

Rebuilding Roombeek-West

An institutional analysis of interactive governance in the context of a representative democracy

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Introduction and research questions

On May 13th 2000 a major explosion in a fireworks storage demolished an entire urban area called 'Roombeek' in the city of Enschede.¹ Twenty-two residents were killed, hundreds were injured, well over 1500 residents were displaced because their homes were demolished and well over 200 firms were forced to relocate their enterprise. Already in the first weeks after the disaster a clear consensus emerged on the principle that in the redevelopment of the destructed area, the victims should be allowed 'maximum feasible participation' in the planning process. In this paper we will provide an institutional analysis in order to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of this participatory or interactive mode of governance in the context of the Dutch representative democratic system of local government .

The interactive approach to planning the (re)development of urban neighbourhoods is not typical for Enschede. The closing decade of the 20th century witnessed a rise of interactive modes of governance throughout the Western world. Especially at the local level, where direct contacts between citizens and government are relatively easy to arrange, these (new) forms of governance have taken firm root. Interactive governance refers to modes of public decision-making in which governments, more or less generously, allow for *direct participation* of interested citizens and other *stakeholders* (social organisations, semi-public organisations and other governments).

This paper aims at an exploration of the effects of interactive governance in the context of the traditional institutions of local democracy in the Netherlands. The rebuilding of Roombeek-West will be used as a case-study to explore some of the problems of interactive governance from a democratic perspective. Our main question will be: *what are from a democratic perspective the major problems of the institutions designed for the interactive governance in the Enschede case.*

Because the new interactive institutions are embedded in the traditional democratic institutions of Dutch local government we will start with a sketch of the institutions of representative democracy at the local level and the newly added interactive institutions. This will provide the basis for a subsequent evaluation of the democratic quality of the institutions of this particular combination of interactive and representative democracy. Therefore our general question can be differentiated into three more specific questions:

1. What are, from a democratic perspective, the main characteristics of the traditional institutions of local representative democracy?
2. What are, from a democratic perspective, the main characteristics of the institutions of interactive governance for the planning process of the redevelopment of Roombeek-West?
3. What are, from a democratic perspective, the major problems of the institutional design for the planning process of Roombeek-West?

Two additional comments should be made pertaining to these questions. First, all questions refer to 'a democratic perspective'. Of course there is a multitude of such perspectives. This implies we have to be explicit about the one(s) we use. Secondly, the process of rebuilding Roombeek-West is only just under way. Many institutions are still evolving, and many of the effects of

¹ Enschede is a city of 150,000 inhabitants in the Eastern part of the Netherlands, close to the German border.

institutions will probably only become apparent over time. Therefore many of our conclusions are preliminary and tentative.

This paper is the result of a research project commissioned by the municipality of Enschede to monitor the interactive policy-making process. The authors of this paper are members of the research group monitoring the process.² Given the specific context of this project, and based on an explicit request by the municipality, we have assumed the combined role of researcher and advisor. In our advisory role we have been asked to provide invited and uninvited advice on issues pertaining to participation of the victims. In the project we use a combination of methods: an analysis of written documents, personal interviews with key actors, participant observation of all sorts of meetings in participatory sessions and other relevant decision arena's, and a panel study among a sample of 700 (former) residents of Roombeek-West. This paper is essentially based on a documentary analysis, complemented by some interviews and observations.

Before we are able to turn to the first and the second question we will first have to outline our conceptual framework. Since for the analyses we also need a normative perspective, the normative assumptions of two models of democracy are explicated in the section thereafter. We then start answering the questions themselves.

² The other members of our research team are Oscar van Heffen and Debby Kok. We are grateful for their share in our joint work.

Conceptual framework

An analysis of our research questions presupposes a conceptual framework as a tool for the description of institutional arrangements and political practices. Elinor Ostrom's *Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework* provides such a tool. The IAD framework combines actor-centred and institution-centred approaches to the analysis of policy-making processes. In this respect it is related to e.g. the Scharpf/Mayntz's actor-centred institutionalism (e.g. Scharpf 1997).

In this section we will outline the major elements of the framework and provide some suggestions for conceptualisation and operationalisation.

The central unit of analysis in the IAD framework is the 'action arena'. Action arenas include an 'action situation' and the actors involved in that situation. The action arena can be represented schematically as in Figure 1 (Ostrom et al., 1994: 28-29).

AN ACTION ARENA IS COMPOSED OF

- * An action situation involving
 - Participants in
 - Positions who must decide among diverse
 - Action in the light of the
 - Information they possess about how actions are
 - Linked to potential
 - Outcomes and the
 - Costs and Benefits assigned to actions and outcomes
 - * Actors, the participants in Action Situations who have
 - Preferences
 - Information-processing capabilities
 - Selection Criteria, and
 - Resources
-

Figure 1 The action arena

Source: Ostrom et al., 1994: 29

Ostrom provides a short explanation for each of these elements, which we will quote here (idem: 29-33). The action situation consists of seven elements:

1. "The first element of an action situation includes actors who have become participants in a situation [...];
2. Positions are simply place holders to associate participants with an authorized set of actions (linked to outcomes) in a process. Examples of positions include first movers, bosses, employees, monitors, voters, elected representatives [...];
3. The third element is the set of actions that participants in particular position can take at different stages of a process (or, nodes in a decision tree) [...];
4. The fourth element is the outcomes that participants can potentially affect through their actions [...];
5. The fifth element of an action situation is the set of functions that map participants (and/or random action) at decision nodes into intermediate or final outcomes [...];

6. Closely allied to the type of information function is the sixth element - the set of information available to a participant in a position at a stage in process. Many situations generate only incomplete information because of the physical relationships involved or because they preclude making all information available [...];
7. The seventh element is the set of payoffs that assign benefits and costs to actions and outcomes [...].”

For the explanation of the behaviour of actors (either individual or composite actors; for further distinctions: Scharpf 1997: 52-58), Ostrom distinguishes four attributes of actors:

1. “the preference evaluation that actors assign to potential actions and outcomes;
2. the way actors acquire, process, retain and use knowledge contingencies and information;
3. the selection criteria actors use for deciding upon a particular course of action; and
4. the resources that an actor brings into a situation.” (idem: 33-35).

The action arena is not situated in an analytical vacuum, it is part of an institutional context: society. Ostrom et al. (idem: 37) distinguish three factors that influence this arena: the rules individuals use to order their relationships, the attributes of a physical world, and the attributes of the community. In figure 2 this is summarized graphically.

