3.2 Research Perspective.....	15
3.3 Data Collection.....	16
3.4 Validity and Reliability.....	18
3.5 Analysis.....	18
3.6 Ethical Considerations.....	19
Chapter Four: Empirical Findings & Analysis.....	19
4.1 Introduction.....	19
4.2 Empirical Findings.....	20
4.3 Analysis.....	21
4.3.1 Networks of Engagement: Residents and Local Authorities.....	21
Rhetoric: Convergence.....	22
Practice: Divergence.....	23
Discussion.....	23
4.3.2 Relationships.....	24
Rhetoric: Convergence.....	25
Practice: Divergence.....	26
Discussion.....	27
4.3.3 Funding.....	28
Rhetoric: Divergence.....	28
Practice: Divergence.....	29
Discussion.....	30
4.3.4 Scope of Resident Involvement.....	31
Rhetoric: Convergence.....	31
Practice: Divergence.....	32
Discussion.....	33

4.4 Conclusion.....	34
Rhetoric (sub-question 2).....	34
Practice (sub-question 3).....	35
Comparison (sub-question 4).....	36
Chapter Five: Conclusions, Discussion, and Recommendations.....	37
5.1 Introduction.....	37
5.2 Discussion and Contribution of Findings.....	37
Developed Inferences.....	37
5.3 Answer to Research Question.....	40
5.4 Limitations and Directions for Future Research.....	41
5.5 Recommendations.....	42
Bibliography.....	44
Appendices.....	52
Appendix A: Respondents.....	52
Appendix B: Codebook.....	54

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Citizen administrator relationship	12
Table 2: Empirical Findings	20
Table 3: Codebook (Networks of engagement).....	22
Table 4: Codebook (Relationships).....	25
Table 5: Codebook (Funding).....	28
Table 6: Codebook (Scope of Resident Involvement).....	31
Table 7: Developed Inferences.....	37

Preface

Understanding participatory forms of governance has been an interest of mine since my undergraduate studies. I explored this topic in various courses as well as in my bachelor's thesis, where I examined how citizen groups actively lobby the Supreme Court, highlighting grassroots influence in high-level decision-making. In much the same spirit, my master's thesis examines resident involvement in urban transformation, exploring the interplay between governance, administrative traditions, and institutional convergence, this time with a local focus. Through this research, I discovered a deep interest in how enduring national characteristics and public values influence governance reform, where deeply rooted historical legacies continue to shape institutional behavior despite similarities in rhetorical commitments.

I was inspired to conduct this research after observing the emergence of new forms of governance in Rotterdam. Living in this city, I have seen significant evolution in its approach to urban development and civic engagement. Witnessing these shifts firsthand refined my interest in governance as both a theoretical and practical challenge, one that demands a nuanced understanding of complexity, local context, and competing institutional logic.

As I progressed through this research journey, I was challenged in ways that were both intellectually demanding and personally formative. It took time and resilience to adjust to the iterative nature of qualitative research; constantly moving between findings, theory, and structure felt entirely new, and to be honest, I struggled with the feeling that my thesis would never come to a conclusion. At times, I felt like I had written my thesis ten times over, each version being just a slightly more refined version of the story. I grappled with shaping a coherent narrative, developing theories that weaved together multiple stories, and navigating the uncertainty that often accompanies inductive, exploratory work. This process strengthened my critical thinking, adaptability, and ability to synthesize diverse perspectives, skills that I now consider essential for contributing to meaningful governance research and practice.

I would like to thank those around me who patiently listened to me discuss this topic at length, the civil servants who generously took the time to be interviewed, and especially my supervisor, Dr. Vincent Homburg, whose guidance, support, and insightful contributions have been invaluable throughout all stages of this process.

Abstract

As cities navigate local urban transitions, they are increasingly adopting new forms of participatory governance to involve residents in shaping key decisions. This study explores these emerging participatory structures in both Rotterdam and Liverpool. In particular, these new governance approaches are analyzed through the lens of path-dependent, regionally embedded administrative traditions alongside national shifts toward similar reform discourses, highlighting emerging patterns of convergence. A small-n, qualitative abductive approach was employed within a Most Similar Systems Design. In-depth content analysis of municipal policy documents and 23 semi-structured interviews with local officials in Rotterdam and Liverpool were analyzed using ATLAS.ti. The study reveals a rhetorical convergence in both Rotterdam and Liverpool's approach to resident involvement, unexpectedly gravitating towards Germanic-style frameworks emphasizing structured, legally-based, and collaborative engagement, contrary to broader assumptions of a universal shift towards Anglo-American New Public Management (NPM) models. However, a pronounced divergence in practice is observed, with administrative traditions significantly influencing implementation: Rotterdam's approach generally aligns with its Germanic legacy through structured facilitation, while Liverpool's practice reflects its Anglo-American tradition via politically influenced, discretionary, and often fragmented engagement. Lastly, Rotterdam demonstrates a closer alignment between its policy rhetoric and practical realities, whereas Liverpool exhibits a significant gap between its stated participatory goals and actual implementation. This study enriches understanding of participatory governance by spotlighting the often-overlooked influence of administrative traditions at the city level, taking an administrative perspective, and contributing to the discussion on the 'real' degree of institutional convergence. Socially the findings offer critical insights for policymakers seeking to bridge the gap between participatory ideals and real-world governance.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In 2022, Rotterdam launched the Wijk aan Zet (“Neighborhood in Action”) program, emphasizing collaboration between the municipality, residents, entrepreneurs, and local organizations (Rotterdam Gemeente, 2022), making “resident involvement part of all projects’ scope” (Respondent 11). Similarly, in 2023, Liverpool implemented its ‘Neighbourhood Model,’ bringing the council “closer to residents, fostering early and effective community engagement” (Liverpool City Council [LCC], 2023, p. 11). Both cities have implemented such democratic innovations, restructuring governance to promote increased resident involvement.

However, this is not isolated to the above cities. Hawkins and Wang (2012) find that cities are generally turning to innovative democratic strategies that engage diverse communities (Hawkins & Wang, 2012), aiming to improve decision-making, social cohesion, and legitimacy in urban planning (Yang & Callahan, 2007; Alemanno & Organ, 2021; Dahl, 1989, 2000). Within urban transformations, these strategies “enable a community-driven urban innovation and development that considers the views and perception of all” (Anthony, 2023, p.2).

Similarly to Hawkins and Wang (2012), Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000) view various convergences across national contexts as governance moves toward greater efficiency and responsiveness. However, Pollitt (2002) cautions that these similarities often remain rhetorical rather than being fully realized in practice. In line with this, differences emerge in practice. In Liverpool, the district councils are politically affiliated, with councilors tied to specific parties, whereas Rotterdam’s district councilors are not required to be party members. Platforms of engagement also vary: Rotterdam uses MijnRotterdam, a centralized platform for initiatives, whereas Liverpool relies on fragmented, project-specific web pages.

Peters (2021) attributes such differences to “enduring patterns in the style and substance of public administration” shaped by administrative traditions (Painter & Peters, 2010, p.6). These traditions create institutional inertia that influences governance styles, with Rotterdam reflecting the Germanic model and Liverpool the Anglo-American (Painter & Peters, 2010; Van Buuren et al., 2018).

1.2 Research Question

Amid rising interest in governance innovation (Peters, 2021; Huxley, 2016) and inspired by the observed similarities and differences in approaches to resident involvement in urban development, this study seeks to understand how entrenched bureaucratic structures, conceptualized through administrative traditions (Peters, 2021; Van Buuren et al., 2018) and the processes of administrative convergences and divergences (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011; Pollitt, 2002) impact rhetorical and participatory practices. The objective of this research is to develop inferences regarding the convergence of democratic innovation and understand how administrative traditions can explain identified patterns. To achieve this, the following research questions will be answered:

What are the convergences and divergences in the rhetoric and practice of resident involvement in Rotterdam's and Liverpool's urban development programs and policies, and what role do different administrative traditions play in explaining these convergences and divergences?

To further explore the central research question, the following sub-questions provide guidance. First, by drawing on theoretical perspectives from public administration and governance, resident participation is conceptualized. To support this, the first sub-question is explored:

1. How is resident participation defined in the literature, and what varieties of participation can be identified in various administrative traditions?

A second element of the research concerns the exploration of rhetorical aspects of participation as it manifests in both cities. This will be explored following the sub-question:

2. How does participation rhetorically manifest in urban development initiatives in Rotterdam and Liverpool, and what explanatory patterns can be derived from document analysis and interviews?

In contrast to the prior rhetorical aspect of participation, a third aspect of the research concerns the implementation or practice of resident involvement, which will also be investigated via interviews in both cities, guided by the following sub-question:

3. How does participation manifest itself in practices in urban development initiatives in Rotterdam and Liverpool, and what explanatory patterns can be derived from document analysis and interviews?

Lastly, sub-question four aims to guide the comparative nature of the research identifying explanatory patterns across various administrative and local governance contexts. This directly contributes to the overall research question by providing empirical grounding for understanding how and why rhetoric and practice align or diverge in different settings while enabling cross-national learning. As such, the following sub-question is investigated:

4. What explanatory patterns can be derived from the comparisons between resident involvement in the field of urban development in Rotterdam and Liverpool?

1.3 Research Strategy

This study employs a small-n, qualitative, abductive approach (Tavory & Timmermans, 2012) and a loosely structured Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) (Przeworski & Teune, 1970) to investigate how resident participation is discussed and implemented. Rotterdam and Liverpool are selected for their similar socio-economic profiles, populations, and aspirations for resident involvement but differing administrative traditions, specifically Germanic-Napoleonic versus Anglo-American (Peters, 2021), which offers an analytical contrast. Using interviews and policy documents and analyzing via ATLAS.ti, the study examines how these traditions shape participatory rhetoric ('talk') and practice ('implementation') (Pollitt, 2002). By holding key contextual factors constant, the research aims to develop a theory on the scope and character of resident involvement in local governance.

