

Vulnerable Communities and Decision-Making in Energy Transitions.

Exploring the potential of participation in the energy transition and redevelopment of the
Hoptille apartment complex in Southeast Amsterdam.

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Cover photo: The Hoptille apartment complex in Southeast Amsterdam. Source: Author

Key information

Abstract

Over the past years, European governments have initiated strategies for energy transitions and label upgrades in the housing sector of urban neighborhoods, aiming at climate mitigation, while tackling energy poverty. To secure the 'just' character in these energy transitions, there is the requirement for the collaboration of numerous actors, stakeholders, and residents. Meanwhile, each context of an urban neighborhood requires a unique approach, in terms of planning and implementation practices. In my thesis research project, I investigate issues of inclusion in such planning processes, focusing on the levels of participation of the most vulnerable and exposed to energy poverty groups, in the urban planning and policy-making of energy transitions. For the contextualization of my research, I approach the case of the energy-saving and redevelopment projects, implemented at the Hoptille apartment complex in Southeast Amsterdam. Within this context, I employ two analytical frameworks; the Neighborhood Arrangements framework allows me to discuss the contextual parameters that encircle the local venture and the values and interests of the engaged actors in these energy transition and redevelopment projects. Through a second framework - the Participation Analysis framework - I approach the levels of participation that permeate the planning of these projects. After the analysis of the material, collected with the help of the engaged stakeholders, I reflect on adapted measures that promote justice and enhance the meaningful participation of vulnerable residents in the decision-making of the local energy transition and redevelopment ventures.

Key concepts

energy transitions, energy poverty, vulnerable communities, procedural justice, urban planning

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Introduction

1.1 Energy Transitions in the Urban Milieu

Cities constitute the main energy-consuming poles of the planet. Constant urbanization translates into extensive raw material use, waste production, and energy consumption (Savini, 2023). Urban development, form, and zoning, along with the parameters of microclimate, physical conditions and population distribution, buildings, and economic activities (Poggi & Amado, 2024), determine the energy consumption patterns of a city. As an essential part of the urban machine, urbanites contribute to these energy consumption patterns and are subjected to their constant shifts. These shifts can occur at multiple levels within the industry of energy provision, and translate as changes in energy sources, upgrades to urban infrastructure, modifications of energy policies, or private sector competition. With energy being a dominant tradeable asset within the global economy, these shifts have tangible impacts on affordability, affecting the economic equilibria of urban households.

These energy consumption patterns affect the urban household economy and have the consequence of non-stop environmental burden. Within these terms, the United Nations proposed sustainable development Goal No.7 (United Nations, 2023), which aims at securing access to sufficient, reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy by 2030. This goal is connected to the so-called “right to energy”, referring to the need for accessibility to adequate energy sources, affordable energy relative to households’ income and beyond discrimination, as well as energy democracy (Hesselman et al., 2022). The UN sustainable development goals advocate the need for the decarbonization of the urban economy within the frames of holistic energy transitions, that will necessitate a break from traditional monopolistic energy regimes, and power structures (Hanke et al., 2023). Practically, these energy transitions refer to the need for interventions in the infrastructure and built environment of the cities and the provision of sustainable energy for the citizens.

1.2 Energy Transitions in the Housing Sector

In Europe, a novel framework for a holistic approach to energy transitions was introduced in 2019, with the name European Green Deal. Among other things, this framework indicates the measures that must be taken in the building sector, initiating strategies for the energy-label upgrade and efficient performance of the existing built capacity. The approach lays out its goals, saying:

To address the twin challenges of energy efficiency and affordability, the EU and the Member States should engage in a ‘renovation wave’ of public and private buildings. While increasing renovation rates is a challenge, renovation lowers energy bills and can reduce energy poverty. (European Commission, 2019)

According to the Renovation Wave strategy announced by the European Commission (European Commission, n.d.), retrofitting and decarbonizing public and private building capacity will be a critical input to climate mitigation and measuring against energy poverty in Europe. In this strategy, three focus areas will be considered; a) tackling energy poverty and worst-performing buildings, b) renovation of public buildings, and c) decarbonization of heating and cooling.

The energy transitions in the housing sector include a variety of interventions in the built environment, such as improvement of insulation, provision of low-emission energy, and installation of energy-generating technology. In the Netherlands, the Renovation Wave has already been set into effect for the improvement of some existing housing units, with the Dutch Minister Hugo De Jonge announcing the halt of renting activities of homes with a poor energy label from 2030 (NOS, 2022). With this measure, the country aims to accelerate sustainability practices while reducing the energy costs of Dutch households. In 2023, the country announced subsidies that will motivate landlords to make energy retrofits to their properties. Sustainable energy investment subsidies (RVO, 2019) will cover housing retrofit costs related to the installation of a heat pump, insulation, and solar boiler installation. Moreover,

additional incentives have been programmed, such as granting zero tax for purchasing the required solar panels. At the same time, “Energy Saving Loans” are already available as economic aid for the respective transition ventures (Kemkens, 2023). Simultaneously, several major Dutch municipalities, such as Amsterdam (AFWC, 2023) and Utrecht (Iris Utrecht, 2023), have initiated strategies for the energy label (efficiency indicator) upgrade of the apartment stock and the conversion of energy grid infrastructure in urban neighborhoods’ housing stock, aiming for reduced or zero carbon emissions while mitigating energy poverty.

1.3 Energy Transitions and Policies

A broader conceptualization of the energy transitions entails the gradual substitution of existing highly CO₂-emitting energy sources and technologies, with ones that have “superior technical, social, economic and physical attributes” (Huda, 2024, p.1). However, this is only one side of the advancing multifaceted transformations. As Sovacool et al. (2021) highlight, these transitions also include “a change in patterns of energy use among energy users in society, a change in the human dimensions related to energy, such as knowledge, values, or motivations, or a switch in the dependence of economic systems or markets from one form of energy source/technology or another” (2021, p.2). Meanwhile, energy policy remains a largely techno-economic issue, with an emphasis on tangible, measurable shifts (Leleux, 2024). Nevertheless, there is a rising call for the design of socio-energy systems (Miller et al., 2015), under the recognition that “energy systems involve the work, behavior, and choices of many different kinds of people” (p.30). In other words, the design and planning of energy transition policies that aim to address the rising ecological issues must consider simultaneously, political, economic, and societal aspects.

1.3.1 Policies, Effects, and Energy Poverty

Browsing through recent relevant literature regarding the multilevel energy transitions in urban living spaces, concerns, and unexplored terrains can be detected. Großmann and Kahlheber (2017) delve into the socioeconomic friction that prompts these activities, arguing that “energy poverty policies necessarily affect different households differently” (2017, p.18). Meanwhile, they pose critical questions about “which measures reach which households, for whom... funding and support instruments [are] accessible, and what unintended side-effects occur” (2017, p.18). In their work, they identify gaps in comprehensive conceptualizations of social inequalities and how they reproduce energy poverty. Furthermore, Großmann (2019) assesses long-term effects on the affordability and availability of housing capacity, pointing out an oxymoron in the respective processes and the eventual benefits of sustainability-driven measures. Specifically, she argues that “if in the long run, (energy-label) upgraded housing becomes less affordable, while income-poor households are dislocated to affordable housing of lower energy efficiency, the practice of retrofitting might thus miss its aim of alleviating energy poverty” (2019, p.6). Von Platten et. al (2022), investigate the energy retrofit impacts on family households in Sweden and argue that retrofitting spurs rent increases, and “reductions in energy use may not be sufficient to fully offset rent increases” (2022, p.1). They underpin that research must focus on context-specific factors, including the energy performance of the housing stock and energy prices, to fully capture the net effect that energy retrofitting has on tenants' expenditures. Discussing on a policy level in German and Dutch contexts, scholars pose questions about the need for overall funding mechanisms and financial reconfigurations that will “lead to more just outcomes” (Großmann, 2019, p.8) and reduce “uncertainty and inertia” (Moore and Doyon, 2023, p.135) in the novel energy transition ventures. Moore and Doyon (2023) further contemplate the complex transitions that take place in the housing sector, invoking the need for long-term policy agendas, with embedded medium and short-term visions.

1.3.2 Just Energy Transitions and Vulnerable Communities

When we refer to just energy transitions, it is crucial to clarify the term justice first. Justice cannot be solely secured through the equal distribution of the energy transition outcomes (distributive justice). It also needs to encompass recognition and procedural justice, which represent the recognition and participation of the engaged actors and stakeholders in the processes of planning and implementation of energy transitions (Boateng et al., 2023).

Procedural justice has a valuable position in urban planning and policy-making, as it expresses the inclusion and participation of stakeholders from the public and private sectors, but also the civil society in such decision-making processes. Kemp et al. (2010), referring to the Dutch Energy Transition policies, acknowledge the imperative need for greater attention to non-technological issues, advanced stakeholder engagement, and a more inclusive and balanced approach in the governance and decision-making processes of the energy transitions. Teladia & van der Windt (2024), by capturing the levels of citizen participation in five Dutch community heating initiatives, emphasize the need for active citizen engagement, energy cooperatives, and adequate communication among the actors. They suggest that inclusive decision-making and tailored engagement strategies promote the perception of locality and a sense of ownership among the residents. In addition, Lennon et al. (2019) endorse that the low levels of community engagement in energy transition initiatives led the residents to adopt lock-in feelings, with the decision-making and strategy implementation being presented as ready-made solutions to communities. Mey et al. (2023) question the opportunities for meaningful participation of civil society in a German and Australian context, underpinning that in recent years the efficacy of participation as an instrument to legitimize the outcomes of energy transition policies has lost ground.

When addressing energy transitions in vulnerable communities, the value of participation and adhering to the needs of the less privileged is becoming more pronounced. Min & Lee (2023), describing the case of energy transitions in the housing sector of Pacific Northwest cities, classify different citizens with vulnerability on socioeconomic aspects, and on their surroundings and housing state. From this categorization, they point out that policymakers should consider the numerous variabilities through tailored policies that facilitate just energy transitions while promoting resilient communities. Hanke et al. (2023) addressing theoretical instruments of procedural justice in energy transitions in a German context, highlight that energy-poor households tend to lack the possibility of attending information events and public referendums, which comprise the initial grades of participation. This fact, in combination with mistrust towards political processes due to chronic misrecognition of their needs, exacerbates the social inequalities. Abbasi et al. (2022) argue that the highly technocratic and technological, top-down character of energy transition policies tends to neglect the social parameters and raise the potential of making low-income families worse instead of better. Taking into account the inherent contextuality that permeates the energy transitions, Bouzarovski & Simcock (2017) suggest three levels of future study and improvement on policies and decision-making that pertain to vulnerable communities: these refer to strategies that a) “target particular areas while providing comprehensive, spatially-sensitive support for vulnerable households across cities and regions”, b) policies that combat the reproduction and perpetuation of injustice in energy transitions, and c) improved mechanisms that “detect and assist socio-demographic groups that are vulnerable by spatially-based injustices” (p.641). Within similar terms, Hanke et al. (2023) argue that if a socially just energy transition is a serious objective, then “policies need to target the energy-poor differently, according to their capabilities” (p.9).

1.3.3 Research on Energy Transitions, Justice, and Vulnerable Communities

Researchers and scholars underline that the rising energy transitions within the urban environment cannot be seen only as a technologically driven topic, with quantitatively measured goals.

Instead, it is argued that the projection of the societal qualities and values embedded in these transitions proves essential in understanding these ventures' impact on civil society. In reverse, this projection reveals the effect that societal behavior has on the energy transitions. Commencing from a technocratic and technologically oriented research topic, the theme of energy transitions shifts towards more humanitarian approaches as researchers position in the center of discussions on the perspective of human rights, invoking the need for the elevation of urban civil society members that have long been overseen within the realm of urban growth and progress. Within the societal spectrum of energy transitions, energy poverty becomes a major theme, constituting a means of producing and reproducing the vulnerability of certain members of the civil society. Regarding the theme of energy poverty, researchers resort to the versatile term of justice, advocating for the imperative to secure equity within the processes and outcomes of these transitions. They emphasize facilitating the vulnerable communities' multifaceted, chronically neglected needs. The tenet of procedural justice comes to the forefront, promoting the value of participation and inclusion of vulnerable communities towards alleviation of injustice phenomena.

1.4 Knowledge Gap and Research Question

The conducted research pinpoints areas for future exploration. Considering procedural justice, it becomes apparent that there is a need to reestablish the role of residents in the energy transition processes and focus more on facilitating the needs of vulnerable communities within these urban transitions. Therefore, there is a plea for conceiving policies that follow context-specific parameters and address the capabilities of less-privileged groups through enhanced participation and bottom-up initiatives. More research is required on the mechanisms that secure and enhance the legitimization of the energy transitions and renovation processes, through the active inclusion of vulnerable groups in the urban planning and policy-making processes. To avoid oversimplified and one-size-fits-all solutions, it is vital to focus on specific contexts and their assets and examine the multi-dimensional perspectives and parameters that dictate the per se decision and policy-making processes. To investigate the research gap and considerations referring to the decision and policy-making in the energy transitions, I form the main research question:

“What is the level of participation of vulnerable communities in the urban planning of just energy transitions?”

1.5 Research Goals

By responding to this research question, I aim to discuss future mechanisms and tools, adapted to specific contexts, that promote the inclusion of the voices of the less privileged in energy transition urban planning and policy-making. Acknowledging the high contextuality of the energy transitions, I approached from an early stage in my research a specific energy transition strategy that has been initiated in Southeast Amsterdam. The proposed mechanisms will comply with the existing situation and refer to active and flexible practices, complementary or contradictory to ongoing energy transition policies.

My research will aim to investigate the procedural justice that appears within certain contexts, during energy transition urban planning and policy-making processes, while pinpointing the crucial role of vulnerable urbanites in the process. Considering the rise of integrated, sustainability-driven technical innovations within the urban environment, we must think critically about where these less privileged and vulnerable members of civil society will stand in these multi-level transitions.

Theoretical Background

This chapter introduces main themes that are closely related to the energy transitions and will be further explored both on a theoretical and an empirical level in this project. Within these themes, the terms of energy poverty and vulnerability will be approached, as well as the merits of energy justice. Elaborating on the tenets of energy justice, emphasis will be given specifically to procedural justice. Next, various methods of participation in energy transition decisions and policy-making will be introduced, with a focus on the fragile position of vulnerable communities during these procedures.

2.1 Approaches in Energy Transitions

In this section, I will delve into two different aspects of energy transitions. First, through the socio-technical approach, emphasis will be given to societal values entwined with the inherent technical nature of these ventures. Second, the socio-political approach will underline the embedded political character that permeates the energy transitions related to essential domestic welfare.

2.1.1 Socio-technical Approach in Energy Transitions

According to Santos Ayllón & Jenkins (2023), access to energy has historically determined geopolitical power relations and livelihoods, for a “socio-energy system shapes, enables and constrains the basic structure” of a society (p.1). Academia largely addresses energy transitions and renovations as “hybrid socio-technical entities, involving complex interactions among multiple stakeholders, forms of provision, and everyday experience” (Bouzarovski, 2022, 1008). These sustainability-driven transformations aim at simultaneously addressing multiple parameters and achieving user-oriented, result-oriented, and product-oriented goals (Boess, 2022). For this reason, it is suggested that sociotechnical systems incorporate design thinking, where the involved designers and planners attain the ‘big picture’ of the ‘product’ under assembly, while collaboration among the different designers, and evaluation of the process is imperative (Bjögvinsson et al., 2012). Wang et al. (2022) comment on the low rates of energy transitions and retrofits that have taken place in the private housing sector in the EU after the establishment of the respective policies. They argue that “it is urgent to identify a multi-objective approach that aims to tackle the low-energy retrofit trilemma (i.e., energy efficiency, cost optimality, the key stakeholders’ perspectives) holistically” (2022, p.3).

2.1.2 Socio-political Approach in Energy Transitions

Rutherford & Coutard (2014) underscore the political nature of urban energy transitions, as they are “reflecting, reinforcing, and transforming existing institutional and governance arrangements, consensual or conflictual relationships between different actors, and the unequal distribution of power within and among social groups and interests” (2014, p.17). Within these multifaceted transitions, the politically charged entities of the *home* and the *neighborhood* are acknowledged. Susan Fainstein (2014) underlines the importance of urban homogeneous neighborhoods and their capacity to provide “existential security” to multiple groups “within a metropolitan context of porous borders” (2014, p.13). Zooming to the house level, Maria Kaika (2004) refers to the porosity of the modern home, as it is exposed to a dialectical relationship to the public space, while its amenities and functions operate as “socio-natural hybrids” (2004, p.11). It is becoming apparent that the energy transitions of the home, and the neighborhood cannot be addressed merely via technocratic, systemic approaches. In addition to these, socio-political aspects of urban contexts must be investigated. To perform this investigation, as Kaika (2004) suggests, it is necessary to delve into qualitative research and data collection, instead of focusing only on quantitative big data.

2.2 Energy Poverty

There are various definitions and visions of energy poverty, the majority of which refer to levels of consumption (Gonzalez-Eguino, 2015), and widely relate to domestic contexts (Bouzarovski & Petrova, 2015). Energy poverty entails several interpretations and aspects, permeated by societal, political, economic, and ecological aspects. Primarily, it can be expressed as the absence of choice, from Amartya Sen's Capabilities perspective (1993), concerning the deprivation of basic needs; from cooking and heating, to access to information, education, and health care. Furthermore, it stresses notions highly dictated by geographical and political parameters, such as the approachability, affordability, and reliability of infrastructure and technologies, known as “energy services”, that refer to energy supply issues (Bouzarovski & Petrova, 2015). Thus, energy poverty comprises “a combination of socioeconomic factors, inadequate housing conditions, rising energy costs, and inefficient energy consumption patterns” (Al Kez et al., 2024). In general, the triplet of low household income, low energy performance of the dwelling, and high energy prices are considered common indicators of energy poverty (von Platten, 2022). The energy poverty term was initially integrated into the vocabulary of the EU institutions in 2009 when the ‘growing’ problem within the member states led to the first policies toward the provision of vulnerable citizens with adequate energy supply (Bouzarovski et al., 2012).

2.2.1 Theorizing Energy Poverty

Bouzarovski and Petrova (2015) recognize a dichotomy in academia, between energy poverty and fuel poverty. Energy poverty, widely acknowledged in developing countries, was first used in the early 1970s and concerns the poor or low provision of adequate infrastructure, technology, and amenities for basic domestic activities. Energy vulnerability, appearing in academic writings and reports in the early 1980s, refers to “the rising fuel costs, and ‘the right to fuel’, in countries such as the UK” (2015, p.2). Brunner et al. (2012), by analyzing experiences and behavioral responses to fuel poverty in Austria, formulate sub-categories of households subjected to energy poverty, such as “the overcharged” and “the modest fuel poor”, referring to single-parent families or single-person households that are subjected to fuel poverty. This category is “largely the result of a combination of adverse circumstances including energy-inefficient flats, heating, and appliances, a permanently low income, as well as debts and a limited scope of action for improving their situation” (2011, p.5). The non-fuel-poor households, entail “modest non-fuel poor” and “low-income” households, pertaining groups that mainly cannot cope with the energy bills, or try to implement energy-saving techniques. Gonzalez-Eguino (2015), discussing means of perceiving and capturing energy poverty, refers to the “Technological, Physical and Economic Thresholds” (2015, p.4). These thresholds concern the inaccessibility to up-to-date energy services: From this viewpoint, “energy poverty is measured by counting the population with no access to such services” (2015, p.4). The physical threshold estimated the “minimum consumption associated with necessities” (2015, p.4), with difficulties lying in the per se definition of the “basic need”. Lastly, the economic threshold is mainly linked with the ability to “purchase power, energy prices and the difficulty of maintaining adequate temperature levels in the home” (2015, p.14). Kez et al. (2023) propose methods of measuring energy and fuel poverty based on energy efficiency, income, and household variables, such as expenditures, dwelling assets, age, family size, etc. In these terms, the most acknowledged indicator of energy poverty sets the 10 percent threshold of energy-related expenditure relative to the net income of a household (Schuessler, 2014).

2.2.2 Energy Vulnerability

Another term that needs to be addressed complementary to energy poverty, is that of energy vulnerability, in order to convey a holistic view on the issues of energy poverty. According to Jenny von Platten (2022):

Energy vulnerability is a conceptualization that aims to move beyond the mere focus on energy efficiency and affordability, to also understand energy poverty from the perspective of probabilistic predisposition through factors such as geography, cultural norms, social practices, and variations in energy needs. (von Platten, 2022, p.2).

Within the context of fuel poverty, Middlemiss and Gillard (2015) connect the term “energy vulnerability”, with the “state of being” (p.2) and the lived experience of energy poverty. Within these frames, they endorse elements such as the “integrity” or the ability to maintain a decent household life, the “challenges” of retaining a household thermal equilibrium, the “capacity” for action, or the ways that a household copes with these challenges, the “multi-dimensionality” of the ways energy poverty is experienced by different people and the “power”, or “the extent to which a household perceive their own agency on energy matters” (p.2).

Although several academic contributions have recognized energy poverty as a form of energy injustice that impacts the receptors, or ‘end-use’ stage, of the energy system (Bouzarovski & Simcock, 2017), the links between energy poverty, justice, and vulnerability remain at an early stage of exploration. Energy vulnerability can also be driven by societal parameters other than economic factors, such as lone-parenting, old age, and part-time employment.

2.2.3 Impacts and Alleviation

Energy and fuel poverty have numerous detrimental impacts; among others, we can refer to the effects on vulnerable groups’ well-being, (Mould & Baker, 2017), mental health (Liddell & Guiney, 2015), personal safety, household budget, labor productivity, education, and economic development (Bouzarovski & Petrova, 2015). Thus, the strategies for its alleviation have been connected to SDG1 and SDG7, which aim at the eradication of all sorts of poverty and guaranteeing “affordable and clean energy” (Zhao et. al, 2024). Middlemiss and Gillard (2015) invoke the need for a “bottom-up” understanding of energy vulnerability, and the need for clarification of “what are people vulnerable to” (p.147), in order to manage the alleviation of the phenomenon. In this way, the implementation of proactive measures will prove more fruitful, while the risks of locking in inequalities in future energy systems will be avoided or reduced (von Platten, 2022). Therefore, to achieve both energy poverty alleviation and climate mitigation, there is a need to build synergies (Ürge-Vorsatz & Tirado Herrero, 2012). The success of these synergies will be highly defined by their ability to facilitate and secure the values of energy justice; in other words, there is a need for just energy transitions.

2.3 Energy Justice and Just Transitions

Energy justice, or energy equity, concerns the issues of justice and equity in energy systems, and “plays a role in identifying where, when, and how injustices occur in energy systems and how these injustices might be avoided” (Anku, 2023, p.63). Energy justice brings out the moral and human aspects of the energy transition (Stojilovska, 2021; Droubi et al., 2022). To future-proof and ensure energy justice and just energy transitions, it is imperative to achieve a balance between aspects of risk, reward, and responsibility in decision-making, whether these refer to contexts in politics, in the private or public sector, or local communities (Heffron, 2023). These “3 R’s” entail the three core tenets of energy justice: distributional, recognition, and procedural justice (Boateng et al., 2023). Within these three tenets,

discussions invoke the need to establish a social contract in energy justice and the energy transitions, that “raises questions about the distribution of roles and responsibilities, the sharing of choices, and solidarity between actors, especially the most vulnerable” (de Fontanelle, 2023, p.9), while touching on matters of ethics during the decision-making (Heffron, 2023).

