

Climbing Up or Falling Down? Stakeholders Support in Urban Governance

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Abstract

Do higher levels of participation lead to higher levels of support among stakeholders? This question is explored in this article. Current debates on participatory policymaking and stakeholders support in urban governance are discussed. This discussion is applied to the case study of the redevelopment of a concert hall in Utrecht, which is one of the largest cities of The Netherlands. The article shows that a higher level of participatory policy-making leads to a higher level of support. The position of power of stakeholders and their dependency relation with the local government plays a major role in establishing the stakeholders' position in participatory policy. It was not only the actual participatory policy-making process that created the support among stakeholders, but also their *initial* position of power in relation to the Utrecht local government.

Keywords: urban governance, participation, participatory policymaking, stakeholders, support, expectations, protest.

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Introduction

Since the 1990s, participation of stakeholders such as groups of citizens, social organizations and companies, entered a new phase in Dutch urban policy. The use of participation evolved in so-called participatory policy-making (De Graaf, 2007). The central idea of participatory policy-making is, that involving and committing stakeholders and (groups of) citizens in an early phase of the policy process, rather than consulting them just before the implementation phase, creates a broader support for that policy and should make policy more effective, legitimate and could build more trust.² Internationally, similar perspectives occur. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2001:11) argues that ‘engaging citizens in policy-making is a sound investment and a core element of good governance. It allows governments to tap wider sources of information, perspectives and potential solutions, and improves the quality of the decisions reached. Equally important, it contributes to building public trust in government, raising the quality of democracy and strengthening civic capacity.’ Participatory policy-making is rather a new name for an old phenomenon.

Participation is widely used with regard to the political system or the policy process. Especially, when we look into academic work in the fields of deliberative democracy (Hajer et al., 2003, Held, 2002) and (urban) governance (John, 2000, Kjaer, 2004, Denters et al., 2005). Although the assumption that a higher level of participation would yield a higher level of support is not new, there is a lack of systematic empirical evidence (Edelenbos, 2000, Pröpper et al., 2001). This article attempts to deliver a contribution to this empirical evidence by investigating one interactive

² Edelenbos (2000: XXV) argues that the idea of participatory policy-making ‘is a continuation of two Dutch traditions: the tradition of public participation, which stems from a reform of the spatial planning system (1970s), and the Dutch pacifist tradition of compromise and adaptation.’ The latter is especially typical in Dutch policy.

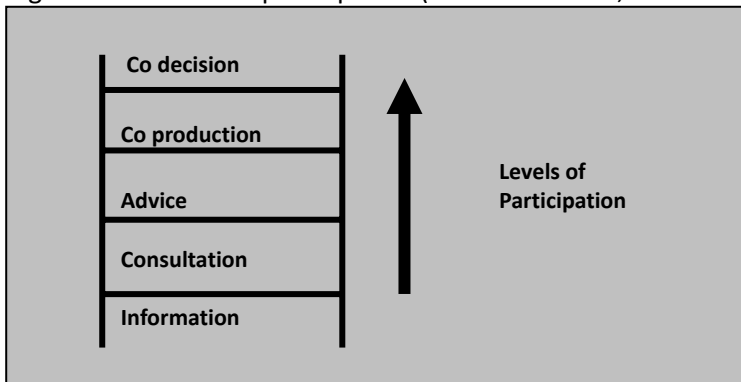
process in the city of Utrecht, The Netherlands. The central question is: *Do higher levels of participation lead to higher levels of support among stakeholders?*

This article has the following structure: the first section presents the theoretical framework, which addresses levels of participation, levels of support and their relation. After a description of the methods in the second section, section three presents the case study of the redevelopment of the Vredenburg concert hall in the city of Utrecht. The concluding two sections will present an answer to the central question and will round off with a discussion.

A Ladder of Participation

Early involvement of citizens and stakeholders can be organized in different ways. I follow Coenen, Huitema et al. (1998:308-309) in defining participation as ‘the involvement in decision making with the purpose to influence choice(s) being made’. According to Arnstein (1969) the level of influence of participants depends on the way the participatory process is organized. This insight has been visualized in several ‘ladders of participation’ (see among others Arnstein, 1969, Pateman, 1970, Milbrath et al., 1977, Edelenbos et al., 2001, Pröpper et al., 2001, OECD, 2001). In this study, such a participation ladder is used as an analytical framework to distinguish between *different levels of participation*. Figure 1 is showing this ladder, which has a sliding scale.

Figure 1: A ladder of participation (Edelenbos et al., 2001:242)



The five levels can be defined as follows.