Action Arena

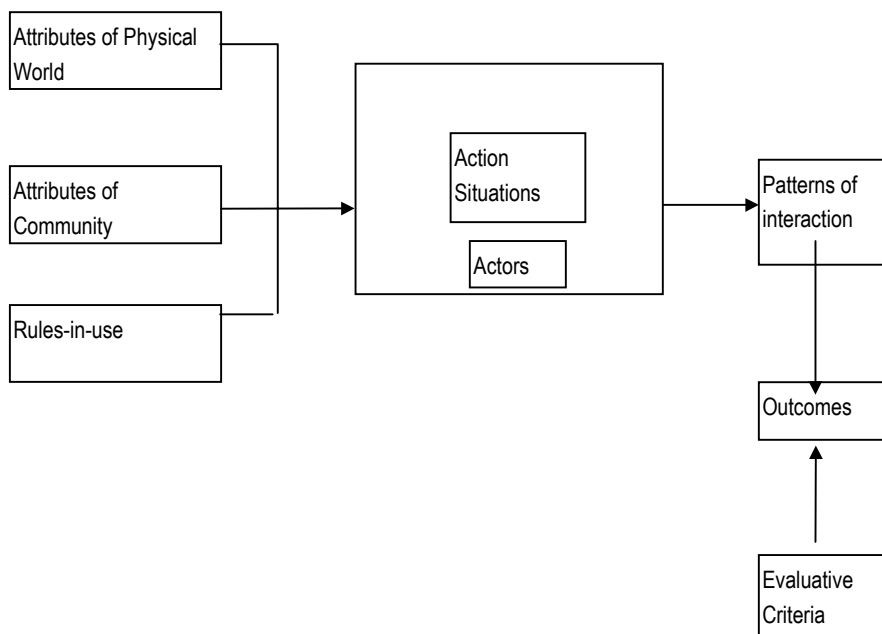


Figure 2 The action arena

Source: Ostrom et al., 1994: 37

Subsequently Ostrom provides the concepts to be used in describing the (institutional) rules. The seven types of rules she distinguishes are linked to the seven constitutive elements of the action situation.

- Position rules establish positions, assign participants to positions, and define who has control over tenure in a position;
- Boundary rules set the entry, exit, and domain conditions for individual participants;

- Authority rules specify which set of actions is assigned to which position at each node of a decision tree;
- Aggregation rules specify the transformation function to be used at a particular node, to map actions into intermediate or final outcomes;
- Scope rules specify the set of outcomes that may be affected, including whether outcomes are intermediate or final;
- Information rules specify the information available to each position at a decision node;
- Payoff rules specify how benefits and costs are required, permitted, or forbidden in relation to players, based on the full set of actions taken and outcomes reached.

As the formulation of these rules is still rather abstract, we would like to present the following suggestions for operationalisation:

Rules	operationalisation and manifestation
Position	<p>Prescribe which positions are to be distinguished in a particular (sub-)arena. For example: councillor, alderman, chairman, member of a party group; spokesman for the party group, citizen, organizational representative, etc. These rules define positions, whereas other types of rules link these positions to responsibilities, formal powers, weights in decision making etc. Apart from a 'name' these rules provide actors with an identity.</p> <p><i>Manifestation: There is/are ... (position)</i></p>
Boundary	<p>Prescribe how the various positions in an arena become occupied. For example: a councillor will be chosen through a four-annual municipal election. An alderman is chosen by and from among the councillors. The mayor is appointed by central government et cetera.</p> <p>On the one hand these rules determine the accessibility of various positions and thereby the openness of an arena. On the other hand, these rules also determine the identity of particular positions (e.g. by providing the basis for normative role expectations). These identities are of course also determined by the contents of other types of rules that are linked to particular positions. Councillors, for example, have particular prerogatives because they are directly elected popular representatives. Interested parties have a right of say precisely because they hold a particular stake in an issue; experts are being consulted on particular issues on the basis of their specific expertise et cetera.</p> <p><i>Manifestation: Actors become ... (position) by ... (condition/procedure)</i></p>
Authority	<p>Prescribe the allocation of rights and obligations for every position. These rules determine the means available for a position holder to perform his duties (e.g. chairman, secretary, process manager) and defines the (legitimate) behavioural alternatives that are open to an actor.</p> <p><i>Manifestation: If .. (condition), ... (position), operator (should or is allowed to), ... (behaviour)</i></p>
Scope	<p>Prescribe the possible outcomes of decision making in a particular arena. The exchange of information and preliminary consultations in a committee meeting, is of a different nature than the final decisions being made in the plenary council meeting, and different again from a decision in the court of mayor and aldermen et cetera. These rules are also important because they provide insight in the relations between various sub-arenas: in a committee meeting preliminary positions are being taken by spokesmen for the different party groups but the final decision is preserved to the meeting of the plenary council. An agreement in principle with an aldermen is not a formal decision by the court of mayor and aldermen nor a formal decision by the council, unless this power has explicitly</p>

	<p>been delegated to this official.</p> <p><i>Manifestation: The scope of ...(arena) is ...(possible outcome)</i></p>
Aggregation	<p>Prescribe how (collective) decisions and other outcomes in an arena are being made on the basis of the contributions of different position holders. For every outcome the realisation is prescribed by means of this type of rules. Because there is a variety of possible outcomes, there is also a pluriformity of aggregation rules: decisions are made by unanimity, simple or qualified majority rule; through weighted voting systems. But there may also be other 'outcomes' e.g. committee reports in which it may be prescribed that it contains either a verbatim report of the stance taken by every actor or merely a summary of the majority position.</p> <p><i>Manifestation: ... (outcome) is obtained by ...(aggregation mechanism)</i></p>
Information	<p>Prescribe which information is available to the various position holders; thereby it is also prescribed how various incumbents should relate to one another in terms of providing and granting access to information. These rules also pertain to the public nature of meetings and the requirement to provide explicit and written justification for decisions.</p> <p><i>Manifestation: as rights and obligations (like authority rules; but now pertaining to information or to rules of conduct relevant for the arena in its relations with third parties).</i></p>
Pay-off	<p>Prescriptions regarding:</p> <p>the costs and benefits generated in the arena itself (e.g. the municipality pays for the meeting costs; council members receive a reimbursement of expenses etc..)</p> <p>the costs and benefits that are part of an outcome (for example: injured parties should receive adequate compensation; or the costs will be distributed on a per capita, according to everyone's ability to pay or on the basis of a benefit principle).</p> <p>-The consequences of decisions (for example: councillors are or are not personally liable for the financial implications of council decisions).</p> <p><i>Manifestation: a specification (per position or per arena) of costs and benefits or of compensations or required contributions.</i></p>

Normative criteria of democracy

In this paper we aim to explore some of the democratic implications of institutions of interactive governance. This task implies that we will have to develop criteria to assess these implications. Definitions of democracy are manifold. This reflects the contested nature of the concept of democracy. For different people democracy means very different things. One of the dimensions underlying this variety of concepts of democracy is based on the distinction between direct and indirect democracy. *Direct* or *participatory democracy* is based on the normative assumption that citizens should have *equal opportunities* to participate in the making of major political decisions and that participants should have *equal influence* over the outcome of this process