2.3.1 Distributive Justice

This justice tenet invokes the value of an equal distribution of resources (Fainstein, 2014). In energy justice and transitions, distributive justice “envision[s] elements of a global energy system that equitably allocates both the benefits and burdens of energy services and can be used as a framework to identify energy inequities” (Czarnecka & Krazniewski, 2023, p.194). Its objective is to secure access to affordable, reliable, and clean energy services for all individuals and communities (Yang, 2023, p.44). Discussing urban contexts, Fainstein (2014) considers geographic aspects “a significant causal force in explaining (inequitable) social relations and societal development” (2014, p.14), referring to the need to control processes that produce “unjust urban geographies” (2014, p.14). Thus, distributional justice is considered an inherently spatial concept, as it is concerned with the distribution of “both the physical allocation of risks and benefits and the allocation of responsibilities, such as risk exposure” (Ayllon & Jenkins, 2023, p.3).

2.3.2 Recognition Justice

Recognition justice acknowledges the diverse needs, values, and rights of individuals and communities regarding energy while considering “the cultural, social, and historical dimensions that shape people’s energy preferences and behaviors” (Yang, 2023, p.45). Thus, it reveals the need for non-assimilative ways of addressing urban transformative processes, to achieve results that comply with each socio-spatial situation. The recognition of diversity is acclaimed as an urban merit and a means to enhance an urbanite’s right to the city (Fainstein, 2014). As it is pointed out; “the glory of cities lies in their capacity to bring together strangers, allowing people to move beyond the ‘familiar enclaves’ of families and social networks the more open public of politics, commerce, and festival, where strangers meet and interact” (Fainstein, 2014, p.13). Rutherford and Coutard (2014) underscore the multiplicity of transition processes and their outcomes within urban environments, describing that “the diversity of societal contexts in which transitions may emerge and may be shaped implies that we cannot view transition processes as singular, universal and linear pathways to the ‘zero-’ or ‘post-carbon’ city” (p.17).

2.4 Procedural Justice

Procedural justice emphasizes fairness and inclusivity within decision-making processes regarding energy issues, entailing the “active engagement of stakeholders, communities, and affected parties in the formulation and execution of energy policies, projects, and regulations” (Yang, 2023, p.44). It also pertains to greater information disclosure, local knowledge mobilization, and appropriate institutional representation” (Ayllon & Jenkins, 2023, p.3). It seeks to amplify the voices of the most vulnerable segments of society and redistribute decision-making power equally to all stakeholders, by highlighting the relationship between institutions and vulnerable citizens over affordable energy (Stojilovska, 2021, p.3). Overall, academia supports that active community involvement in decision-making promotes better outcomes, social innovation, and greater public acceptance of energy projects (Anku, 2023,). Within this justice context, Fainstein (2014) emphasizes the need for democratization and deliberation of decision-making procedures. Aiming to bring to the spotlight the participation of the least advantaged and minority social groups via inclusive policy making, she criticizes the established democratic processes, as they “can lead to exclusionary practices since a situation in which all social classes are proportionally represented

will rarely occur” (2014, p.10). According to Stojilovska (2021), energy poverty emanates from procedural (in)justice, “when there is a lack of information on energy poverty, energy prices, and solutions, lack of participation in energy, housing, climate, fiscal policies, lack of access to legal rights, and there are barriers to challenging these rights” (p.171). Within these terms, Bouzarovski (2022) underlines the potential emergence of collective political actions, on the recognition of adequate energy provision as a fundamental right, arguing for bottom-up initiatives in energy retrofits, “in which the community relations and socio-environmental circulations that surround and permeate the home can be used as a basis for transforming the built fabric of the home towards more sustainable energy use patterns” (2022). Maria Kaika (2018) contemplating solutions on the building of new sustainability indicators in the areas where socio-political conflict arises, suggests seeking out actors, groups, and communities who propose fresh questions and produce novel, radical imaginaries for environmental management; “actors who have been thus far systematically excluded from the sustainability debate” (Kaika, January 2018).

2.4.1 Participation

Participation in decision-making is one of the main forms of procedural justice expression, which according to Cohen (1985) comprises the “necessary condition for institutional stability” (p.3). Sherry Arnstein (1969) with the Ladder of Citizen Participation, attempts to categorize the levels of participation within three strands: The first one refers to “non-participation”, where decisions are top-down and expertise-driven. The second category refers to “Tokenism”, which suggests one-way flows of information, consultation of the citizens from the power holders about the ready-made decision, and placation, which still allocates a low level of active operations in decision-making. Finally, the category of “Citizen Control”, entailing partnership, delegation, and citizen control, is defined as the higher level of active participation on behalf of the citizens. Elaborating on the different concepts and levels of participation, Jules Pretty (1995), structures another normative categorization, more centered on the user, escalating from ‘bad’ to ‘good’ participation. These categories refer to the Manipulative, Passive, Consultation, Materially Incentivized, Functional, Interactive, and Self-mobilized participation. Pretty (1995) regards tokenism as manipulative and passive participation that does not allow the users to define the outcomes of a design or plan. On the contrary, through interactive and self-mobilized participation, the citizens-users are ‘in control’ of decision-making.

2.4.2 Participation Fatigue

Despite the grave importance of participation as an instrument of decision and policy-making, it is important to acknowledge the levels of doubts and fatigue that can permeate such procedures. Participants might doubt whether the decisions will be made by them or be left to the experts (Lelieveldt & Schram, 2023), perceiving that they should not undertake greater roles in local planning (Cho & Ho, 2020). Participation practices can prove time-consuming, leading to reduced will for engagement by participants in long procedures (Jeong et al., 2023). Fatigue is widely detected in cases where participants experience negligence of their needs, despite their participation in democratic processes (Tshishonga, 2020), a fact that affects the legitimacy of the procedures. Cornwall (2008) makes a critique on the procedures of policy-making, arguing that “the most ‘participatory’ of participatory policy interventions involves at best a process of consultation that seeks to draw together information gathered from the public to present to policy-makers” (2008, p.13). Invoking the need for clarity in the participation processes per location and context, within the embedded sociopolitical dynamics, she states that there is a need “for an approach that regards participation as an inherently political process rather than a technique” (2008, p.14).

Within the energy transition contexts, fatigue or objection to participation is commonly expressed through NIMBYism (Not-in-my-Backyard). Devine-Wright (2009), invoking psychological aspects that refer

to place attachment, place identity, and place disruption, describes NIMBYism as “the protectionist attitudes of and oppositional tactics adopted by community groups facing an unwelcome development in their neighborhoods” (2009, p.5). Furthermore, public engagement initiatives may be hampered by the pre-established power dynamics in decision-making, leading to trade-offs like lack of efficiency in decision-making (Xuan, 2023). Without a doubt, certain decision-making strategies that exclude civil society from participating, lead to a lessening of the public’s acceptance and appreciation of energy transition strategies; Wolsink (1994) highlights that the opposition is greatest during the planning stages of a local project, and weaker right before or after it has been realized. Thus, it is implied that the actual realization has less gravity than the decision-making process itself. In general, Akerboom (2008) invokes that participation requires equal access to information by all the engaged actors. This information includes data, reports, advice, and (technical) information that needs to be translated so that it can be interpreted by everyone. Thus, limited input during concept decisions raises the chances for negative attitudes and fatigue on behalf of civil society. It can be argued that there is a need to combat participation fatigue and establish active participation as a major instrument during decision and policy-making, to achieve just transitions and overcome the barriers that produce energy poverty.

2.4.3 Participation in Planning and Policy-Making for Just Energy Transitions

Public participation is considered crucial for the development of efficient and effective sustainable energy policies, as it provides openness in the processes while ensuring the facilitation of the different stakeholders’ interests and goals (Xuan, 2023). Mey et al. (2023) underline the value of legitimacy in participatory processes and its promotion through community involvement in policy measures that seek to achieve just transition outcomes. The authors highlight its creation through such collective and social procedures, that remain “subject to contingencies and conflict with context structures changing over time” (2022, p.1346), as various actors negotiate and struggle for control. Furthermore, trust and acceptability work in tandem during participatory processes. Liu et al. (2019) underline that the trust in agents responsible for renewable energy projects influences public acceptability, reflecting the extent to which the public evaluates the responsible agents for trustworthiness. In contrast, when people have lower trust in responsible agents, they tend to evaluate the projects as less acceptable. In any case, it has been proven that meaningful and active public engagement in decision-making, instead of simple consultation, leads to higher acceptability of a project, and higher trust in the actors, the procedures, and the outcomes (Liu et al., 2019).

Regarding public engagement in energy transition decision-making, Suboticki et al. (2023), categorize four main models that highlight the tenet of procedural justice: namely, “public consultation”, “co-creation”, “community energy”, and “ecologies and collectives of participation”.

a. Public consultation

In this category, the public engagement in energy transitions remains at the level of consulting and informing groups of civil society, without actively including them in the decision-making. In such cases, the engagement processes do not give the public any authority on the outcome. Mulally et al. (2018) discussing the consultation-participation processes during Environmental Policy Integration in Ireland, refer to “top-down models, with information, education and market-based instruments being the preferred tools for ensuring public compliance with policy objectives entailing minimal organizational change” (2018, p.5). This form leads to meaningless participation, while policy-makers fail to capture the local communities’ actual needs (Batidzirai et al. 2021). The lack of transparency and information concealment reduces the opportunity to impact outcomes and thus includes the public in decision-making. Fraune & Knodt (2017) describe distrust to be reported as a problem at the regional and local policy-making levels: “The opponents expressed distrust in the state government because they felt some

of its representatives were playing a double game” (2017, p.267). Moreover, strategies with predefined outcomes discourage public engagement, hindering procedural justice. For example, Alvial-Palavicino and Opazo-Bunster (2018) referring to a future energy policy-making context in Chile, discuss the way political commitments of the committee and pre-established techno-economical scenarios, limited the willingness of more diverse actors, such as key NGOs, to actively participate in decision-making procedures.

Suboticki et al. (2023) assert that framing citizen engagement merely as public acceptance and employing engagement mechanisms that remain limited to the level of information sharing and consultation cannot be considered procedurally just (p.5). They highlight that under certain circumstances, public consultation can lead to meaningful participation, but yet, it retains a vague connection with mechanisms that can ensure procedural justice.

b. Co-creation

Co-creation, and relevant notions such as co-production, co-design, living labs, experiments, and participatory research, promote equality among the engaged participants over the control of the process and the power to define the outcomes of the processes (Suboticki et al., 2023). Recent academic work underlines the social innovation that is promoted through such co-creation initiatives and urban living labs, in contrast to early approaches, where such processes were regarded as “test beds for technological innovation” (Frantzeskaki et al., 2018, p.1046). Elkjær et al. (2021) highlight how co-creation moves beyond traditional participation methods, suggesting an approach that “can be more sensitive to—and better include—different interests and values” (p.6). The authors discuss that the focus should be given to “how actors actively shape technologies, procedures, and other elements to fit better with their reality” (2023, p.7), looking beyond the usual actor listings within the social acceptance literature contexts, such as supporters, resisters, adopters, consumers, and users. Suboticki et al. (2023) suggest that an analysis of participant actors in co-creation processes can spotlight the engagement of “both incumbent and alternative actors” (p.6), highlighting that the co-creation process is ever-changing. Galende-Sanchez & Sorman (2021), invoking the “representativeness crisis” within democratic institutions, suggest co-production as new approaches in decision-making, particularly toward knowledge-making for “urgent and global challenges that deserve holistic thinking and systemic acting with a long-term perspective” (p.2).

Although co-creation is considered one of the most inclusive methods of participation, several issues can arise during its practice. Such issues can refer to the lack of adequate information for the participants during the processes that render them more passive than active decision-makers or are dominated by pre-established expertise-driven strategies that limit the development of new ways of thinking (O’Connor et al., 2021). The implementation of co-design and living labs in highly geographically specific areas (Frantzeskaki et al., 2018), can also lead to the exclusion of certain civil society groups, while Fitzgibbons and Mitchell (2021) underline as a major challenge the creation of fertile soil for cooperation between planners and marginalized disempowered communities. Lowitzsch and Hanke (2019) discuss that the per se characteristics of vulnerable communities, such as age, gender, income, health, ethnicity, religion, and political orientation, can be eliminated by decision-making processes, within the established energy and housing market systems. In total, Suboticki et al. (2023), acknowledge that co-creation is hindered and challenged by several limitations, but can be recognized as a more inclusive form of engagement in decision-making, since “co-creation mechanisms cater to more public influence but are difficult to implement in practice” (p.8). Thus, the procedural justice aspects are not extensively considered, which leads to the exclusion of certain people, or inadequate inclusion.

c. Community energy

This category refers to “the bottom-up initiatives or approaches to decision-making where local communities design and develop their approach to energy transitions” (Suboticki, 2021, p.6.). Seygang & Smith (2007) state that locally rooted action generates socially embedded changes in behavior since the

principal requirement among these is the active citizens and strong local democratic institutions to 'own' and embody sustainable development. Thus, community energy initiatives can promote and combine the need for both sustainable energy behavior and community engagement among its members (Sloot et al., 2019). Moreover, Kim (2017) states that community initiatives also complement central governments' efforts to achieve national sustainability strategies. Simultaneously, through such initiatives, the decentralization of the energy systems of production, management and distribution is promoted, rendering the community members "from consumers to active prosumers (producers and consumers of energy)" (Coy et al., 2021, p.2).

However, internal clashes can arise within such community initiatives, where vulnerable groups or certain members, such as women, elder members, or children, can be excluded by the processes. In this way, discriminatory, or patriarchal community structure paradigms can be reproduced, hindering equity during the decision-making processes (Mang-Bena, 2021), while losing its initial societal value.

Suboticki et al. (2021) summarize that community energy is mainly understood as a bottom-up and citizen-led form of public engagement that promotes "opportunities for self-inclusion and a shift of power relations in energy transitions" (p.6). Lastly, the authors highlight those procedural difficulties such as unequal power relations, are revealed through certain mechanisms that these initiatives operate.

d. Ecologies and collectives of participation

Within this category, it is expressed that public engagement needs to move beyond individualistic approaches in engagement events and encompass a wider set of interrelated forms of participation (Suboticki et al., 2021). Therefore, it "challenges mainstream approaches which build on fixed, pre-given meanings of what it means to participate" (Suboticki et al., 2021, p.7). According to Chilvers et al. (2018), an ecological conception of public engagement suggests that it is impossible to fully capture any one collective of participation "without understanding its relational interdependence with other collective participatory practices, technologies of participation, spaces of negotiation and the cultural political settings in which they become established" (2018, p.3). In this context, the subjects (including participating publics), the objects (issues or material devices), and the models (political ontologies or formats) of participation are actively co-produced during the collective participatory practices, instead of being predefined or pre-established. For example, Skjølsvold et al. (2018) discussing a Norwegian PV pilot project, highlight the engaged households' attempt to 're-orchestrate' the engagement forms established by the project. Specifically, instead of accepting the pilot project as an experimental, technologically-driven initiative, the residents re-established their role in the project as active, visible participants, promoting politically induced dialogues among the tenants toward new forms of electricity production, while reshaping the goal of the project. Within such contexts, participation is closely related to concepts of energy democracy and energy citizenship, which view public engagement as major input during energy policy-making and energy transitions (Szulecki, 2017).

The ecologies and collectives of engagement give a more encompassing perspective on how citizen involvement should be facilitated in energy transition decision-making and ventures, compared to the other three types, which may be seen as constitutive of energy democracy and citizenship (Suboticki et al., 2021). Within such a context, procedural justice is "not only a matter of individual engagement mechanisms but needs to be viewed within a wider set of engagement mechanisms/ efforts/activities" (2021, p.7).

2.5 Towards Just Energy Transitions in Urban Planning.

The literature review on the levels of participation in decision and policy-making for just energy transitions reveals that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution when it comes to civil participation, while even the most well-intended methods can lead to negative results, or produce friction within civil society

groups. In such contexts, vulnerable groups seem to be the usual victims of exclusion, even in the more inclusive grass-roots initiatives. Moreover, most of such procedures seem to lack a solid structure or follow in-situ, non-structured formations, which might reduce their liability as a tool of decision-making within the established power relations and decision-making processes. Thus, it would be useful to extend the review to participatory theories, axioms, and models that revisit the status quo in the decision-making toward just energy transitions and can nourish tools for advanced and adjusted procedural justice, with a focus on the vulnerable groups of the civil society.

2.5.1 Energy Democracy

The term ‘energy democracy’ appeared in the literature during the previous decade, reflecting the growing politicization of energy governance and climate policy. It is widely regarded as a “process” that challenges energy incumbents through dispersed grassroots initiatives, an “outcome” towards a more distributed and decentralized energy system, and a “goal”, as an aspiring ideal future (Szulecki & Overland, 2020). One of the major prerequisites in the democratization of energy, is civil participation in energy transitions, both in a material way, through the decentralization of energy systems, and in a political manner, “as a means for enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of energy transformation processes” (Fraune, 2022, p.49). The activist interpretation of energy democracy is often opposed to the individualistic liberal prosumer (producer-consumer), and favors collective forms of production and participatory governance where individuals have a crucial role, not just as consumers but also as citizens, indirectly, by influencing other policy actors, or directly, “by consenting or refusing policy options in democratic decision-making processes” (Mullally et al., 2018, p.1).

Energy democracy, according to Burke & Stephens (2017), is a movement that aims at the destabilization of power relations, “reversing histories of dispossession, marginalization, and social and environmental injustices, and replacing monopolized fossil fuel energy systems with democratic and renewable structures” (2017, p.2). Being closely related to socio-technical transition theory, it represents an example of a “dealignment/realignment transition pathway, an ideal-type pathway for energy transition that develops in response to serious contextual pressures” (2017, p.3). The authors argue that this transition pathway entails a great presence of actors who have lost their trust and faith in existing governing structures (e.g. vulnerable groups), within new guiding principles, beliefs, and practices, and coexistence of multiple innovations, experimentation, while suggesting a shift towards locally managed systems. Furthermore, they categorize several goals of energy democracy, such as “Resist the dominant energy agenda”, “Reclaim the energy sector” and “Restructure the energy sector” (2017, p.5). In this latter category (shown in Table 1), we can detect values towards meaningful participation of vulnerable groups within the energy transitions, through the re-establishment of power relations, and the general prioritization of well-being, instead of profit-making.

Table 1. Energy democracy goals and intended outcomes. Source: Burke & Stephens, 2017

<p>Goals for energy democracy: Restructure the energy sector</p> <p>Intended outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy sector moves away from the profit motive. • Energy access and assets are shared broadly and community wealth-building is supported. • Energy systems are governed as a commons. • Community power and capacity to control energy systems strengthen. • Emphasis shifts from growth to well-being, sufficiency, and environmental quality. • Economic and political power is decentralized and distributed. • Capacity for energy planning increases.
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- Geopolitics of energy supports global cooperation and peace over competition and conflict.
- Solidarity, inclusion, and open, democratic participation advances.
- Workers, low-income communities, and communities of color hold central positions within energy systems.
- An understanding of the energy sector as interdependent within the natural environment pervades.

2.5.2 Asset-Based Community Development and Energy Transitions

Mathie & Cunningham (2003) describe the ABCD as a strategy for sustainable community-driven development, focused on community mobilization rather than institutional reform, linking community-driven initiatives to the macro environment and promoting a policy environment conducive to such initiatives. This development theory derives from Amartya Sen's (1999) translation of development as freedom, according to which, development should encompass five different types of freedom: political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security. In this context, Green & Haines (2016) illustrate that development cannot simply be reduced to growth in income or jobs but should be viewed as a much broader process that improves individuals' opportunities and quality of life. Kretzman & McKnight (1993) describe the ABCD as an approach within which powerful communities can be built by the capacities of local people and their associations. The theory is constituted of five main elements: "Appreciative Inquiry", "Social Capital", "Participatory Approaches", "Community Economic Development" and the "Civil Society" (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003, p.482). These assets are promoted and built by local groups, or community-based organizations (Green & Haines, 2016), which play a major role in the ABCD. The participation element suggests that the strengths of all individuals are valued and legitimated through their equal and active participation, irrespective of power imbalances while ensuring that the process is locally controlled, and community-driven" (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003, p.482).

Within the context of energy transition decision-making, Feldhoff (2016), describes that the ABCD model promotes the localization of policymaking by concentrating on local assets and capacities of multiple actors for problem solutions. Simultaneously, it aims to switch from community marginalization to community strengthening, as legitimacy deficits are tackled through direct citizen involvement (Feldhoff, 2016). Mathie and Cunningham (2003), discussing the participatory challenges of ABCD models, argue that the opportunities to build confidence and 'occupy the space' for participation by vulnerable citizens are augmented through such proposed structures, since there is the ambition for the re-politicization of the processes, with "less involvement from the outside" (2003, p.10).

Therefore, it would be valid to further explore, at a later time in this research project, the potentials of enhanced energy democracy and citizenship and ABCD models, within mechanisms that enable the participation of vulnerable communities in their neighborhood and housing energy transition.

2.5.3 Triple-loop Learning

Triple-loop learning is a concept developed by Beirsto and Ruohotie (2003) and involves not only revising established theories of business but also generating processes to challenge those theories. The concept aims to confront an organization's employed mechanisms and initiate a process that challenges and changes the organization's existing business theories. It proposes a more comprehensive and transformative form of learning that leads to systemic change within an organization. Jenny Stenberg (2018) analyzed the dilemmas associated with tenant participation in the renovation of housing in marginalized areas in Sweden. In this example, she categorized the process of consultation employed by the housing companies, as tokenism, that "it only asks tenants what they want in extremely tight

frameworks sometimes without even acknowledging what the framework is when the dialogue is in progress” (Stenberg, 2018, p.21). Stenberg applied the triple-loop theory to understand how tenants can be inducted into concepts that will allow them to gain knowledge and power:

The course implemented to empower tenants highlighted the importance of teaching tenants the exact meaning of all the concepts used in consultation on renovation and of doing so in their mother tongues, as the concepts are difficult to understand. If the goal is to transfer power to the tenants, this is a necessary condition, as knowledge of the concepts empowers them. (Stenberg, 2018 p.17)

In this way, Stenberg proposes that the tenants will be capable of acting, and reacting, within top-down complex processes entailing expert-level jargon, while communicating efficiently with the high-rank stakeholders. This approach aims to lead to a shift of power that benefits tenants and to modify the processes used during renovations while acknowledging that consultation models’ goals should be the “opening of black boxes” if their honest intention is the residents’ empowerment.

Research Design and Methodology

Following the theoretical review of participation in urban planning for just energy transitions, I perform empirical research. To examine the role and levels of participation of vulnerable residents in such transitions, I set a specific geographic area under the microscope.

3.1 Case Study

I contextualize the area of my research fieldwork on a specific urban neighborhood, whose members are highly susceptible to energy vulnerability and energy poverty. This is the quarter of Hoptille, in the neighborhood of H-Buurt, in Southeast Amsterdam. My case refers to an apartment complex that recently received energy-saving interventions to provide its residents with greater living comfort. This project was implemented as an immediate solution to the apartments' numerous problems, as the discussions for the total redevelopment of the complex had already begun by the owner-housing corporation. In my research project, I elaborate on these two projects.

To delve into this case, I applied my main data collection methods, which are desk research, semi-structured interviews, and discussions. The flow of the desk research and the content of the discussions were dictated by the following analytical frameworks.