- The fifth and highest level is *co decision*, which has the most 'extreme' level of participation. A new organization or association is created out of every partner (or participant), which share all responsibilities and decisions. The government does not intervene.
- The government is one of the partners in a partnership, when the level of participation is *co production*. Partners collaborate on an equal basis. This is the fourth level.
- Level three is *advice*. This is a more advanced level than consultation, because a government should react to citizens and stakeholders. The government has to take the input of citizens and stakeholders seriously.
- When a government uses the level *consultation*, it asks citizens' and stakeholders' opinion about a specific policy. This is the second level.
- *Information*, which is the lowest and first level, concerns the one-way communication of a government to citizens and stakeholders.

The core elements of participatory policy-making are caught in five questions (Edelenbos, 2000:44-45). Figure 2 shows the five core elements of participatory policy-making in relation with the levels of participation. These are described below.

Figure 2: How can the level of participation be measured?

	<i>information</i>	<i>consultation</i>	<i>advice</i>	<i>co production</i>	<i>co decision</i>
Policy phase	Late: government determines the policy (decisions).	Late: government lets actors react to intentions.	Early: government gives room to actors to help determining the agenda	Early: government and actors determine the agenda together	Early: actors determine policy. Government agrees
Preconditions	Are defined by the government	Are largely defined by the government	Are used as criteria to check	Are defined during the process	Are defined during the process and are not defined by the government
Policy problem	Is defined by the government	Is largely defined by the government	Ideas of actors will play a role	Is defined by government and actors.	Is defined by the actors.
Solutions	Are defined by the government	Are largely defined by the government	Ideas of actors will play a role	Are defined by government and actors.	Are defined by the actors.
Final decision * Policy outputs	Outputs are defined by the government	Government does not commit itself to process outputs.	In principle, outputs are binding, but can differ based on the pre-conditions	Outputs are binding and will unchangeably accepted by the government.	Government and city council do not have to confirm the outputs.
* Policy input	No possibilities for actors to deliver any input	Government asks input from actors	Government asks input from actors, but actors can also come up with input.	Actors are delivering input. The input of the government is low.	The input of the government is very low. Actors determine the input among them

1. In which stage of the policy process are stakeholders involved? Is this an early phase (agenda setting or policy-making), or a late phase (implementation or evaluation)?
2. Who defines the problem; stakeholders or local government?

3. What are the, juridical, financial preconditions? Who defines them; local government or stakeholders?
4. Who defines the policy solutions; stakeholders or local government?
5. Who takes the final decision? Does the city council have enough power to overrule the stakeholder's choices or will they respect the policy output?

Figure 2 will be used to determine the level of participation in the case study. Now, we continue to identify whether we can speak of a level of support and how it will be used in this article.

Can we build a Ladder of Support?

As De Graaf (2007) showed in an earlier article, support is closely linked to concepts such as (output) legitimacy and policy acceptance. Political scientists in democracy studies, as well as power and influence studies often use these terms. Political scholars such as David Easton (1967) and Robert Dahl (1961) researched the phenomenon of support, particularly the support for the political system. Their view is specifically based on a person's judgments towards the political system. I am not particularly interested in that sort of support. I rather want to focus on support for policy that was created in a participatory approach. Thus, the difference with Easton and Dahl is that I am not only aiming at a judgment towards participatory policy-making, but also at the behavior of stakeholders towards policy. Here, support is considered to be more than a judgment. It consists of not only what people are thinking or speaking about, but also of what people do. Ruelle et al. (1998:405) describe support as: *'an interest driven evaluation of a political situation by target groups of a policy. Based on this evaluation, the target group accept this policy actively or passively or offer resistance.'* Their definition is relevant, because it is based on stakeholder's evaluation (satisfaction or dissatisfaction) with regard to policy outputs. It is also referring to the

actual behavior of stakeholders, which is based on their judgments.

Here, support is measured at target groups or 'receivers' of policy. These are the stakeholders; groups of citizens, social organizations and companies who collaborate with (departments of) a local government. Therefore in this research, support must be interpreted as a combination of the satisfaction and behavior of stakeholders with regard to a specific participatory policy project. More specifically, the support must directly refer to a policy output, which is the result of the participatory process. For instance, support is referring to a policy document or a decision.

But how will the level of support be measured? On the one hand, it is based on stakeholders' *evaluation* (satisfaction or dissatisfaction), with regard to the core elements of participatory policy. On the other hand, it is based on the *activities* stakeholders can do to express their support or protest. This results in a protest and support ladder, which consists of twenty potential (up sliding) activities with regard to the participatory policy (process).³ This ladder determines how high the level of support is and whether this level is positive or negative. A negative support score must be interpreted as a signal of resistance.