1.4 Relevance

Social relevance

As demands for resident involvement grow, uncertainty persists around the definition of participation, implementation strategies, and whether cities can learn from each other's policies. "The ability to learn is one of the core principles of resilience [in urban development]" (Rotterdam Municipality, 2022, p. 41), yet policymakers often struggle to design evidence-based programs (Barnett et al., 2013). Liverpool, like Rotterdam, aims to "drive improvements in the council's service delivery... [and] use high quality data and intelligence to... support the ongoing development of our neighbourhood model" (Liverpool, 2023, para. 36). This research addresses those challenges by comparing the two cities at a neighborhood level, ultimately

equipping policymakers and practitioners with strategies for designing more effective engagement methods.

This research is further socially relevant as it aligns with Rotterdam's and Liverpool's commitments to enhance resident involvement. In Liverpool "Neighbourhood working," is a primary objective as the city seeks to "ensure a collaborative approach to new plans and strategies that shape the City and its neighborhoods" (LCC, 2023, p.3). This includes "giving people a voice to shape the way the council delivers public services across Liverpool's communities" (LCC, 2023, p.7). Similarly, Rotterdam's "Wijk aan Zet movement wants to increase the influence of local representatives" (Joose et al., 2023, p. 4), hoping that "residents and entrepreneurs feel ownership of their own living environment experience the government and politics as a partner" and have more say in their environment" (*Letter to municipal council the district takes action*, 2023, p.2). This study contributes to these social objectives by offering insights into effective participation mechanisms, helping cities translate their rhetorical ambitions into practical, inclusive engagement strategies.

Academic Relevance

This paper contributes to current literature in three ways. First, despite Peters (2021) assertion that administrative traditions manifest across various governance, including "countries, Länder, communes, or whatever" (Peters, 2021), most empirical research focuses on national, supranational, or regional scales (Knill, 1998; Painter & Peters, 2010; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011; Meyer-Sahling & Yesilkagit, 2011). As such, this research fills that gap by studying administrative traditions on a local level, specifically municipal governance, thereby offering insight into how national legacies are operationalized locally.

Second, research on citizen involvement tends to prioritize citizens' perspectives, often operationalized through surveys, voting data, or models of civic power (e.g., Arnstein, 1969; ESS, various years). While valuable, this approach underrepresents the administrative perspective, which is essential for understanding how participatory rhetoric translates practice (Huxley, 2016; Van Buuren et al., 2018). This study addresses this imbalance by investigating how public officials in Rotterdam and Liverpool perceive, discuss, and implement resident involvement in sustainable urban governance through interviews and document analysis.

Third, there is an ongoing "scholarly argument about the real degree of 'convergence' in international public management reforms" (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2000, p.33). For instance, Kettl

(2005) and Hughes (2003) argue for broad convergence in public management reforms, whereas Pollitt (2002) views it as limited to discourse rather than implementation. It remains unclear if this applies to resident participation in the Netherlands and the UK. As such, this research aims to fill the gap in the existing literature by thoroughly examining whether there are similarities or differences in the rhetoric and practices of resident involvement in the Netherlands and the UK.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Lens

2.1 Introduction

The following chapter presents several theoretical frameworks that support the analysis and bridge fieldwork with broader conceptual insights, allowing readers to understand how the inferences are developed (Klein & Meyers, 1999). First, it is examined how administrative traditions shape state-society relationships in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (UK) (Peters, 2021). Within the administrative traditions context, Callahan's (2007) matrix of citizen-administrator relationships is used to examine various forms of interaction, while Van Buure et al.'s (2018) research in the Netherlands and the UK offers a nationally specific theoretical perspective. Next, convergence is explored from Pollitts (2002) perspective with rhetorical and practical dimensions of convergence investigated. Lastly, the chapter concludes by answering sub-question 1: *How is resident participation defined in the literature, and what varieties of participation can be identified in various administrative traditions?*

2.2 Administrative Traditions

Administrative traditions are enduring institutional arrangements that create "certain types of behaviors are more probable than are others," shaping how policies are designed and implemented across national contexts (Biesbroek et al., 2018; Painter & Peters, 2010, p. 22). In the Netherlands and the UK, Van Buuren et al (2018) finds that administrative traditions "permeate the decision space in which policy is prepared, the actor configuration, and distribution of responsibilities and how planning is done, decisions made, and implemented" (Van Buuren et al., 2018, p.17).

Rooted in legal, administrative, and cultural legacies, these traditions persist across various dimensions, one of which is the state-society relationship, which is central to this study. As Peters (2021) asserts, this state-society relationship is “the most fundamental dimension for comparison” (p.119), making it essential for examining how administrative traditions shape resident involvement in urban governance. Through exploring this dimension, it is understood how interests in contrasting countries are mediated and participation is structured, ranging from competitive pluralism to corporatist collaboration (Peters, 2021).

The State-Society Relationship

The Netherlands, influenced by Germanic and, to a lesser extent, Napoleonic administrative traditions, as well as the “Rechtsstaat” model, has long featured corporatist arrangements where structured, collaborative interactions are institutionalized, and citizens are often viewed as recipients of services rather than active agents of governance (Peters & Painter, 2010; Peters, 2021). Structurally, a hierarchical “étatiste” conception of the state, a Napoleonic trait that emphasizes state superiority in delivering public services, can limit the scope for purely bottom-up, citizen-driven approaches (Van Buuren et al., 2018; Peters, 2021). These institutional dynamics are evident in Rotterdam, where the municipality operates within a unitary state framework, functions under the national government, and depends heavily on national grants (Vlaard, 2021).

Nevertheless, post-1980s reforms, driven by the principle of “Bürger Nähe” (closeness to citizens), have progressively opened avenues for direct participation (Peters, 2021). This is evident as of 2016; a large percentage of Dutch society, 62%, belongs to one or more socially active political groups, indicating the corporatist system where collaborative interactions between the state and organized societal groups are institutionalized (Peters, 2021). This corporatist system suggests that the interaction between administrators and organized interests can be viewed as administrators acting as “brokers,” negotiating with powerful non-state actors, a dynamic distinct from purely individual citizen engagement (Callahan, 2007).

In the Germanic tradition, civil servants in the Netherlands are viewed as a central link between the state and society, acting as significant service providers who work to manage interests for the benefit of the whole (Peters, 2021). This approach similarly follows the constitutional tradition in the Dutch context, which emphasizes governmental responsibility for protection and welfare, resulting in a protection-oriented approach with a strong public-sector

focus (van Buuren et al., 2018, p. 103). This suggests that citizens interact with administrators in a “citizen as client/administrator as expert” relationship, viewing citizens more as recipients of services rather than agents of governance (Callahan, 2007).

In the UK, under the Anglo-American tradition, the relationship with society is typically pluralist, with political actors and interest groups competing to influence policy (Peters, 2021). Citizen participation is characterized as a “contractual” relationship between the state and society, where the government bargains with its citizens, considered the more significant entities (Peters, 2021). This aligns, to some degree, with Callahan’s (2007) ‘Citizen as owner’ model, where citizens are in control and administrators comply, or the ‘Citizen as investor/shareholder’ model, which implies co-ownership and shared interest. In expressing the Anglo-American tradition, the UK has historically upheld a stronger state than the US, viewing it as essential to preserving society and securing individual rights through, rather than against, state power. Within this context, civil servants have more narrowly circumscribed ranges of action, with these individuals viewed as instruments of the state (Peters, 2021).

Citizen participation often involves individuals or interest groups mobilizing to advocate for their interests within the existing political arena. This implies that citizens, as individuals with rights, have a foundational role in authorizing and potentially challenging governmental actions. Nevertheless, John and Copus (2011) find that “local government can only act within the bounds set by Parliament” (p. 29-30). As such, central government decisions can limit the scope of local autonomy and reduce the influence of citizens.

Table 1 below provides an overview of the relationships described above.

	Netherlands	United Kingdom
Administrative Tradition	Germanic and, to a lesser extent, Napoleonic; Rechtsstaat model	Anglo-American
State-Society Relationship	Consultative and advisory - Citizens as co-producers or investors, administrators as co-producers or brokers - Partnership or co-investing and active, dynamic	Contractual - Citizen as a customer, administrator as a professional - Passive and consultative dynamic
Societal Linkages	Corporatist: strong relationships with organized interests and non-state actors	Pluralist: interest groups and individuals mobilize to advocate within the political system
Implications for Resident Involvement	Engagement is often mediated through organized interest groups and embedded in legal and institutional hierarchies	Participation is an individual rights and citizens authorize or challenge government

Table 1: citizen-administrator/ state society relationships

2.3 Resident Involvement

Residents

Residents are individuals residing within a specific locality who engage or seek to engage in public affairs, policy formulation, and decision-making processes that directly affect their community (Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999). The term ‘citizen’ is deliberately not used, as at this local level, the population studied includes residents who claim rights to the city, regardless of their formal membership (e.g., national citizenship). This includes marginalized individuals, such as immigrants, who may face limited formal rights but can still assert their residential right to shape urban life (Kymlicka & Norman, 2000; Marshall, 1950; Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999).

Involvement

Resident involvement “is a form of action in which a group of residents consciously contributes to the residential community and the well-being of fellow residents” (Baur et al., 2013, p. 3). In line with civic involvement, resident involvement typically involves “non-remunerative, publicly spirited collective action that is not motivated by the desire to affect public policy” (Campbell, 2004, p. 7). Within the domain of urban development, creating resident involvement requires “appropriate governance innovations that permit durable decision-making, information sharing, forums that facilitate meaningful public participation, and

direct access by the public in decision-making through mechanisms that connect different local governments and civil society groups” (Edelman & Feldman, 2018, p.2).

This involvement can manifest across a spectrum of contexts, from informal grassroots movements and “participation as practice” to more formalized institutional arrangements (Kalandis, 2018). Further, in this research, involvement relates to other concepts such as co-creation, defined as “the active involvement of end-users in various stages of the production process” (Bekkers & Tummers, 2015, p. 1335), collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008), and residents as partners, where there is “power sharing, negotiation, collaboration and co-production” between residents and local governance actors (Baur et al., 2013, p. 3). These various concepts form the backbone of the conceptualization of resident involvement within this research.