In terms of the rules this a.o. implies that:

- *position rules* define the position of ‘citizen participants’³
- *boundary rules* allow access to the position of ‘citizen participants’ to all (adult) individuals.
- *authority rules* guarantee equal rights and obligations for ‘citizen participants’ (the right to participate and to express one’s opinion).
- *information rules* ensure that all ‘citizen participants’ shall have adequate and free access to all relevant information for making a sound collective decision (including adequate information about ‘the rules of the game’).
- *aggregation rules* imply that ‘citizen participants’ have an equal weight in the collective decision.
- *scope rules* imply that the collective decision made by ‘citizen participants’ is binding upon other position holders and reduces the scope of subsequent arenas.
- *pay-off rules* imply that there is no a priori definition of what constitutes a ‘just’ or an ‘unjust’ division of costs and benefits: as long as the other rules ensure equal opportunity and equal influence any division of payoffs will provide an acceptable outcome (procedural justice). This implies that costs and benefits are not fixed in advance, but open to decision (and thus part of the outcome).

Of course, this formulation is ideal typical. Actual institutions will only meet these requirements to a limited extent. Some of these institutions, however, may fall further short than others. In our evaluation of the procedures employed in the Roombeek-West case, we will focus on these direct democratic criteria. In our project we are primarily interested in the extent to which the objective of the municipality to offer this group adequate participatory opportunities to influence the decisions on the development of their neighbourhood, will be achieved.

Nevertheless the interactive arenas are embedded in what remains an essentially representative democracy. The essence of indirect or *representative democracy* is that the influence of citizens over policies should primarily (or even solely) be indirect: the people should have influence over the selection of representatives who should participate in public decision-making ‘on their behalf’. Advocates of indirect democracy

³ Of course in practice, it is also conceivable that different types of participant positions are being defined (e.g. collective and individual participants). For the sake of simplicity, in this finger exercise, we will assume that this is not the case. This assumption reflects the uneasiness of direct democrats when it comes down to dealing with collective interests (cf. Rousseau’s theory of direct participatory democracy)

disagree on the appropriate meaning of 'on their behalf'⁴, but that need not bother us here. Irrespective of the precise meaning theorists of indirect democracy attach to the term 'on their behalf', all these scholars agree that the assembly of directly elected representatives should have a major or a supreme influence in the policy-making process. The Dutch constitution is of the latter type, since it is based on the normative assumption that the elected council should be the head of local government (principle of monism). For the sake of simplicity, we take this monistic variant of representative local government as a normative frame of reference. This implies a set of rules that clearly establish the political primacy of the elected council:

- *position rules* define the position of 'councillors', as the only democratic representatives of the people.
- *boundary rules* allow access to the position of 'candidates for councillor' to all (adult) individuals, and specify that direct free and equal elections will be decisive for who is elected to be 'councillor'.
- *authority rules* guarantee equal rights and obligations for 'councillors' (the right to participate, vote and to express one's own interpretation of one's political mandate provided by the electorate).
- *information rules* ensure that all 'councillors' shall have adequate and free access to all relevant information for making a sound collective decision (including adequate information of 'the rules of the game') and that actors outside the arena will be informed (public motivation of collective decisions).
- *aggregation rules* imply that 'councillors' have an equal weight in the collective decision and that (in most cases) a simple majority ensures a decision of the council.
- *scope rules* imply that the collective decision made by 'councillors' is binding upon other position holders and reduces the scope of preceding and subsequent arenas (no final collective decision can be made in arenas preceding the council, and subsequent arenas can't impair the decision).
- *Pay-off rules* imply that cost and benefits are not fixed in advance (are part of the outcome) and are distributed in a way that maximises collective welfare, for the council has to represent the interests of all the citizens.

This latter set of *normative criteria* only refers to the position of the council and its members. In order to secure the normative primacy of the council the Dutch constitution and the Municipal Law provide many additional rules that are relevant for the position of the council and its members in the traditional decision-making process. Therefore the above formulation is by no means a full account of the rules that are meant to establish the council's primacy in municipal government. In the next section we will discuss the subsidiary rules that are necessary to give a full answer to our first research question: *What are, from a democratic perspective, the main characteristics of the traditional institutions of local representative democracy?* Without a clear understanding of these traditional arenas it will be impossible to understand and evaluate the implications of the complementary institutional provisions for direct citizen participation.

⁴ These disagreement lies at the heart of the main normative theories of political representation (e.g. the liberal democratic theory of Edmund Burke and the theory of responsible party government; see Thomassen 1991 for an overview).

Traditional representative institutions as a configuration of arenas

At the end of the previous section we have described the main constitutional rules that are intended to establish the primacy of the municipal council, as it is considered to be desirable from a representative democratic point of view. According to this set of rules there is little doubt that the primary arena in local government should be the municipal council. But in addition to this primary arena municipal government is characterised by a multitude of other action situations and actors that are involved in such situations. Rather than one arena there is a configuration of arenas. How are we to identify action arenas? The problems in doing this closely resemble the issues system analysis faces in identifying social systems. For our purposes it is especially relevant to consider how to deal with more refined subdivisions in the policymaking process once a primary arena has been defined?⁵

Even though in a formal sense there is one primary arena (the council being the head of local government; at least in the Dutch case) one might have identified a variety of arguably relevant interaction sets: preliminary politico-administrative consultations, decision-making in the court of mayor and aldermen, committee meetings, meetings of party groups, and informal consultations between council members and aldermen and between coalition parties. Each of these might possibly be considered as a sub-arena. And since several of these sets of interactions are characterized by a specific set of rules (that are different from the rules that pertain to the primary council arena, consider for example the rules of public deliberation, and rules of access) it may be worthwhile to consider them as a (sub-) arena in their own right.

Of course, the issue of differentiation is one of choosing the proper level of abstraction; in our case the appropriate level for a study of interactive governance and representative democracy. On the one hand we want to keep our analysis well-organised. This suggests an analysis at a rather high level of abstraction. On the other hand, our analysis should preferably be unambiguous and should also provide us with clear insight in the interactions in the primary arena. Both these considerations indicate the necessity of an analysis at multiple levels: the level of the primary arena and a prior analysis of sub-arenas. A description of multiple sub-arenas in a setting where different rule configurations may apply for different sets of interactions within a primary arena. In doing this, however, we should take care to include those rules that link the outcomes of the decision outputs of the various sub-arenas. In addition to descriptive convenience, the analysis of 'nested

⁵ Ostrom underscores the relevance of such issues but does not provide us with very clear guidelines on how to deal with such problems. Two quotes clearly demonstrate this point: First: "*The term action situation refers to the social space where individuals interact, exchange goods and services, engage in appropriation and provision activities, solve problems, dominate one another, or fight. In field settings, it is hard to tell where one situation ends and another begins. Life continues in almost a seamless web as fishers move from home to a harbor to a nearby fishing grounds and then to a market where the day's haul is sold. The observer who wants to analyze the recurrent structure of situations must, however, find ways of separating one situation from another for the purpose of analysis. Further, individuals who participate in many situations must also know the difference among them. The actions that can be taken on the fishing grounds are not the same as those that can be taken on the market. An individual who is mixed up about what situation he or she is in is not considered to be competent*" (Ostrom et al, 1994: 28). Second: "*While the concept of a "single" arena may include large numbers of participants and complex chains of action, most of social reality is composed of multiple arenas linked sequentially or simultaneously*" (p. 45).

games' will also provide better insight in the course of decision making processes (Tsebelis 1990).