To give an answer to the question of this section, a ladder of support is empirically possible. As was mentioned before, it is a ladder that shows the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of stakeholders with regard to the core elements of the participatory policy process. It also shows the actual (protest or supportive) activities that stakeholders express (often based on their judgments). Of course, one could also argue on what level of support would be necessary for certain levels of participation. This kind of normative discussions may be inspirational for additional research, but this article will only focus on the empirical results.

³ See Figure 7 in appendix 1.

Support for Participatory Policy-making: the theoretical relation

Now that we know we can determine levels of participatory policy-making and levels of support, we can address how these variables relate to each other. Policy-makers, as well as scientists assume that they are closely related. Policy-makers who deal with participatory policy-making use it as a policy theory in which they expect that more participation will lead to more support. Dutch scholars such as Edelenbos (2000) and Pröpper et al. (2001) are using the same reasoning. However so far, there has been poor empirical evidence of this. This research will systematically investigate evidence of this relation.

The dependent variable ‘level of support among stakeholders’ is measured for different levels of participation.⁴ Theoretically, there are three possible outcomes:

1. Levels of participatory policy-making and levels of support have a *positive relation*. For instance, this means that the level of information will result in a lower level of support than the level of consultation. The level of advice will lead to a higher level of support than the level of consultation, and so on.
2. Levels of participatory policy-making and levels of support have a *negative relation*. This means that a higher level of participation will result in a lower level of support or, vice versa; a lower level of participation will lead to a higher level of support.
3. There is *no relation* between the two. Other variables than levels of participation *determine the level of support*. For example, one could think of context factors that may have an impact on support such as, sudden political circumstances, macro-economical developments or other autonomous developments.

⁴ The level of participatory policy-making is the independent variable.

Methods

This section shows that qualitative methods are used to conduct the empirical research. They are applied to this research as data triangulation (Yin, 1994).

The unit of analysis is the relationship between Utrecht's local government and one stakeholder. It focuses therefore on a one-on-one relationship between a local government and an organization or association in local society. Responsible representatives of the involved organization or association were selected as respondents (see also the interview section).

Data collectors, which have been used in each case study are respectively; document analysis⁵, observations⁶, interviews⁷ and a questionnaire⁸. The result of the document analysis is shown in Figure 3. The interviews were not only needed to collect additional information, but also to collect the perspectives of stakeholders towards (the level) of participation. A stakeholder analysis was

⁵ I used document analysis to determine the level of participation. I selected relevant documents from the Utrecht local government, which were referring to participation, and the project as a whole. This analysis was used to determine whether the intended level of participatory policy-making within the documents correspond to the measured level of participatory policy-making.

⁶ I observed, relevant meetings when possible. I did not contribute to any discussion during these meetings, but remained a silent observer. There was a special focus on the amount of 'participation-related' attention during the meeting. In addition to this, there were also observations during council meetings in which the projects were discussed.

⁷ 15 to 20 key persons were interviewed, with a semi-structured interview. I have used an interview guide for each interview. Most interviews took approximately one hour and were recorded on minidisk. Transcripts of each interview are available in Dutch. On the one hand, these consisted of informants who did not fill out the questionnaire (so called non-response), but also persons who had filled out extreme answers. On the other hand, I interviewed key officers, such as the project manager, the district manager and the responsible deputy Mayor.

⁸ It was a small-scale questionnaire, which was used only to *describe* statistical data. The response to the questionnaire was 54 percent (N=24). Respondents had to rank their most important interests / stakes in the project.

conducted to determine which stakeholders were relevant in order to measure support. Stakeholders filled out a questionnaire that measured their support for the specific project.

The case of the redevelopment of Music Hall Vredenburg

The project

Vredenburg is Utrecht's largest concert hall and is located in the inner city of Utrecht. It has two auditoriums in which a broad variety of cultural and musical events take place. The concert hall will be redeveloped and two other cultural organizations will be accommodated there as well. These are *Tivoli*, which is a well-known pop podium and *Stichting Jazz Utrecht (SJU)*, a Jazz Music Association.⁹ Together, they will use several concert halls in the future building. In addition to the redevelopment of the current building, the surrounding area will also be redeveloped, for example the market square in front of the building, and parts of the shopping centre 'Hoog Catharijne'. The redevelopment is based on a Masterplan which dates from 2003. Vredenburg is part of a greater reconstruction project of the Utrecht Central Train Station area. In the past years citizens, experts and stakeholders had the opportunity to deliver input for this Masterplan. The redevelopment of Vredenburg music hall is one of the first projects that will be implemented.¹⁰

⁹ Both organizations are forced to collaborate with Vredenburg, because their current (leasing) license is no longer granted. They need to find a new building, among other things, because of the noise nuisance they produce within the immediate surrounding area.