2.4 Convergence

Despite historical administrative traditions, both the Netherlands and the UK underwent significant reforms in the 1980s. These reforms marked a broader move toward decentralization, transparency, and public engagement (Vollard, 2021). In the Netherlands, these reforms led to the following of the guiding principle of “Bürgernähe,” resulting in a closer distance between the administration and citizens. This resulted in an “increasing variety of opportunities for citizens and stakeholders to participate directly in policy-making” (Vollard, 2021, p.260). In the UK, reforms shifted the emphasis of state-society relationships to a “customer orientation,” viewing citizens as consumers of public services (Peters, 2021). This led to forms of participation that focus on service delivery and performance feedback, such as consultations on service standards or satisfaction surveys (Pollitt, 2007).

Due to this general shift, many scholars observe a global convergence as nations adopt similar reform agendas rooted in principles emphasizing efficiency, accountability, and customer orientation. In the Netherlands and the UK, this is viewed as a shift towards ‘better management’ techniques, such as citizen involvement, to address public challenges. Further convergence is reflected in the widespread adoption of performance indicator systems, as seen in both the Netherlands and the UK (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2000, p. 14). While these different countries seemingly “implement similar reforms from the New Public Management (NPM) toolbox... [the

adoption] has varied enormously from country to country, between policy sectors and over time” (Pollitt, Van Thiel, Homburg, 2007, p. 7).

As such, the “reach” and “penetration” of this convergence are questioned, with Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000) arguing that convergence is likely overstated as countries express similar democratic innovations differently and accept varying principles. Due to the deeply entrenched traditions of legality, corporatism, and strong civil service, Pollitt (2002) finds that nations exhibit a selective adoption of various innovative principles. For instance, in both the Netherlands and the UK, there was a drive for efficiency (Pollitt, 2007); however, in the Netherlands, “the drive for efficiency and savings did not carry the same anti-government ideological edge as it did, for example, in the UK” (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2000, p.331).

Despite differing theories on convergence, later work by Pollitt (2002) offers a more nuanced perspective on how democratic innovations spread internationally by distinguishing between four types of convergence: discursive, decisional, practice, and results. Discursive convergence occurs when similar concepts of public management reform are discussed. Decisional convergence occurs when governments adopt similar specific techniques. Practice convergence is seen when public organizations adopt similar operational methods. Finally, results convergence happens when democratic innovations produce similar effects (Pollitt, 2002).

In terms of findings, Pollitt (2002) notes that convergence at one stage does not guarantee it at the next. Particularly relevant is that while there is considerable discursive and decisional convergence, particularly among Anglophone countries, convergence in practice and results are far less extensive, with significant and durable differences persisting between nations (Pollitt, 2002). In studying the Netherlands and the UK, Van Buuren et al. (2018) similarly find that there may be rhetorical convergence, particularly in the language used to describe new approaches or policies, but question whether such shifts represent a profound, fundamental change in underlying administrative practices.

2.5 Conclusion

This theoretical exploration has contributed to sub-question 1: *How is resident participation defined in the literature, and what varieties of participation can be identified in various administrative traditions?*

Resident involvement refers to the various ways in which individuals residing in a locality, regardless of their formal citizenship, participate in shaping public decisions and community life (Baur et al., 2013; Campbell, 2004; Kymlicka & Norman, 2000; Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999). According to Peters (2021), administrative traditions have a profound influence on how this participation is defined and practiced. The Germanic and Napoleonic traditions, such as in the Netherlands, typically emphasize collaborative and state-facilitated involvement, with a focus on consensus and co-governance (Peters, 2021). In contrast, the Anglo-American tradition, as seen in the UK, tends to frame the involvement through individual interest representation, with residents often positioned as service users providing feedback, reflecting a more market-oriented, consultative approach shaped by NPM (Peters, 2021; Pollitt, 2007).

Further literature highlights the varieties of participation based on citizen-administrator relationships, where the Netherlands reflects the ‘citizen as client/administrator as expert’ model, in which citizens are primarily seen as service recipients, and administrators manage public interests within a state-led, corporatist framework (Callahan, 2007). In contrast, the UK aligns more closely with ‘citizen as owner’ and ‘citizen as investor/shareholder’ models, where citizens are viewed as co-owners or active stakeholders in governance, although their influence may be limited by central government authority (Callahan, 2007).

While the literature acknowledges these different forms of resident involvement, it is still unknown how they unfold in both a rhetorical and practical sense.

Chapter Three: Methods

3.1 Introduction

The study’s methods are discussed below, including the chosen research perspective, data collection methods, the selection of respondents, the validity and reliability of the approaches, the analysis method, and various ethical considerations explored.

3.2 Research Perspective

This research adopted an interpretive perspective, assuming that reality is constructed through language, shared meanings, and artifacts (Klein & Myers, 1999). An abductive approach was employed to refine theories through iterative data collection and analysis, allowing the theory to emerge from both prior literature and empirical materials (Tavory & Timmermans, 2012). This approach was well-suited for the research aim of theory construction as it increased the likelihood of generating truly novel theoretical insights (Tavory & Timmermans, 2012; Janiszewski & Osselaer, 2002).

A loosely structured MSSD was employed to examine the influence of administrative traditions on resident participation practices while holding many contextual variables constant (Przeworski & Teune, 1970; Anckar, 2008). Rotterdam and Liverpool were selected due to their comparable size, port city status, industrial histories, public service structures, employment levels, and their similar goals of increasing citizen involvement in urban governance (The Urban Innovative Actions (UIA), n.d; Center for Cities, 2023). This comparative design enabled a systemic-level analysis of bureaucratic variation while acknowledging that complete control over extraneous factors is not possible. Nonetheless, the approach aimed to maximize theoretical insight while minimizing confounding influences (Peters, 2020).

3.3 Data Collection

A small-n comparative case study design was chosen to enable rich, context-sensitive qualitative analysis as it provides value for uncovering nuanced causal mechanisms often missed in large-n or quantitative studies (Peters, 2020). This approach enabled an in-depth examination of local policy rhetoric and practice. Data were collected through two primary methods: content analysis and interviews, both of which were analyzed using ATLAS.ti.

An abductive logic guided the research, with theories of administrative traditions (Peters, 2021) and discursive convergence in democratic innovation (Pollitt, 2002) informing, but not determining, the analytical lens. Instead, observations “emerge[d] from the material (interviews and documents) during analysis” (Van Thiel, 2021).

Government documents, white papers, and speeches related to urban transformation, urban governance structures, and resident participation were analyzed. These documents were sourced from official platforms, including the Rotterdam Municipal and Liverpool City Council websites. These texts helped trace official rhetoric concerning resident involvement. To

complement this, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the practice and interpretation of resident involvement at the local level in greater depth. This “use of multiple theories, data, methods, and observers to study one phenomenon” enables triangulation, creating a more comprehensive understanding of how administrative traditions and convergence manifest in urban governance (Donkoh & Mensah, 2023, p.8).

Choosing Respondents

Respondents were purposefully selected for their roles in urban development across various domains, including transportation, environment, and green spaces (Charmaz, 2006). This included local government civil servants and elected officials (district council members in the Netherlands and party-affiliated councilors in the UK). As civil servants work closely within the structured bureaucracy and administrative frameworks of the municipalities, they were chosen as they represented the norms and expectations of their respective institutions throughout conversations. Elected officials were included due to their key role in shaping local policies and their close ties at the local level. In particular, elected officials, unlike most civil servants, focus solely on one locality, providing valuable insights into resident involvement at the micro-level. Overall, these respondents were chosen as they play a key role in translating participatory rhetoric into practice. Residents were not interviewed as the study aimed to capture how administrators interpret and implement participatory ideals and face various bureaucratic structures and administrative traditions, rather than how citizens experience them. An overview of respondents can be found in Appendix A.

Participants were identified via municipal websites, LinkedIn, and snowball sampling. Additional expert interviews provided context but were not core data. A total of 23 interviews were conducted between February 2024 and May 2025 in Rotterdam and Liverpool. Interviews lasted 30 to 60 minutes and were conducted online (via Microsoft Teams and Zoom), recorded, and transcribed for analysis. The interviews concluded when thematic saturation was reached.

This study employed semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, following ethnographic methods as outlined by Geertz (1973). This approach was chosen to gather detailed, context-rich insights into practitioners’ experiences with resident involvement, enabling a “thick description” of their roles (Geertz, 1973). The methodology aligns with the use of anthropological theories and methods that provide insights into how bureaucracies function and how administrative cultures shape behavior, as highlighted by Rhodes (2011).

Notably, conducting interviews in the Netherlands posed a slight language challenge as I do not speak Dutch. To overcome this, questions were adapted for clarity, and respondents were encouraged to use Dutch terms when necessary. A supportive environment was also created, including, in one case, sending guiding questions in advance.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

This study enhanced validity by interviewing experts, using a third-lens triangulation approach (Creswell, 2000) that allowed comparison between expert insights and civil servant perspectives. Triangulation allowed for the situating and contextualization of findings alongside established expert knowledge. Additionally, validity was enhanced using an interpretive approach, which relies on the plausibility and coherence of reasoning rather than statistical representativeness, supported by iterative abductive analysis, careful case selection, and systematic interpretation of rich qualitative data (Klein & Meyers, 1999).

To ensure reliability and data quality, all interviews were recorded and transcribed, providing transparency, which enhances the study's reproducibility and strengthens the overall reliability of the research findings (Bryman, 2016; Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007; Van Thiel, 2021). Further, as ATLAS.ti was used for data analysis, a transparent codebook was maintained (Appendix B), enabling readers to understand and assess the coding scheme, thereby enhancing the credibility and consistency of the analysis (Trena & Lester, 2016).