3.2 Analytical Frameworks

For my research project, I employed two analytical frameworks: First, the Neighborhood Arrangements Framework allowed me to grasp the embedded parameters that encircle the overall venture in the area, outlining the context under investigation. Then, with the Participation Analysis Framework, I attempted to capture the levels of participation of the different stakeholders engaged in the procedures of decision-making and implementation of the respective energy transition and redevelopment strategies.

3.2.1 Neighborhood Arrangements Framework

This initial analytical framework allowed the systematic analysis of the contextual parameters that dictate the processes of decision and policy-making in the local energy transition strategy. The 'Neighborhood Arrangements' framework (Figure 1), inspired by Hajer et al. (2021), constitutes a tool to investigate "the policy arrangements that underpin successful retrofits or newly built environments" (p.34). It consists of four parameters: rules, resources, actors, and discourses. The framework facilitates the discovery and capture of the transformations occurring in urban neighborhoods, both from an ecological/urban-metabolism perspective and from a normative one. For the requirements of my research, I adjusted the terminology of these parameters, and the sequence of their examination, as described below.

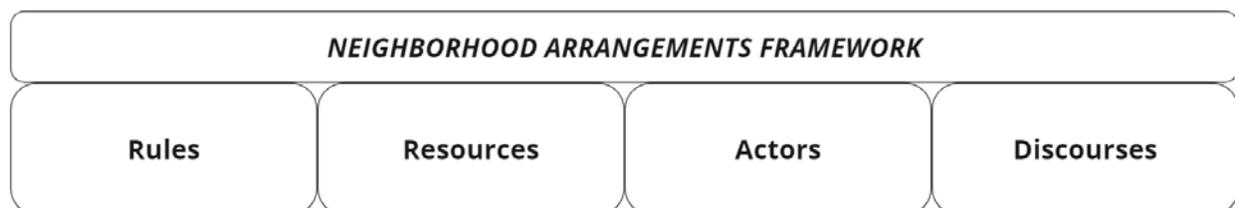


Figure 1. The Neighborhood Arrangements Framework. Source: Author

- The parameter of "rules" refers to the ongoing policies, strategies, and decisions that dictate the implementation of a transition. It entails their structure, assets, rigid or open-ended character,

and level of flexibility regarding the inclusion of local actors for their adaptation and implementation according to a specific context.

- The “resources” refer to the neighborhood value chains and the financial sustainability of a transition. It pertains to the economic and profit aspects of a strategy, and it affects all the actors and stages of a venture.
- The “actors” include the varying stakeholders that are involved in the planning and implementation of a policy or strategy.
- The “discourses” refer to values and perceptions of the actors, about common themes, in our case ‘energy transitions’. It implies ideals, visions, goals, or expectations from the *outcomes* of these established concepts or strategies.

3.2.2 Participation Analysis Framework

As suggested by Jones & Kardan (2013), the “Participation Analysis” framework (Figure 2) provides the opportunity to delve into the many levels of participation that occur in the decision-making of a development project.



Figure 2. The Participation Analysis Framework according to Jones and Kardan. Source: Jones & Kardan (2013)

- The “category of participation” refers to cases of design, policy-making, decision-making, budgeting, or planning.
- The “form of participation” refers to the level of participation, indicated by established processes and activities such as consultancy, information, hearings, activism, etc.
- “Who participates” pertains to the actors and stakeholders that are engaged in the processes.
- “The motives for participation” refer to the actors' motivation to actively engage in participation processes.
- The conditions for effective participation imply the extent to which the preconditions for each form of participation are secured. Processes are more likely to be effective if e.g. adequate information and resources are provided in the case of consultation or co-design.
- The results of participation include the level at which the process fulfills its existence, attaining, for example, “better alignment with local needs and priorities, improvements in the quality and accountability for service provision, or broader social learning in addressing complex challenges” (Jones & Kardan, 2013, p.16).

Inspired by the above-mentioned framework, I synthesize a new framework (Figure 3) for the analysis of participation, since certain tenets of the Jones & Kardan (2013) framework have already been approached in the Neighborhood Arrangements Framework. By analyzing the forms, levels, motives in participation, and the established power relations between the different actors, I aim to discuss the ways that legitimacy is attained through the participative processes.

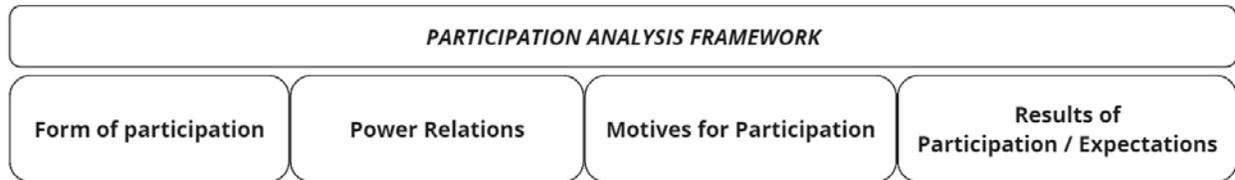


Figure 3. Scheme of the Simplified Participation Analysis Framework employed for this research project.
Source: Author

3.3 Research Sub-Questions

To facilitate the response to the main research question, I will elaborate on certain sub-questions:

SQ1. What is the normative context of the redevelopment and energy transition strategies?

SQ2. In what ways do the values of vulnerable residents on energy transitions clash, align, or are neglected, during the decision-making and implementation of the transition projects?

SQ3. To what extent does participation legitimize the decision-making processes for just energy transition and redevelopment projects?

To respond to the **SQ1**, I delved into the “rules” and “resources” and analyzed the local energy transition and redevelopment strategies, within its broader policy, planning, and implementation context, and its financial aspects. To answer the **SQ2**, I analyzed the “actors” and “discourses”. In this way, I categorized the interests, goals, and values of each stakeholder, and captured the ways they correlate or clash, during the planning and implementation of the energy transition. To respond to the **SQ3**, I elaborated on the power relations between the actors and aimed to detect the level of participation in the energy transition processes and the decision-making in the ongoing energy transitions. Thus, I employed the second analytical framework that focuses on the measurement and assessment of procedural justice.

3.4 Data Collection

The two frameworks propose a holistic approach to the context and the procedures of decision-making and implementation of the discussed energy transition strategy. Their origin is found in socio-ecological systems frameworks. As illustrated by Teladia and van der Windt (2022), such frameworks can “capture local nuances, explain the role and degree of citizen participation in different contexts and areas of participation, and that will allow community energy initiatives to benchmark their participation levels about ‘others’ and their change over time” (2022, p.3). Thus, the tiers of these frameworks require tailored methodology during their implementation. This methodology includes pathways such as the “*Critical Discourse Analysis*” (MacCallum et al., 2019, p.196), which helps us ‘pill’ the many layers of an issue through desk review, and “Focus group research” (MacCallum et al., 2019), through which certain social groups are set under examination. Their parameters defined the approach needed in terms of interview context and discussion.

3.4.1 Data Collection Following the “Neighborhood Arrangements” Framework Structure

For the “rules” and “resources” parameters, I performed desk research on the Hoptille strategy through the Internet and press sources, while through semi-structured interviews with planners and municipality members, I managed to grasp further perspectives about the design and implementation of the strategy. For the “actors” parameters, I categorized the various engaged groups and stakeholders, after desk research, and discussions with members from the municipality of Amsterdam and the Energy Lab Zuidoost. For the parameter of “discourses”, I captured the actors’ values, via semi-structured interviews, discussions, and attendance at sessions and workshops. For this reason, it was required to

have a tailored structure for the interviews and discussions according to each actor's role and engagement in the respective projects.

3.4.2 Data Collection Following the “Participation Analysis” Framework Structure

To investigate the aspects and categories proposed by this framework, I conducted semi-structured interviews and discussions with the engaged actors and stakeholders and aimed to capture the form of inclusion, the power relations, the gravity of each voice, and the motivations of participation in the decision-making processes. Furthermore, attending information sessions, workshops, and volunteering work in Southeast Amsterdam, allowed me to grasp an overall picture of the decision-making and implementation of the transitive projects at Hoptille and the broader area.

3.5 Scoping

Embarking on this research project, I conducted a preliminary literature review on the associated themes, to detect the depth of academic work available to support my research and allow me to render my results relevant to academia. An investigation of published thesis projects, both in the repository of Utrecht University and in the databases of different Dutch Universities was necessary to ensure the originality of my approach to the specific case in Southeast Amsterdam. As an intern at Energy Lab Zuidoost, this process was essential to produce novel literature on the domain of energy transitions in the area.

Before I visited the research field of the Hoptille neighborhood in Southeast Amsterdam, I consulted with members of the municipality and the Energy Lab Zuidoost, to receive guidance regarding the methods that best suit my research, and to acquire information about the individuals that I should approach for each engaged party. In this way, I set a clear course to achieve the goals of this research, while averting barriers during my fieldwork relating to participation fatigue that exists in the area. In this way, I avoided stepping past the limitations of the residents’ willingness to participate, so that I would maintain an ethical and professional relationship during my research fieldwork.

3.6 Reading Guide

The following scheme (Figure 4) illustrates the sequence according to which the results of the analyzed collected material on the Hoptille case are going to be presented. These results will facilitate the response to the research sub-questions, and finally the main research question of this project.

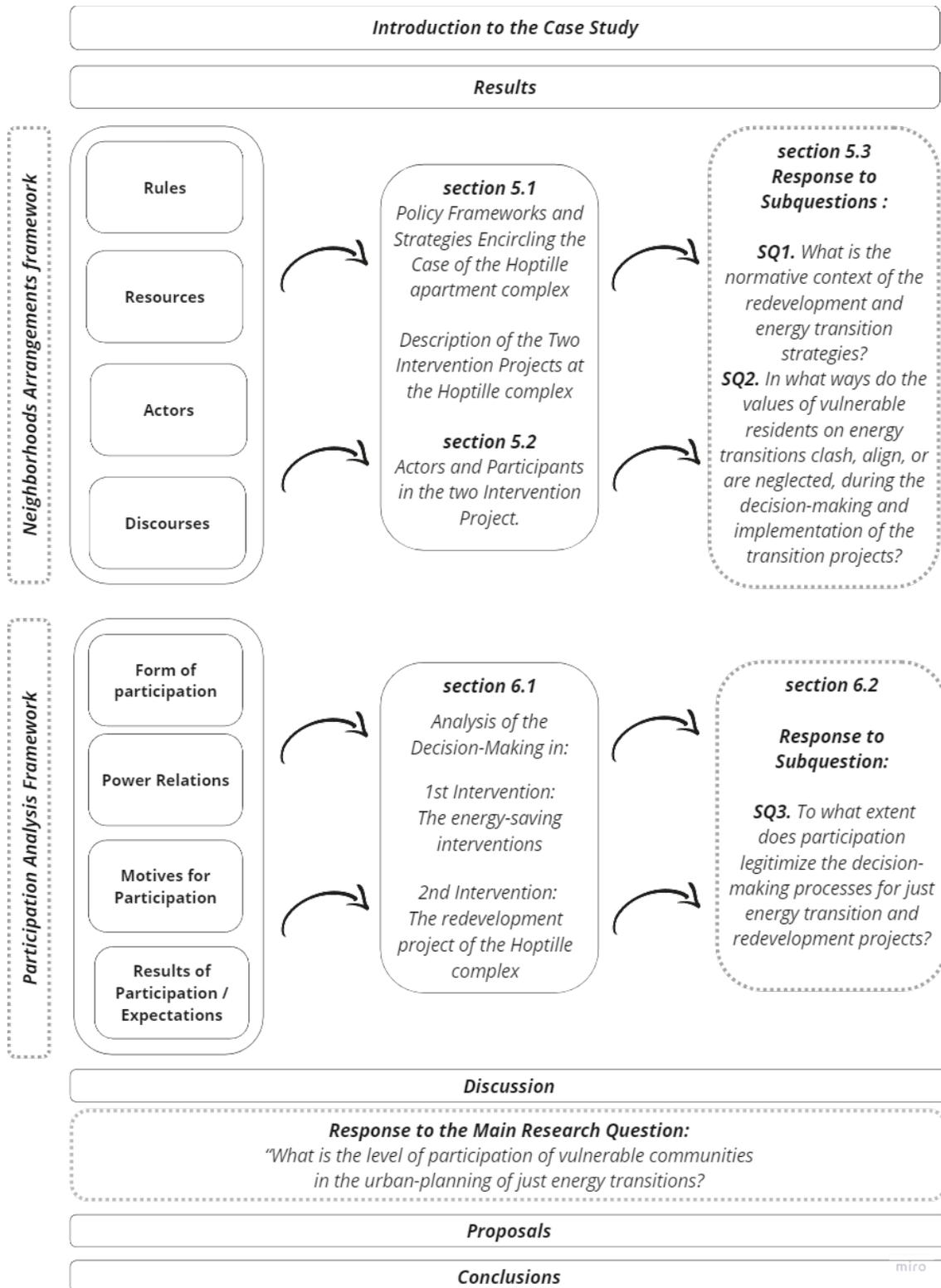


Figure 4. Reading guide of the results and discussions sections. Source: Author

Introduction to the Case Study

4.1 Energy Poverty in the City of Amsterdam

The report on energy poverty published by the municipality of Amsterdam (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2022), describes that approximately 43,000 households in Amsterdam are subjected to energy poverty, 92% of which are considered to be of low-income status. This ratio implies that 9% of the city's households spend more than 10% of their income on energy costs. According to the Spring 2021 data (Figure 5), it is stated that the central, northern, and southern parts of the city have the highest energy expenses, with 124 euros per month for central Amsterdam, 123 euros for the North, and 121 euros per month for the South. Although the energy costs in the area of Southeast Amsterdam are on the urban average, the great accumulation of low-income households raises the ratio of energy poverty.

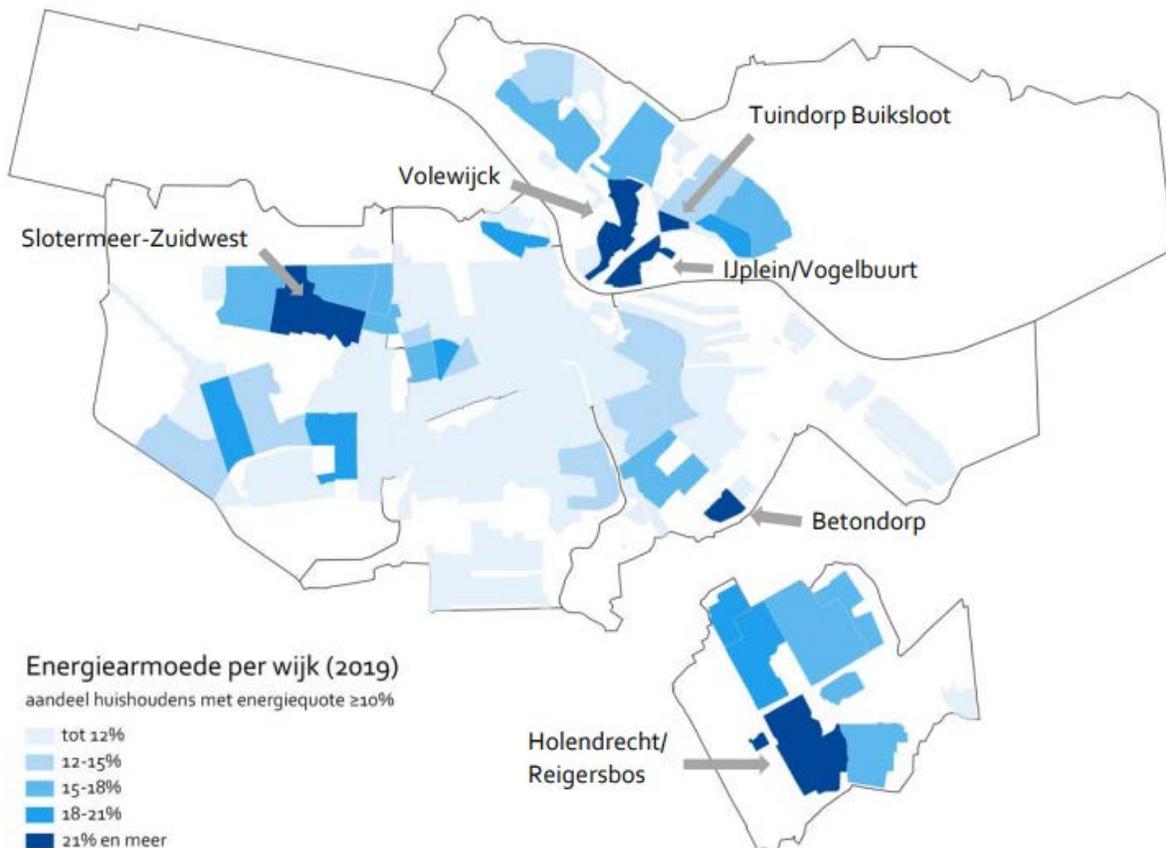


Figure 5. The energy poverty per neighborhood in Amsterdam. Southeast Amsterdam is located on the bottom-right of the map. Source: Gemeente Amsterdam, 2022

4.2 Southeast Amsterdam

Southeast Amsterdam is a borough of Amsterdam, separated from the main city. It is comprised of four districts, that are divided into sub-neighborhoods: Amstel III/Bullewijk, Bijlmer Centrum (with neighborhoods D, F, H), Bijlmer Oost (with neighborhoods E, G, K), Driemond, Gein, and Nellestein (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2014). Located on the grounds of the former village of Bijlmermeer, or Bijlmer, the initial masterplan for the Southeast was conceived by the architect Siegfried Nassuth (Figure 6) and received the green light for its implementation in 1964. The plans referred to a new area for 100,000

residents, while the final plan presented in 1965 included 90% high-rise buildings and 10% low-rise (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2023). This “modern city of the future” was conceived as a response to the housing shortage in the Netherlands. However, in the 1970s, social issues appeared in the area that led to the demolition of several high-rise blocks. The area started receiving a negative reputation, with soaring crime, as vulnerable social groups, attracted to the area’s low-rent and social housing accommodations accumulated (Zahirović & Sterk, 2019).

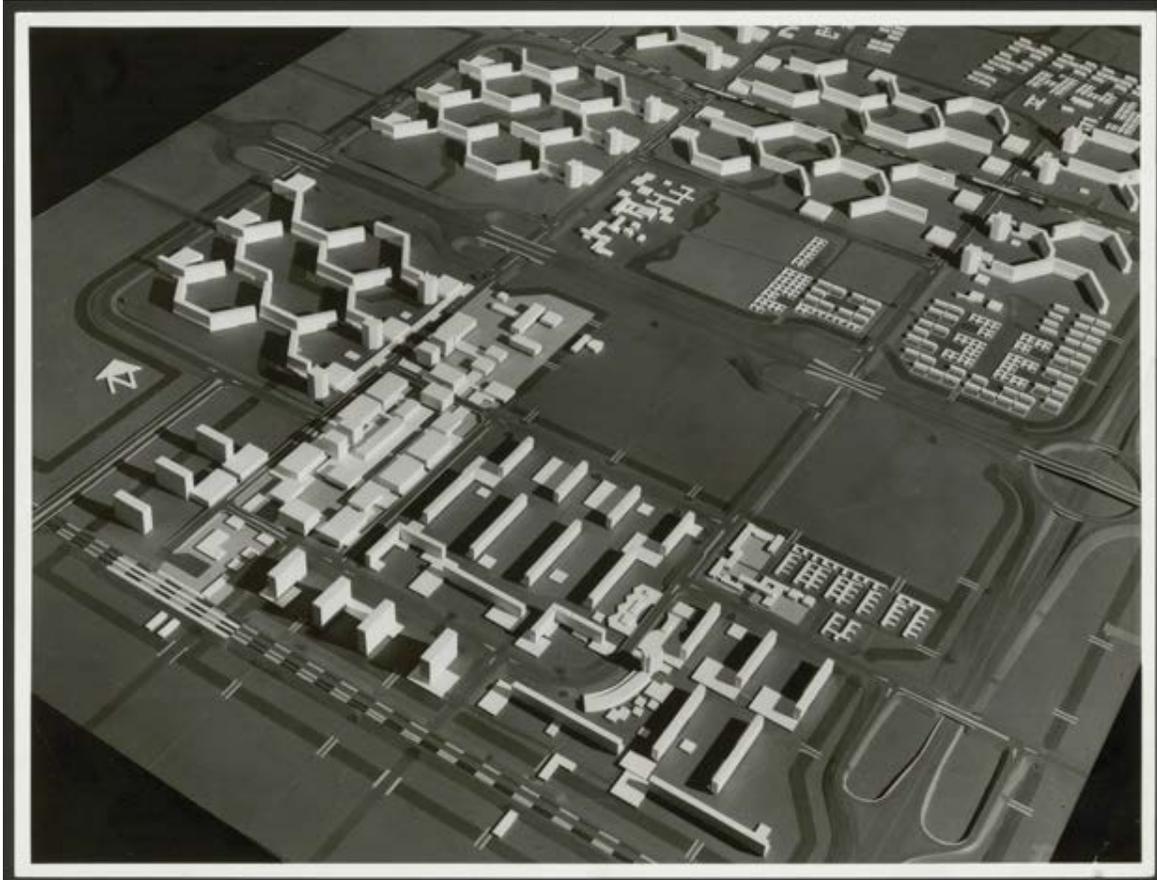


Figure 6. The initial model of the Bijlmer area. Source: Gemeente Amsterdam, 2023

Today, Southeast Amsterdam hosts a community with more than 170 different nationalities and is in the midst of a transformation: a master plan has been schematized, aiming at new developments in certain parts of the area, while rendering the area energy-neutral by 2040 (Nienhuis, 2024). Within the national and urban policy frameworks towards transitions for sustainability, certain formations for the collaboration of different stakeholders were created. Simultaneously, several independent projects have been initiated for the renovation and redevelopment of the housing capacity in the local neighborhoods.

4.3 The H-Buurt

The H Neighborhood or H-Buurt, consists of four sub-neighborhoods, namely the Hoptille, the Rechte H-buurt, the Huntum, and the Hakfort and Huigenbos (H&H). In my research, I will focus on two intervention projects at the Hoptille apartment complex (Figure 7), located in the Hoptille quarter of H-Buurt. The first one refers to the small-scale energy-saving interventions that took place for the energy

efficiency and living comfort of the complex's apartments. The second intervention refers to the ongoing planning processes for the redevelopment of the Hoptille apartment complex.

The residents of the Hoptille Quarter

The Hoptille quarter is home to 1945 residents (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2023a), the majority of whom are between the ages of 25 to 45 years old (770 individuals), although many vulnerable residents aged over 65 years old also live in the Hoptille neighborhood. The majority of the residents are Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese, and Antilles, and their education levels are considered middle and low (Tjin, 2022). Hoptille is home to 1500 income recipients (working and non-working citizens), with the average standardized household income amounting to 26.400 euros per household (Tjin, 2022). These income levels are considered low if we consider that the national average household income is 33.500 euros (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2023b). A significant number of the residents rely on subsidies and benefits for unemployment, incapability, and pensions (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2023a). The average household electricity consumption differs per type of accommodation. For the apartments of the complex, this amounts to 1790 kWh, for terraced houses at 2520 kWh, and for corner houses at 1870 kWh. These numbers are considered low compared to the average consumption of an Amsterdam household, which is 2760 kWh (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2023c). Assets such as these reinforce the notion that the Hoptille residents compose a community vulnerable to energy poverty.