¹⁰ For almost 20 years, Utrecht local government, the national railway company, a retail company, and the owner of shopping centre 'Hoog Catharijne' were planning to redevelop this crucial area in the city. The project was kept at a standstill due to all sorts of political games and developments.. However, the current Masterplan (2003) has, until now, the most advanced concrete plans and mutual collaboration, which is seen as promising.

The stakeholders

The participation and support among stakeholders with regard to the new design of this building and its square is investigated. Because Vredenburg is located in the inner city, many stakeholders have a stake in the redevelopment of Vredenburg. The list of stakeholders (Figure 3) shows a great variety; from little shop owners, citizen associations, to cultural organizations and CoriÓ; the owner of the largest shopping center in The Netherlands. It also shows that only two governmental organizations are involved: *Project Organization of the Station Area (POS)* and *Vredenburg* as a department of Utrecht local government. The POS manages the station area project. This is a very complex task because it has a long history and consists of long-term plans that will affect Utrecht as a whole. There is a lot at stake for public and private organizations. The POS has a heavy duty to manage the different projects and to meet the expectations of the major partners and diverse stakeholders. Vredenburg, as a department of Utrecht local government, is responsible for the current exploitation of the building and the cultural events that they schedule. Comparing to other governmental departments, Vredenburg has a relatively autonomous role.

Figure 3: Three types of stakeholders in the redevelopment of music hall Vredenburg

Type I	Type II	Type III
Interest association shopping center Hoog Catharijne	Market place holders association	<i>Project Organization Station Area (POS)</i>
Vendex KBB, department store (head office)	Department store <i>De Bijenkorf</i>	<i>Music hall Vredenburg</i>
Center for the homeless in shopping center Hoog Catharijne	Victor Consael pancake restaurant	Cori6, owner of shopping center Hoog Catharijne
Police, location: Hoog Catharijne	U-stal, bicycle shed	Jazz venue Utrecht
Shop Association Utrecht Center	Fish shop	Tivoli, pop venue
Shops and residents associations Grachtenstegen	Shop owners Vredenburg North	
Quality association Mariaplaats		
Residents associations center project (BOCP)		
Chamber of Commerce		
Utrecht Public Transport Company		
Sounding board Station area,		
Utrecht Regional Management		
District council inner city		
Hotel and catering industry, Utrecht department		
Committee district C		

When there is a lot at stake, people are willing to participate. This could be one of the explanations as to why so many (24 stakeholders and two departments of Utrecht local government) stakeholders are involved. This is not distinctive of this particular project; it is common to other projects as well. Spit et al. (2002:105) argue that a classification of types of stakeholders is relevant. The reason is that, during the planning process, it must be decided which stakeholders will or will not be actively involved in the process. A level of selection seems to be inevitable. Stakeholders are typified as follows. Type I stakeholders are organizations and associations that have indirect or direct interest *with* the issue. These are in this case representatives of: shopkeeper and resident associations, police, chamber of commerce, social organizations

and others. Although they have a stake in the project, these stakeholders are not located in the Vredenburg area, but in the immediate surrounding areas. Type II stakeholders are organizations and associations that have direct, mostly a business interest *in* the issue. These are companies who are working in the Vredenburg area, such as the market place association and the Vredenburg Noord shop owners association, and companies that are situated on the Vredenburg Square. Type III stakeholders are organizations and associations that have a direct business interest with regard to *the solutions* of the problem, or issue. These are the involved cultural organizations Tivoli, SJU, and Vredenburg, Corió, and the project organization Station area. Type III stakeholders have more at stake than type II stakeholders. Type II stakeholders have more at stake than type I stakeholders. I will use these types of stakeholders in the further analysis of this case.

The ladder of participation

The POS organized the participation for the redevelopment of Vredenburg (and broader, for the Station Area as a whole).¹¹ They have been creating different opportunities for stakeholders to participate, for instance discussions, city debates, and expert meetings. They also created an information point in which stakeholders could get information about the plans and its procedures. In September 2003, every Utrecht stakeholders could have their say about the new design of the music hall during the 'inspraakronde.' [participation round]¹² Their 62 reactions are clustered in a report (Utrecht, 2004).