With these considerations, in mind we have identified , the following minimal set of relevant arenas:⁶

1. An arena in which administrative staff and the alderman that is primarily responsible for a policy develop a policy proposal (Politico-Administrative preparation).
2. An arena in which the court of the mayor and alderman decide on a policy proposal that is to be send to the council (CMA).
3. A number of arenas in which the council members of each political party decide on their support for the policy proposal (Party group meetings).
4. One or a number of arenas in which specialised council members of different parties discuss the policy proposal and prepare an advice to the plenary council meeting (Committee meetings).
5. An arena in which the council in plenary decides on the policy proposal (Council meeting).

An important reason for the selection of these arenas is that they are all characterised by a set of more or less clearly identifiable institutional rules. Moreover, these sets of rules also control the relations between these various arenas. In Table 2 we have identified the rules for each consecutive arena. This table demonstrates the crucial role that authority and scope rules play in establishing the relations between the various arenas. On the one hand, scope rules determine the sequence of the various stages in the decision-making process: which decisions are made at each successive stage and what should happen next. On the other hand, authority rules not only determine the rights of various actors but they also set obligations. These obligations typically establish substantive linkages between the decisions reached in various arenas. For example a member of a party group is generally supposed to represent the views of his/her party group (doctrine of party discipline) on a proposal when he/she acts as party spokesman in a committee.

The main conclusion from this analysis is that this configuration of arenas in the traditional representative democratic system provides a carefully institutionalised process. In the course of this process an initial proposal is being gradually transformed into a binding collective decision. In every subsequent arena additional office holders are being committed to the proposal. This is reflected in the restrictions on the opinions member's can legitimately express in subsequent arenas (authority rules). This conversion process is also reflected in the scope rules, that indicate that an initial policy proposal is transformed into a proposal to the court of mayor and aldermen, a proposal of the board to the council, that has support among party groups and is endorsed by the sectoral committee, and is sanctioned by a majority decision decided upon in the council meeting. These explicit scope rules make it unequivocally clear for all actors involved that a collectively binding decision is reached no sooner than the final decision by the council meeting has been made.

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⁶ This set corresponds to the arenas Denters et al have identified in their empirical study of municipal decision-making in Dutch municipal government (Denters et al 2000).

a proposal of the board to the council, that has support among party groups and is endorsed by the sectoral committee, and is sanctioned by a majority decision decided upon in the council meeting. These explicit scope rules make it unequivocally clear for all actors involved that a collectively binding decision is reached no sooner than the final decision by the council meeting has been made.

Arena	Position rules	Boundary rules	Authority rules	Scope rules	Aggregation rules	Information rules ⁷
Politico-Administrative Preparation (PAP)	define the positions of administrators in charge of writing the proposal, administrators who are to be heard on the proposal and the alderman primary responsible.	access to the positions of administrators on the basis of appointment and of alderman via election by the council (portfolios allocated when aldermen take office).	Administrators have the right to express 'professional' opinion and alderman to express their 'political' opinions.	the result is a <i>proposal</i> , supported by the alderman and the administration, that has to be discussed in a subsequent CMA meeting.	the opinions of administrative staff do count as relevant, but ultimately the alderman decides. Coordination between different administrative departments is normally negative. (<i>parafencultuur</i>)	all participants shall have adequate and free access to all relevant information. Information will not be available outside the arena
Court Mayor & Aldermen (CMA)	define the positions of 'members of the court'	access to the positions of members by appointment (mayor) and of alderman by election by the council.	Members have the right to express their opinions, only the PAP alderman is initially committed to defend the PAP proposal.	result is <i>proposal</i> , supported by CMA to be discussed in a subsequent CM. In case of negative decision a new proposal is to be developed in PAP.	CMA 'members' have an equal weight in the collective decision; a simple majority is sufficient for a CMA decision. Mayor's vote breaks ties.	all participants shall have adequate and free access to all relevant information. Information will not be available outside the arena.
Party Group Meetings (PGM)	define the position of 'party group member'.	access to PGM is determined by rules on party membership and electoral laws. Also open to alderman.	Members have the right to express opinions (bounded by party platform and for majority coalition agreement). Aldermen are supposed to defend CMA proposal (except for a proviso)	the result is <i>political support</i> for (or rejection or proposed amendments) the proposal, that is to be discussed in SCM and CM.	'members' have an equal weight in the decision and that a simple majority ensures a decision on the support for the proposal.	all participants shall have adequate and free access to all relevant information. Information will not be available outside the arena.
Sectoral Committee Meeting (SCM)	define the committees and position of 'committee members'	access is open to selected council members (nominated by their party group); responsible alderman and sometimes also external members	Members have the right to express opinions (though councillors bounded by decision of PGM) Aldermen are supposed to defend CMA proposal (except for a proviso)	the result is an authoritative advice to the CM indicating support (or rejection or proposed amendments).	members express their opinions, implicit weighting takes place by the number of votes in the council they 'represent'.	all participants shall have adequate and free access to all relevant information. Information will be available to the CM and the public
Council meeting (CM)	For the relevant entries here please refer to the information provided in the previous section					

⁷ The *Pay-off rule* that 'cost and benefits are not fixed in advance (are part of the outcome) and are distributed in a way that maximises collective welfare', is the same for all arena's and is for the sake of simplicity not included in this table.

Interactive arenas in Roombeek-West

After the description of 'traditional' arenas of representative democracy we will now turn to our second research question: What are, from a democratic perspective, the main characteristics of the institutions of interactive governance for the planning process of the redevelopment of Roombeek-West?

The institutional structure of this 'participation process' and its links to other arenas will be described in this section. We will concentrate on the first phase of the process, which will result (in the fall of 2001) in a formal decision of the municipal council on a general plan for rebuilding the area. It should be remembered that what is discussed in this paper is only the first round of the planning process. The plan to be developed in this round will after being accepted by the municipal council, provide the basis for more detailed plans and the subsequent realisation of these plans.