Figure 7. The apartment complex of Hoptille. Source: Spoormans, 2023

Results

The results from the analyzed material according to the two analytical frameworks are presented in sections 5 and 6. Section 5 includes the results from the analysis according to the Neighborhood Arrangements Framework, which are categorized according to the tenets of the framework - namely, the Rules and Resources (section 5.1), and the Actors and Discourses (section 5.2). In section 6, the results from the analysis according to the Participation Analysis Framework will be presented in two categories, each for every intervention project that took place at the Hoptille apartment complex (6.1.1 and 6.1.2). Finally, in section 6.3, a different case study of energy interventions that took place in the H-Buurt of Southeast Amsterdam will be shortly discussed, based on the two analytical frameworks. This additional case provides information invaluable for receiving a holistic view of the local ongoing transformative projects.

5.1 Rules and Resources: Policies and Strategies Encircling the Hoptille Case

Followingly, the frames of planning and implementation of the interventions at the Hoptille apartment complex will be presented, providing information that responds to the research sub-question:

SQ1. What is the normative context of the redevelopment and energy transition strategies?

The section commences by introducing the national and regional levels of policies that apply in Southeast Amsterdam. Zooming into the H-Buurt (neighborhood), the strategies for the energy-label upgrade and redevelopment of the Hoptille apartment complex are introduced. The profiles of the engaged actors referred to in these paragraphs are illustrated in section 5.2.

5.1.1 The Regional and Urban Policy Frameworks of Southeast Amsterdam

The National Frameworks Towards Energy Transitions

On a national scale, the Dutch government introduced the Klimaatakkoord (Ministerie van Economische Zaken en Klimaat, 2020), following the 2015 Paris Agreement (United Nations, 2015), and set the goal for the reduction of CO₂ emissions by 49% in 2030, and 95% by 2050, compared to the levels recorded in 1990. To achieve these goals, more than 100 parties from the private and public sector, as well as from civil society, created a package of measures in 2019, focusing on reduction of the energy bills taxation, sustainable energy storage, and the promotion of electric car use (Ministerie van Economische Zaken en Klimaat, 2020). The domains that are included in these measures refer to electricity, industry, mobility, the built environment, agriculture, and land use. Thus, multisectoral action is required, bringing to the epicenter the need for innovation, transitions in the labor market, and financial support of emerging sustainability projects.

The transitions in the building sector propose the natural gas phase-out of 7 million homes and an extra 1 million of various buildings (Ministerie van Economische Zaken en Klimaat, 2020). The short-term goal aims at the transition of 1.5 million homes by 2030, within transition processes that will take place on a neighborhood scale. Already 64 municipalities have joined these transitions, with the government making available 435 million euros until 2028 (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, n.d.). Thus, local governance has a central role in these transitions (Ministerie van Economische Zaken en Klimaat, 2020a). The Klimaatakkoord promotes the use of participation strategies on behalf of the municipalities (Ministerie van Economische Zaken en Klimaat, 2020b) with the neighborhoods in transition. This implies the collaboration between the municipality, energy companies, renovation and development firms, and civil society, toward the conceptualization and implementation of the best solution, according to the assets of each terrain. Within these terms, the municipalities are responsible for defining which neighborhoods should first enter these transitions. Simultaneously, pilot projects will be initiated, in order to test the

economic feasibility of these ventures per district, while creating a standardization in the implementation processes. Moreover, any new construction will not be allowed to be connected to a gas network, unless there is no alternative solution. Regarding the rental housing sector, it is highlighted that several financing incentives, such as heating funding, energy loans, and subsidies will be provided to different target groups (Ministerie van Economische Zaken en Klimaat, 2022), while gas taxation will be increased, and energy taxation decreased. In this context, agreements have already been made with the housing corporations, for the transitions of homes that belong to the social housing rental sector.

Energy Transitions in the City of Amsterdam

Within these regional frameworks, the municipality of Amsterdam created a separate strategy, called the “Routekaart”, or the “Roadmap” (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2020a). In a nutshell, this strategy includes separate measures for the different sections of the Klimaatakkoord and aims at an overall reduction of 48% of CO2 emissions by 2030, 29% of which refers to the building sector. The district-by-district approach is promoted in a city-wide systematic approach within the scheme of “City Deal” (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2020b). The basis of the “City Deal” strategy (Figure 8) is the “TransitieVisie Warmte”, or “Heat Transition Vision” (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2020b), which determines the period during which the city’s neighborhoods will go gas-neutral, while indicating the proper alternative heat supply (Figure 9). This strategy aims at the phase-out from natural gas, by adapting to the contextual parameters of each neighborhood, and introducing the WAM model (Wijken Aardgasvrij Maken), which promotes the close collaboration of the engaged stakeholders during the decision-making processes. Therefore, within the “City Deal” strategy, private-sector stakeholders, neighborhood social organizations, and residents discuss with the municipality about the imminent gas transitions. Effective communication between the different stakeholders and the residents is among the main concepts that permeate this strategy, as it seeks the most suitable solution, with better-informed and active residents during the planning and implementation of these transitions. Accordingly, housing associations and energy companies collaborate with the municipality of Amsterdam, for the transitions of around 110.000 homes that are located close to heating networks, providing the residents with affordable, gas-free heating solutions.

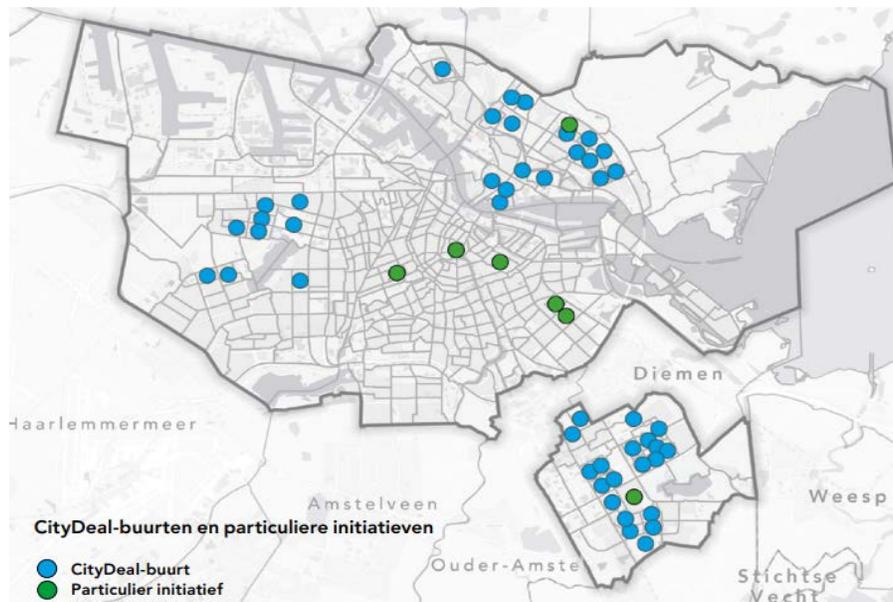


Figure 8. Neighborhoods of Southeast Amsterdam (bottom-right) are included in the City Deal strategy. Source: Gemeente Amsterdam, 2020b

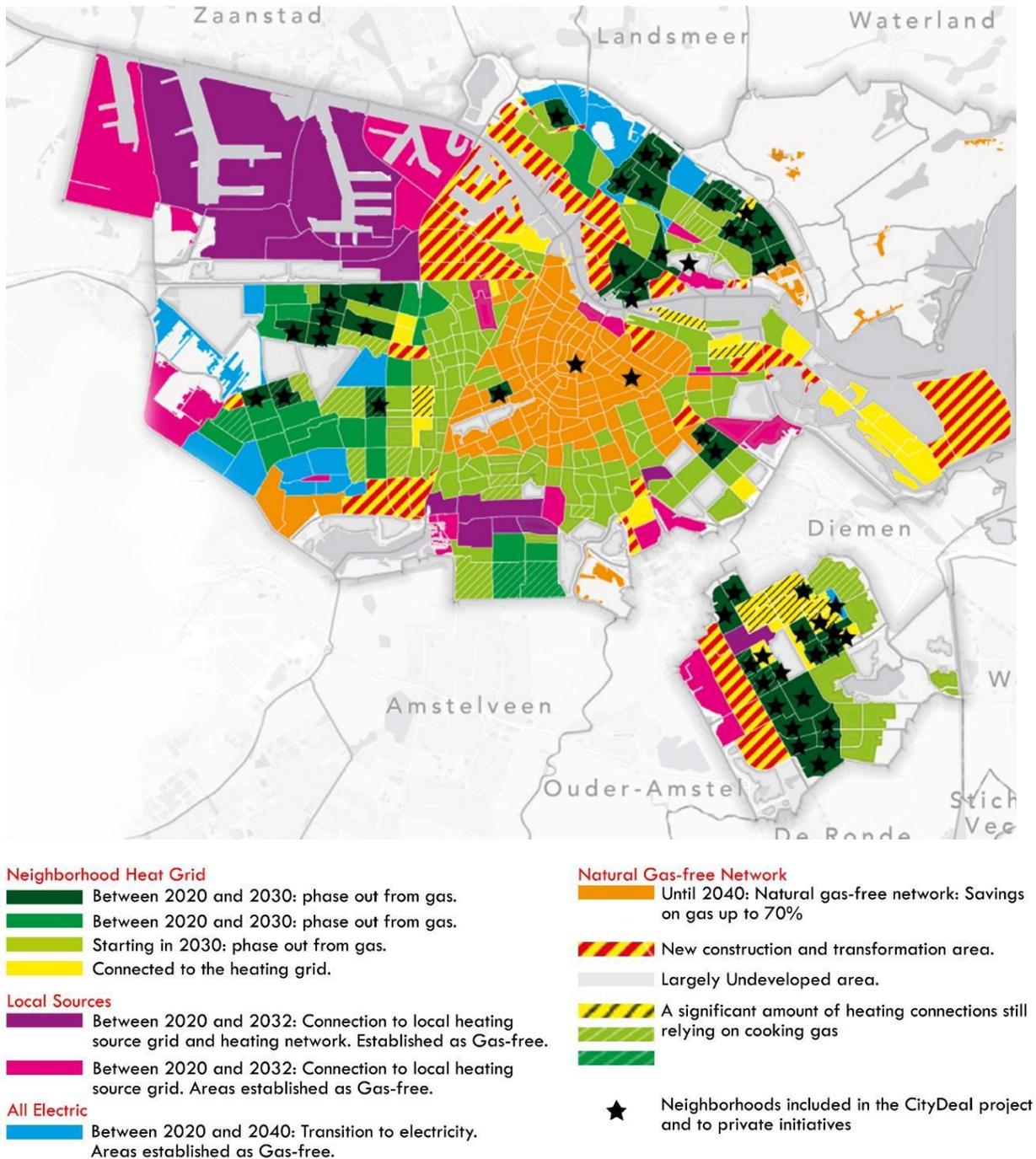


Figure 9. The Heat Transition Vision 2040 of Amsterdam. Source: Gemeente Amsterdam, 2020b

The Energy Vision of Southeast Amsterdam

The vision for an energy-neutral Southeast Amsterdam (Nienhuis, 2024) proposes a holistic socio-technical transition that combines solutions towards sustainability and reduction of energy poverty. Concerning the local housing capacity, the plan proposes the renovation of 35.000 homes with low energy labels and poor insulation, and the development of stock, while there is an overall goal to invest in the

public space and improve the living environment. Moreover, it suggests the interconnection of the heat networks, and the effective use of the local waste heat produced by the area's industry, while promoting the generation of green energy, through solar panels, wind turbines, and green gas. Among these, the local biodiversity and landscape will be improved, and green infrastructure will be implemented as an aid to climate mitigation. Along with the Energy Vision 2040, a masterplan was established in Southeast Amsterdam (Alliantie Zuidoost, 2021), aiming for improvements of the existing housing supply, endorsing employment, and education, with a focus on "building an inclusive and diverse society" (2021, p.5). The masterplans' main themes of participation, education, safety, housing, and employment are followed by certain sub-strategies, that foster the collaboration of the different stakeholders with residents (Municipality member #1, interview, March 5th, 2024).

The locals react

Although the above-mentioned masterplan stimulates the participation of several stakeholders from different domains and expertise, local community groups are questioning the character of the 2040 vision. During meetings that began in the summer of 2023, the Blueprint Manifesto was formed (Initiatiefgroep Masterplan Zuidoost Community, 2023), where criticism has been posed against the top-down character of the masterplan in Southeast Amsterdam. Within this document, there is a call for more 'thinking along' with the community through meaningful collaboration, co-creation, as well as co-ownership of local initiatives. The meetings of the local groups continue as of today (1104 Enzo, 2024), aiming at conveying their manifesto to the rest of the engaged stakeholders and redirecting the character of the 2040 vision masterplan.

5.1.2 The Intervention Projects at the Hoptille Apartment Complex.

The interventions at the Hoptille apartment complex in H-Buurt of Southeast Amsterdam are introduced in this section. These refer to two projects for the improvement of the living environment and the energy performance of the apartment complex, adhering to the local strategies. The two projects differ in scale, type of intervention, as well as planning, and execution method.

The Hoptille Apartment Complex

The Hoptille apartment complex consists of a middle-rise 385-meter-long wing of apartments. The complex was constructed in 1981/1982 (Plan Viewer, 2024), as a response to the extensive high-rise building of the Bijlmer area, and the general lack of housing supply. The intention was to provide an experimental model of co-living, by mixing different social groups, such as former prisoners, students, ex-psychiatric patients, and residents with foreign origins (Bijlmer Museum, 2017).

Within two years after its creation, the Hoptille turned into a no-go spot (Bijlmer Museum, 2017). The design of the apartment complex included multiple entrances and long corridors that created the perfect hiding spots for criminals. A few years later, several modifications were made to the building which blocked the corridors on the different staircases, providing separate staircases to their apartments. Reconstruction of the apartments followed, with rearrangements of the set-ups and sizes. The multiple interventions and the poor material of the initial construction caused several malfunctions in the piping and sewage system of the building.

The continuous problems of the complex and the complaints of the residents led the owner-housing corporation, Ymere, to initiate discussions for the redevelopment of the complex. However, having in mind that a redevelopment project would last several years until its materialization, the corporation first implemented a small-scale intervention project, as an answer for the direct improvement of the unhealthy and energy-devouring apartments.

1st Intervention: The Energy-Saving Interventions at Hoptille

This first, small-scale intervention comprised an immediate solution for a quick fix of major issues in the apartments of Hoptille. The housing corporation came into communication with the municipality of Amsterdam and initiated a co-funded program for the performance of small-scale interventions on the building (Municipality member #1, interview, May 21st, 2024). Such measures included applying draft strips, radiator foils, door brushes, switches of LED lamps, etc. The installation of energy-saving applications and materials in the apartments was assigned to Fro-Studio, an upcoming local group of energy coaches and technicians. The Fro-Studio planned and executed the assignment, working in close collaboration with another local initiative, the Groene Hub. In the meantime, another actor, the WOON Foundation, had a very important role in this intervention project, acting as a mediator between the residents and the housing corporation.

The interventions ended in December 2022 to January 2023, after significant delays in the timeline of the project. A feedback process followed the interventions, during which the residents pointed out the immediate changes in the comfort of their household, and their positive experience with the local team of experts visiting their apartments (Municipality member #1, interview, May 21st, 2024).

2nd Intervention: The redevelopment project at Hoptille

In 2021, the residents of Hoptille received a letter from the housing corporation, announcing the demolition and redevelopment of the apartment building, as well as the termination of the residents' rental agreements. According to municipal regulations, every housing corporation in Amsterdam must inform the affected tenants in case of major changes in their owned housing buildings. The owner-housing corporation Ymere plans to replace the existing apartment of Hoptille with a new building of 320 units, 246 of which will be in social rent, and 74 will be allocated for middle-income households. The project will take place in three phases, comprising an investment of around 50 million euros on behalf of the housing corporation (Ymere member #2, discussion, April 12th, 2024). Providing affordable social housing, while retaining the investment within the limits of efficiency is a challenge for the housing corporation (Ymere member #1, Interview, April 12th, 2024). At the same time, research is conducted on the construction strategy and materials for the new building, having to choose between reusing existing foundations and structural elements of the existing buildings, or opting for a completely new redevelopment. The final solution must comply with the restrictions regarding CO2 emissions per new construction, as indicated in the Energy Vision 2040 of Southeast (WOON Foundation member, discussion, April 2nd, 2024).

The project was initiated in 2021 and will last in total around 10 years, according to Ymere's estimations. In this period, the housing corporation aims to co-plan and co-design the new complex (Ymere member #1, interview, April 12th, 2024). Therefore, a collaboration model was established for the facilitation of communication between the residents, the housing corporation, and the engaged stakeholders. The process is indicated by the "Handbook of Renewing and Renovations" (Amsterdamse Federatie van Woning Corporation, 2020), presented in Figure 10 and Table 2.

The Handbook of Renewings and Renovations by the Amsterdam Federation of Housing Corporations (AFWC)

The handbook was introduced by the Amsterdam Federation of Housing Corporations (AFWC) in 2020, as a tool that promotes cooperation between the housing corporations and the tenants, during projects of renovations and redevelopments. The different background coloring of the three presented step-lines (Figure 10) indicates the sequential phases of such projects (the handbook diagram is incorporated in Appendix C, in a higher resolution analysis). These are the "orientation phase" (peach coloring), the "development phase" (light green coloring), and the "implementation phase" (blue coloring). The upper line (line 1, deep green-colored, Figure 10) refers to renovation projects where the

tenants retain their rental agreement, or in other words, their housing status remains the same before and after the intervention. The middle line (line 2, orange-colored) refers to renovation projects, including demolition and redevelopment of a housing building, without the retention of the rental agreement for the tenants. This implies that the newly built housing will include assets that substantially differ from the former condition, and thus, the tenants need to reorient their housing status. Finally, the lower line (gray-colored) (Figure 10) refers to a short process timeline, employed for interventions in small-scale housing complexes that include fewer than ten housing units.

The Hoptille redevelopment case refers to a project where, according to the housing corporation, the tenants' lease agreements are not going to be retained, as indicated by the 2nd line (orange colored) (Figure 10). In Table 2, the steps that need to be followed in such projects are presented.



Figure 10. The collaboration timeline and steps proposed in the Handbook of Renewings and Renovations (Appendix C). Source: Amsterdamse Federatie van Woning Corporaties, 2020

Table 2: The steps presented in the Handbook of Renewings and Renovations, by the Amsterdam Federation of Housing Corporations. Source: Amsterdamse Federatie van Woning Corporaties, 2020

PHASE	ORIENTATION PHASE
2.1	The housing corporation informs the tenants, the residents' committee (or the tenants' umbrella organization), and the municipality about the initial decision.
2.2	The corporation and the tenant umbrella organization are obliged to set up residents' committees, in projects where regular participation is required according to the framework.

2.3	In case no committee is formed, the consultation is organized with the tenants differently.
2.4	The tenants' association informs the residents' committee about its rights and obligations under the Framework Agreements.
2.5	The corporation facilitates the residents' committee in the implementation of its duties arising from the Consultation Act.
2.6	The residents' committee is entitled to professional and independent support during the process. The residents' committee selects the residents' support person and formulates the assignment in consultation with the corporation.
2.7	The corporation draws up a participation plan in consultation with the residents' committee containing the agreements about cooperation during the project.
2.8	The corporation conducts research into the housing wishes of the tenants, after consultation with the residents' committee.
2.9	The corporation informs the residents' committee, the tenants, and the tenant umbrella organization about the preferred scenario and substantiates choice for this scenario. In the case of a renovation without retention of the rental agreement, the corporation also makes an initial proposal for the social plan.
2.10	The corporation consults with the residents' committee about the preferred scenario.
2.11	The residents' committee has the option to express advice about the preferred scenario.
2.12	Depending on the preferred scenario, one of two processes continues with a. 'renovation with retention of the rental agreement', or b. 'renovation without retaining the rental agreement'.
PHASE	DEVELOPMENT PHASE - *Renovation/redevelopment without retention of the lease agreement (Middle/Red Line on the diagram of Figure10)
2.B.13	If the preferred scenario states that tenants can return to the complex, the participation plan additionally determines whether they can contribute ideas about the draft plan and, if so, how. In that case, they will be involved in the development phase as agreed.
2.B.14	The corporation consults with the residents' committee about the social plan.
2.B.15	The residents' committee will hold a residents' consultation on the social plan within 6 weeks of the advice period. The residents' committee selects a third, expert party in consultation with the corporation. If the residents' committee does not take on the residents' consultation, the corporation can take over the initiative. The results of the residents' consultation are added to the advice.
2.B.16	Within 6 weeks after it is informed, the residents' committee gives the corporation advice on the preferred scenario and the social plan.

2.B.17	The corporation will provide a written response within 2 weeks on the advice of the residents' committee.
2.B.18	The corporation can request the reference date after providing the written notice response to the advice.
2.B. 19	The municipality will issue the reference date within 6 weeks.
PHASE	EXECUTION PHASE
2.B.20	The housing corporation terminates the rental agreements. The tenant has 6 weeks to agree to the termination.

The employment of the AFWC Handbook in the redevelopment project.

The proposed Handbook steps have been employed in the redevelopment project of the Hoptille housing complex, by the owner housing corporation. In my discussion with the WOON Foundation (April 2nd, 2024), it was made clear that the project of Hoptille refers to a case of redevelopment and renovation projects without lease retainment - meaning that the current rental agreement of the tenants will be canceled by the initiation of the project. While the Handbook indicates that the housing corporations and the residents need to reach this agreement together, Ymere has already established the path of this project: “We promise a new contract and house to the residents that want to return” (Ymere members, April 12th, 2024), was stated by the housing corporation members during the information market that took place at Hoptille, in April 2024, organized for providing information to the tenants about the progress of the project (Information Market, April 12th, 2024). Meanwhile, sessions regarding the design of the new building have already been organized by Ymere, during which, the residents’ committee will visit several housing development examples, to indicate preferred elements for their new building (WOON Foundation member, discussion, April 2nd, 2024).

The residents’ relocation process is another major issue in the redevelopment project. It is already discussed that the relocation and redevelopment must take place in three parts. This partial demolition and redevelopment will allow people to move to new buildings, without burdening the already competitive housing market during their search for temporary accommodation (WOON Foundation member, discussion, April 2nd, 2024).

5.2 Actors and Discourses

In this section, I profile the various actors that are engaged in the energy transition and redevelopment of the Hoptille apartment complex (Figure 11) and describe their values about this venture. These are the owner housing corporation (Ymere), the municipality of Amsterdam, the consulting foundation (WOON), and the residents of the Hoptille complex. In my research, I also investigate the direct or indirect participation of miscellaneous local actors in the respective redevelopment and energy transition projects. These actors are energy coaches (Groene Hub), and community organizations (EGK, Community Land Trust H-Buurt), that are closely connected to the residents of Southeast Amsterdam and the H-Buurt through various activities. The collected information allows me to respond to the second research sub-question:

SQ2. In what ways do the values of vulnerable residents on energy transitions clash, align, or are neglected, during the decision-making and implementation of the transition projects?