To determine the level of participation I will use the five core elements.

¹¹ For example, in May 2002 the POS organized a referendum with regard to the whole (train) station area. Music hall Vredenburg was also part of the choice. Voters could chose to demolish the current building and rebuild it in another area, or redevelop the current building.

¹² These were formal reactions to the plans.

1. *In what policy phase are stakeholders involved?* Based on the document analysis of policy documents and interviews, one could say that all stakeholders had the opportunity to participate in a fairly early phase. Unsurprisingly, some stakeholders had a bigger say than others.
2. *Who defines the problem?* Because of the long history of the project, it is not quite clear who exactly defined the problem. Interviews with stakeholders show that stakeholders who had a direct link with the policy plan (type III stakeholders) were particularly able to define the problem. Interviews with shop associations, citizen associations, POS, Vredenburg and others show that the POS often preselected information. They justified this by saying that a selection had to be made, but this created suspicion especially among citizens and shop associations. Implicitly, many choices were made.
3. *Who defined the juridical or economical preconditions?* As 10% owner of the current Vredenburg building, and 87% owner of the surrounded area, Corió had a strategic position. Together with Utrecht local government they owned the area and the building. The economical preconditions were mainly defined by ownership. Also juridical preconditions played a role; especially environmental guidelines (noise pollution, shadow of the future building, wind).
4. *Who defines the solutions?* The interviews with (for instance) Corió, Vredenburg and the POS show that Corió, pop venue Tivoli and Jazz venue SJU had access to talk and think about a possible new design for the building and its surroundings. Other stakeholders saw the design in a later phase (cf. point one).
5. *Who takes the final decision?* This element is crucial within a participatory policy-making process, because it is responsible for the success or failure of the entire participation process. It often refers

to the influence that stakeholders can have on the input or the output of the policy process.

These five core elements in the Vredenburg case are quite ambiguous to measure the specific level of participatory policy-making. It seems as if the great variety of stakeholders (and stakes) make things unclear. However, a sharper picture can be presented when we divide the case into three arenas of stakeholders around clear stakes in the project.¹³

These are:

- Arena A: the *collaboration between the three cultural organizations; concert hall Vredenburg, pop venue Tivoli and Jazz association SJU*, which will exploit the future music hall Vredenburg.
- Arena B: the *collaboration between Coriό and the POS*, which is aiming at issues such as money, ownership of square meters, property and design.
- Arena C: the *other stakeholders*, which are aiming at diverse stakes and trying to influence the policy process.

When we relate these arenas to the core elements of the level of participatory policy-making, it shows that arena A and B have a much more intensive relationship with (departments of) Utrecht local government than arena C. Based on the interviews and the document analysis, it was clear that arena C had less influence on decision with regard to the policy process or substantial input. Although Utrecht local government asked their input in an early phase, stakeholders in arena C, were largely bound to preconditions of the local government, had relatively little influence on the definition of the problem or its solution. This means that their position on the ladder of participation is

¹³ An arena is a selection of stakeholders in a clearly demarcated case which operates relative intensively together and relatively independently from other stakeholders around a clear defined part of the whole case.

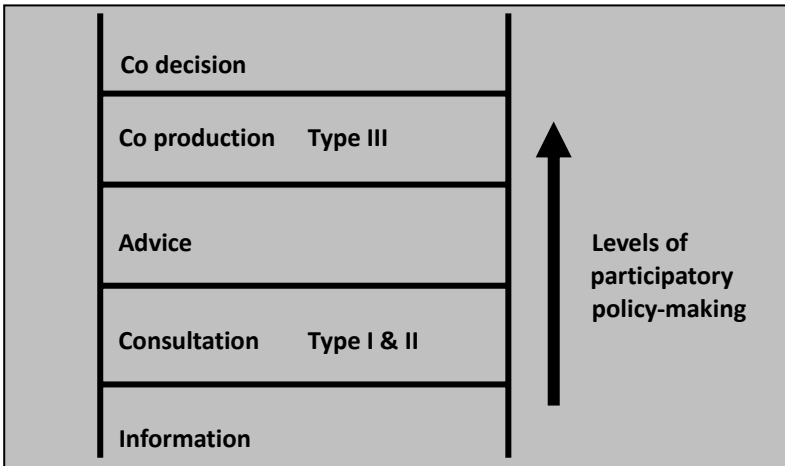
consultation (Figure 4). Although arena A and B were also involved in an early phase, they had more influence on the agenda. They were intensively involved in the process and had the opportunity to discuss the preconditions, the definition of the problem and its solutions. Arena B had more opportunities to deliver input than arena A, but both had more opportunities than arena C. On the whole, arena B and A scored *coproduction* as level of participatory policy-making. Figure 4 shows this.