3.5 Analysis

Both interview transcripts and documents were coded and analyzed in ATLAS.ti through an iterative process, aligning with the best practices of qualitative research (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). ATLAS.ti enabled a transparent and reflexive process through features such as memoing, contributing to the rigor and traceability of analytical decisions (Trena & Lester, 2016). Guided by the method of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the analysis moved recursively between theory and data, allowing theoretical insights to emerge while incorporating both established literature and new concepts (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014). Throughout the theory construction process, prior literature (Chapter 2) informed the

development of the theory, but novel theoretical fragments were also integrated as the analysis progressed (Klein & Myers, 1999).

Open coding helped identify patterns, categorize data, and surface sensitizing concepts and themes “derived from the research participants’ perspective, using their language or expressions” (Hoonard, Becker, & Blumer, 2008, p. 1). This method enabled the discovery of conceptual linkages and dominant narratives that spanned across both cities and were unique to each. This enriched the understanding of both the rhetorical and practical landscape, which facilitated the construction of original theoretical insights, aligning well with the research objectives (Peters, 2020). Appendix B provides an overview of the codebook, including both themes developed and codes attributed under each theme.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Various measures were taken to ensure compliance with ethical standards. Regarding privacy and data storage regulations set by the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam were strictly followed. Interviewees were given informed consent forms before the interviews and were given the option to discontinue participation or decline the use of their data during the interview at any point without needing to provide a reason. Additionally, interviews were anonymized by assigning numerical identifiers to each participant (Appendix A provides an overview of all respondents). Lastly, the collected data was shared only with the supervisor and will be deleted within five years of the project’s completion.

Chapter Four: Empirical Findings & Analysis

4.1 Introduction

Applying the aforementioned techniques (Chapter 3) to construct theory, Chapter 4 presents the newly established themes and constructs in an empirical findings table, along with a

brief explanation. These findings are followed by a detailed qualitative analysis that draws on the gathered evidence. The analysis is divided into rhetoric and practice, with a theoretical discussion contextualizing the data. An overview of the code table highlighting themes developed from codegroups and relevant codes can be found in Appendix B. The chapter concludes with a summary that addresses sub-questions 2, 3, and 4.

This chapter seeks to answer sub-question 2: *How does participation rhetorically manifest in urban development initiatives in Rotterdam and Liverpool, and what explanatory patterns can be derived from document analysis and interviews?*, sub-question 3: *How does participation manifest itself in practices in urban development in Rotterdam and Liverpool, and what explanatory patterns can be derived from document analysis and interviews?* And sub-question 4: *What explanatory patterns can be derived from the comparisons between resident involvement in the field of urban development in Rotterdam and Liverpool?*

4.2 Empirical Findings

Below, the overall empirical findings are presented in a table of theoretical synthesis.

Theme	Rhetoric and Practice	Convergence/Divergence	Rotterdam	Liverpool
Networks of engagement (Peters, 2021)	Rhetoric	(Convergence)	Formal connective structures- Germanic/Scandinavian	
	Practice	(Divergence)	Formal Connective structures, with variation of practice/success	Informal Connective structures-Anglo-American
Relationships (Peters, 2021) (Callahan, 2007)	Rhetoric	(Convergence)	Germanic/Scandinavian - <i>(Slightly Anglo-American)</i>	
	Practice	(Divergence)	Germanic	Large range: Anglo-American → Napoleonic relationships evident
Funding	Rhetoric	(Divergence)	Germanic	Anglo-American
	Practice	(Divergence)	Germanic/Scandinavian	Anglo-American
Scope of Resident Involvement	Rhetoric	(Convergence)	Germanic, Napoleonic - <i>Slightly Anglo-American (monitoring)</i>	
	Practice	(Divergence)	Germanic	Anglo-American

Table 2: Empirical findings

Utilizing ATLAS.ti and applying the aforementioned data analysis techniques (C3), various themes emerged: Networks of engagement, state-citizen relationships, funding, and the scope of resident involvement. Convergence and divergence in terms of rhetoric and practice were thus considered within these thematic areas (Pollitt, 2002). Further, administrative traditions helped contextualize the empirically observed patterns (Peters, 2021).

The findings highlight a shift towards rhetorical convergence accompanied by divergence in practice. This convergence is solely seen at the rhetorical level, aligning with Pollitt's (2002) concept of discursive convergence. Unexpectedly, this rhetoric appears to converge on characteristics associated with Germanic administrative traditions, which emphasizes a state-sponsored and structured approach to involvement. This contrasts with the understanding of NPM evolution in public administration. In contrast, practice appears to diverge, aligning with Pollitt's (2002) perspective that convergence is often less extensive at the practice and results stages than at the discourse and decisions stages. This practical divergence is shaped by historically established administrative traditions and path dependency, as evidenced by the practice in Rotterdam, which reflects aspects of the Germanic tradition and Liverpool's practice aligning more closely with the Anglo-American tradition. This aligns with both Peters (2021) and Van Buuren et al.'s (2018) theory that historically-based, path-dependent administrative legacies continue to shape national policy.

4.3 Analysis

4.3.1 Networks of Engagement: Residents and Local Authorities

Direct access between local governments and civil society is an imperative aspect of involvement (Edelman & Feldman, 2018). This theme was evident in interviews, where various networks of engagement between residents and local authorities were described. Respondents consistently explained that, at the local level, accessibility is crucial for effective resident engagement, ensuring that residents can easily reach local governance actors. The code group 'networks of engagement' was created based on various codes such as "venues for RI" "formal meetings," "online tools," "town halls," "workshops," "interviews," "events," "public meetings," and "stakeholder engagement forum."

Themes	Codes	
Networks of engagement	Advice Center	Meetings
	Appropriate venue	Minimal RI at Neighborhoodhubs
	Coffee Table Discussion	Online tools
	Community hub	Open invitation through e-mail
	Events	Organize an event
	Feedback letter	Physical building
	Feedback phone call	Paper communication
	Flyers	Podcast
	Focus group	Public meetings
	Formal building	Social Media
	Formal Meetings	Stakeholder Forum
	Inaccessible venues	Connect in person
	Inform citizens	Town halls
	Informal Relationship	Go to where residents are
	Information meeting evening	Various locations of events
	Interviews	Videos and Photos for RI (L)
	Leading RI with questions	Workshops

Table 3: Codebook (Networks of engagement)

Rhetoric: Convergence

In Rotterdam, as of “April 2022, the Rotterdam Municipality implemented the Wijk aan Zet system... We have 39 wijkhubs (neighborhood hubs) in Rotterdam” (Rotterdam, n.d. para.1). Neighborhood hubs are accessible points where residents can connect with neighborhood managers and elected district councilors. These hubs are dedicated buildings paid for by the municipality. Rotterdam also has “Wijkhub on wheels,” mobile neighborhood hubs for further flexibility. Both forms of neighborhood hubs aim to provide an “accessible place where residents can drop in without an appointment with questions, ideas, or concerns about their neighborhood.” Ideally, residents can get “immediate answers to questions... discover which colleague from the municipality can assist them, share ideas for their neighborhoods, or report something about their environment” (Rotterdam, n.d. para. 1).

In Liverpool, elected councilors actively engage with their constituents by dedicating one or two days each week to hold “surgeries” at local venues within their wards, such as public libraries. This practice ensures that residents have direct access to their representatives, providing “a regular opportunity for any ward resident to go and talk to their councilor face to face” (LivRegionality Regional, n.d, para.4). This aims to promote transparency and responsiveness in local governance. While elected councilors participate in these surgeries, civil servants do not.

Practice: Divergence

Despite these official venues for connecting with residents, in both cities, civil servants and local councilors do not always experience them as intended. Respondent 8, a Rotterdam neighborhood manager, explains that residents may or may not pass by depending on the hub's positioning. At the hub where he is based, he noted, "People do not really come here by accident. I know that my colleagues in Hoogvliet are located in a shopping mall or nearby, so a lot of people pass by there." He further emphasizes the importance of good positioning explaining that in some areas, such as South Rotterdam, demand is especially high: "When you open something, a neighborhood hub, well, the next day, people are queuing up. Because there are a lot of people who have questions or problems they can't resolve on their own." Despite this, differences in Rotterdam emerge; Respondent 10, a neighborhood manager; Respondent 7, a neighborhood coordinator; and Respondent 1, a neighborhood networker, explained that in their neighborhoods, within projects such as fixing a street light, funding a community program, and creating a community garden, the neighborhood hub provided an initial point of contact where residents were able to start a conversation with relevant local officials. As a result of this contact, resident-focused governance emerged.

In Liverpool, despite official 'surgery' times, residents often approach counselors informally. Respondent 16, a councilor, describes being approached while carrying out activities in his ward: "I often go litter picking, and I reckon for every bag of litter I collect, I have about ten conversations." Sometimes, he will "sit in my (his) front room downstairs, and people knock on the door." Green Project Manager Respondent 14 explained that for the sustainable urban transformation project of tree planting, he went around "knocking on the door(s). If I get a response, I'll talk to the resident, and we'll have that kind of conversation right there. Very informally".

Discussion

The rhetoric of resident participation in Rotterdam and Liverpool highlights a convergence between the two cities, exemplifying a state-sponsored and structured approach to involvement, as residents are encouraged to go to dedicated meeting spots and times in both cities. This structured approach aligns with the Germanic administrative traditions expected in Rotterdam, yet is surprising in Liverpool (Peters, 2021). Additionally, this rhetoric aligns with

Pollit's (2002) conception of discursive convergence as shared language emerges across these varying institutional contexts.

Despite this convergence, in practice, Rotterdam and Liverpool diverge. In Rotterdam, some civil servants report that, in practice, structured governance approaches are highly contingent upon contextual factors, such as neighborhood dynamics and community needs, whereas others, the majority, find the structured approach helpful. This variability suggests that the Germanic tradition's ideal of structured, collaborative interaction and easily accessible administrators is not uniformly realized, highlighting a gap between policy rhetoric and practice (Peters, 2021; Pollitt, 2002). In Liverpool, the practice contradicts the rhetoric, as resident-inclusive engagement often occurs in informal settings through casual conversations with councilors, informally through spontaneous doorstep visits, or during other activities. This aligns closely with the Anglo-American tradition, described in the UK as a pluralist state-society relationship, where individuals and interest groups engage in advocacy within a less corporatist, more open political arena (Peters, 2021). This aligns with Pollitt's (2002) perspective that, despite some convergence in public management discourse and decisions, durable differences rooted in national traditions and the practical realities of implementation and results persist.