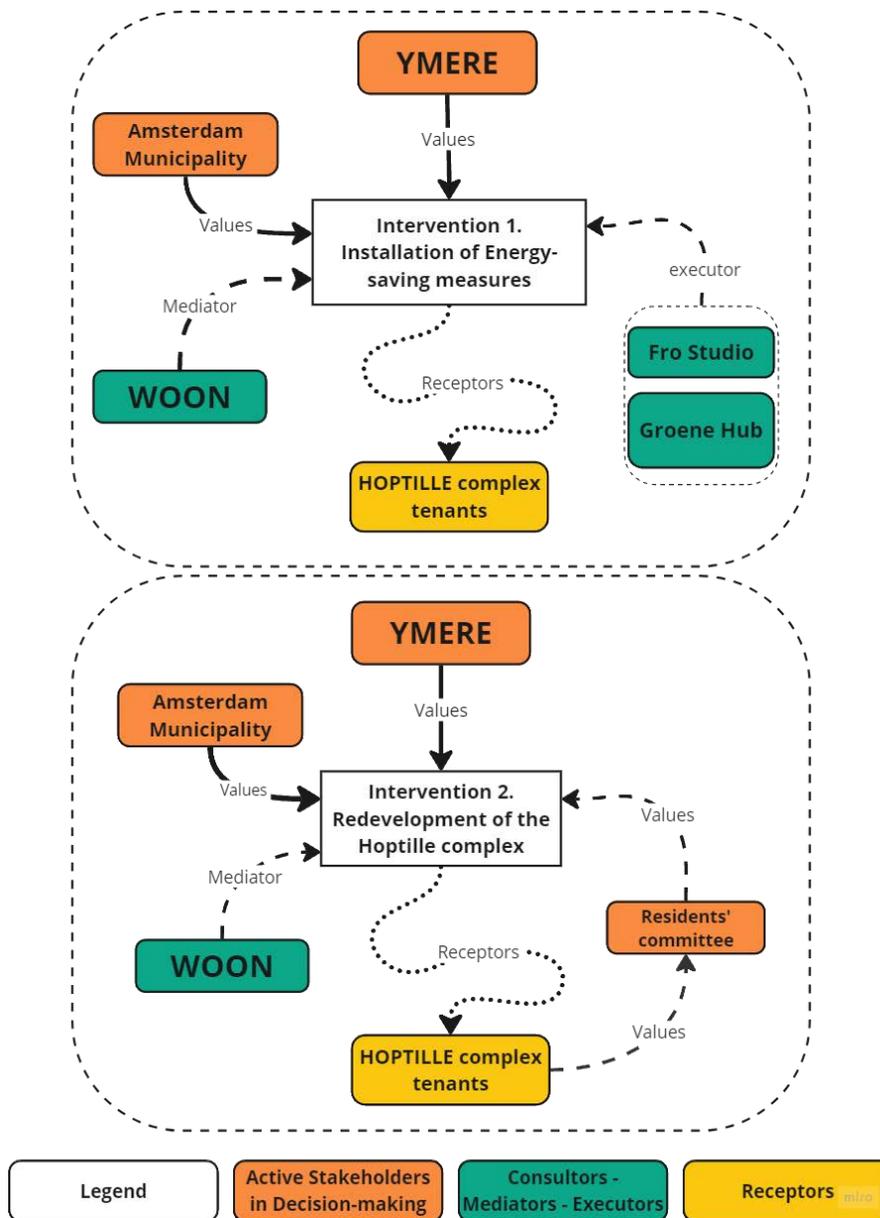


Figure 11. Scheme of the Engaged Actors in the Decision-making for the intervention projects at the Hoptille apartment complex. Source: Author

The Housing Corporation

Ymere is a major housing corporation in the Netherlands. In 2022, the corporation published an extensive agenda (Directieraad Ymere, 2022), where it expresses its goals for mitigating the housing crisis while adopting sustainable methods of developing new housing capacity. These objectives are to be achieved in terms of advanced collaboration and participation with miscellaneous stakeholders and the tenants. The corporation aims to maintain and improve approximately 75,000 homes. This venture requires “major investments, correct prioritization, and smart collaborations” (Directieraad Ymere, 2022, p.13). Thus, Ymere has incorporated within its plans the vision for energy transitions from gas, and the

energy label upgrade of its managed housing capacity. These transitions are meant to take place block-by-block, prioritizing those with the lowest energy label. Through these investments, Ymere tries to deal with “housing complexes where many residents face energy poverty” (Directieraad Ymere, 2022, p.14). Simultaneously, the corporation investigates sustainable building methods during the programmed renovations and redevelopments, while setting as a goal the affordability of these ventures (Directieraad Ymere, 2022, p.20).

The housing corporation, responding to the urgent need for improvement of the Hoptille living conditions, initiated the 1st intervention of energy-saving installations, in collaboration with the municipality. Ymere assigned the planning and execution of the project to Fro-Studio and Groene Hub, taking into account the fact that the groups were acquainted with the neighborhood and the building. Simultaneously, the corporation had initiated the long-term redevelopment project, highlighting that a lot of spatial, but also social problems were common in the Hoptille building. With the execution of the project, Ymere will achieve, at the same time, the reallocation of the apartments according to the types of households as well, since in the current situation, the size of the apartments and the number of inhabitants is disproportionate (WOON Foundation member, discussion, April 2nd, 2024).

The Municipality of Amsterdam

The municipality holds key positions within the two intervention projects, as it is considered the co-initiator of the energy-saving intervention (1st Intervention), and a “gatekeeper” in the upcoming redevelopment project at Hoptille. Discussing with members from the municipality during the information market (April 12th, 2024), insights were conveyed regarding the novel path of collaboration implemented during the Hoptille redevelopment project. As it was explained, the norm that the municipality planners follow in such redevelopment projects is creating an initial plan and then requesting from a housing corporation to build the programmed housing units. However, in the Hoptille case, there is no predefined plan, as the building and the residents are already present. This fact renders effective communication with the Hoptille residents an absolute requirement for the planning processes (Municipality member #2, discussion, April 12th, 2024). Within these processes, the municipality is responsible for the compatibility of the project with the established regulations and local policies (Municipality member #3, discussion, April 12th, 2024). The municipality members expressed their positivity towards such a planning approach that entails extensive collaboration between the stakeholders and the residents since there is a need for the improvement both of the residents' living conditions, and the neighborhood's public space (Municipality member #2, discussion, April 12th, 2024).

WOON Foundation

Stichting WOON, or WOON Foundation, is a non-profit foundation, with many roles in the energy transitions of Southeast Amsterdam, and the metropolitan area. One of the many activities of the foundation is energy coaching for the residents of Southeast, with a mission to advise residents regarding energy-saving methods, while leading efforts for the installation of small-scale interventions with the installation of materials and applications in the apartments. According to WOON, residents play an important role in the local transitions from natural gas. Therefore, as an independent party, WOON is involved in these transition processes from an early stage, by supporting the residents in expressing their ideas and concerns (WOON, 2021).

In both intervention cases at Hoptille, WOON acted as a mediator between the owner-housing corporation and the tenants. Although “hired” by the housing corporation, the foundation supports and conveys the needs of the tenants and the residents' committee. Within the redevelopment project, WOON has a major role in the adaptation and establishment of the participation steps indicated in the AFWC

handbook, where the foundation is making sure that “the tenants follow the participation steps, and the steps are followed by the residents” (WOON Foundation member, discussion, April 2, 2024).

For WOON, creating a new building according to the local policy regulations is important for reducing CO2 emissions during construction activities. These considerations entail the use of cross-laminated timber as a structural material, which leads to 10% less CO2 emissions than concrete constructions. Followingly, matters of adequate heating must be resolved in the new building, within the terms of affordable and sustainable solutions. Finally, it was expressed that among the goals set in the project, prevails the need to create an appealing building for the neighborhood with socio-centric spatial assets (WOON Foundation member, discussion, April 2nd, 2024).

The local energy coaching groups

In the area of Southeast Amsterdam, several consulting and sustainability-oriented groups have been formed during the past several years. These groups follow a concept initiated by the municipality of Amsterdam, within the Energy Vision masterplan, suggesting that an energy commissioner should be appointed per zip code in Amsterdam, with the role to aid and inform the locals regarding issues of energy saving, sustainability, and the upcoming energy transitions (Municipality member #1, interview, March 5th, 2024).

Groene Hub

The Groene Hub organization (Green Hub) is located in Southeast Amsterdam. It is a “Living Lab” where the community can learn more about issues of sustainability, energy saving, and energy transitions (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2023). This initiative is based on Kate Raworth's concept of the “Donut Economy” (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2017), which aims at dealing with social, environmental, and economic issues, through “Donut Deals”.

Groene Hub’s explicit goal is to inform and educate local citizens about circular economy aspects and energy transitions, and to hand in the resident's advice about sustainability solutions that enhance the domestic economy. The Hub, in communication with the municipality, has an active part in the installation of energy-saving measures in apartment complexes of Southeast Amsterdam (Groene Hub member #1, interview, March 20th, 2024). Its members define the group as a community team rather than just consultants and technicians. During a workshop organized by the Energy Lab Zuidoost in Southeast Amsterdam, Groene Hub members openly expressed that “there is a need to stop romanticizing the participation processes” when we discuss bottom-up initiatives, highlighting that there is a need for collaboration between all the local community and consulting initiatives that are active in Southeast Amsterdam (Workshop, March 14th, 2024).

Groene Hub had a major role during the execution of the energy-saving installations intervention at Hoptille (Groene Hub member #2, ex-Fro-studio member, interview, April 16th, 2024). Primarily, as an organization, the team was responsible for retaining the contract between the municipality and the Fro-Studio, securing the assignment of the project from the municipality and the housing corporation to the local technicians' group. Furthermore, Groene Hub oversaw the project’s execution planning, since personal data about the households were used during these interventions. The planning included appointments and visit/intervention dates, during which the Fro-Studio partners would visit the apartments and perform the required installations.

Fro-Studio

Fro-Studio is considered a neighborhood empowering initiative, created at the Hoptille complex. It is a model of education for the local youth, with a focus on making rental properties more sustainable through small-scale installations of energy-saving measures in the apartments of Southeast Amsterdam.

As it was conveyed by an ex-Fro-studio member, currently partner of Groene Hub (interview, April 20th, 2024), the necessary fix in the local housing requires financing from the municipality to import the required experts and the workforce, outside the community. However, the member explained that “abundant human resources in the community can be trained and employed” by the municipality and the local stakeholders, ensuring that the financing remains within Southeast Amsterdam.

The twelve members are local youth, aged from 16 to 37. Along with the housing associations active in the Southeast Amsterdam area, and Groene Hub Hub, the initiative is focused on issues of community resilience, and sustainability, while helping simultaneously to mitigate issues of delinquency, by providing options for different lifestyles (interview, April 20th, 2024).

The tenants and the residents' committee of the Hoptille apartment complex

The Hoptille residents' committee consists of 6 to 8 dedicated tenants that represent roughly 200 households in Hoptille, during the consultation sessions for the planning and implementation of the intervention projects. In my research, I did not receive adequate information directly from the committee and the tenants regarding the energy-saving installations project at Hoptille (1st intervention). The former member of Fro-Studio who contributed to this intervention project at Hoptille provided me with invaluable insights regarding the residents' attitude during the energy-saving installations project (interview, April 20th, 2024). According to the testimony, the residents felt relieved when the local group visited them and provided them with their services. Many tenants belong to elderly groups that suffer from loneliness, accompanied by an implicit sense of remorse for their life status. Their long experience in systemic negligence rendered this intervention a “helping hand” to their daily struggles (interview, April 20th, 2024). Similar comments were expressed during the discussion with the municipality member who took part in the energy-saving intervention (municipality member #1, interview, May 21st, 2024). Specifically, the member shared that after completion of the 1st intervention at the apartment complex, an evaluation process followed, with personal communication with the residents. This evaluation proved that a great percentage of the tenants were satisfied with the results of the installations in their apartments while feeling gratitude for the services provided by the local team. However, according to the ex-Fro-Studio member, during the intervention period, levels of resistance were expressed by certain residents, denying to “open” their houses, and allow the technicians of the Fro-Studio to make the needed installations and improvements:

Sometimes the residents didn't want to, or they were afraid that other implications would appear, regarding their tenancy, or the people that were hosted in their apartment at that time. For others, hurdles appeared during the scheduling of the visits (Groene Hub member #2, ex-Fro-studio member, interview, April 16th, 2024).

In the upcoming redevelopment project, the residents' committee represents the tenants' interests during the planning of the project, as suggested by the established collaboration model. In my discussions with two members of the residents' committee, it was made clear that the lack of a holistic view and understanding of the processes and collaboration steps induced stress and uncertainty in the community. Thus, the values that the individual tenants see in the project vary significantly, as the households are permeated by heterogeneity in age, economic status, educational background, and lifestyle. The resident's committee members expressed fears and worries, such as losing their current home, being left abandoned in the competitive housing market of Amsterdam during their search for a relocation space, or seeing their rent increase in the new apartment complex. Implicitly, the members expressed their wishes to remain in the neighborhood and preserve the community after their relocation to the new apartments, while arguing against the rumors that encircle the H-Buurt area and perpetuate its notorious reputation. The residents' concerns were also verified during my discussions with members

of Ymere, but also members of the WOON Foundation, who work closely with the community in this project: “The people of Hoptille received a letter that terminates their leases. When your house is on the line, tensions can rise” (WOON Foundation member, discussion, April 2nd, 2024).

The community organizations and groups in Southeast Amsterdam

A significant number of organizations are active in H-Buurt, and the broader area of Southeast Amsterdam (Figure 12). Their character and focus of action vary in topics, but their overall aim remains the provision of education, consultation, and support to the local community. Discussing with a local social worker, I was informed about the invaluable work of community building, and the need for the provision of information on the upcoming large-scale local interventions: “The locals ask for help, for example, to translate these policy or strategy documents, not because they don’t speak Dutch, but because they can’t understand the jargon” (WOON Foundation member #2, interview, April 2nd, 2024).

Within the terms of the energy transition masterplans taking place in the area, the local social workers make a plea for community building, with the provision of spaces of non or semi-commercial use being essential for neighborhood gatherings that will enable the creation of bonds between the community while allowing the creation of communication bridges with actors that are active in the area: “The masterplans call for participation and inclusion of the residents, but really, not so many connections exist yet” (WOON Foundation member #2, interview, April 2nd, 2024). Discussing the Hoptille redevelopment project and the established collaboration model, the WOON member informed me of the potential insecurities that this participative process can cultivate in the residents, emphasizing the lack of basic agreements and common values between the stakeholders during the initiation of the discussions.

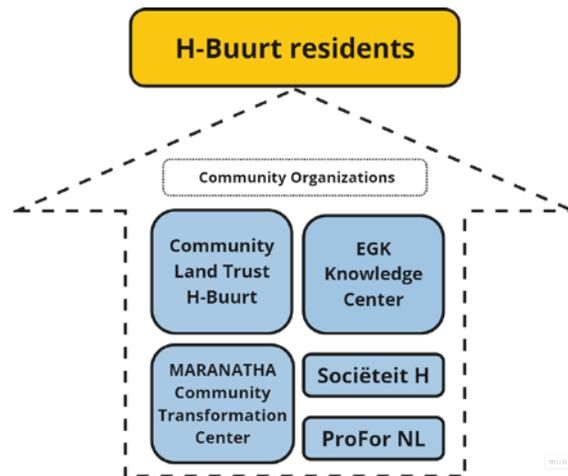


Figure 12. Scheme of local community organizations active in H-Buurt. Source: Author

EGK Center - Energy Transition General Knowledge Centre

The EGK Center is focused on providing the Western African communities of Southeast Amsterdam with the necessary knowledge about energy transitions. It was created in June 2023, by Otas Elum, an experienced member of the WOON Foundation. Through this initiative, Otas wants to promote to the West African local community the urgency of climate change and the need for energy transitions (EGK founding member, interview, March 28th, 2024). The EGK center aims at being accessible for the locals, independent of educational background, and status, while setting a long-term target of combating energy poverty. The “double role” of Otas, both as a member of WOON and as a local community leader,

provides him with insights both from a “top-down” and a “bottom-up” point of view, regarding the extensive energy transition and development vision of Southeast Amsterdam.

The center works independently of ongoing projects and aims at an exchange of information that will allow a more holistic approach to energy transitions. The main ways for this information circulation are through workshops, information sessions, radio programs, community and club visits, social gatherings and parties, or approaching people at the church and trying to give information about the local changes:

Approaching the whole issue of energy transitions from a holistic point of view, you see the energy transition is about regime change, it's about change of behavior, of how we think, how we build, how we make policies, how we plan our education for the future housing and welfare. The transition from gas to non-gas ways of cooking and heating our homes is just a small bit of it (EGK founding member, interview, March 28th, 2024).

The Community Land Trust of H-Buurt (CLT-H)

The Community Land Trust of H-Buurt is a social innovation cooperative. It is based on the idea of creating collective ownership by the community, the municipality, and other stakeholders, on new developments or interventions. In this way, the long-term affordability of the land, the developed apartments, or of any other co-invested development can be secured (CLT-H member, interview, April 18th, 2024). The CLT-H consists of four working members, two of which are locals, while another four members are engaged in Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) training sessions. In 2022, the CLT performed an ABCD training for 10 active residents, to provide them with professional skills, in order to receive an income from the services that they provide to the neighborhood. The funding for the operation of the CLT derives from different parties, such as non-profit organizations, while the funds that secure the role of CLT as a developer are provided by multiple sources, such as the municipality or potential mortgages. The concept that the CLT-H promotes with this sort of ownership suggests that the secured affordability of the housing units initiates the preservation of a community, promoting enhanced active citizenship, and strong neighborhoods while combating the loneliness of certain community members (CLT-H member, interview, April 18th, 2024).

For the time being, discussions have taken place between the CLT and Ymere, mostly regarding the co-design of the public space of H-Midden, where the CLT's focus is at the moment. In these discussions, fears have already been expressed that many current residents of the Hoptille complex might abandon the neighborhood due to the extensive relocations and redevelopment projects, shaking the established community.

5.3 Responding to the Research Sub-questions 1 and 2.

The results from the analysis according to the Neighborhood Arrangements Framework allow me to respond to the two sub-questions:

SQ1. What is the normative context of the redevelopment and energy transition strategies? (Section 5.3.1)

SQ2. In what ways do the values of vulnerable residents on energy transitions clash, align, or are neglected, during the decision-making and implementation of the transition projects? (Section 5.3.2)

5.3.1 Rules and Resources Parameters: The normative context of the energy transition and development projects in Southeast Amsterdam.

The data analysis indicates that the national and local policy frameworks for energy transitions act as a catalyst in shaping the normative context of the ongoing project in Southeast Amsterdam. These frameworks provide trajectories towards multisectoral activities, indicating the need for collaboration

among the private and public sector parties, as well as civil society. The initiated strategies incentivize the mass natural gas phase-out in the housing sector via various policy instruments, promoting alternative energy provision solutions and reducing CO₂ emissions during building activities in the housing sector. Within these frameworks, the city of Amsterdam has formed independent strategies that aim at energy transitions and gas-free homes, and extensive renovations of the local housing capacity, within a climate of enhanced collaboration between the municipality, the energy providers, and the housing corporations.

Within the spirit of collaboration among the different stakeholders, the municipality aims at empowering the South-Amsterdam communities, by supporting the local active bottom-up initiatives, while promoting the participation of the residents in the energy transitions, by creating expertise-driven labor opportunities. The housing corporations of Amsterdam attempt to comply with the demands of the new norms, opting for projects that entail the energy-label upgrade and renewal of their housing units, as well as future developments in the area. These aspirations materialized during the intervention projects at the Hoptille apartment complex, where the owner-housing corporation employed a local group of experts for the energy-saving measures installations (1st intervention) and employed the AFWC handbook for collaboration during the current redevelopment project (2nd Intervention).

Although the urban strategies in Southeast Amsterdam promote an inclusive character in these socio-technical transitions, local groups keep questioning the largely top-down character of the initiated ventures. Within their manifestos, they call for greater transparency, and more meaningful participation in the decision-making processes, while arguing for the establishment of democratic models within the energy-transitions, where local initiatives become an influential stakeholder through various roles.

5.3.2 Actors and Discourses Parameters: Mapping the values and goals of the engaged actors in the Hoptille apartment complex.

The collected material regarding the values and discourses of the engaged actors in the decision-making processes of the Hoptille intervention projects was analyzed with the help of an artificial intelligence machine. These values and interests are presented in the following Venn Diagrams (Figures 13, 14). At this point, it must be acknowledged that the residents' committee values illustrated in these diagrams derive from a restricted number of testimonies, and thus, do not represent every member of the committee, and tenant of the Hoptille complex.

Overall, the analysis of the two intervention projects that differ in type and size, revealed that certain values were recognized as common ground by most participants (Figures 13, 14). These common values set the initial background for collaboration in the decision-making processes. However, the different interpretations of each value, depending on the interests and character of each engaged actor, can be accountable for the potential frictions during the planning and implementation processes. Another highlight is the extensive misalignment of the residents' committee values and interests from those of the other actors, and the expression of implicit negative sentiments towards the interventions. As the tenants' values are highly dictated by the community's means of representation and communication with the rest stakeholders, the findings underline issues in procedural and recognition justice within the decision-making processes of the two projects.

1st Intervention: The Energy-Saving Installations

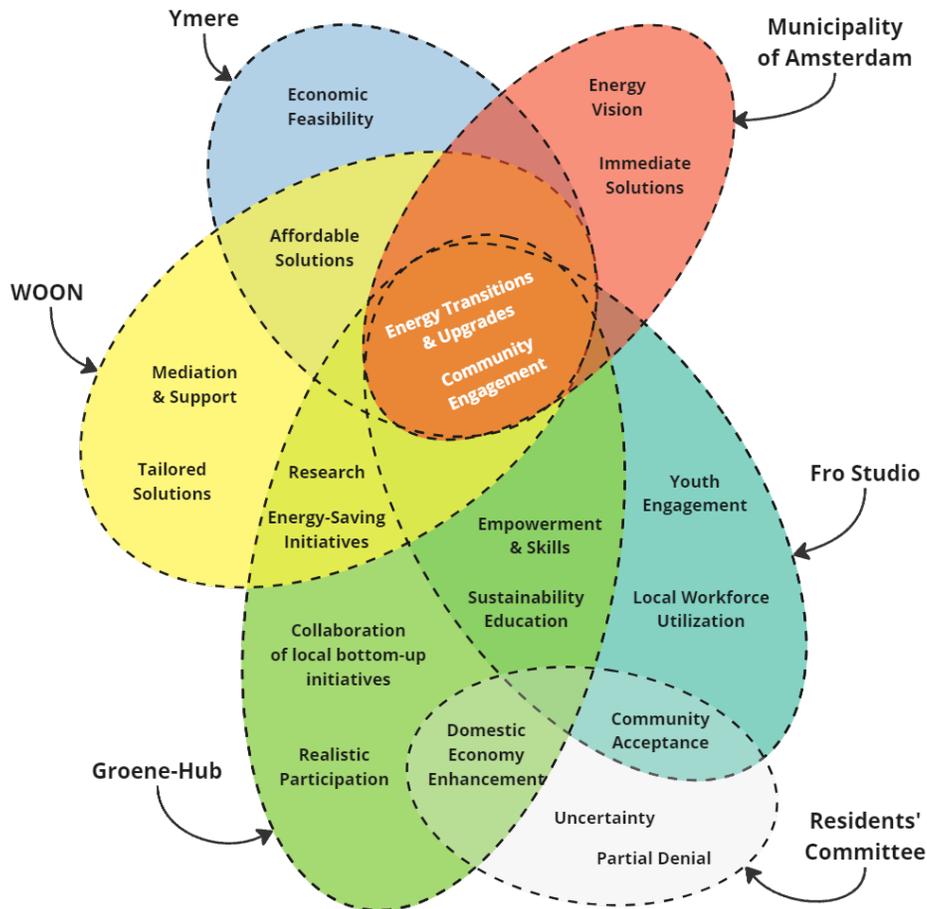


Figure 13. Venn Diagram visualizing the values expressed by the engaged actors in the first intervention at Hoptille. Source: Author

By analyzing the material collected for the energy-saving interventions (1st intervention, Figure 13), terms such as *energy transitions & upgrades* and *community engagement* appeared as a common theme and starting point of discussion. These terms can receive different interpretations, according to the assets of each actor; For Ymere and the municipality, this engagement promised frictionless and immediate achievement of the desired results, since the Fro-Studio, as an executor, was already receiving community acceptance, and could secure the *affordability* of the venture. WOON, highlighting issues of *mediation* between the different actors, underlined that this venture comprised a new approach and a *tailored solution*, according to the Hoptille residents' needs. For Groene Hub and Fro-Studio, as planners and executors of the project, the *energy transitions* and the *community engagement* comprised the core of their values. The members expressed that *community empowerment* can be achieved through the attainment of practical *skills* and *education on sustainability* issues. These community-centered values conveyed by the local initiatives lean towards higher social merit, secure realistic participation, and enhance the local and domestic economy.