Figure 4: Three arenas of stakeholders participate on different levels within the case

	<i>Information</i>	<i>Consultation</i>	<i>Advice</i>	<i>Co production</i>	<i>Co decision</i>
<i>Policy phase</i>			Arena C	Arena A&B	
<i>Preconditions</i>		Arena C		Arena A&B	
<i>Policy problem</i>		Arena C		Arena A&B	
<i>Solutions</i>		Arena C		Arena A&B	
<i>Final decision</i> <i>*Policy outputs</i>		Arena C		Arena A&B	
<i>*Policy input</i>		Arena C	Arena A	Arena B	

Two things are striking. Firstly, within this case, the Utrecht local government treats stakeholders differently. Secondly, and this is even more striking, when we combine Figure 4 and Figure 4, type III stakeholders are all operating at a higher level of participatory policy-making, while stakeholders types I and II only operate on the level of *consultation* (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Types of stakeholders on the ladder of participation



It looks as if Utrecht local government plays different games (of chess) in different arenas, and appears to assess (probably in an early phase) which stakeholder has an important position to interact with. The Utrecht local government seems to estimate in advance who's support it will need for the (participatory) policy-making process. Of course, this can also be (estimated) during the actual process. According to Utrecht local government, the support of stakeholders with a minor position of power is less needed. The estimation of the position of power by Utrecht local government appears to explain the position of stakeholders on the ladder of participatory policy-making.

Climbing the ladder of support

Considering the different levels of participatory policy-making in the Vredenburg case, it becomes very interesting to determine the level of support. Support among stakeholders in the Vredenburg project refers to the period (12 March – June 2004) after the new design of the building and its surroundings was presented on the 12th of March 2004. Based on the question that we investigate in this article, one would

expect that these different (arenas as) levels of participatory policy-making should lead to different levels of support.

Arena A: Tivoli, SJU and Vredenburg

To secure future activities, Tivoli and SJU are (almost) forced to collaborate with the music hall Vredenburg, because their operating license for the current location is no longer granted. Consequently, collaboration seems to be the best option for these organizations' survival. A critical attitude, or even an objection, will not always be helpful. Tivoli and SJU must be glad that they are allowed to collaborate and have influence in the redevelopment project. This dependency relation explains the positive support from Tivoli and SJU. In the interviews (including the one with Vredenburg) they were positive about the way they are involved and their influence in the process. Tivoli and SJU's support for the participatory policy-making process appeared to be positive as well as the highest of the three arenas.

Arena B: Corió and Project Organization Station Area (POS)

Generally, Corió was positive about the relationship with the POS and was more or less satisfied with the way the process was organized. Corió had close contact with the POS and was critical of the Utrecht local government, judging it as being often very sensitive during council meetings and during the presentation of the Masterplan of 2003. Nevertheless the support by Corió for the participatory policy process was positive.

Arena C: Other Stakeholders

Stakeholders in arena C showed a much more negative and skeptical picture with regard to support for the participatory policy-making process. An example would be the director of the department store 'De Bijenkorf', a store situated on the corner opposite to Vredenburg. He

was not at all satisfied about his participatory role: 'I do not experience participation, because I am not an equal partner'. He also said that he considered it more as non-participation rather than participation. It is 'the money' that determines the project. 'When I need some information, I have to find my own way'.¹⁴ Figure 6 shows a similar (negative) picture. The activities of arena C stakeholders are more (very) critical than supportive. Another noticeable thing is that whenever stakeholders undertook an activity, they did it only once or twice in the period after the plan was presented.

¹⁴ This interview was held on January 13th 2004 with the director of the department store 'De Bijenkorf'.

Figure 6: The ladder of protest and a supportive ladder for 'Arena C stakeholders'¹⁵

Activities which are focussed on Utrecht local government	Evaluation ¹⁶				
	Very critical	Critical	Neutral	Support	Very supportive
1. I phoned	A				
2. I wrote an e-mail	C				
3. I wrote a letter			A		
4. I have spoken to an officer	A,A	A,A,B,A,A	A,A,B		C
5. I hung up a poster					
6. I distributed leaflets					
7. I have put an advertisement in a local or regional newspaper		A			
8. I attended a meeting	A,B,C	A,A,B,A,BA,A	A	C	B
9. I organized a meeting		A			A
10. I have sent a letter to the local or regional newspaper					
11. I participated in a demonstration					
12. I have asked for an interview with the (deputy) Mayor				A	
13. I was interviewed by a local or regional newspaper	A,A				
14. I gave an interview on the radio	A	A			
15. I gave an interview on TV					
16. I presented a petition					
17. I organized a demonstration					
18. I took legal actions	A				
19. I participated in violent actions					
20. Other, namely.....				A	