4.3.2 Relationships

This code group, 'relationships,' includes instances where administrator and citizen relationships were reflected in documents and interviews. Various codes, such as "co-creation," "collaboration," "informal relationship," and "consultation," make up this code group. This characterization of relationships loosely follows Callahan's (2007) citizen-administrator typology to define roles and interaction processes.

Theme	Code
Relationships	Aiding citizens directly
	Assistance
	Co creation
	Collaboration based on RI
	Collaboration platform.
	Consultation
	consultation fatigue
	Co-production
	Improved relationship
	Informal Relationship
	Relationship between NM and policy officers
	Supportive
	Zero consultation

Table 4: Codebook (Relationships)

Rhetoric: Convergence

In Rotterdam, urban transformation rhetoric increasingly positions residents as co-producers or owners, with the administrators serving as public brokers or co-producers. The Mooi Mooier Middelland (MMM) project and the Shapenwei self-managed neighborhood garden in Kralingseveer are two examples. MMM states, “To perpetuate and further develop the co-creation, residents and the municipality will jointly formulate concrete activities and tasks for the future of the Middelland district” (Mooi Mooier Middelland, 2019, p. 8). This new collaborative project is aimed to create “Co-creation, a new work method for all parties involved” (Hillen & Mertens, 2017, p. 1). Within the Shapenwei project in Kralingseveer, a high level of autonomy was given to residents: “The municipality wants to give it (a plot of land) free of charge in self-management to (a group of) residents, an association (playground, CKC, etc.), or a partnership of residents and/or associations.” (Kralingseveer District Council, 2023, para.1). A resident’s proposal was chosen to make the land into a neighborhood garden. Here, residents are positioned as owners as they obtain the plot of land and have the autonomy to dictate choices as they see fit (Callahan, 2007). This ownership position of residents was not in conflict with the municipality and administrators but rather relatively cooperative and actively supported.

In Liverpool, “throughout the year, we (they) seek the views of residents, business owners, visitors, and stakeholders on a range of topics” (LCC, n.d). Here, residents are positioned as customers and experience a more consultative interaction with responsive administrators acting as professionals (Callahan, 2007). This is exhibited in the West Derby Road traffic scheme as it is stated, “To assist this consultation, there will be several drop-in sessions

where the public can view more detailed plans and talk to members of the design team before providing feedback.” (Liverpool, 2022, para 10). On the other hand, sometimes the rhetoric aligns more closely with that in Rotterdam, as residents are positioned in ownership roles, such as with the Canning House cooperative in Liverpool, where “The aim was to empower residents and give them control over decisions regarding their homes and community” (Canning House Co-Operative, n.d, para. 2).

Practice: Divergence

In Rotterdam, the relationships between administrators and citizens align closely with the participatory rhetoric found in policy documents, reflecting a collaborative and facilitative dynamic. Respondent 5, a neighborhood manager involved in the MMM project, highlighted a citizen-driven and governmentally supported approach, noting it was “up to the citizens to actually tell what we’re gonna do with the seven million.” Similarly, Respondent 1, a neighborhood networker, described how residents initiated a community garden project by approaching the municipality for land and independently developing a plan with an architect. This example illustrates a relationship in which administrators take on a supportive, enabling role, providing resources and space while allowing citizens to lead, thus reinforcing a partnership model rooted in trust and shared ownership (Callahan, 2007).

In Liverpool, relationships between administrators and residents vary widely. Concerning West Derby Road development, Respondent 18 describes resident relations as often marked by exclusion, noting that people felt “sidelined,” “excluded from decision-making,” or even “deliberately and politically bypassed.” Reflecting on a traffic scheme on West Derby Road, he describes the relationship as “we know what’s better for the peasants, so we won’t pretend to ask them,” contrasting with the previous rhetoric. Within other urban development programs, Respondent 14 highlights a different relationship, noting that residents “might have some immediate feedback” during review periods after presenting green-oriented projects, such as Everton Park.

Others recount deeper partnerships. A neighborhood manager, Respondent 13, highlights a youth-led waste management project: “It was their own. So we actually didn’t do anything other than facilitate meetings for them.” Similarly, Respondent 14 reflects on the Canning House Co-Operative: “The whole point of it was that they had to be citizen voices... We can’t impose

cooperatives on people... We let them get on with it and have done so ever since". This aligns with the above rhetoric regarding the co-operative.

Discussion

In terms of rhetoric, both Rotterdam and Liverpool indicate a convergence as both signal a departure from the traditional "citizen as subject and administrator as ruler" model (Callahan, 2007). Instead, they both express a clear aspiration toward more collaborative forms of citizen-administrator interaction. This convergence in rhetoric aligns with Pollitt's (2002) discursive convergence, as both cities similarly emphasize the active participation of a variety of actors.

The Germanic tradition is expressed in both cities as the bureaucracy is positioned as a central link, managing diverse interests and fostering a partnership model rooted in trust and shared responsibility (Peters, 2021). However, in Liverpool's approach the Anglo-American tradition is also seen in relationships as residents are treated as "customers" providing feedback in a consultative process, with administrators acting as responsive professionals (Peters, 2021).

In practice, administrator-resident relationships in Rotterdam align with rhetoric. Administrators often facilitate resident-led initiatives, reflecting more collaborative roles such as co-producers or investors (Callahan, 2007). This is reflective of the Germanic tradition, which features close linkages between social actors and governance, with roots in historical structures (Peters, 2021). In Liverpool, however, the difference between practice and rhetoric paints a fragmented picture. While some relationships embody genuine partnership or even ownership at times, others reflect hierarchical or exclusionary dynamics, aligning more closely with the subject or voter roles in Callahan's (2007) typology. These relationships may suggest alignment with the pluralist, open-access characteristics typical of the Anglo-American tradition. However, the top-down, state-centric, and deliberate exclusion from policymaking sometimes resembles features of the Napoleonic tradition, which emphasizes centralized authority and has historically limited the role of societal actors (Peters, 2021).

The divergence in practice aligns with Pollitt's (2002) conception that convergence is often less extensive at the practice and results stages compared to discourse and decisions. This persistent divergence despite similar rhetorical objectives, also directly supports van Buuren et

al.'s (2018) argument that administrative traditions significantly influence how policies are shaped and implemented, leading to path-dependent responses rather than uniform outcomes.

4.3.3 Funding

A recurring theme in discussions of participatory governance was the topic of funding as a key enabler for residents to participate and actively co-produce. This thematic group emerged from codes such as “money”, “financing”, “distribution of funds”, “subsidies”, and “financial autonomy”.

Theme	Code
Funding	Financial constraints
	Financial Freedom
	Funding
	High class neighborhoods
	Inaccessible venues
	Money
	Specific funding
	Subsidies
	Wealth disparity
	Minimal financial autonomy
	Distribution of money
	Adult voice central to RI

Table 5: Codebook (Funding)

Rhetoric: Divergence

In Rotterdam, various funding mechanisms support resident involvement. These include funds such as the resident initiative, the youth initiative (for ages 12–17), and the general initiative (available to organizations, residents, or civil servants), where money is allocated towards “all kinds of subjects. Think for example of recreation, building or living, education or art and culture” (Rotterdam Gemeente, n.d., para 2). Such funding has enabled wall paintings, planting projects, community events, and local newspapers, empowering citizens to act on their proposals and contribute to neighborhood development (Rotterdam Gemeente, n.d.). Through the centralized “Mijn Rotterdam” platform, residents can submit initiatives online, facilitating more accessible digital participation (Rotterdam Gemeente, n.d.).

In contrast, Liverpool employs a more structured, top-down funding model. Each neighborhood receives a budget for sectors like highways, street lighting, community safety, and infrastructure (LCC, n.d.). Residents can access specific funds, including grants for “sports

equipment” and “The Covenant Fund,” which supports initiatives related to the armed forces (LCC, n.d.). Further, each elected councilor manages a Local Neighbourhood Fund, meant to “enable councilors to recommend spending in their ward, to alleviate need linked to the Council Plan,” with the stipulation that “all spending must be consistent with Council policies” (LCC, 2024, p. 4). These funds support community organizations, schools, and projects, though residents lack direct access, and consultation guidelines are absent (LCC, 2024).

Practice: Divergence

In Rotterdam, both Respondents 8 and 3 explain that, in practice, they have seen the benefits the dedicated funds offered to residents. Respondent 8 explained that as a Neighborhood manager, he often helps “citizens fill in the forms for this funding.” This direct access to municipal funds empowers citizens to propose and implement their own projects at a local level, fostering active engagement in improving their communities. However, Respondent 2, an elected district council member, explained, “often the funding goes either to the poorer areas of Rotterdam or to the broader city, rather than to small local initiatives within (all of) the neighborhoods.”

Respondent 5, who worked closely with the MMM program, further highlighted the benefits of flexible funding, explaining that “the municipality offered a budget of 7 million euros, which allowed the program to become a citizen-directed standalone unit” within the local government, enabling it to directly respond to citizens priorities and “bypass typical bureaucratic hurdles.” This level of financial autonomy enabled extensive resident involvement in a wide range of projects.

In Liverpool, in practice, strict hierarchical financial structures, especially the Council’s Reliance on central government funding, limit citizen engagement. Expert 22 stated that “the local councils have been massively, massively defunded of resources in the last 15 years... so the Council’s just really, really struggle to find the bandwidth and headspace to do anything other than the absolutely necessary statutory consultations”.

In addition to this, when funding is offered, conditions often predefine project goals, sidelining citizen interests and the local context. Respondent 17 noted that in the West Derby Road project, “the budgetary pressures from the government and funding conditions meant that citizen interests were not consulted.” Even when citizens participate, the Council’s ability to

respond is limited by resources. Respondent 17 explained, “The reduced funding means we can’t always react to those requests from residents, especially in infrastructure projects tied to pre-programmed schemes, making it “difficult to react to them [residents] because [the] funding I’ve got is specifically for schemes which are already programmed or pipelines.” However, these effects vary across neighborhoods; Respondent 16 described his area as “One of the wealthiest areas in Liverpool... money isn’t the issue,” residents are able to self-organize. In contrast, deprived areas rely more on Council funding, making participation vulnerable to budget cuts and restrictive conditions.