According to the testimonies, the majority of the residents saw the energy-saving intervention positively, with the bottom-up character of the executing team playing a crucial role in the acceptance and openness of the community. The goal of an improved domestic economy via reduced energy bills that

would follow these interventions was common ground. However, the expressed fear, insecurity, or denial of this venture indicates that several residents did not acquire the same interest in the outcome of the venture.

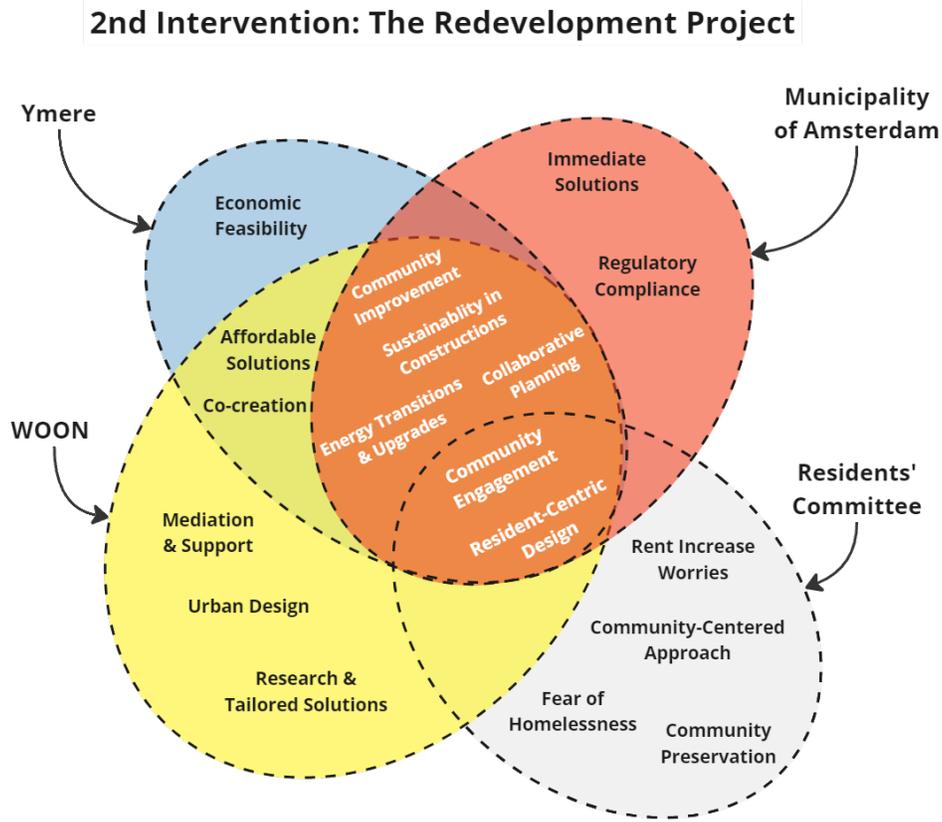


Figure 14. Venn Diagram, indicating the common values by the actively engaged actors in the second intervention at the Hoptille building. Source: Author

Similarly, after the analysis of the material that refers to the redevelopment project (2nd intervention, Figure 14), several common themes were addressed by the high-rank stakeholders. The topic of *sustainability in construction* was addressed by the housing corporation Ymere, the municipality of Amsterdam, and the consulting groups of the WOON Foundation. For Ymere, this topic entails the aspiration to create homes that are sustainable and of sufficient quality, aiming at CO2-neutral buildings. For the municipality, *sustainable constructions* are a prerequisite towards the attainment of the Southeast Energy Vision, and the promotion of innovation in the building sector. The *energy transitions and upgrades* and the need to combat energy poverty remain one of the main focuses of the discussions encircling the redevelopment project. The term *community improvement* includes the common interest of the high-rank stakeholders in solving maladies in the neighborhood through the redevelopment of Hoptille, by providing security in the interior and exterior of the apartment building through its new spatial and functional rearrangement. Finally, the engaged actors highlighted their interest in achieving their goals in the redevelopment project, via *collaborative planning*, and enhanced communication between the stakeholders and the residents. Both WOON and Ymere consider *affordability* as a main value in the redevelopment venture. But this term has two possible interpretations: For Ymere, it is imperative to

perform renovations and redevelopment projects within the limits that are considered an *economically feasible* venture for the company while acknowledging the high demand for new housing, as well as the scarcity of building locations, and labor force. For WOON, *affordability* implies the need to detect the most cost-effective solutions for the new building, in issues such as energy provision systems. *Co-creation* is considered another major common discourse toward achievement through this project. However, its interpretation varies per actor, while being highly dictated by the Handbook of AFWC (see section 5.1.2). Meanwhile, the need for *community engagement* is once more the epicenter for all participants.

The values, discourses, and interests supported by the residents' committee members diverge largely from those expressed by the rest of the stakeholders engaged in the redevelopment project. Understanding the gravity of this undertaking and the ways it is going to affect their lives, the residents' committee seems to approve of the vision of *community engagement* and the *residents-centric design* that will address the varying needs of the tenants' households. Although the housing corporation informed the tenants regarding the redevelopment project and their required temporal relocation, the residents committee expressed insecurity regarding the potential future rise in the rents of their new apartments, or even the fear of homelessness due to the competitive market of affordable housing. Lack of trust in the planning procedures is revealed by the looming fear that the community will be dispersed after the scheduled relocations. These findings showcase that the established communication processes need further cultivation for the project to gain greater acceptance from the community. Lastly, the fact that numerous different needs of the residents are not easily and equally conveyed, invites vagueness to the co-planning steps of the project.

6.1 The Decision-Making Processes

In this chapter, I present the results of the analysis according to the Participation Analysis Framework, regarding the decision-making processes in the interventions at the Hoptille apartment complex. Discussing the attained insights from the following analysis, I will answer the sub-question:

SQ3. To what extent does participation legitimize the decision-making processes for just energy transition and redevelopment projects?

6.1.1 The 1st Intervention: The energy-saving interventions

Form of Participation

The first intervention at the Hoptille complex refers to a direct assignment (Figure 15). Specifically, the housing corporation Ymere, following the suggestions by the municipality members to utilize the local workforce, assigned the execution of the intervention project to the local group Fro-Studio. Fro-Studio, under the guidance and planning of the Groene Hub, performed the intervention successfully. In this project, a top-down structure was followed, with the WOON foundation acting as a mediator between the execution planners Fro-Studio and Groene-Hub, the housing corporation, and the municipality. The residents of Hoptille did not have any practical active participation in the stage of the decision-making of the intervention, other than the openness that they demonstrated to the local experts during their visits to their households.

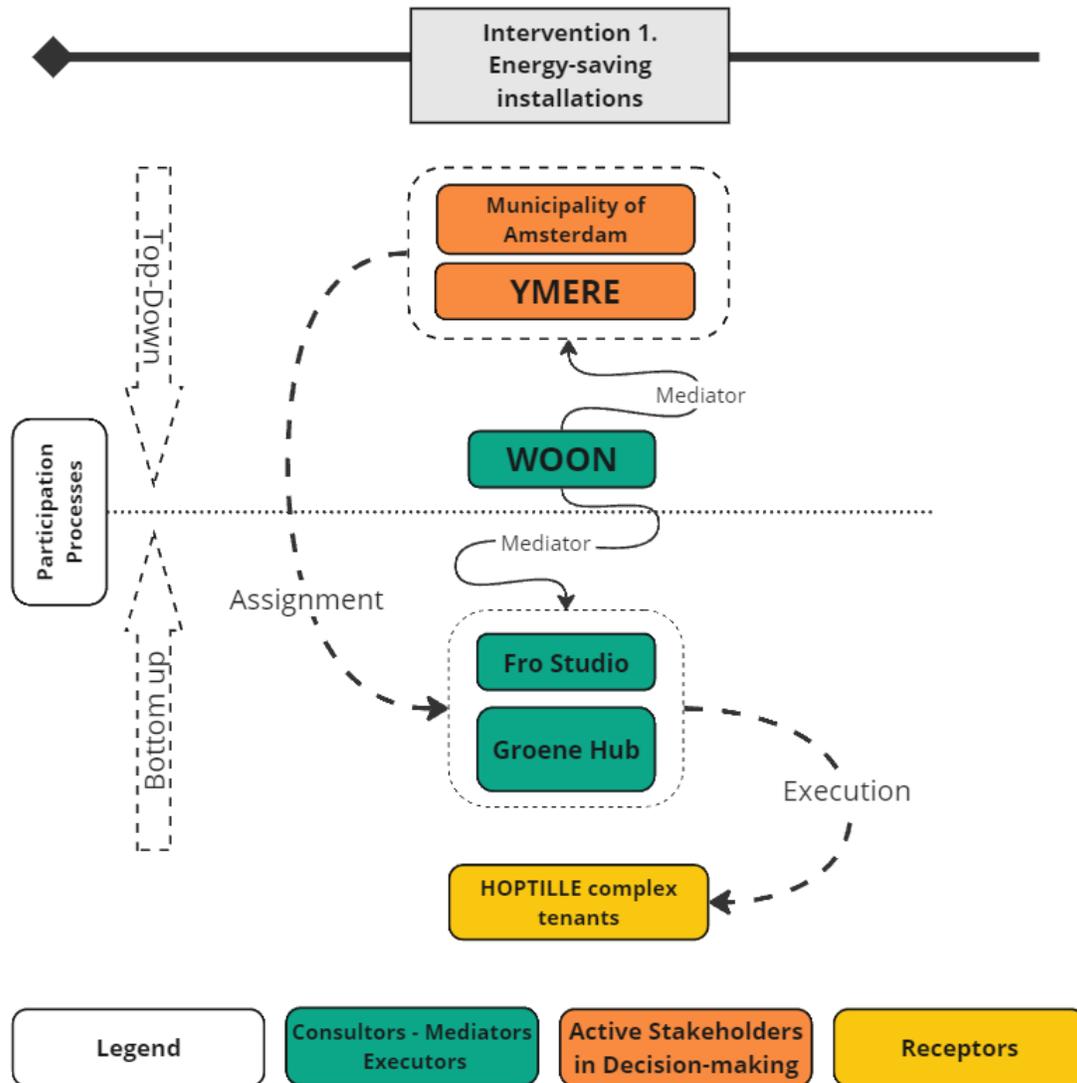


Figure 15. Scheme of the engaged actors and the decision-making process during the 2nd intervention project. Source: Author

Power Relations

The top-down character of the energy-saving intervention assignment dictated the power relations between the decision-makers and the executors. Specifically, the housing corporation held greater power in the decision-making, by being the owner of the apartment complex and the main investor of the venture. The municipality intervened mainly through their suggestions for experimentation with the local experts' group while participating in the legal settlements for the collaboration. In this execution, underlying power relations existed, with Groene Hub holding a key role both as a planner of the execution and as a contract keeper, enabling effective communication with the municipality and the housing corporation. In the meantime, the mediation of the WOON foundation was considered invaluable for the smooth execution of the planning: "It would not have been the same without their contribution" (Groene Hub member #2 - ex Fro-Studio member, interview, April 16th, 2024).

Motives of Participation

The motives for the initiation of this assignment are closely related to the goals and interests of each engaged actor. Primarily, the idea of performing a big-scale renovation or redevelopment project in a short period was deemed impossible for the housing corporation, considering that funding issues and time-consuming processes would elongate the period of inconvenience for the residents (Groene Hub member #2, ex-Fro-Studio member, interview, April 16th, 2024). As the housing corporation became overwhelmed by the complaints of the residents about the situation of their apartments, the demand for immediate solutions for the improvement of the apartments' conditions became apparent. At the same time, the municipality's interest in the experimentation for community inclusion, through the utilization of the local social capital and workforce, created another incentive for Ymere to collaborate with the local group of experts, while allowing Ymere to achieve faster and less costly results. Indeed, the residents, in the majority, expressed their positivity and trust in Fro-Studio during the installation processes.

Results of Participation or Expectations

The specific operation through direct assignment processes proved to be a successful venture for a variety of reasons, according to the stakeholders' testimonies. First, the explicit goal to perform energy-saving interventions and transitions in order to provide immediate amelioration on the living conditions of the residents was attained. Second, by this assignment, the housing corporation and the municipality opted to build trust with the Hoptille community by employing the local young workforce, instead of assigning the execution of the project to another external group of experts. Therefore, the empowerment of the local economy model was achieved, with members of the community receiving a meaningful role in the project. At the same time, the execution of the project, although ambitious, proved a largely novel and educational experience, both for the Fro-Studio and Groene Hub members and the Hoptille community, that saw the materialization of immediate solutions to their demands after the recognition of their problems (Groene Hub member #2, ex Fro-Studio member, interview, April 16th, 2024). Therefore, despite the lack of direct participation of the tenants, the planning and implementation of the project highlighted aspects of recognition and distributive justice that are invaluable in securing equality and justice in energy transition projects.

6.1.2 The 2nd Intervention: The redevelopment project of the Hoptille apartment complex

Form of Participation

From an early point in the redevelopment project, the housing corporation decided to establish the steps of collaboration indicated in the AFWC handbook. These steps propose close communication and consultation of the residents in every planning step. The housing corporation, the residents' committee (meaning the representative body of the tenants), and the municipality are considered the main decision-makers in these processes (Figure 16). The steps suggest a rigid structure, with a sequence that cannot be easily deviated from or changed during its execution (WOON Foundation member, discussion, April 2nd, 2024).

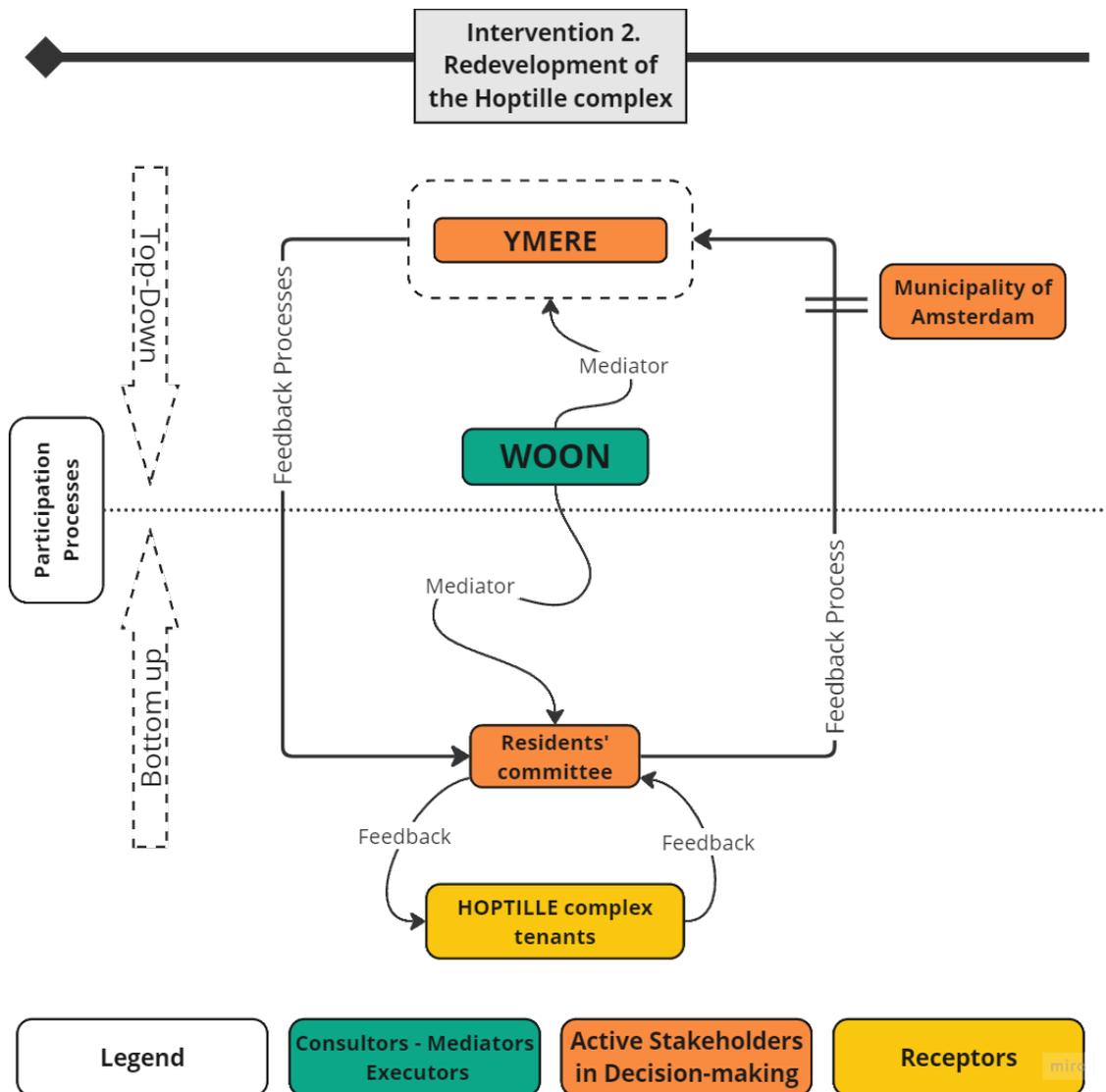


Figure 16. Scheme of the engaged actors and the decision-making process during the 2nd intervention project. Source: Author

The municipality’s participation, although limited during the co-design stages, is considered crucial during the milestone steps of the project. Officially, its role is to provide the reference date for termination of the lease agreements. By the time the reference date is announced, the municipality is responsible for facilitating the long or short-term relocation of the tenants, within the area’s housing market. Meanwhile, the implementation of the project requires a new round of checks on the local regulations and building codes. According to these parameters, the date of the project commencement can change by the municipality. The municipality’s role in the decision-making process is restricted as the land plot and the building of the Hoptille complex are owned by the housing corporation (Municipality member #2, discussion, April 12th, 2024).

The households of Hoptille, numbering around 200, are represented by a body of 6 to 8 active residents that comprise the residents committee. This group retains a relatively close connection to the Ymere members, with the role of providing the corporation with insights collected by the Hoptille

residents (Ymere member #1, interview, April 12th, 2024). The residents committee contributes to the consultation and discussion process, as the neighborhood's "gatekeeper". Questions arise in the forms that the committee communicates with the numerous tenants. Specifically, it was made clear that the committee does not follow any structured, regular feedback process with the residents of the Hoptille (WOON Foundation member, discussion, April 2nd, 2024). This lack of regular communication between the committee and the residents became apparent during my visit to the information market organized at the Hoptille project (April 12th, 2024). In my short discussion with present tenants, it was conveyed that several residents were not acquainted with the members of the committee, or rarely discussed with them. At the same time, they expressed no great interest in talking about the committee or the plans of the project presented in the information market event.

Power Relations

To better understand the established power relations in the decision-making process, it is imperative to emphasize the initiation of the discussions on the redevelopment project. As it was conveyed by the different stakeholders, the housing corporation sent the residents a letter, announcing the concept for the redevelopment plan. This first correspondence was followed by a series of update letters (Table 3, Figure 17).

Datum 18 mei 2022
Afdeling pv - stedelijke vernieuwing
Contactpersoon [REDACTED]

Onderwerp Toekomst Hoptille Hoogbouw

Beste mevrouw, meneer,

Deze brief gaat over het voornemen van Ymere om toe te werken naar een grote ingreep van de woningen in het complex waarin u woont. Dit gaat om de hoogbouw en start in 2027.

In juli 2021 heeft u een brief van ons ontvangen over vocht, tocht en schimmel in uw complex. Ook schreven wij u over de gebiedsvisie van de H-buurt waar Ymere met de gemeente aan werkt. Het afgelopen jaar hebben we ook de technische staat van uw complex verder onderzocht.

Het voornemen over de woningen
Ymere wil goede, betaalbare woningen in Hoptille kunnen aanbieden. Om dat te realiseren is een grote ingreep nodig. De gebiedsvisie is nog niet afgerond, maar het technisch onderzoek geeft ons al wel meer zicht op de technische staat van het complex Hoptille hoogbouw. Uit dat onderzoek, maar ook bij de afhandeling van de (technische) klachten, blijkt dat er veel meer nodig is om de woningen in goede staat te krijgen en te behouden.

Wat is een grote ingreep?
Dat kan een grote ingrijpende renovatie of (gedeeltelijke) sloop-/nieuwbouw zijn. De komende jaren gaan wij verder onderzoeken welke ingreep het meest wenselijk is. Wat we nu wel al weten is dat we een dergelijke ingreep niet kunnen uitvoeren als u in de woning woont. Dit betekent dat u gaat verhuizen. Uiteraard helpen we u tegen die tijd met het zoeken naar een andere woning. Over de mogelijkheden van terugkeer (naar een andere woning op deze plek) gaan we met de huurders in gesprek.

Wat zijn uw wensen?
De ingreep aan het complex vindt niet eerder dan in 2027 plaats. Ymere heeft de komende vijf jaren als voorbereiding nodig voordat we echt aan de slag kunnen. Die tijd willen we ook gebruiken om u te leren kennen en uw wensen te horen. Wat vindt u belangrijk? En zou u bijvoorbeeld terug willen keren naar Hoptille?

Hoe verder tussen nu en 2027?
We zorgen er natuurlijk voor dat u de komende 5 jaar zo prettig mogelijk en veilig in het complex kunt wonen. We gaan graag met u in gesprek over hoe we dat het beste kunnen doen binnen onze mogelijkheden. Hiervoor organiseren we spreekuren in het complex en gaan we langs de deuren.

U bent van harte welkom op 19, 20 en 23 mei in Hoptille 261
Wij begrijpen dat deze brief veel vragen en zorgen oproept. Het is onze taak om u zo goed mogelijk te informeren en te begeleiden. Wij nodigen u van harte uit om naar de spreekuren te komen.

U kunt ook op een ander moment met ons in gesprek. U kunt hiervoor een afspraak maken. Ik ben te bereiken per email: [REDACTED] of u kunt mij bellen op [REDACTED].

Vragen, zorgen of een keer kennismaken? Kom langs!
Inloopspreekuur op donderdag 19, vrijdag 20 mei en maandag 23 mei
tussen 16.00 – 20.00uur
Locatie: woning Hoptille 261
(ingang aan de kant van de laagbouw).