Participation in a configuration of arenas

In order to facilitate 'maximum feasible participation' by the numerous victims of the explosion, the participation process was designed as a set of arena's, each geared towards the needs of different groups. We will first describe these participation arena's, followed by a description of the other arenas that provide the institutional framework for the first phase of the programme's development.

Participation arenas

The first phase comprises of two stages: in February/March 2001 an open inventory of opinions on rebuilding the area was made; and in June 2001 participants will be able to express their opinions on the first draft of the redevelopment programme.

First stage

The core of the first stage was a series of eight sessions with former residents of different areas in Roombeek and its immediate surroundings. For these sessions the (former) residential location served as criterion for inclusion (boundary rule). Other 'arena's' were open to participants from the entire city (anyone could drop his ideas in ID-boxes that were placed all over the city) or open to anyone connected to the Internet and able to understand Dutch (an internet-site was constructed where anyone could express his or her opinions). The latter 'arena's', however, offered no opportunities for interaction between participants: they just provided a channel to express people's opinions.

In addition to these locality-based arena's, special sessions were organised for functional groups. Workshops were organised for schoolchildren, and for migrants from different ethnical backgrounds, as well as for artists (who were a characteristic segment of the population of Roombeek), entrepreneurs and older people.

In terms of the institutional rules these arenas can be described as ones that gave an open access to opportunities for participation and for the expression of opinions. In a formal sense selection of participants (boundary rule) resulted from invitation based on location or through addresses known by organisations of ethnical or occupational groups. However, through the

whole set of arenas, all relevant actors will have had an opportunity to participate.

As part of our research project, at least for the group of residents and former residents of the Roombeek neighbourhood, we will use survey instruments to establish who used the formal participatory opportunities and who did not. Moreover we will look into the determinants of residents' decisions to participate or not to participate and the consequences of these decisions for the representativeness of the participatory process' results: to what extent is there a possible 'participatory distortion'? (Verba, Brady & Schlozman 1995: 178-182).

The main **positions** in the arenas were the one's of 'participant' and 'process facilitator'. Participants had the rights to express their opinions either in an entirely open way, or related to a large number of important topics that were previously discussed with 'key-persons' from the area. The 'process facilitator' was an independent expert on participation processes who was hired by the city to organise the participation process and ensure that the outcomes would truly represent the opinions of the participants. Another key position in some of the arenas is the 'town-planner', an external expert, hired by the municipality of Enschede to prepare a first draft of the redevelopment plan (more on his role follows in the description of the other arena's). In the eight central sessions the external town planner was present to discuss participants' opinions and to state some general points of departure for his work. Councillors held a minor position in the sessions, fulfilling the role of 'table-host' at discussion tables, facilitating discussion and listening to the participants. They were explicitly instructed not to express their own opinions.

With regards to the **scope** of the arenas, the eight central sessions were slightly 'pre-structured'. The organisers provided the participants with cues (in the form of series of photographs and accompanying short texts) for reflection and subsequent discussion on a predetermined list of topics about the future of the redeveloped neighbourhood. The number of these topics (about eighty), however, was so high and the range of issues so wide, that the participants were able to address almost any topic they might have deemed relevant. Moreover, the short notes written in reaction to the clues the participants were absolutely unconstrained (also enabling participants to raise topics different from those initially provided), and the entirely open ID-boxes and internet-site provided further opportunities to address any issue a participant would like to raise. From the perspective of the openness of the arena may be considered as an asset. The other side of the coin, however, is that the participatory process has thus lead to an enormous variety of opinions about the future of the neighbourhood. In the light of this diversity, it would presumably be not too difficult to supply advocates of virtually any possible conception of the new neighbourhood with a useful anthology of statements made by participants to legitimise their point of view.

Information rules were also quite open: participants were informed of the possibility to participate, they were informed on the general structure of the different arenas, and they were promised that a written report on the sessions would be provided to attendants. Moreover, reports were to be published on the Internet. Drafting the reports on the results per arena was a major responsibility of the process facilitator. Implicitly this also indicates the main **aggregation** rule used to 'produce' the results for each of these sessions. The participants' notes with their opinions were collected, described on a one-to-one basis and these subsequently served as input for a general summary of the opinions by the facilitator. For the next steps in the process, a full report was produced by the process-facilitator, summarising the output of the first stage of the participation process. This report consists of a general summary and short summaries of all the different sessions.

Costs and benefits of redevelopment options were as yet no topic for discussion, so it is for this moment not necessary to specify a **pay-off** rule (all costs of the process were covered by the city).

The second stage

In June 2001 a second stage of the participation process will be organised, very much along the lines of the first stage with regards to the groups that are consulted in different arenas. The scope rules will however be somewhat different, as a draft version of the programme will by then be available, and the discussion should concentrate on the question whether this draft truly represents the opinions of the participants or not. Participants will also have more structured possibilities to express their opinions on issues using a 'voting device' by which they can evaluate different aspects of the proposal in a quantitative way. Before describing the main function of this second stage it is useful to present the other arenas in the entire process.

Other arenas

Alongside the participation arenas, where (former) residents play the central role, a number of other arenas were constructed to provide input into the redevelopment programme. Three **panels of experts** were invited to present their views on the programme. In one of these meetings, experts on social policy presented their opinions on the social policy programme, in another the economic policy options were discussed and in a third the physical programme (building/infrastructure) was the focus. This division in three broad policy areas stems directly from the way in which the Dutch national government's urban policy (in which Enschede together with 24 other urban municipalities participates) is structured. This national urban policy has invited municipalities to develop a strategic scenario for urban redevelopment based on three pillars: social policy, economic policy and policies for the built environment/infrastructure. The notion of the three pillars is also at the heart of the city's approach to the plans for redeveloping Roombeek-West. For every 'pillar' a policy programme will have to be developed under the direction of a programme-manager who has been appointed to co-ordinate all activities regarding this part of policy or programme development.

For all three expert-panels, participants were selected on the basis of known expertise in this field. Discussions in these expert panels have had a rather unstructured character, each participant having an opportunity to state his or her views on topics they deemed of importance. Municipal employees working in the policy sector wrote summary reports. At each expert panel the programme-manager of the relevant programme was present. The results of the panels were intended to provide expert advice for the further development of the plans for the three 'pillars'.

These three programme managers are key members of the **programme development group (PDG)**, which can be seen as an arena where the general programme for the redevelopment of Roombeek is drafted. This group is supposed to write a draft version of a document that describes which functions should be accommodated in the redeveloped neighbourhood (housing, economic activity, infrastructure, etc.) and the policies needed to achieve the programmes' goals for the area (e.g. in terms of its social structure and social cohesion).