¹⁵ This Table is only used for arena C (type I and II stakeholders), because the response of arena A and B is only based on one or two judgments and activities of stakeholders. Their 'story' behind their judgment or activities is of much more value. The N of the questionnaire was 23. Only type I and II stakeholders responded to the questionnaire. That is why the response is 54 percent (=13/24). In the interviews, I aimed to interview the stakeholders who did not respond to the questionnaire. There were five stakeholders who fit the stakeholder definition, but who did not consider themselves as such.

¹⁶ A. Once in the period 12 March 2004 – June 2004, B. Once a month, C. More than once a month, but less than once a week, D. Once a week, E. More than once a week, but less than once a day, F. Once a day.

In the interviews, these stakeholders considered the participatory policy-making process to be a fake process. Several of them, especially those who were unsuccessful in their lobby attempts, had experienced it as a joke or a hoax. They felt that what they said did not matter, and that the local government had already determined its policy and made all of the decisions. For example, the resident associations BOCP were not satisfied by the participatory policy-making process and the content of plans (see the following quote from an interview with a residential organization). They felt neglected.

‘It is much too symbolic. Look: you are welcomed in an open way. You get your time to tell your story. They (POS) are listening to you. But that is it. It could be that we have a bit of influence and push it into the right the direction, but that is not apparent. I would like that, because that would motivate me more for next times. Now, it discourages us,’ (Interview BOCP, 6 January 2004).

There are also stakeholders who are, on the contrary, positive about the participatory policy-making process. The owner of ‘Poffertjeskraam Victor Consael’ said that he and his wife have been little involved in the process, but they were satisfied with the policy outputs and the content. The Market place holders were, compared to many other respondents, the most successful. They achieved all of their objectives, including maintaining the market on the future Vredenburg Square. They were conversely not satisfied with the process. As the spokesman said in an interview (see the quote from an interview with a spokesman of the Market place holders):

‘Oh and participation, I checked it in the dictionary; it is to ‘take part in’ and ‘have a say in’. So, on Monday we went to the Project Organization Station area (POS), because they had invited

us. The deputy Mayor told us, in fifteen minutes, that we should leave the square within a year. So our participation lasted for fifteen minutes. I was beside myself. They friendly asked us to keep it silent until the next Thursday, because then the city council would discuss it. Well, we are very practical people, so we went from the POS (meeting) straight to the Utrecht Newspaper¹⁷. There, they would love this story. The next day, it was published and the story made the headlines. On the following Saturday, “mister deputy Mayor” approached me at my market stall. He said: “I am not pleased about this.” “But we are not pleased with you as well,” I said. “Let me be clear”. From that moment on, the contact became ten times better. First, we had to put him in the right place and we told him what we wanted. During the next city council meeting, the deputy Mayor was being criticized by some councilors. They asked him what he thought he was doing, informing us, the market people. Then suddenly, we received a lot more support(ers), especially from the opposition parties within the city council. The deputy Mayor was not happy at that time, but the communication became much better. [LdG: ‘Do you have another example, which shows that you are active and that you want to be taken seriously?’] ‘Usually, I record all e-mail addresses of the aldermen and all local councilors. We regularly bomb them with e-mails. These consist of letters in which we show our concerns. First, they (the politicians) started to say that the market had to leave the square. Then, there was a possibility that the market would stay in a modest way. After that, they thought that on six Saturdays per year we should give our place to other activities. Then, it was not clear if this would be done, next year. Every time, we

¹⁷ The distance between the POS and the office of the Utrecht Nieuwsblad (Utrecht regional paper) is approximately 300 meters.

have informed this matter to some newspaper or another. We often got a fast reaction to things we had said. Eventually, we achieved our goal; stay on the marketplace.' (...) 'We will continue, because it is all about who can pay and who will get something in return for that money? And when you are a stakeholder with not much money, you have to touch a tender spot. Anyway, I think that the deputy Mayors liked the attention he received in the media. It is sometimes nice to play with that'. (Interview held on 21 January 2004).