Figure 17. An update letter that the residents received from the housing corporation. Source: Information Market, April 12th, 2024.

Table 3. Translated abstract from the update letter presented in Figure 17.

In July 2021, you received a letter from us about moisture, drafts, and mold in your complex. We also wrote to you about the area vision of the H-Buurt that Ymere is working on with the municipality. (...) Ymere wants to be able to provide good, affordable homes in Hoptille. To achieve this, major intervention is required. (...) This could be a major renovation or partial demolition or new construction. (...) What we already know is that we cannot perform such a procedure if you live in the housing complex. This means that you are moving. We will of course help you look for another home at that time. We will discuss the possibility of returning with the tenants. The intervention will not take place until 2027. Ymere needs the next five years (2022 to 2027), as preparation before we can really get started. We also want to use that time to get to know you and hear your wishes, such as what do you find important, or whether you would like to return to the new building. (...) We would be happy to discuss with you how we can best do this within our capabilities. To this end, we organize consultation hours in the complex and go door to door.

From an early stage, it was announced to the residents that a redevelopment project was going to take place and the lease agreements of the tenants were going to be terminated. However, according to the Handbook, the “lease termination” decision must be taken after consultation with the residents’ committee (Steps 2.11 and 2.12). In my discussions about these pre-decided elements of the ongoing project, it was made clear that the housing corporation wanted to present a concrete idea to the residents, as a response to the series of complaints that had been expressed in the previous years about the building’s conditions (Ymere member #1, discussion, April 12th, 2024). As mentioned in the update letter (Figure 17), the corporation set several consultation days, inviting the residents to discuss the current and future needs of their households and form the preferred scenario for the new building. These discussions already propose the creation of 200 social housing units, aiming for the preservation of the existing local community, but also the provision of a greater amount of free market apartments, to render the venture economically feasible (Ymere member #1, discussion, April 12th, 2024).

Within this process, the municipality is considered a partner with influence on Ymere, regarding the imperative need for creating a building with a positive impact on the local community. However, since the plot is not within the municipality’s possession, its role on the decision-making table is considered limited (Municipality member #2, discussion, April 12th, 2024).

During these consultation sessions, the residents usually express their uncertainty about the yet-to-be-created plans. In my discussion with two members of the committee, it was clarified that both the tenants and the members of the committee were surrounded by certain levels of vagueness regarding the exact stage at which the redevelopment project was. It was pointed out that, to a certain degree, there was a lack of real-time updates on the changes and progress, while the provided information was in a language not always approachable by all residents. Specifically, the members would prefer to be supported in understanding the jargon, while it would be beneficial for the tenants to receive the required data in languages used by the local communities, such as Spanish or Arabic. Moreover, the committee has openly expressed their need to create from an earlier stage a social plan that will secure their new relocation conditions. This request by the committee objects to the established sequence of steps in the decision-making processes, which indicates that the social plan is co-created after the design of the new building.

Motives of Participation

Within the framework of the local policies for the development and socio-technological transition of Southeast Amsterdam, the established model of collaboration for the decision-making process received unanimous support from the engaged high-ranking stakeholders at the Hoptille project. The housing corporation aimed to initiate a collaborative model from an early stage in the project. As it was conveyed, in the past Ymere had received a great deal of opposition and resistance from local communities during the planning and implementation processes of similar projects. This factor motivated the corporation to change the way of approaching the residents during the project of great impact for them (Ymere member #1, discussion, April 12th, 2024). For WOON, following this participation model guarantees a solid process for facilitating the varying interests, and achieving the best possible results: “It is imperative to have a concrete pathway for the decision-making processes. The residents also need to know that they follow specific indications” (WOON Foundation member, discussion, April 2nd, 2024). The municipality's members conveyed that a great deal of experimentation with similar participatory processes has been favored during the decision-making and design of projects in the public space and the housing sector of the area, without always proving successful: “More than 20% of the people living in this area are on marginal limits with poverty. This factor proves to be an obstacle for their participation in such projects” (Municipality member #2, discussion, April 12th, 2024).

The established collaboration model received major initial approval by the residents as well, with the committee members comparing the process of co-creating a successful apartment building to the design of any other product: “It is like making any product. Many people have to try it out and say if it is not good or not before you can sell it” (Residents’ committee member, discussion, April 12th, 2024). Although motivated to participate more actively, one of the committee members already expressed their lack of time and patience to continue with the discussions that will define the eventual decisions for their future homes. Furthermore, the lack of real-time and comprehensible information has already led many tenants and committee members to lose their interest and motivation to participate. Nevertheless, the great attendance of tenants at the information market event (April 12th, 2024), can be an indicator of the residents’ willingness to discuss with the housing corporation and engage more in the plans of the new complex.

Results of Participation or Expectations

The redevelopment project of the Hoptille apartment complex refers to a large-scale undertaking that will affect hundreds of households. The employment of the specific collaboration model aims at facilitating a planning process that reduces the friction between the housing corporation and the tenants while promoting the community’s inclusion to a more active role in the decision-making. Co-planning and designing promises solutions that match the tenants’ needs and enable the housing corporation’s goal in proceeding successfully with the relocation of the numerous tenants and the implementation stages for the new complex. Although the established participation steps follow a solid structure, issues appear in the transparency and clarity of the communication and implementation by the housing corporation, as well as their adaptability to the specific context. The outcomes of the participatory process present negotiable results regarding their validity and legitimacy, and thus, underscore weak points in provisioning procedural, recognition, and even distributive justice in the decision-making.

Specifically, the housing corporation expressed positivity in this collaboration process, claiming that it is en route to success, especially when they compared its application on the Hoptille project with previous attempts of co-planning, where opposition was apparent by the tenants. This positivity boosts procedural justice within the decision-making processes, as it creates fertile soil for meaningful collaboration with the residents. Tenets of distributive justice are highlighted as well, as a greater dialogue promotes greater distribution of power at the table of negotiations.

The residents' committee shared their gratitude towards the housing corporation's will to include them in the planning process. Nevertheless, their disbelief in the eventual success of the venture is apparent, as the needs of the residents are too many, too various, and not always well-communicated to Ymere. At the same time, questions arise about the effectiveness of the residents' representation via the committee, but also their communication levels with the rest of the tenants. The tenants' levels of active participation within the established collaboration model are also restricted to consultation, which renders their role predominantly to the of the receptor, with limited power.

Ymere understands the potential impediments in the communication procedures, as well as the lack of trust from the residents since the redevelopment is a very large-scale project with multiple variables that must be considered (Ymere member #1, discussion, April 12th, 2024). According to the latest updates provided to me at the end of May 2024, the housing corporation managed to form an urban planning program, inspired by residents' insights during the consultation sessions. Scheduled visits of the committee and the corporation to successful examples of apartment complexes allowed them to express their interest in certain architectural and spatial elements.

6.2 Responding to the Research Sub-Question 3.

The decision-making processes in the two intervention projects for the energy-label upgrades and redevelopment of the Hoptille housing complex are permeated by core differences in the four analyzed tenets of the Participation Analysis Framework (Figure 18). The active participation in the decision-making varies, with the inclusion of the residents being direct, indirect, or absent.

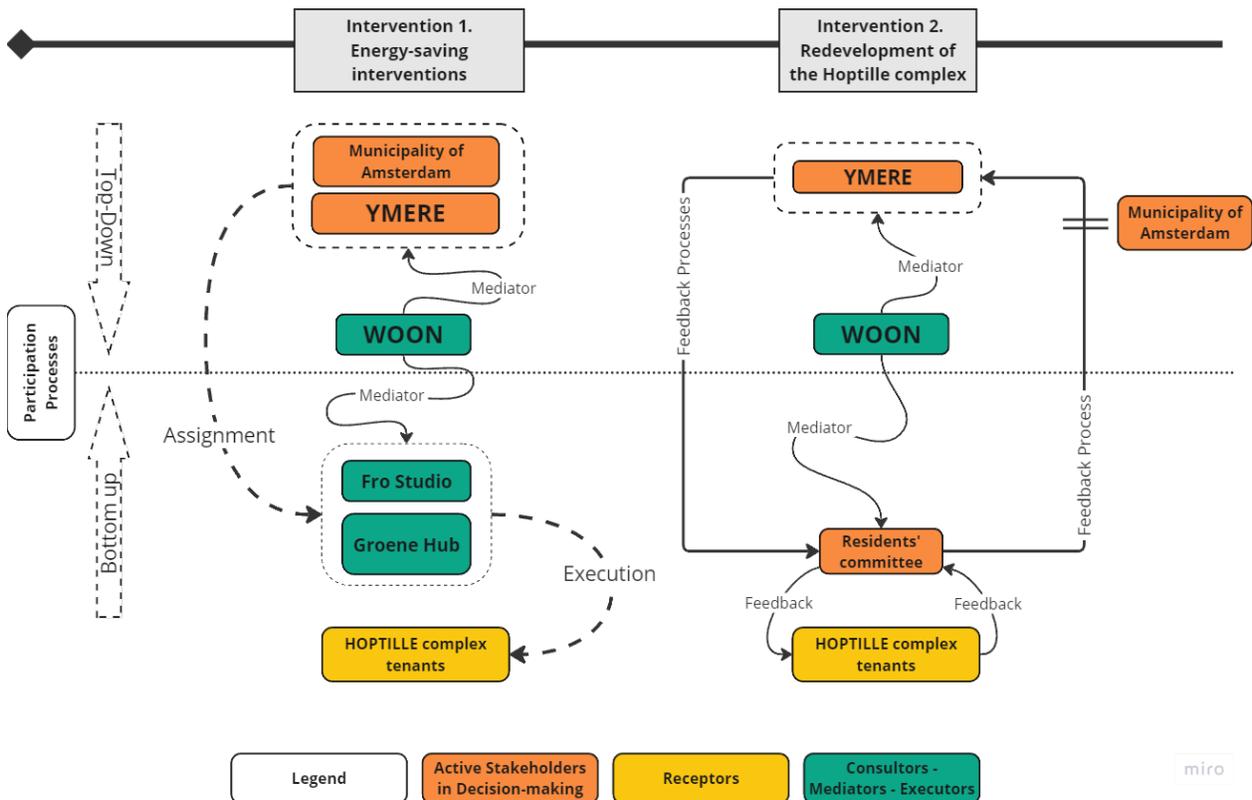


Figure 18. Scheme of the engaged actors and the decision-making processes in the intervention projects at Hoptille. Source: Author

Answering the research sub-question 3 “To what extent does participation legitimize the decision-making of just energy transition and redevelopment projects”, it can be argued that the legitimization of the decision-making in the intervention projects at the Hoptille complex is dictated by the clash of two power streams of participation: namely, the top-down and the bottom-up. On the one hand, the planning and execution of the projects are highly dictated by the ways the high-ranking stakeholders utilize the established power relations on the decision-making table, and their dominant motives, goals, and expectations from the established participation models. On the other hand, the residents’ inclusion is restricted to consultation processes or is provided through representative bodies that do not necessarily receive unanimous acceptance and do not always promise a holistic inclusion of the local community. This leads to the larger body of the community holding the role of the transitions’ receptor only. Thus, issues of procedural, but also recognition, and distributive justice within the decision-making become apparent, dictating the legitimization of the projects’ outcomes.

The energy-saving intervention venture (1st intervention) underscored that the collaboration between high-rank stakeholders with bottom-up and community-based initiatives can lead to successful and impactful results, when the terms of cooperation are clear, and mutual respect for the expertise of each actor has been cultivated. Nevertheless, the direct participation of the individual tenants in this project was not present, since they were simply rendered as receptors of the interventions. As mentioned, the execution of the project was marked by significant delays, with the residents lacking trust in the procedures, or being in fear of mishaps in their tenancy conditions by the time they allowed the expert groups to visit their homes. This fact raises questions about the adequate information and consultation provided to the residents before and during the implementation of the project. Therefore, the legitimization of the procedures and the results of the energy-upgrade project was achieved through the indirect participation and representation of the community, via the employed local workforce.

With the redevelopment project still being in progress (2nd Intervention) at Hoptille, it is difficult to answer whether the established AFWC collaboration model legitimizes the decision-making processes and results of the specific venture. The participation model promises a higher involvement of the residents in the creation of a new apartment building that better caters to their needs. Simultaneously, the housing corporation conducts the planning of a housing project through a process that allows them to avoid friction with the local community. Nevertheless, issues in the information circulation during these procedures become apparent once more. Such issues occur both between the housing corporation and the committee on one level, and between the committee and the tenants on a second level. As analyzed in the previous paragraph, members of the residents' committee feel that they are not fully aware of the overall planning procedure, while the lack of real-time and comprehensible information creates a veil of vagueness for the tenants. Although the housing corporation successfully manages to deduct essential information regarding the tenants from the committee that is necessary for the following steps of the planning, the reverse flow of communication, from the committee to the residents, is not clear. The committee does not follow a regular feedback schedule with all the residents of Hoptille through communication instruments, such as neighborhood gatherings or discussion sessions. This fact creates questions regarding the adequate information that all the Hoptille residents receive timely, and thus, sets in danger the provision of procedural justice within the decision-making. Meanwhile, the size of the residents’ committee group might be considered too small to guarantee the proper representation and communication of 200 households’ necessities. The non-homogeneity of these households hinders, even more, the clarity and unanimity in the residents’ perspective during their participation in the redevelopment project, leading to further hindrance of the recognition justice tenet. Although the housing corporation tries to make meticulous research into the future situation of the residents needed for the relocation processes, the soon-to-come co-design sessions require a clear position and attitude on behalf of the residents, but also a greater distribution and allocation of responsibilities and duties on behalf of

the housing corporation. Therefore, the legitimacy of the decision-making processes and the results from this collaborative model can be rendered dubious to a certain extent. Complementary testimonies made from municipality members, and community groups highlighted that the inadequate educational support of the residents, both at Hoptille, and the overall area of Southeast Amsterdam in themes of energy transitions and participative processes, perpetuates the inability for such complex projects to take place through meaningful collaborative schemes.

Discussion and Proposals

7.1 Responding to the main research question

The insights collected through the analysis of the two intervention projects provide me with adequate material to answer the main question of this research: “What is the level of participation of vulnerable communities in the urban planning of just energy transitions?”. The findings prove that the answer to this question is nuanced and cannot be described with an absolute response.

Primarily, the research showed that the inclusion of Hoptille’s community is highly dictated by the power relations, and pre-established forms of participation provided by high-ranking stakeholders that hold inherently privileged positions and solid agendas within the decision-making processes. If the level of participation of the Hoptille’s residents was to be characterized according to Arnstein’s participation ladder, then it could be argued that their inclusion in the decision-making and implementation processes was either absent (1st intervention) or indirect, taking place through consultation procedures (2nd intervention). But what do these participation indicators imply for the specific case study? The results from the conducted analysis indicate that the establishment of a participation process alone cannot promise just and immediate results in the planning and execution of community-oriented projects. It was underscored that representation and recognition have a major value in the participation processes as well. For example, although the Hoptille residents did not have an active role at the decision-making table for the energy-saving interventions project, its execution with the assignment of a neighborhood-based group quickly received the tenants’ acceptance and led to immediate beneficiary results for the households. In the redevelopment project, the tenants are represented by a committee that does not adequately communicate with the rest of the community; a community that lacks initial knowledge or capabilities to participate actively in such procedures. Thus, the tenets of recognition, but also distributive justice become essential within the participation processes, as vulnerable communities seek their power through adequate and meaningful inclusion at the decision-making table.

Overall, the results of the conducted research set in question the types and purposes of established participation processes within the energy transition and redevelopment projects in neighborhoods with vulnerable communities. At the same time, they highlight the merits of indirect forms of inclusion through adequate representation, early recognition of the local community’s values, and distribution of active roles in these complex ventures. Finally, the response to the research question underscores the need for alternative scopes through which the vulnerable communities’ participation levels can be explored and indicated.

7.2 Towards the Enhancement of the Vulnerable Communities’ Participation

The research conducted at the H-Buurt and the broader area of Southeast Amsterdam highlighted the value of including vulnerable communities in the complex ventures of the energy transition, renovation, and redevelopment processes. My contact with the locals through discussions (information market, April 12th, 2024), and volunteering engagement in activities of energy-saving interventions in apartments of the area (Intervention Visit, May 21st, 2024), underscored the merits of acceptance, openness, and participation to the procedures of planning and implementation of these ventures.

In this section, several points that enhance the meaningful participation of vulnerable residents in the decision-making processes are proposed, following the results of this research. The suggestions are divided into two levels and are permeated by principles set in the chapter on the theoretical background, such as procedural justice and participation in energy transitions (section 2.5.3). Concepts such as energy democracy (section 2.6.1), Asset-Based Community Development in Energy Transitions (section 2.6.2), and triple-loop learning (section 2.6.3) are also incorporated. Furthermore, the two analytical frameworks that were used in this research project are utilized as indicators for these proposals.

The first level of approaches refers to adjustments and changes in the collaboration model proposed in the AFWC handbook, which has been implemented in the Hoptille case by the housing corporation Ymere. Taking into account that this model will be largely followed by the housing corporations of Amsterdam in future projects, it is deemed imperative to propose measures that enhance the meaningful participation of the tenants. Admittedly, this collaboration model entails a meticulous procedure that enables the participation of the tenants' groups through consultation. However, as was discussed, challenges appear in the systematic information circulation, and the representation of a greater mass of tenants in the decision-making processes.

The second level of proposals refers to solutions on a policy scale, that aim to promote procedural justice in projects of energy transitions, renovations, and redevelopments in Southeast Amsterdam, or urban settings with similar assets. The proposals argue for more active participation of the communities and aim to combat established procedures and/or measures that tend to perpetuate the often controversial relationships between the engaged stakeholders.

As illustrated in Figures 19, 20, and 21, the proposals are constituted by several components: The "Axioms towards Just Energy Transitions", introduced in section 2.6, provide trajectories towards enhanced and meaningful participation during the planning processes. These include Asset-Based Community Development, Energy Democracy, and Triple Loop Learning. The "Justice Tenets", (sections 2.4 and 2.5), indicate the aspects of Justice that can be further promoted through the respective proposal. These entail procedural justice (equal and meaningful participation), recognition justice (adequate recognition of the needs and values of the engaged actors), and distributive justice (distribution of power and knowledge within the planning processes). The Neighborhood Arrangements Frameworks parameters of "Rules, Resources, Actors, and Discourses", showcase the contextual parameters of participatory processes that can be modified through these proposals, towards meaningful participation. Similarly, the Participation Analysis Framework parameters ("Form of Participation, Power Relations, Motives, and Outcomes of Participation") indicate aspects of the participation processes revised through each proposal.

7.2.1 Proposals regarding the established collaboration steps of the Federation of Housing Corporation of Amsterdam handbook (AFWC).

The following proposals refer to additions and changes that could be incorporated into the collaboration model proposed by the Federation of Housing Corporations of Amsterdam (Figure 19). These proposals follow a narrative that begins with the recognition of the tenants' values and the setting of common goals during a project (proposal a.). Next, the establishment of transparent and iterative communication processes with adequate information flows is suggested (proposals b. and c.), promoting the tenet of procedural justice. Finally, fostering the distributive justice tenet, I argue for the incorporation of community-oriented actors (proposal d.), and the need for enhanced adaptability of the participation models to each context (proposal e.). These suggestions should be implemented within feedback loops for their application to remain relevant to each context of employment.

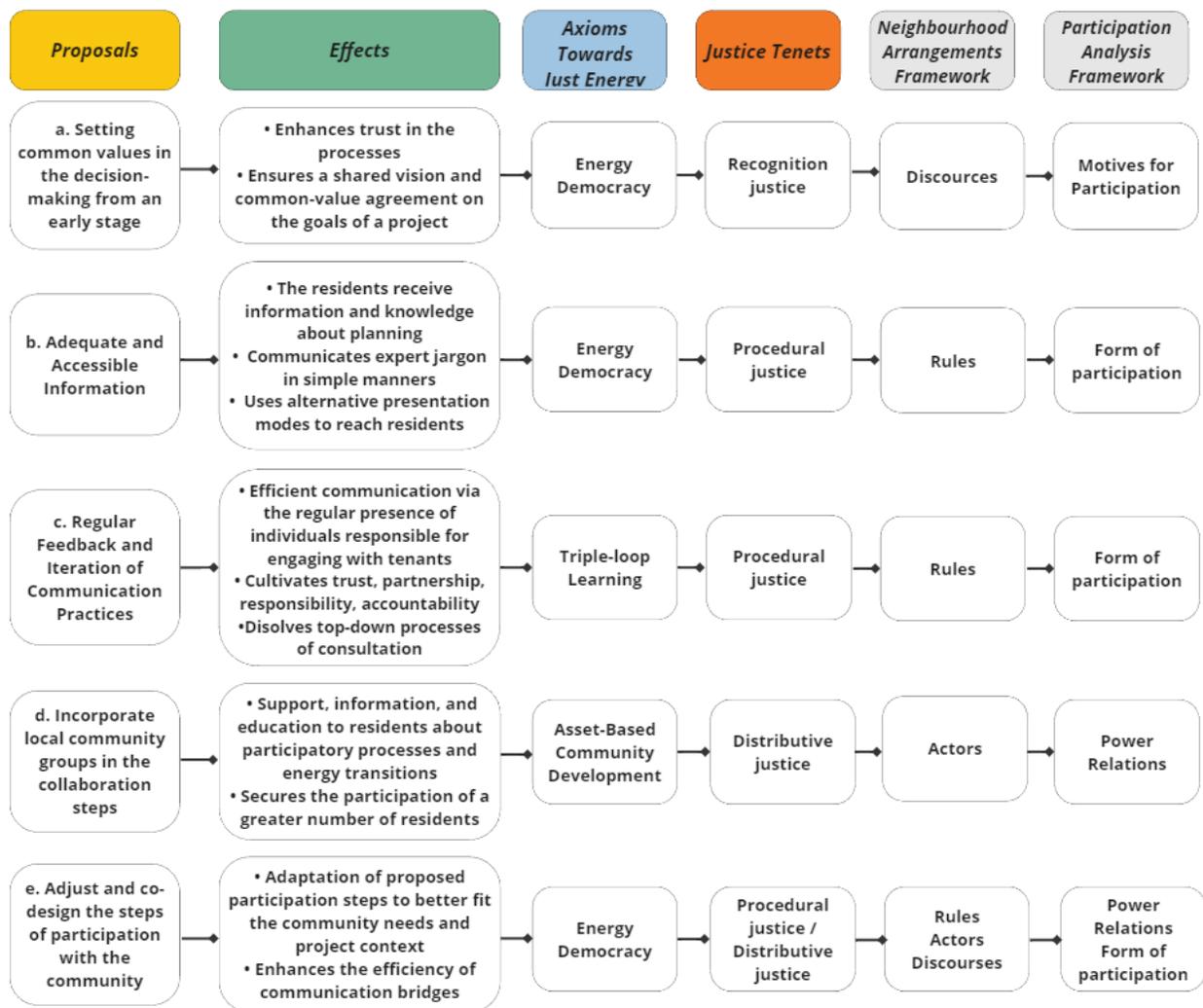


Figure 19. Scheme visualizing the formation of the proposals regarding the established collaboration steps of the Federation of Housing Corporation of Amsterdam handbook. Source: Author

a. Setting common values in the decision-making from an early stage

The research conducted in the Hoptille project underpinned the need for setting common values from an early stage during the procedures of participation. In these stages, all participants must convey their interests and aim to set common goals for all stakeholders. It is apparent that the characteristics of each participant actor highly define their point of view, interests, and agendas in each project. These values do not always align among the participants. However, all actors must aim at agreeing on certain common goals and values at the beginning of the processes, on the basis that these projects are for the amelioration of vulnerable communities. The Hoptille case proved that the initiation of a large-scale project that is accompanied by major pre-established decisions and a lack of common values creates questions about the shared vision in this venture. Bezdek (2014) discussing the active participation of vulnerable communities in urban development towards “development justice”, recognizes this “common-value agreement” as a measure to secure the just and meaningful participation of vulnerable residents.

b. Adequate and Accessible Information

The residents must receive holistic knowledge and information on the planning of the project they participate in. Moreover, they need to grasp the impacts that future projects are going to have on their household and daily lives. Therefore, information must reach them in a timely and accessible way. The jargon must be communicated in a simplified way and languages spoken by the local community. Alternative presentation modes can prove helpful, such as the use of infographics or plain schemes that can directly convey information to residents of varying educational backgrounds. The use of posters in common-use spaces of the complex, such as entrances and staircases, can also prove helpful. In any case, this information must reach the awareness of every tenant.

c. Regular Feedback and Iteration of Communication Practices

More efficient communication can be secured through the regular presence of people responsible for getting in touch with the tenants. In this way, the tenants have the opportunity to express their individual opinion, independently of the representation provided by the committee. Although such a process can be time and fund-consuming, it can create more efficient communication bridges, while restoring the trust between the high-rank stakeholders and the tenants. Moreover, such communication professionals can be assigned on behalf of multiple actors, such as the municipality, the housing corporation, and the local social and community groups. Thus, the residents can communicate with representatives from every participant party, and cultivate notions of partnership, responsibility, and accountability. At the same time, this communication process with a variety of consultants and representatives achieves the dissolution of the top-down consultation that the residents are currently receiving (Bezdek, 2014).

d. Incorporate local community groups in the collaboration steps

According to the collected testimonies, both at the Hoptille project and in the broader area, the lack of participation by a great number and range of locals is a constant issue. As it was discussed, the lack of time, trust, or education produces major hindrances for many residents who may otherwise participate in the planning processes. My interaction with several bottom-up local initiatives (Groene Hub, EGK, Community Land Trust H-Buurt) revealed that there is important active social infrastructure in the area, such as community groups and educative bottom-up initiatives, that are active in providing the residents with greater support, information and education about participatory processes, and, in general, about the occurring energy transition. Therefore, the inclusion of these community groups in the AFWC collaboration steps as instrumental support for the tenants and the residents' committee at the decision-making table, would lead to better results in terms of planning and design, while securing participation for a greater number of residents. At the same time, the boost of local trustworthy groups that participate in the implementation phases of the energy transition interventions (Groene Hub, Fro-Studio), through scaling up and intensification of their activities, can render them an invaluable actor and partner in the local planning and implementation processes.

e. Adjust and co-design the steps of participation with the community

The AFWC handbook proposes several steps of participation that are permeated by great rigidity in its content and sequence of application. Without a doubt, rigidity in processes can lead to great friction between the participants. Therefore, it could be proposed that the participant stakeholders, along with an accountable residents' committee, should be able to adapt and adjust the proposed participation steps according to the project, and the conditions that encircle it. For example, at the Hoptille project, it became apparent that the lack of an initial social plan produced great anxiety for the residents, as they had no idea about the future tenancy conditions. In this case, the creation of a social plan could give a first image to the tenants and enhance their trust in the processes. This would imply the deviation and adjustment of

the proposed AFWC steps, according to which the social plan follows the co-design process of the new building.