Where this group focuses on 'what' should be done, the **'planning group (PG)'** develops proposals for 'how' these functions should be incorporated in the area. This planning group is centred round the previously mentioned 'town-planner'. The PG typically produces maps and visualisations of the functions proposed for the area.

One of the complications of the process is that the programme development (PDG) and the planning group (PG) do their work simultaneously. This is a result of the understandable desire to start

rebuilding the area as soon as possible. Normally one would probably decide to determine the basic goals for the redevelopment programme first and subsequently develop the plan for the neighbourhood and draw the relevant maps. The simultaneous deliberations in these arenas (PDG and PG) produce co-ordination problems. In some cases maps are drawn based on the planners' images of the functions needed for the area, whereas programme managers are still debating these.

When looking at the institutional design of the two arenas (PDG and PG), the **boundary rules** are clearly based on professional expertise. In the planning group (PG) the external town planner is accompanied by staff members of his firm and by a town planner from within the municipal administration. In the PDG, the programme-managers convene with the deputy-director of the municipal redevelopment taskforce and the officer in charge of the participation process. The group also comprises of a staff supplied by the external town planner's firm. This staff does the bulk of the writing and is supposed to inform their colleagues in the planning group.

When looking at the **authority rules** for these position holders, two aspects are important. As has been shown in our description of the links between different arenas, authority rules might reflect the more or less binding results of other arenas. In this case it is important to see to what extent the outputs of the participatory arenas provide constraints for the choices that position holders, in for instance the programme development group (PDG), could legitimately make. The institutional design of the decision-making process is far from unambiguous in this respect. On the one hand it is clearly indicated that the outcomes of the participation process should provide a very important input into the programme development group (PDG). On the other hand, it is also stated that the results of the expert panels and previous council decisions should also be considered as important. This implies considerable discretion for position holders in the programme development group (PDG). For much the same reasons the planning group (PG) members exercise considerable discretion.

The constellation of the position holders in the programme development group (PDG) is such that each of them has to consult a 'constituency'. In the case of the sectoral programme managers: they have to consult relevant segments of the standing municipal organisation and other relevant governmental, quasi-governmental and social organisations in their sector. Moreover, the programme managers have to consider the basic principles of the general municipal scenario for urban redevelopment that is the basis for Enschede's participation in the national government's urban policy initiative. Finally they will have to take the priorities of their political principals (especially the aldermen responsible for the three 'pillars') into account.

The officer in charge of the participation process has special responsibilities for heeding the outputs of the participatory process. As such he forms a tandem with the 'process facilitator'. For his support base he is at least to some extent dependent upon the association representing the interests of the victims (BVS). The staff members of the consultancy firm are of course closely linked to the planning group and will (at least to some extent) be inclined and expected to represent the external planners perspective. The deputy-director of the municipal taskforce, hired by the municipality as an interim-manager from one of the major Dutch consultants companies, acts as chairman of the arena.

On the one hand this constellation of 'linking-pins' in the PDG ensures that relevant perspectives are brought to the table. On the other hand the heterogeneity of interests in the PDG puts severe pressure on the **aggregation rules** in this arena, as different perspectives would suggest different outcomes in the programme. One of the characteristics of the PDG arena, however, is that no explicit aggregation rule has been formulated. The group has a collective responsibility for writing a concept version of the programme, but no mechanism is available for resolving conflicts between

the different perspectives. This has resulted in a situation in which the draft programme on many points of crucial importance merely formulates 'points for further discussion'. Under these conditions, the results achieved in more decisive arenas, especially the preliminary planning results in the PG, may be more influential in guiding the redevelopment plans than the inputs from the PDG. This is not unlikely since the heterogeneity of interests represented in the PDG stands in marked contrast to the relative homogeneity of the planning group (PG). Although the PG, just like the PDG, lacks explicit aggregation rules, here this institutional weakness poses no major threat to the arena's decisiveness. The homogeneity of interests within the PG arena reduces the need for a mechanism for conflict resolution.

This state of affairs may be of considerable interest for the results of the decision-making process. For the imbalance in the decisiveness of the PG vis-à-vis the PDG is not counterbalanced by clear **scope rules** that define the status of the decisions made in either of these arenas. This arguably exacerbates the problems of the simultaneity of the deliberations in the PDG and the PG. In the absence of previously determined normative premises and a lack of decision in the arena (PDG) that is primarily responsible for providing such principles 'en route', the planners find themselves in a power vacuum. A vacuum that, because of the time constraints induced by the political priority of a swift return of displaced residents to the a redeveloped Roombeek, is in urgent need of filling. Therefore, it is safe to assume that the dice in the redevelopment game are considerably biased in favour of the PG and its key position holder, the external planner and his staff.

The arenas of representative democracy in the Roombeek case

After the PG and the PDG will have developed the draft programme and a rough plan for the redevelopment of Roombeek these policy documents will first have to be approved by the council of mayor and aldermen of Enschede (CMA). The discussions in the CMA will take place later this month (May 2001). Therefore, we can only speculate on the consequences of the interactive preparation of the proposals.

Two general points, however, can be made nevertheless. First, in a formal sense (in terms of the relevant authority and scope rules) the hands of the members of Enschede's CMA are completely free. In a material sense, however, there are clear limits to the freedom of the members of the local executive board to amend the proposals. Most important, the planning process is under a severe time constraint. If the second stage of the participation process (the public consultation about the drafts, scheduled for June 2001) is to take place before the summer holidays, the CMA will have to make a decision on these documents no later than the end of May 2001.

Secondly, the alternatives available to the CMA are 'politically' (rather than formally) constrained to the extent that the collective outcomes of the preceding arenas are more specific and more consensual.

In this respect, we should be aware of the fact that there will be considerable political pressure on the CMA to heed the results of the participatory sessions. This constraint however, is probably not a very tight. As we have emphasised before, the 'results' of the participation sessions leave plenty of room to legitimise a wide range of alternative choices. The same is essentially true for the draft programme, with its multitude of 'points for discussion'. In theory this leaves the CMA with considerable room for manoeuvre. Under different circumstances the CMA might have hailed this window of opportunity. And from a democratic point of view this condition may be considered as highly desirable for the political primacy of elected politicians. The extreme time pressure under which the CMA will have to decide on the 'many points for discussion', however, is likely to induce despair rather than joy amongst the CMA's members. This might make them susceptible to ready-made alternatives developed elsewhere. These options may be available from at least two sources. First, the ideas and plans

developed in the bosom of the PG. And second, plans the municipality developed for the neighbourhood prior to May 13th 2000.