Conclusion

This article answered the following question: *Do higher levels of participation lead to higher levels of support among stakeholders?* We already concluded that within this case, arenas of stakeholders differ on the level of participatory policy-making. It shows that a higher level of participatory policy-making leads to a higher level of support. Remarkably, the two arenas within the case, as seen in Figure 4, have the same level of participatory policy-making, but have a different level of support. This difference in support must be explained through the fact that Utrecht local government and Coriό have a common history, which consists of low trust. Even now, such a historical scar has its effect on the current relationship, and influences the level of support negatively.

The Vredenburg case confirms the central assumption of this research. Yet we do have to make a critical remark. Stakeholders with a realization power are needed, such as Coriό. Whenever Utrecht local government does not make 'use' of it, the project cannot even be implemented. Utrecht local government also gives access to stakeholders who have a relatively weak position (such as market place holders (= type II). These do not have much financial resources or property, but have the power to

mobilize resistance or to delay or block the process. The local government seems to know which partners it needs. Especially, when these partners have realization power. This position of power of stakeholders and their dependency relation with the local government plays a major role in establishing the stakeholders' position on the ladder of participation. It was not only the actual participatory policy-making process that created the support among stakeholders, but also their *initial* position of power in relation to the Utrecht local government.

Discussion: dealing with expectations

This article showed the interaction between stakeholders and local government in the practice of participatory policy-making. A reliable guarantee to obtain support among stakeholders for participatory policy-making is to create realistic expectations among participants in the initial phase of the policy-making process by the local government. This must be done to prevent the rising of expectations among stakeholders, who at an early stage of a project show enthusiasm towards a government's proposal. At the end of the project, the results can be disappointing, or even dissatisfying. This could be a threat for important social values and local democracy.

When a local government regularly acts like this in such projects, stakeholders will be more and more discouraged to participate, because their raised expectations proved to be unrealistic. For this reason, local governments must be very careful when pretending to seek participatory policy-making. Therefore, it is not always necessary to strive to the highest level of participation, if only to prevent rising expectations. Gaining support among stakeholders in participatory policy-making is a continuous reflection on climbing up or falling down the ladders.

Where is the human factor?

This study clearly highlighted the interaction on the institutional level. Because of this institutional focus, the personal behavior and qualities of individuals, as broader elements of participation, are underexposed in this article. However, during the research I observed certain persons to have competences and skills, which stimulated a click between people. This appears to be important to build a kind of participatory culture and seems to be stimulating for the participation process. Unfortunately, in this study, I found not enough empirical evidence to formulate academic conclusions about this, because it requires another research design. So, for now it is only a hunch. Nevertheless, in future research it would be interesting to study not only the participatory behaviour on the organisational or institutional level, but also to add a research approach in which the human factor is highlighted. Often, this human factor is underestimated or only briefly taken into account in institutional approaches. More empirical research to this must be done. Such a study should consider a more interpretive research design.

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Appendix One

Figure 7: A protest and support ladder to measure the level of support

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>
What do stakeholders think? What is their judgment	<p><i>Dissatisfied</i></p> <p>Stakeholders are dissatisfied with regard to (elements) of the participatory policy.</p>	<p><i>Satisfied</i></p> <p>Stakeholders are satisfied with regard to (elements) of the participatory policy.</p>
What activities do stakeholders do to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction?	<p><i>Protest ladder</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protest phone call 2. Protest e-mail 3. Protest letter 4. Protest through a conversation with a civil servant 5. Poster to protest 6. Distribute flyers to protest 7. Put an advertisement in a local or regional newspaper to protest 8. Attend a meeting to protest 9. Organize a meeting to protest 10. Place a letter in a local or regional newspaper to protest 11. Walk in a demonstration to protest 12. Protest visit: 'I want to speak to the (Deputy) Mayor' 13. Protest interview in the newspaper 14. Protest interview on the radio 15. Protest interview on the regional television 16. Petition to protest 17. Organize a demonstration to protest 18. Legal procedures to protest (appeal, apply for an injunction) 19. Violent protest 20. Other, namely... 	<p><i>Support ladder</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Phone call to support 2. E-mail to support 3. Supportive letter 4. Oral compliment to a civil servant 5. Poster to support 6. Distribute flyers to support 7. Put an advertisement in a local or regional newspaper to support 8. Attend a meeting to support 9. Organize a meeting to support 10. Place a letter in a local or regional newspaper to support 11. Walk in a demonstration to support 12. Support visit: 'I want to speak to the (Deputy) Mayor' 13. Support interview in the newspaper 14. Support interview on the radio 15. Support interview on the (regional) television 16. Petition to support 17. Organize a demonstration to support 18. Legal procedures to support (appeal, apply for an injunction) 19. Violent support 20. Other, namely...