7.2.2. Proposals for Enhancing the Participation of Vulnerable Communities in Future Energy Transition Projects.

The conducted research on the Hoptille case and the exploration of energy transition projects in Southeast Amsterdam through the two analytical frameworks highlighted certain points regarding the power relations and the form of participation in the energy transition ventures. It became apparent that certain roles in these complex projects are inherently permeated by greater influence on specific domains. Bearing in mind that the energy vision in Southeast Amsterdam represents a socio-technical venture, it can be argued that the community deserves to receive a greater role in every aspect of these projects. In other words, the community, as an entity and participant body, should be provided with the ability to participate in more versatile roles than just a receptor, or a consulted group. These roles can be detected in the domains of a) ownership and investment, b) energy provision, and c) planning of participatory procedures (Figure 20).

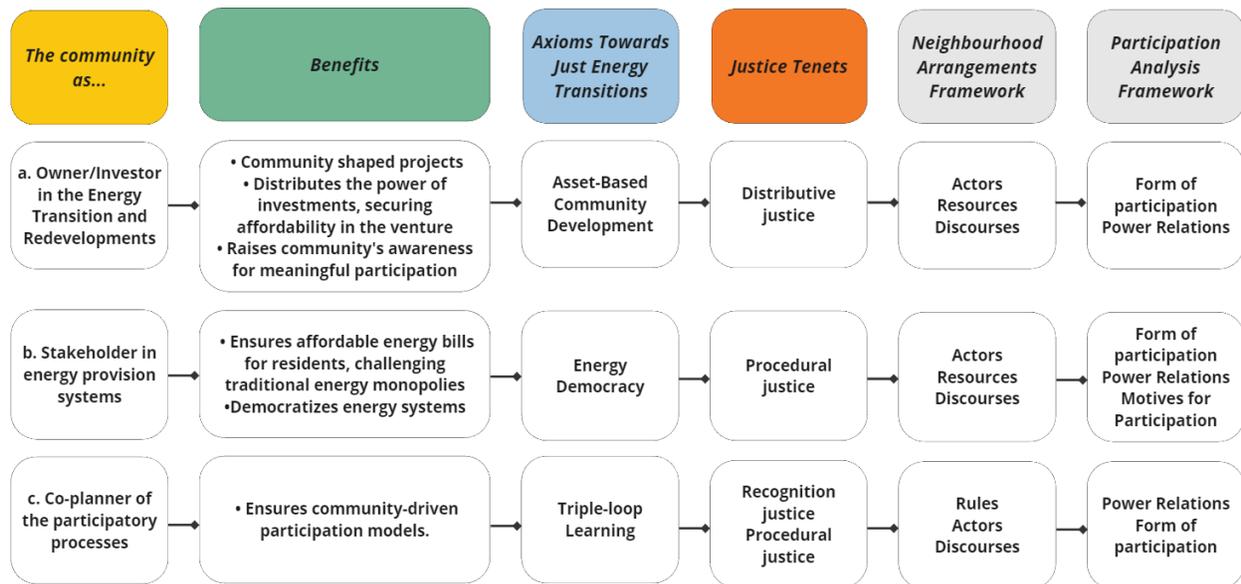


Figure 20. Scheme visualizing the formation of the proposals for the vulnerable communities' participation enhancement in future energy transition projects. Source: Author

The proposals implicitly address the tenets of representative and distributive justice, highlighting the value of the power and role reallocation, as a catalyst to securing procedural justice during the decision-making of such projects within vulnerable communities. Simultaneously, the introduction of the community in new roles at the decision-making table automatically influences the community's values and interests in these projects, while reorienting the form of participation, power relations, and motives of participating in these processes.

a. The community as an owner or investor in the energy transition and redevelopment projects.

One of the roles that can empower the just participation of the community in energy transitions and redevelopment projects is that of the owner or investor. When roles of economic power are distributed among multiple stakeholders, then the power relations and forms of participation change. Therefore, it can be argued that procedural justice can be promoted when the tenants receive a more

determining role on the decision-making table. This role can be that of an active investor, under the umbrella of local community entities, such as a Community Land Trust (CLT). Within these terms, new investment schemes can be introduced, where the CLT has a more active role as an investor in the redevelopment and transitions. By providing a more powerful role to the residents, awareness, and responsibility can be created from within the community, as it holds tangible power in the execution of the project. Simultaneously, a sense of ownership and accountability can be cultivated by the locals, while the plurality of the active actors enhances the legitimization of the decision-making processes.

The Community Land-Trust concept in a nutshell

A Community Land Trust (CLT) is both a type of civil society organization, an NGO, and a funding model. The model originated in the United States, with its oldest definition dating to 1972. The Community Land Trust is considered a legal entity, a quasi-public body, chartered to hold land in stewardship for all mankind present and future while protecting the legitimate use rights of its residents (Bachus, 2013). CLTs offer services to their members, during processes of home improvements and performing renovations, organizing volunteers to help with repairs or renovations, or “to inform and sensitize its residents about energy efficiency, both in the construction and renovation phase as well as in everyday use”. (2013, p.17) According to Bezdek (2021), although CLTs are promoted in housing policy circles as an economically efficient form of affordable housing, there is a low appreciation of its operational and cultural dimensions, particularly concerning sustaining community control of the land and housing.

The CLT-H Buurt and the community as a co-developer in H-Buurt

Using the Hoptille redevelopment case as a basis, the following question was addressed to the CLT-H member: “Can the CLT become a co-developer for the Hoptille redevelopment?”. The response was the following:

Practically it can. Of course, issues of ownership arise, since the building is owned by the housing corporation Ymere. Thus, there has to be clear communication between CLT and the housing corporation. Moreover, the residents’ committee has a strong role in this. Since the CLT promotes the community’s participation in the redevelopment as a co-investor, there is a need for a strong alignment of interests among the members of the community (CLT member, interview, April 18th, 2024).

In my discussions with the CLT-H member, it was clarified that the concept of community ownership via the CLT concept can also be adapted to renovations, energy-productive installations, or energy transition interventions in the housing sector of Southeast Amsterdam: “This creates opportunities to get ownership over sustainability and circularity projects” (April 18th, 2024). However, for this to happen, there is a need for a strong connection with the residents’ committee of each complex. In this way, the redevelopment, renovation, or energy-label upgrade interventions are rendered as a community investment that secures, among others, the affordability of these ventures. Moreover, the CLT concept can promote the decentralization of the energy transitions, by dissolving the rigid structure of the top-down initiated business model, thus facilitating the establishment of energy democracy tenets.

b. The community as a stakeholder in energy provision systems.

As was presented in section 2.5.3, creating an energy community can prove challenging, even for the most well-organized neighborhoods. However, a community, as an entity, can become part of the energy provision systems as a co-provider. Collaborative models that promote meaningful participation and adapt to the needs of the residents could create novel paths in the energy provision market. Practically, the community can engage with energy systems by becoming a producer of its energy. This can be achieved by the installation of community-owned technologies such as solar panels and windmills,

which could provide the neighborhood with green energy. Thus, vulnerable communities can benefit by avoiding the dead-ends of the monopoly in the energy provision networks, while securing affordable prices for the residents' bills. Overall, this would imply a step toward the democratization of the energy systems (McGookin et al., 2021), which has long been disregarded as a means towards just energy transitions. By all means, an energy-wise autonomous community can secure its higher influence on the decision-making table during energy transition and redevelopment projects.

c. The community as co-planner of the participatory processes

Another key role that can provide the community with greater and more meaningful participation in energy transitions and redevelopment projects is that of the co-planner of the decision-making procedures. This proposal refers to the co-creation of agile frameworks that allow for input and adjustments according to the content of each project. Towards this trajectory, the municipality of Amsterdam proposed the Participation Policy Framework (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2021), which refers to a scheme for the design of citizen participation. Primarily, it emphasizes the need for formalization and institutionalization of lessons and principles deriving from past participatory experiences. The importance of setting clear values, goals, and common objectives between the government and civil society is highlighted and considered the basis for successful citizen participation. Within these terms, the significance of understanding and integrating citizen needs into the decision-making procedures is underscored. The policy introduces a scheme that links the goals of participation with the various levels and forms of participation, underlining the need for a tailor-made approach that follows the objectives of each participatory procedure. Furthermore, it proposes guidelines as essential tools for the implementation of the outlined principle, aiming to ensure a more transparent, and well-defined citizen participation process. Finally, it addresses the importance of a continuous learning process via the establishment of a team of participation experts to facilitate knowledge sharing and assurance of quality procedures within the municipality.

Co-designing the participation frameworks with the community could create schemes with greater bottom-up character, that promote processes adapted to the needs and capabilities of the locals. The establishment of the community as a co-planner of policy frameworks can lead to its solidification as a key decision-maker while allowing the institutionalization of agile community participation models (Großmann, 2019).

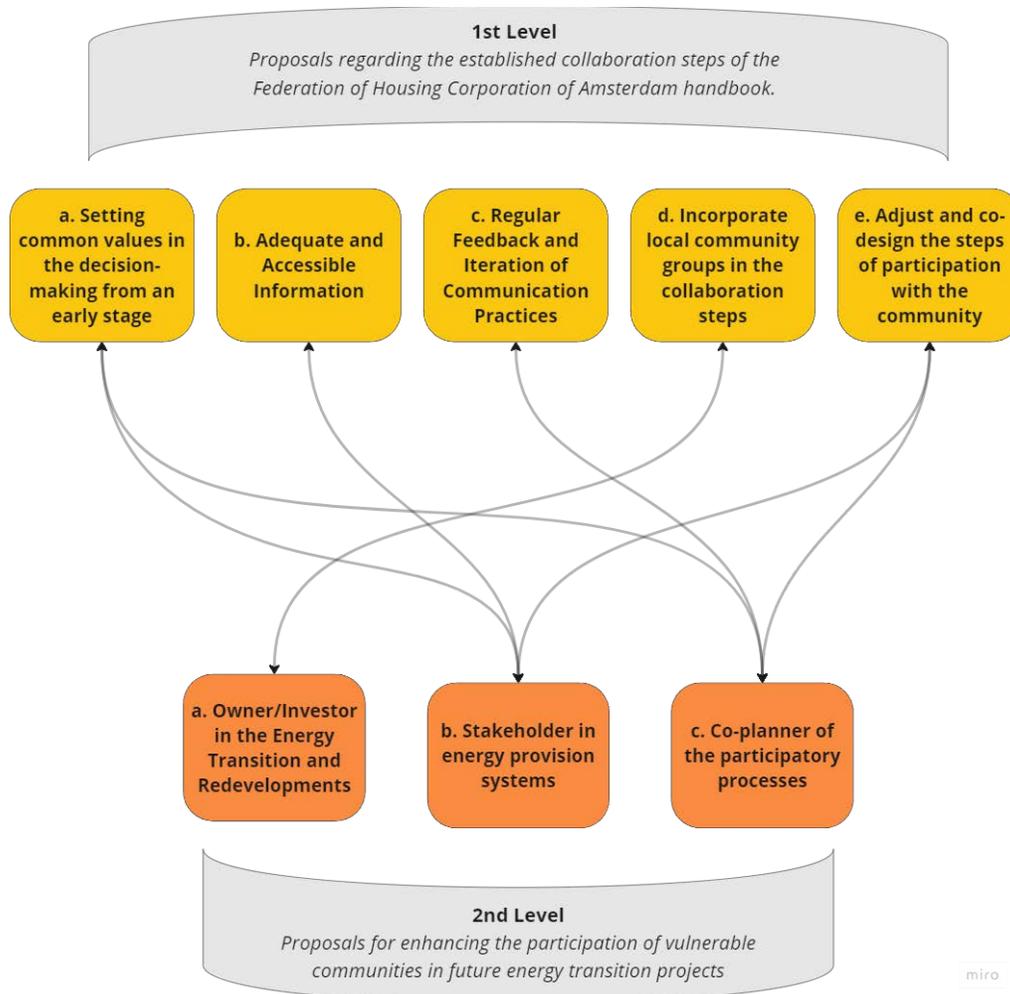


Figure 21. Scheme visualizing the link between the two-level proposals. The connected proposals are permeated by common components. For example, the proposal for the role of the community as an “owner/investor in the energy transitions and redevelopment” (proposal a., level 2), and the “incorporation of local community groups in the collaboration steps” (proposal d., level 1) are constituted by the components of “distributive justice” tenet and “asset-based community development” model. Their implementation would suggest the rearrangement of the same contextual parameters (according to the Neighborhood Arrangements framework), and the modification of the same aspects of participation processes (Participation Analysis framework). Source: Author

Conclusions

8.1 Recap

This research project aimed to investigate the level of participation of vulnerable communities in urban planning for a just energy transition. For this investigation, I approached a case of energy transitions in a neighborhood that is subjected to energy poverty challenges. This strategy was indicated as necessary by the literature review conducted on the topics of energy transitions, policies, and energy poverty. This context was the Hoptille apartment complex, in Southeast Amsterdam. The theoretical framework was built on the themes of procedural justice, and participation in energy transitions. With the employment of two analytical frameworks - namely the Neighborhood Arrangements Framework and the Participation Analysis Framework, several points became evident about the inclusion of the residents in the planning and implementation procedures of the energy-saving and redevelopment projects at the Hoptille apartment complex. The research methodology required desk research, as well as extensive interviews and discussions with actors engaged in these intervention projects. The research showcased that a variety of parameters and indicators must be taken into account via different spectrums, to describe the participation of the vulnerable communities in such complex projects.

Specifically, the Neighborhood Arrangements Framework revealed that the context and character of the overlapping policies highly influence the type and size of the energy transition projects, as well as the number of participant actors. The background, agendas, and level of expertise of each participant on the energy transition and redevelopment projects dictated the values, goals, and interests expressed for each intervention project. These values set either the common ground for fertile collaboration or became the source of friction between the stakeholders' communication. The Participation Analysis Framework allowed me to detect that the initial motives and intentions for participation can vary greatly between the high-ranking stakeholders and the community members participating in the same project. With certain actors being inherently supplied with greater information knowledge and influence on the projects, friction in the power relations became obvious between the top-down and bottom-up concepts of decision-making. These defined the forms of participation in the processes while revealing signs of recognition and distributive injustice. Finally, the results or expectations from the collaborative models established in the two projects proved that the values and interests of the individual actors influenced the conceptualization of the success of these processes.

The final proposals responded to the demands accentuated by the research results, introducing practical measures for enhancing the meaningful participation of the local communities. Enhanced participation can be achieved, on the first level, through changes and adaptations in the AFWC collaboration model employed by the local housing corporations. On a second level, participation can be boosted through the allocation of inherently powerful roles to the local vulnerable communities in future energy transition and redevelopment projects.

8.2 Risks and Limitations

Several challenges impeded the performance of this research project. The most crucial of these was receiving the initial approval for conducting this research, particularly from the private sector stakeholders engaged in the transition projects. This fact underlined that researching topics that have a close reference to housing issues might create conflicts for certain stakeholders. The specific topic of energy transitions in the housing sector required approaching multiple actors and receiving a satisfying number of testimonies, in order to elaborate on the numerous tenets of the two analytical frameworks. At the same time, collecting information that is highly defined by the lifestyle of residents also proved difficult to interpret in certain cases. The factor of time limitation had a major role in this research, as a more extensive period of research would have allowed for delving further into the residents' perspectives

and employing more extensive ethnographic approaches. Finally, language barriers and lack of availability led to limited testimonies provided directly by the tenants of the apartment complex. The ex-durante evaluation of the planning procedures established in the redevelopment project at Hoptille added extra hindrance to the formulation of solid results. Therefore, the risks of misinterpretation of certain facts, and future shifts in the contextual parameters of the ongoing planning processes are always looming.

8.3 Reflections - Future Work

Progress, innovation, maximum performance, minimum waste, energy labels, tangible strategies, measurable results: These terms depict the prevailing approach to the energy transitions within the urban landscape, that receives its concrete formation from a basis largely reliant on quantitative data. This research project allowed me to perform an approach to the non-tangible, qualitative information on the themes of urban energy transitions. Focusing on the less-privileged members of civil society, this approach establishes a human-centric view, within a climate of technical and expert-oriented discussions.

During this thesis project, I had the opportunity to meet and discuss with municipality members, housing corporations, consulting organizations, community groups, technicians, experts, researchers, and academics. Their approach to these ongoing, multifaceted transitions created a mosaic of ideas, unable to follow a common path. From an early phase, I became aware of the difficulties existing in the collaboration between the different actors in Southeast Amsterdam. At the same time, I was warned by my colleagues that participation fatigue had been expressed by the local communities. Indeed, approaching the tenants of the Hoptille complex proved quite challenging during this project, for a variety of reasons. However, I concluded that participation fatigue and unwillingness can be even greater and unbeatable when it is expressed by high-rank stakeholders. During the performance of this research project, I dealt with such high-rank collaboration fatigue, which was expressed with a solid denial of permitting academic research to take place in certain cases of energy transitions in the housing sector of Southeast Amsterdam. Therefore, it became apparent that qualitative research on energy transitions can lead to results with nuanced interpretations that are not always easily digestible by all parties since it requires personal testimonies about processes and projects that are still in an experimental stage. Simultaneously, such research generates a political charge, which can initiate a clash of interests between the actors engaged in the wave of energy transitions. It can be argued that, for these exact reasons, qualitative research must receive even greater support, both from academia, but also from the public and private sectors.

In terms of research methodology, it is worth highlighting that the combination and employment of the two analytical frameworks created a solid basis for the approach of complicated projects such as this at the Hoptille apartment complex. This framework combination allowed for a multilevel interpretation of the collected material. Simultaneously, it provided the agility to illustrate a spherical image of the topic, by suggesting the approach of every contextual parameter and engaged actor. Within these frames of research, the understanding of the local community's insights into these transition projects was invaluable.

Discussing with members who took part in the energy-saving interventions at the Hoptille apartment complex revealed that “the tenants felt that a window to the world opened for them -they felt as if their lives mattered more” (Groene Hub member #2 - ex-Fro-Studio member, interview, April 16th, 2024). These sentiments articulate an immense amount of information about the merit of the vulnerable communities' participation in the transitions of their living space. They ring an alarm bell, declaring that social values must not be considered secondary parameters within the upcoming extensive and intensive energy transition activities in our cities, but should be included in urban planning through meaningful measures.

I conclude this research project by highlighting the need to further explore the nature of participation procedures within urban planning and decision-making procedures. Thus, I propose to reconsider the following questions: What is citizen participation for? And who benefits from it?

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Appendices

Appendix A - Interviews List

Type of communication	Organization/Company Member	Date
Interview	Municipality of Amsterdam - member #1	March 5 th , 2024
Interview	Groene Hub - member #1	March 20 th , 2024
Interview	EGK center- founding member	March 28 th , 2024
Discussion	WOON Foundation – member #1	April 2 nd , 2024

Discussion	WOON Foundation - member #2	April 2 nd , 2024
Interview	Ymere Housing Corporation - member #1	April 12 th , 2024
Discussion	Ymere Housing Corporation - member #2	April 12 th , 2024
Discussion	Ymere Housing Corporation - members	April 12 th , 2024
Interview	Municipality of Amsterdam - member #2	April 12 th , 2024
Interview	Municipality of Amsterdam - member #3	April 12 th , 2024
Interview	Groene Hub member #2, (ex-Fro-studio member)	April 16 th , 2024
Interview	Community Land Trust H - member	April 18 th , 2024
Interview	Municipality of Amsterdam - member #1	May 21 st , 2024

Appendix B - Events List

Type of Event	Theme of Event	Organized by	Date
Workshop	Participation Planning and Policies	Municipality of Amsterdam	March 14 th , 2024
Information Market	Discussion and information Sessions with the Hoptille residents	Ymere Housing Corporation	April 12 th , 2024
Intervention Visit	Volunteering work during intervention visits to apartments in Holendrecht neighborhood, Southeast Amsterdam, for the installation of energy-saving materials and inspection.	Groene-Hub	May 21 st , 2024

Appendix C - The AFWC Handbook Diagram