After the CMA has made its preliminary decisions, the proposals will be the subject of a new round of citizen consultations. Only after this second stage of the participation process the final draft (that as a result of the consultation may have been amended) will be submitted to the municipal council, that ultimately has to approve of the proposal.⁸

In a legal sense the members of the council are completely free to amend the plans submitted to them for final approval. At this moment it is impossible to speculate about the most role the council will play in the final stage (presumably in September or October 2001). This uncertainty is not to the least due to the fact that so far the council has not given the other actors any clues as to which role the council would like to play in the final stages of the process. For example, the council as yet did not formulate any substantive or procedural criteria it would employ in deciding on the acceptability of the final proposals.

The actual role the council might play in these final stages hinges very much upon the contents of the CMA preliminary draft proposal, the public reactions to this document and the subsequent (un)willingness of the CMA – if necessary – to amend the draft according to the results of the participatory process.

Even though this is merely speculation, it seems rather unlikely that the council will make use of its formal competence to bring up completely *new* substantive proposals for discussion during the final stages of the decision-making process. The role of the council will largely depend on the course of the public consultations. At one extreme, if the CMA's proposal presented to the council should be in close agreement with the results of the second round of popular consultations, the council will probably be perfectly happy to perform the role of an 'applause machine'. If, however, the CMA should have been unwilling to amend its plans to meet equivocal citizen demands voiced during the participation process the council's role will be crucially important. In this case the municipal council might very well serve as a 'court of appeal' on behalf of the residents of Roombeek-West. If the results of the participation process should be relatively unambiguous, it will probably be hard for the councillors to ignore these signals. Especially since in the spring of 2002 new municipal elections will be due. The latter scenario, however, is rather unlikely. Even if the CMA would in fact have liked to hold on to its original plans, it is likely to submit to the pressure of public opinion and the anticipation of a likely and painful defeat in the council meeting.

The more ambiguous the results of the second stage of the participation process, however, the more room for manoeuvre there will be.

⁸ In this description for the sake of parsimony we will disregard some of the other arenas of local representative democracy.

Problems in the institutional design of the interactive process in the case of Roombeek-West

In this section we will address our third research question: What are, from a democratic perspective, the major problems of the institutional design for the planning process of Roombeek-West?

From the direct democratic perspective, various aspects of the institutional arrangements of the arenas may be considered as problematic. If we follow the logic of our conceptual framework problems arise with regard to all the types of rules:

1. A major challenge facing institutional designers in developing interactive arenas is to identify and define relevant *positions*. The bases for participatory rights differs between various actors. Some of them are involved in the process only for professional reasons (the town planners, the process-facilitator et cetera). Others are stakeholders. This is the case for the victims of the disaster. The stakes between the various groups of victims, however, are different: consider the owner-occupiers, the people living in rented accommodation, the shopkeepers and businessmen, and the artists with studios in the neighbourhood etc. Still others possess valuable resources that are essential for planning or for plan realisation: e.g. experts (knowledge), and owners of capital and land. Differentiation between such positions would pose problems in terms of the general democratic presumption of political equality among citizens (in terms of equal access and equal influence).⁹ The fundamental principle of political equality may be adequate as an abstract normative point of reference for policymaking in general. As Robert Dahl has argued, however, one of the most difficult questions in democratic theory pertains to the question 'who belongs to the demos?': those that are to have equal access and an equal say in making collectively binding decisions (Dahl 1970: 64-67). In general there may be a consensus that those that are affected by a particular decision should have a right to determine the outcome of the decision-making process. But this intuitively appealing principle of affected interest, runs into severe difficulties when applied to specific policy proposals. Should a Roombeek resident whose house was completely demolished have the same rights as any other citizen of Enschede? And what position, if any, should be given to a national chain store or a real estate development company who are willing to invest in the development of the neighbourhood? However difficult it may be to answer such questions, it is nevertheless important to face these issues. The absence of explicit position rules (suggesting that each participant would have the same position), could easily result in conflicts between participants. In the case of Roombeek-West the designers have circumvented part of this problem by creating different arenas for different subgroups. Although this strategy facilitates interaction in each arena, it only postpones the potential conflicts to the stage when scope rules (how do the scopes of the parallel arenas relate to each other) are to be defined, and to the subsequent arenas (where it has to be decided how

⁹ In the representative theory of democracy this problem is solved by means of the principle of one man one vote in elections. In direct democracy this problem is less easily solved, especially since some participants may act purely on their own behalf whereas others represent collective interests.

- differences in outcomes between the parallel arenas are to be accommodated).
2. *Boundary rules* define possibilities for entrance and exit. One of the general features of interactive governance is that it creates new possibilities for actors to enter arenas where policy proposals are discussed. This does not mean that entrance will always be possible for any actor who would want to participate. Rules on which characteristics are sufficient to qualify for participation might be explicit, but could also be implied by the selective invitation of actors for meetings. If different parallel arenas are created for different 'stakeholders' (see point 1), this is usually combined with highly selective boundary rules: an ordinary citizen for example will not have access to either the PDG nor to the PG. But ordinary citizens are not the only actors that have limited access to arenas. A major example in which asymmetries in the accessibility of arenas may have far reaching consequences is to be found in the relation between PDG and PG. On the one hand the central actor in the PG, the external town planner, has indirect access to the PDG, through the PDG staff that is provided by his firm. On the other hand neither the programme-managers nor the officer in charge of the participation process (the participation officer) has access to the PG. From a direct-democratic frame of reference, the fact that the participation officer did not have access to the PG, is especially troublesome, for one of his major responsibilities was to ensure that the results of the participation process would be heeded in the decision-making process. Indirectly the boundary rules also determined the relative homogeneity and thus the decisiveness of the PG vis-à-vis the PDG (in which according to the rules of the game the participation officer had institutionalised access).
 3. For each position the *authority rules* define the actions an actor can legitimately take. As we have seen before, the actions an actor can legitimately take, might be restricted by the outcome of preceding arenas. For instance, in many planning processes the discretion of a town planner is bounded by a programme in which basic goals of the planning process have been previously defined in another arena. In the case of Roombeek-West such a programme was not available at the outset of the planning process. In theory these planning directives should have been developed during the process in the PDG. But the lack of decision in the PDG, such guidelines have at best been only fragmentary and vague. The lack of decision in the PDG was at least in part the result of the limited authority of e.g. the programme-managers, who were supposed to act in close consultation with their 'sectoral' networks and political principals and were also bound by previously made municipal decisions (e.g. the municipality's strategic vision). It is evident that the specification of authority rules is an essential element determining an actor's scope for influencing decision outcomes. From a direct-democratic perspective it is troublesome that the planner's authority was not circumscribed by programmatic principles (that should have clearly reflected the results of the participatory sessions).
 4. *Scope rules* define the range of possible outcomes that can be legitimately discussed and decided upon in of an arena (1) and what the implications in one arena are for subsequent arenas (2)? The first aspect of the scope rules is that they specify what can and what can't be legitimate outcomes. Legitimate outcomes can be defined in many different ways. One way may to differentiate in terms of the substance of proposals. The second aspect refers to the formal status of the outcome: an indication of the opinions of the participating actors, an idea that is explicitly supported by the actors, an official proposal, or an official (collective) decision. From a direct democratic perspectives the rules in use in the case of Roombeek-West are characterised by major flaws. First, the limited scope of the results of the participatory sessions in the