Discussion

Rhetoric concerning the funding of resident involvement shows a clear divergence between both cities. Rotterdam offers varied funding options that support collaborative governance and resident participation in local development, reflecting reforms aligned with the Germanic tradition (Peters, 2021). Liverpool, by contrast, has structured, councilor-controlled budgets tied to official policy, limiting direct resident access. This top-down, council-centric model reflects Anglo-American traditions (Peters, 2021) and limits grassroots agency. Centralization trends in the UK further reinforce this, constraining Liverpool’s ability to support citizen-led initiatives beyond the pre-approved government agenda and narrowing the scope for participatory flexibility. This aligns with Peters’s (2021) delineation of administrative traditions.

In practice, divergences persist between Rotterdam and Liverpool. Rotterdam’s approach aligns with the Germanic tradition where frontline officials collaborate with residents to navigate funding and administrative processes, thereby enabling community initiatives (Peters, 2021). Conversely, Liverpool’s reliance on central government funding reflects the Anglo-American tradition, which limits local discretion and confines responses to “pre-programmed” schemes (Peters, 2021). Managerial reforms and funding constraints exacerbate inequalities, as deprived areas depend heavily on council support, while wealthier communities can more easily self-organize. This aligns with both Peters’ (2021) conception of administrative traditions and Van Buuren et al.’s (2018) assertion that administrative traditions heavily impact practical implementation in both the Netherlands and the UK. Overall, these divergences in both rhetoric and practice highlight how deeply ingrained national administrative patterns shape persistent

differences, contradicting Pollitt's (2002) expectation of convergence in public management reforms.

4.3.4 Scope of Resident Involvement

The analysis of interview data and policy documents revealed the theme, scope of resident involvement, this concerned the extent or level of participation by residents in shaping their communities. As such, the code group "Scope" was developed in ATLAS.ti. This consisted of codes such as "level of resident participation", "discretion of participation", "process planning", "top-down", "bottom-up", and "legal participation".

Theme	Codes	
Scope	Asking opinions on politics	Local RI
	RI asking for help	Long term benefits of RI
	RI discretion up to conselors	Lots of partiRIpation
	RI discretion up to managers and officers	Low engagement when non-controversial
	RI not mandatory	Neighborhood action plan
	Citizens give info	Neighborhood council
	Community representation	NM traits determine RI
	Deeper layer of democracy	Pictorial Approach
	Encourage RI	Positinv RI outcomes
	Give Citizens autonomy	Relationship between NM and policy officers
	Given idea to comment on	Providing suggestions
	initial feedback	Voices opinions
	Invite both parties	Yearly Action plan
	Resident views embeded	Zero consultation
	Adult voice central to RI	Alderman hearing RI perspectives
	RI discretion up to conselors	RI discretion up to managers and officers

Table 6: Codebook (Scope of Resident Involvement)

Rhetoric: Convergence

In Rotterdam, "district agreements are drawn up together with the district council, residents, district partners, and the municipality and are the basis for cooperation in the district" (Rotterdam Gemeente Press Release, 2023, para. 1). This agreement consists of an annual action plan and a four-year district vision, both of which are primarily implemented by the municipality. Adherence to these objectives is tracked by the elected district council, which "monitors whether everyone adheres to the agreements. If things do not go according to plan, the district council will sound the alarm with the municipality" (Wijk aan Zet, n.d, para.7). Further legal structures establishing the scope of resident involvement include the Municipal Act which "contains the 'participation ordinance,' which states that citizens must be involved in policy decisions" (Van

der Stoep et al.m 2024, p.5). Relating more specifically to spatial planning like urban development, the Dutch government explains that “Public authorities must involve residents and businesses in spatial planning ” (Government of the Netherlands, n.d, para. 8)

In Liverpool, Neighborhood Action Plans (NAPs) are “develop[ed] local plans through community consultations, which give communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighborhood and shape the development and growth of their local area” (GovUK, 2019). Furthermore, Liverpool’s 2023 statement of community involvement sheds light onto the scope of resident involvement, explaining, “The community needs to take part in plan-making for local ownership and to help with the policies that will shape the future of land uses and development in Liverpool” (LCC, 2023, para. 1). It establishes that it is a “duty to engage the community in planning matters” with “Government Digital Service (GDS) providing monitoring of compliance with regards to the digital accessibility of information” (LCC, 2022, p.7).

Practice: Divergence

In Rotterdam, local officials report mixed experiences with district agreements. Respondent 1, a civil servant, explained agreements “mean in practice that there are several points of attention that I (with colleagues or external parties) focus on.” Yet, elected district council members have contrasting experiences with Respondent 2 noting, “District agreements are not always the main guiding force in the day-to-day work of district councils.” Respondent 2 elaborates that with monitoring, council members also experience “a lack of timely information, limited formal authority, and insufficient tracking systems,” revealing a gap between the agreements’ intended cooperative function and their practical effectiveness.

Further concerning scope within urban development, Respondent 11, a project manager, highlighted, “Nowadays, every solution, every initiative should be validated, even validated by the residents.” This shift is reflected in engagement practices, such as contact and information evenings, which are now embedded in the planning process, aligning with the rhetorical objectives. Project managers are expected to involve residents throughout the design and implementation process. However, this broader scope presents challenges. “Most of my colleagues are constantly busy with tackling complaints,” Respondent 11 observed, adding, “We should focus on the long term, not just reactive issues.” These insights illustrate the Dutch

government's commitment to citizen participation in spatial planning while also exposing tensions between participatory ideals and the day-to-day realities of public service delivery.

In Liverpool, Respondent 15 explains that “as part of the neighborhood action plan, each of the 13 areas has a list of priorities, (shaped by) partner agencies, elected members, councilors, and professionals.” While NAPs may seemingly have a quasi-legal role, Respondent 14 noted, “I found we don't have a legal obligation to consult the community before we do this... we do it because we want to encourage good community engagement.” Expert 22 added, “We are often non-statutory, I'd describe it as more of a voluntary form of engagement.”

The scope of citizen involvement varies substantially. Respondent 14, a green infrastructure project manager, explained it “really differs depending on who is in the Council,” noting “the counselors are the ones that determine the level of the consultation that we do.” Respondent 18, a councilor, similarly emphasized the role of the Council in shaping the scope of resident involvement, “The second consultation they did was arranged in Sheil Road... in the red light district... they do go out of their way to discriminate against opposition councilors and hear the public that they don't want to hear.” This example reveals how, in practice, individual actors may limit the scope of resident involvement, reflecting a discretionary and politically influenced approach to resident involvement.

Discussion

In both Rotterdam and Liverpool, the rhetoric surrounding funding and resident participation reflects the enduring influence of the Germanic administrative tradition, particularly through legal or quasi-legal instruments such as district agreements and NAPs. Belausteguioitia et al. (2021) explain that often, “binding and non-binding documents reinforce the notion that participation is a right that should be regulated and implemented” (p.1). These formalized efforts to determine the scope of resident involvement align with the Germanic conception that civic participation is not optional but legally mandated (Peters, 2021). However, a key divergence appears in oversight mechanisms. In Rotterdam, local accountability is upheld through district councils, reflecting the Germanic tradition's emphasis on subnational democracy and reforms like *Bürger Nähe* (closeness to citizens) and the *Neues Steuerungsmodell* (Peters, 2021). By contrast, Liverpool's oversight mechanisms, such as annual audits, monitoring, and standardized

accessibility statements completed by the GDS, align more closely with the Anglo-American tradition and its managerial focus on performance outcomes and compliance (Peters, 2021).

In practice there is a clear divergence between the cities. In Rotterdam, civil servants experience the structured and formalized district agreements and there is a strong emphasis on resident validation and participation, requiring resident involvement throughout the design and implementation phases, hallmarks of the Germanic focus on *Bürger Nähe* (closeness to citizens) and institutionalized consultation (Peters, 2021). In Liverpool, the practice of resident involvement closely follows the Anglo-American administrative tradition, marked by discretionary, politically influenced engagement rather than legally mandated participation, despite rhetoric stating otherwise (Peters, 2021). The level and type of involvement varies based on political leadership, with councilors determining the extent of consultation, demonstrating a politicized and contingent approach. Overall, this discursive convergence but practice divergence concurs with Pollitt (2002) with practical divergence in line with administrative traditions (Peters, 2021).

4.4 Conclusion

Rhetoric (sub-question 2)

Regarding rhetoric, based on the empirical evidence, it is inferred that *Rotterdam and Liverpool have converged rhetorically*. This is seen as both Liverpool and Rotterdam increasingly emphasize resident involvement, citizen-centric action, and co-production. This aligns with Pollitt's (2002) observation that public management discourse often exhibits convergence. In both cities, the influence of the Germanic administrative tradition is evident, as resident involvement is discussed as structured, collaborative, and legally grounded (Peters, 2021). This is surprising in Liverpool, where the prevailing administrative tradition is typically Anglo-American. Notably, concerning rhetoric, it is only in the area of funding that Liverpool remains explicitly aligned with Anglo-American principles.

While this rhetorical convergence aligns with Pollitt's (2002) conviction of discursive convergence, this is not due to a general shift towards Anglo-Americanism and NPM reforms, as he posits, but rather a shift towards Germanic rhetoric. Additionally, this convergence challenges

Peters' (2021) concept of administrative traditions as sources of enduring, regionally distinct patterns in public administration.

Instead, other explanations emerge for the identified explanatory pattern. Expert 21s, (who work at the European Commission's Joint Research Centre in participatory democracy) highlights a normative shift towards Germanic ideas and rhetoric within resident involvement stating "we need rejuvenation... we need different things, public administrations at any level of government should be not just deliberative, but co-creative...the legal basis is very important". Within this context, it is evident that convergence emerges not from deeply rooted administrative traditions, as Peters (2021) might argue, but rather from evolving expectations of democratic engagement as there is a shared discursive and normative shift towards formal, legalistic approaches that transcend traditional institutional legacies.