first stage of the process (a non-binding very broad catalogue of all sorts of statements by individual participants) will be considered as unsatisfactory. In a stage of the participation process primarily aimed at generating as many creative ideas as possible by means of a very open process this may be an acceptable strategy. For genuine popular influence on the redevelopment of Roombeek-West the scope of the results in the participatory arenas in the second stage will have to be much broader (in terms of its implications for subsequent arenas) than it was in the first phase. Second, the scopes of the PDG and the PG, as we argued before, were unbalanced. Because of the simultaneity of deliberations in both arenas, and their composition the scope of the decisions reached in the PDG (in which the participation officer was a key player) was relatively limited. This provided a further reduction of the impact of the institutionalised channels through which the results of the participatory arenas should have had on influence on later planning decisions.

As has been indicated before, the scope of an arena can also be limited by outcomes of prior arenas. Usually deliberations in a specific arena will have to take into account some previously and externally defined conditions. Examples are: conditions in terms of the available budget, the area for which a plan has to be developed, previous agreements with other governments or other agents (e.g. land owners or real estate developers) et cetera. During the first participation sessions it was suggested once and again that in this process there would be no such prior limitations, except for an agreement between the municipality and the organisation taking care of the interests of the victims (implying a promise that every former resident should be able to return to the new neighbourhood if he or she would want to do so). Informally, however, amongst insiders it was widely known that as far as the municipality was concerned some previous council decisions with implications for the physical structure of Roombeek-West were to be considered as irreversible.

All these examples clearly imply that at least during the first stages of the participatory process the direct and indirect institutionalised channels for popular influence were rather limited. Of course this does not necessarily imply that the 'voice of the people' will go unheard: the external town planner for example attended most of the participation sessions. Moreover he has once and again professed his intention to heed the suggestions made by the participants. There are no reasons to question the sincerity of the planner's intentions. Nevertheless we should not forget that an evaluation of an institutional design should focus on *structural* strengths and flaws of the design. If the scope rules in participatory arenas are essentially non-binding, this will provide *no institutional guarantees* that actors in subsequent arenas will not redefine outcomes in later stages of the process. Again, inadequate formulation of institutional rules might raise expectations about 'real influence' among the participants, who will only find out that in the end 'it's still the council, an alderman or outside interests who decide what is going to happen'.

5. *Aggregation rules* determine how individual preferences are translated into collective decisions. Whereas scope rules specify what outcomes are possible, aggregation rules specify how a specific outcome is selected. It is therefore obvious that scope rules have implications for the aggregation mechanism to be used. If for instance the outcome will be a collectively binding decision (as is the case in a decision of the municipal council), there will almost certainly be a highly formalised aggregation mechanism (in this case voting with a majority rule), or else conflicts over aggregation would certainly arise. In case the result is a binding agreement among individual participants (as is the case for an agreement in the form of a contract), the aggregation rule will be most likely one of unanimous

consent (where each actor has either a veto possibility, or at least the 'exit' possibility: he who doesn't sign is not committed). In case the outcome is essentially non-binding (for instance in the case of an inventory of opinions) the aggregation mechanism might be one of descriptive summary: an oral or written report contains the opinions of 'most participants', or 'important groups of participants'. In the extreme, this might be a literal transcription of all opinions that are expressed in the arena. Of course all sorts of aggregation mechanisms might be used. In many cases these mechanisms assign a specific function to an actor in a specific position (for instance a 'secretary', who has to make the transcription). In the participatory sessions during the first stage such a written report based on individual contributions was produced by an independent process-facilitator. The latter kind of aggregation rule is very vulnerable. Of course the facilitator might have done an excellent job in representing the interest of the consulted groups and gave these interest an equal weight in drafting the summary report. However, the gist of the idea of interactive governance is that people should be able to speak for *themselves* and that we should not rely on the skills and the willingness of others to adequately express their opinions. Moreover, here too we would like the institutions to guarantee essential values like equal access and equal right.

6. *Information rules* define the availability of information to actors. On the one hand information rules specify the availability of information to the incumbents of different position in the arena. As such they can be seen as authority rules with a specific subject: they indicate the actors' rights and obligations regarding information. Because 'openness' is to be seen as one of the characteristics of interactive governance, the general rule of 'adequate and free access to all relevant information to all participants' seems to be a likely candidate to use in these arenas. This does not mean that the actual availability of information is likely to be unproblematic. This was for instance the case when in the beginning of the Roombeek participation process it was suggested that there were no prior decisions that would constrain the scope of the decisions that were possible in the planning process for Roombeek-West. Information rules are an important factor in arenas where some actors have considerable more information than others, for instance because they hold positions as professional experts versus lay citizens, or because some actors are also participating in parallel arenas and others are not. Information rules may specify provisions that enable actors to reduce these inequalities, such as the right (and the money) to get a 'second opinion' from independent experts outside the arena or the right to send 'observers' to other arenas. In the current institutional arrangements no such provisions are made. From a direct democratic perspective the right of all actors, in and outside an arena, is crucial to the equal opportunity structure. Some actors might, however, have considerable objections against such normative assumptions, for they would prefer to negotiate in secrecy. This may be the case for market organisations who may have various motives (e.g. considerations of competitiveness) for confidentiality in their proceedings. In this respect it will be interesting to see how the municipality will provide information about its consultations of market organisations about their willingness to get involved in the realisation of the redevelopment plans of the neighbourhood.

Conclusion

In sum it seems fair to say that the configuration of interactive arenas suffers from a lack of institutionalisation, as for instance the aggregation and scope rules of the programme and design arenas are not clearly formulated. Although it is the municipality's proclaimed aim to give the victims a strong position in the participation process, the outcomes of the arenas where they are able to participate have to be weighted and integrated with outcomes from arenas where powerful interests have privileged access. Therefore, it is doubtful whether the results of the process will meet the participatory objectives set by the municipality. We have, however, to be cautious in our conclusions. We are only in the first phase of the process. We have argued that if in the second phase the process will be organised in such a way as to broaden the scope of the decisions in the participatory arenas, might improve their opportunities to give a clear indication of their opinions. The proclaimed political will to heed the citizens' interests, the upcoming municipal elections, and the final say of the municipal council (that is thus able to function as a democratic court of appeal) appear to provide some guarantees for residential influence on the results of the planning process. It is perhaps ironic that the major institutional guarantees (elections and the final decision making authority of the elected municipal council) are provided by the traditional institutions of representative democracy rather than the new institutions of the interactive arenas.

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