As such, it is inferred that *Rotterdam and Liverpool have rhetorically converged within the Germanic administrative tradition representing a normative shift in the discourse around resident involvement.*

Practice (sub-question 3)

In practice, Peters' (2021) regionally based administrative traditions appear to influence resident involvement. Rotterdam and Liverpool each reflect their distinct administrative legacies. Rotterdam is consistent with the Germanic tradition, where administrators enable resident-led initiatives, guide funding processes, and promote collaborative governance (Peters, 2021). Liverpool, by contrast, reflects the Anglo-American tradition, characterized by informal and often hierarchical citizen-state relationships, central government dependency, and disparities tied to neighborhood wealth (Peters, 2021). This further aligns with Van Buuren et al.'s (2018) assertion that, in practice, the Netherlands and the UK tend to express their individual traditions. This proves their "doubt that change was fundamental and more than just discursive" (Van Buuren, et al., 2018, p.11). Lastly, this divergence in practice highlights an explanatory pattern that directly supports and reinforces Pollitt's (2002) finding that, while there may be considerable convergence in discourse or decisions, convergences in practice and results are far less extensive. Thus, *while countries might adopt similar rhetorical reform, the realities of implementation, powerfully influenced by administrative traditions, ensure that regional divergence persists in practice.*

Comparison (sub-question 4)

From a comparative lens, *Rotterdam demonstrates a closer alignment between its policy rhetoric and practical realities, whereas Liverpool exhibits a divergence between its stated participatory goals and actual practice.*

Rotterdam rhetoric highlights structured, legally mandated, and administratively supported resident involvement, this is reflected in practice. The Germanic and Napoleonic traditions, with their legalistic and professional view of public duty, ensure that civil servants closely follow municipal procedures, aligning practice with rhetoric. In contrast, Liverpool's rhetoric often contrasts from practice. Informal, sometimes hierarchical relationships, reliance on central funding, and uneven outcomes tied to neighborhood wealth contradict the structured image presented rhetorically. This gap is shaped by the politicized environment, where elected officials, influenced by party loyalty and mandates, often prioritize political visibility and control, impeding consistent implementation of democratic innovations (Peters, 2021; Callahan, 2007). This finding generally aligns with Van Buuren et al.'s (2018) finding that the Anglo-American model grants elected officials broad discretion, whereas civil servants are less embedded in a professional, duty-bound culture. Expert 22 explains that, "Often you have a politician who wants to do these things, and the next four years... the citizen engagement is not done anymore because these other politicians don't have the disposition." Her remarks illustrate how political turnover disrupts long-term engagement.

Comparatively, in both cities, the practices of civil servants align more closely with participatory rhetoric than those of elected officials. This supports broader literature suggesting that while politicians gain visibility in early reform phases (Pollitt, 2002), civil servants, closer to implementation, are more likely to sustain reform efforts (Callahan, 2007). In Liverpool, politically affiliated councillors reinforce the Anglo-American tradition's emphasis on political control, creating a system in which, as Expert 21 observes, participation occurs because people feel it is "the right thing to do."

Chapter Five: Conclusions, Discussion, and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter concludes the research by synthesizing the findings and providing a clear answer to the main research question: *What are the similarities and differences in the rhetoric and practice of resident involvement in Rotterdam's and Liverpool's urban development policies, and what role do administrative traditions play in explaining them?* This chapter reflects on the findings, outlines how they contribute to existing literature and fill the previously identified gaps, answers the research question, explores the study's limitations, and offers targeted policy recommendations while suggesting directions for future research.

5.2 Discussion and Contribution of Findings

Developed Inferences

Inference 1	Rotterdam and Liverpool have rhetorically converged concerning resident involvement.
Inference 2	Rotterdam and Liverpool have rhetorically converged within the Germanic administrative tradition representing a normative shift in the discourse around resident involvement.
Inference 3:	While countries might adopt similar rhetorical reform, the realities of implementation, powerfully influenced by administrative traditions, ensure that regional divergence persists in practice.
Inference 4	Rotterdam demonstrates a closer alignment between its policy rhetoric and the practical realities, whereas Liverpool exhibits a divergence between its stated participatory goals and practice.

Table 7: Developed Inferences

Inference 1

Rotterdam and Liverpool demonstrate rhetorical convergence in their strategies for resident involvement in urban development, indicating that they have embraced a shared language, discourse, and reform vocabulary centered around co-creation, collaborative

governance, and resident participation (Pollitt, 2002). This is consistent with Pollitt's (2002) discursive convergence and aligns with broader trends toward democratic innovation, collaborative governance, and citizen-centered approaches in public administration (Callahan, 2007). Further, this aligns with Van Buuren et al.'s (2018) findings that across both the Netherlands and the UK, similar language is used to describe new approaches (in this case resident involvement or policies). However, this convergence contradicts the assertions of Peter (2021) and Van Buuren et al. (2018) that administrative traditions create regional differences. In the studied cases, administrative traditions offer limited explanatory power concerning rhetoric.

This finding addresses a gap in the literature concerning the application of administrative traditions on a local level. As such, the findings reveal that administrative traditions do not manifest in rhetoric at the municipal level, with Peter's (2021) theory providing no explanatory power for the observed rhetorical convergence. Instead, administrative traditions only remain prominent in national or supranational analyses (Knill, 1998; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011; Peters, 2021). Despite contradicting administrative tradition theory, Pollitt's (2002) discursive convergence is confirmed at the local level, revealing that cities adopt similar resident involvement rhetoric both locally and nationally (Pollitt, 2002).

Inference 2

The rhetorical focus on resident involvement in Rotterdam and Liverpool aligns more with the Germanic administrative tradition, characterized by legal frameworks and formal consultation (Peters, 2021). While this fits the Netherlands' tradition, it challenges Peters' (2021) view of the UK as Anglo-American and Pollitt and Bouckaerts' (2000) assumption of NPM convergence. This surprising Germanic influence in the UK may reflect that administrative traditions are often studied at national levels, overlooking local variations. At the regional level, resident involvement tends to follow formal, rule-based processes, further confirming the above finding that national traditions serve as flexible frameworks rather than fixed models across governance levels.

Inference 3

Despite the convergence at the rhetorical level, deeply embedded administrative traditions ensure that regional divergence persists in practice. This inference directly addresses the literature gap on the 'real degree of convergence' in democratic reforms by offering empirical evidence consistent with Pollitt's (2002) notion that rhetorical convergence does not

guarantee implementation convergence. This further contributes to the academic gap, providing additional evidence that there is no broad convergence, at least not between the Netherlands and the UK (Kettl, 2005; Hughes, 2003).

Peters' (2021) administrative traditions provide strong explanatory power for this finding, as Rotterdam exhibits the Germanic tradition (e.g., structured, collaborative, service-oriented facilitation) in practice, and Liverpool exhibits the Anglo-American tradition (e.g., more fragmented, contingent, influenced by political and financial constraints, sometimes exhibiting hierarchical tendencies). This suggests that the legacies of each locality's institutions influence how democratic innovations are implemented, aligning with Van Buuren et al.'s (2018) findings that in Rotterdam and the UK, administrative traditions impact the implementation of policies.

This is socially relevant as it contributes to a policy understanding of the gaps between rhetorically stated commitments and the implementation of democratically innovative policies. In particular, for Rotterdam and Liverpool, both with publicly emphasized goals of resident participation, it is evident there is a need to reflect on whether current policy objectives realistically reflect practical realities.

Inference 4

This finding addresses a gap in the literature, which often focuses on the citizen perspective while overlooking how administrators translate rhetoric into practice. Some cities are more effective at aligning rhetoric and practical realities, while in others, a disconnect persists. Applying the lens of administrative traditions, the Germanic and Napoleonic traditions' emphasis on a legalistic, professional civil service encourages civil servants to view strict implementation as part of their formal responsibilities and public duty (Peters, 2021). In contrast, more Anglo-American environments tend to have a politicized climate, where elected officials, driven by party agendas, cause less alignment between implementation and rhetoric. According to Callahan (2007), this may lead to a prioritization of visibility over consistency, making it harder to align rhetoric with practice. This aligns with Van Burren's (2018) understanding that the English state's politicized approach to the public interest and participatory governance can undermine the alignment between rhetoric and Liverpool's practice.

This further addresses the social gap, providing insights for cross-national policy learning, a stated objective of both cities. In particular, both effective strategies (neighborhood hubs, legal basis) and implementation challenges (civil servant versus elected official

implementation, funding issues, short-sightedness due to over-involvement) are highlighted between each city. By doing so, this research equips policymakers and practitioners with grounded insights for designing more coherent, adaptive, and effective resident engagement methods.

5.3 Answer to Research Question

What are the similarities and differences in the rhetoric and practice of resident involvement in Rotterdam's and Liverpool's urban development policies, and what role do administrative traditions play in explaining them?

Rotterdam and Liverpool converge in their rhetoric on resident involvement policies, with both expressing a commitment to collaborative governance, co-creation, and increasing resident voices. This convergence can be partially explained by Pollitt's (2002) logic however, the shared rhetoric aligns with the Germanic administrative tradition, as opposed to the Anglo-American traditions expected in Pollitt and Bouckaert's (2000) logic. Nevertheless, expert opinions suggest that global normative pressures such as emphasis on structured resident involvement, shape discursive trends, which may be the reason for the observed convergence. This rhetorically converge also aligns with Van Buuren et al.'s (2018) findings that in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, similar language is often used even when underlying administrative practices remain shaped by distinct national traditions. Nevertheless, this rhetorical convergence contradicts Peters's (2021) administrative traditions as regional differences did not manifest rhetorically. That said, it is essential to note that administrative tradition theory was applied locally here, as opposed to the national and regional scales in other studies (Van Buuren, 2018; Peters, 2021). Contributing to the above literature, at the local level, administrative traditions do not impact rhetoric.

Concerning implementation, Peters's (2021), Van Buuren's (2018), and Pollitt's (2018) theories of administrative traditions and practical divergence mirror the empirical realities of resident involvement in Rotterdam and Liverpool. Each city's implementation rests firmly in its traditions, with Rotterdam's Germanic and Napoleonic influences evident in its legalism, formal structures, and civil service, and Liverpool's Anglo-American tradition, expressed in political control, decentralization, and managerialism. As such, while Liverpool adopts a similar rhetoric

concerning resident participation, underlying administrative traditions explain why Rotterdam and Liverpool diverge in practice.

5.4 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Considering the theories, Peters' (2021) administrative traditions helped describe the regional differences and stressed the institutionally structured and path-dependent characteristics of each country. Pollitt's (2002) theory of convergence also contributed to understanding some areas where discourse was aligned across different contexts. Still, neither framework was able to fully represent the realities that were observed in the cases. Instead, inferences emerged, which, while grounded in the cases, necessitate further testing. Thus, additional research in other local governance settings is needed to assess whether the inferences remain true more broadly. This future research could also apply the inferences to policy outcomes rather than just rhetoric and implementation, as these are often overlooked (Huxley et al., 2016; Callahan, 2007; Pollitt, 2002). In conducting such research, a distributive power perspective could be integrated, providing useful in highlighting how power is shared or withheld between authorities and citizens, a crucial yet previously excluded dimension in this study (Arnstein, 1969).

Reflecting on the methodology, qualitative interviewing is inherently a social interaction that shapes research outcomes by establishing distinct roles between interviewer and interviewee (Zittoun, 2021). Concerning the respondents, mid-level civil servants, Zittoun (2021, p. 6) explains that these individuals may feel uncomfortable "speaking to researchers about their activities, particularly their difficulties, may be perceived as a problem." In accounting for this, "interviewers need to develop different techniques to show interviewees that they are valued, for instance, by showing empathy and encouraging them to speak" (Zittoun, 2021, p. 6). To address this, interviews were conducted in a conversational tone, emphasizing confidentiality, and aimed to create a safe and open environment. Active listening was employed, as it was essential to respond empathetically to participants' reflections, which helped build trust and encouraged more candid responses.

Lastly, this research was limited in scope, as time constraints made it infeasible to expand the analysis beyond the two cases examined, Rotterdam and Liverpool. However, such traditions exist globally, and future research should explore resident involvement and urban development across cities with different administrative legacies (e.g., Napoleonic vs. Scandinavian). In

particular, this would help determine if the rhetorical convergence in the Germanic tradition, which contrasts with other scholars (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2000; Peters, 2021), is widespread or context-specific. In doing such research, it could be useful to systematically categorize rhetorical styles and administrative traditions across various countries to develop a broader matrix that maps rhetorical styles against administrative traditions, allowing researchers to assess whether the observed Germanic rhetorical convergence is a broader phenomenon.

5.5 Recommendations

Bridging the gap between rhetoric and practice in Liverpool, the city should either align implementation with stated goals or adjust its rhetoric to reflect current realities. One option is to formalize resident involvement through local legal mandates, following the Germanic model where participation is embedded in administrative structures and supported by trained civil servants (Peters, 2021). Learning from the experience in Rotterdam, formalization could also occur through civic infrastructure, such as neighborhood hubs, which can enhance engagement by providing residents with consistent spaces to connect with civil servants. This would address Liverpool's current dependence on informal channels. If adjusting rhetoric to align with practical realities, Liverpool City Council could revise its rhetorical goal by setting goals that fall within the Anglo-American institutional narrative, aligning with the practical realities. As Pollitt (2002) notes, rhetoric often outpaces action, creating false expectations. Clarifying either the process or the promise would improve transparency and strengthen the legitimacy of citizen participation.

Additionally, as briefly discussed in inference four, a similarity between both cities is that civil servants seem to experience a practical and rhetorical alignment; however, there is tension between rhetoric and reality for elected officials. To address the mutual frustration between political officials and municipal actors observed in both Rotterdam and Liverpool, more precise accountability mechanisms for follow-through should be established on both sides. In Rotterdam, elected officials express dissatisfaction with the inconsistent implementation of neighborhood agreements by municipal departments, while in Liverpool, councilors report being sidelined and inadequately consulted by the Council on matters related to resident involvement. To manage these tensions, each municipal government, with regional government oversight, should develop monitoring and evaluation systems that hold both political and administrative actors accountable for ensuring the implementation of resident-centered involvement. Mechanisms could include

regular public progress reports, transparent timelines for follow-up actions, and structured stakeholder feedback loops that incorporate input from residents, councilors, and civil servants to assess whether and how citizen engagement is being realized in practice.

This thesis examined resident involvement in Rotterdam and Liverpool, focusing on how administrative traditions shape the alignment between policy rhetoric and practice. Both cities exhibit similar rhetorical commitments to structured, state-led engagement inspired by Germanic models; however, their practices differ: Rotterdam's collaborative approach contrasts with Liverpool's fragmented, politically driven one. Rotterdam demonstrates a closer alignment between rhetoric and reality, while Liverpool faces notable gaps. These inferences provide valuable insights for enhancing citizen engagement and governance. To conclude, while practically shaped by deep-rooted administrative traditions and political dynamics, a committed effort to align rhetoric with practice and embrace inclusive, context-sensitive strategies is essential to fostering more equitable, effective, and trustworthy cities like Rotterdam and Liverpool.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Respondents

Person	Job
Rotterdam	
Respondent 1	Neighborhood Networker
Respondent 2	District Council Member
Respondent 3	Neighborhood Manager
Respondent 4	District Councilor
Respondent 5	Neighborhood Manager
Respondent 6	Programme manager for sustainable initiatives
Respondent 7	Neighborhood coordinator
Respondent 8	Neighborhood Manger
Respondent 9	Chair of the District Council
Respondent 10	Neighborhood Manager
Respondent 11	Strategic Manager of Public Spaces
Person	Job
Liverpool	
Respondent 12	Neighborhood Manager
Respondent 13	Neighborhood Manager
Respondent 14	Green Infrastructure project manager
Respondent 15	Neighborhood Manager
Respondent 16	District Council Member
Respondent 17	Active Travel Officer
Respondent 18	District Council Member and Lord Mayor of Liverpool
Respondent 19	Parks development officer

Respondent 20	District council Member
Experts	
Expert 21	Expert at the Competence Centre on Participatory and Deliberative Democracy within the European Commission
Expert 22	Independent Public Policy Consultant and Current Director within Liverpool City Region
Expert 23	Transport Policy Officer at Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Appendix B: Codebook

Themes	Codes
Networks of engagement	Advice Center
	Appropriate venue
	Coffee Table Discussion
	Community hub
	Events
	Feedback letter
	Feedback phone call
	Flyers
	Focus group
	Formal building
	Formal Meetings
	Inaccessible venues
	Inform citizens
	Informal Relationship
	Information meeting evening
	Interviews
	Leading RI with questions
	Minimal RI at Neighborhoodhubs
	Online tools
	Open invitation through e-mail
	Organize an event
	Physical building
	Paper communication
	Podcast
	Public meetings
	Social Media
	Stakeholder Forum
	Connect in person
	Town halls
	use places where people are likely to be going to anyway, rather than
	Various locations of events
	Videos and Photos for RI
	Workshops
Bureaucratic Influence	Bureaucracy against change
	Top down
	Hierarchy
	Mayoral support
	Meetings
	Minimal RI at Neighborhoodhubs
	Minimal council involvement
	Minimal diversity in RI
	Minimal participation
	Structured Neighborhood council

Themes	Codes
	Politics
	Power struggle
	Structure supports RI
	Stumble across you as well anyway
	Symbolic RI
	Move decisions to neighborhood level
	Dealing direct with central governments
	Work around bureaucracy
	Adult voice central to RI
Funding	Financial constraints
	Financial Freedom
	Funding
	High class neighborhoods
	Inaccessable venues
	Money
	Specific funding
	Subsidies
	Wealth disparity
	Minimal financial autonomy
	Distribution of money
Scope	Asking opinions on politics
	RI asking for help
	RI discretion up to conselors
	RI discretion up to managers and officers
	RI not mandatory
	Citizens give info
	Community representation
	Deeper layer of democracy
	Encourage RI
	Give Citizens autonomy
	Given idea to comment on
	initial feedback
	Invite both parties
	Resident views embeded
	Local RI
	Long term benefits of RI
	Lots of partiRipation
	Low engagement when non-controversial
	Neighborhood action plan
	Neighborhood council
	NM traits determine RI
	Pictorial Approach
	Positinve RI outcomes

Themes	Codes
	Relationship between NM and policy officers
	Providing suggestions
	Voices opinions
	Yearly Action plan
	Zero consultation
	Adult voice central to RI
	Alderman hearing RI perspectives
	RI discretion up to conselors
	RI discretion up to managers and officers
Individual Discretion	RI not mandatory
	Community representation
	Go against employer
	Great code
	I try to fix resident problems
	Embed resident views
	Neighborhood managers have large role
	Neighborhood Manager traits determine RI
	That people have some faith in what we do as workers and that we can r
	Neighborhood group
	Neighborhood manager as connector
	RI discretion up to managers and officers
	Councilor informs residents
	Councilor represent citizen interests
Councilor Led Resident Involvement	Data of citizen perspectives
	Formal Meetings
	Initiate from CS
	Municipal RI (data) contradicts whats going on on the ground
	neighborhood managers are very, very beneficial ,
	NM represent RI (L)
	NM traits determine RI
	Present a broad question
	Present plan to neighborhood
	Resident Power to Decline Tree
	CS can go against the city
Relationships	Aiding citizens directly
	Assistance
	Co creation
	Collaboration based on RI
	Collaboration platform.
	Consultation
	consultation fatigue
	Co-production
	Improved relationship
	Informal Relationship
	Relationship between NM and policy officers
	Supportive
	Zero consultation