

# Design parameters for invitational urban governance

## Revising the Right to Challenge in Rotterdam

Paper for the panel T07P01 *The design of policy and governance design: principles, practices and potentials*. 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Public Policy, 28<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> of June, 2017 – Singapore

**Please do not cite, work in progress**

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### 1. Introduction

In 2011, the United Kingdom adopted the Localism Act. This Act established several rights to strengthen the possibilities of communities to take control over their own neighborhood. One of these rights is the Right to Challenge. With this community right, people are invited to express their interest to execute a public service and to take it over.

The community right to challenge can be seen as an example of invitational governance. The Statutory Guidance document stated: *“Communities rightly have high expectations of local services that offer excellent value for money. But local authorities do not have to have a monopoly over service delivery in the area to ensure excellent services. Nor do they have to have all of the good ideas for where improvements can be made. The most creative authorities welcome innovative ideas from communities about how services can be reformed and improved to better meet local needs, and work with groups who believe they can run services differently and better”* (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012: 4). The idea of the community Right to Challenge was also picked-up by several cities in the Netherlands. Cities like Rotterdam, Utrecht, Amsterdam and Tilburg experiment with different arrangements to invite their local communities to take over public tasks.

This attention for invitational governance arises from various trends. Some governments want to limit the tasks they are responsible for and therefore transfer responsibilities to citizens, due to budget cuts or staffing problems. Other governments signal self-organizing movements in communities and want to give room for these bottom-up initiatives. Others signal democratic deficits and want to stimulate and strengthen democratic citizenship by invitational governance (Barnes et al. 2004; Jones & Ormston, 2014; Lowndes & Sullivan, 2008).

Invitational governance can get many different appearances. In essence, it has to do with governmental strategies to stimulate societal initiatives to provide public goods and services, to enable and facilitate these initiatives, and to make room for them by stepping back and removing barriers within policy and administration. However, when citizens challenge a public service, all kind of questions arise about how to ensure public values and how to legitimize other ways of working within the public bureaucracy. Invitational governance requires tailor-made arrangements to enable societal initiatives while ensuring values like transparency, legitimacy, equity and accountability (Bakker et al. 2012; Bovaird, 2007). Being invitational implies that governments have to develop new routines to make it both simple and attractive for citizens to take over public tasks (Barnes et al. 2004; Alford,

2002; Boonstra & Boelens, 2011) and to combine this with traditional public values as fairness, efficiency and procedural justice.

In 2016, the city of Rotterdam commissioned a learning evaluation in order to find out how they could improve their Right to Challenge arrangement. The authors of this paper were asked as independent experts to reflect upon this evaluation and to advise how to redesign the current arrangement in order to make it more invitational. To do so, we explored the main design parameters that constitute arrangements for invitational urban governance. Based upon these design parameters and practices in five Dutch cities, we designed three prototypes. The design parameters and prototypes were used to improve the Right to Challenge Rotterdam and can be used to spur the debate on invitational urban governance and function as a point of departure for designing tailor-made arrangements with respect to local agendas and values.

## **2. Invitational urban governance**

### **Invitational governance**

To understand invitational urban governance, we have to go back to the 90s. In that decade, scholars emphasize trends like globalization, decentralization, urbanization, and privatization. The consequence of these trends, is the limitations of hierarchical government and the increased importance of governance (Jessop, 2003; Pierre & Peters, 2000; Rhodes, 1996; Stoker, 1998). Decentralization is one of these trends. This should not be confused with decentralization as the downscaling in legalization or policy. In the trend to governance, decentralization is about the societal trend in which the local level of the community is of growing importance.

This tendency is for example strongly visible in the Big Society movement of the UK Government, which stands for new forms of 'community organizing', which by the UK Government is seen as "*a way to rebuild communities, help transfer power from the state to local people and foster community activism*" (King et al. 2010: 1, in: Bunyan, 2013). A related notion is 'government through community' (Linders, 2015). Thus, by empowering local communities and by activating them to take responsibility for their own neighbourhood, governments pave the way to step back.

There is a fierce debate between the more cynical interpretation that invitational governance mainly is a pragmatic solution to enable budget cuts and to downsize governmental agencies, and the more idealistic view that invitational governance is a way to empower communities, to enhance public value creation and to mobilize more problem-solving capacity.

However, nevertheless these differences in motives behind invitational governance, the main aim of this strategy is to provoke and enable initiatives from private or societal actors and citizens. The relation between governments that opt for an invitational stance and initiators that adapt to such an invitation, can get different forms. Most likely a relation of co-creation or coproduction emerges in which governments and initiators enters a quite equal relationship in which they work together to create public value. Invitational governance may imply that public services will be completely provided by citizens or citizen collectives, but normally they have to collaborate with governmental agencies to do the job.

### **Characteristics of invitational governance**

This new role play differs fundamentally from traditional relations between government and citizen, and from government and citizens as clients of public services. Invitational governance is about a

change in which the leading role of governments changed into an accommodating role and in which the participating role of citizens changed into a leading role (Barnes et al. 2004; Bovaird, 2007; Span et al. 2011). Bovaird (2007: 846) emphasize the revolutionary character of this new role play: *“This is a revolutionary concept in public service. It has major implications for democratic practices beyond representative government because it locates users and communities more centrally in the decision-making process.”* As such, it fits nicely in the rise of the self-service society (Eriksson, 2012).

This new role of governments has at least three defining elements. Firstly, invitational governance is about governments who recognize and accommodate the self-organizing capacity of citizens and communities. Self-organization in governance is about the way governance arises from the interactions between local actors, without external control (Kooiman & Van Vliet, 2000). Herewith the new role of governments goes beyond a facilitative role, which still implicated an external position of the government. Invitational governance, presupposes that governments give room for self-organization (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Edelenbos et al. 2016; Nederhand et al. 2016).

Secondly, invitational governance is fundamentally different from the notion of responsive governance. The latter is based upon the idea to give citizens a voice in the formulation of policies. It is also different from the notion of coproduction as such, which is about involving service users in the design and delivery of public services. Invitational governance goes one step further and provoke others to take the lead by the provision of these services. The government thus no longer plays the role of initiator, principal or service provider, but make room for others to take that position.

Finally, the role of government in invitational governance changes. Governmental actor no longer take the lead, but this does not imply that governments no longer have any role. Various studies (Barnes et al. 2012; Nederhand et al. 2016) show that governments are still an important actor in the new role play where self-organizing initiatives are more in the lead. The government remains important when it comes to setting the rules of the game, to remove administrative barriers and to organize the necessary support.

### **Understanding invitational urban governance**

There are thus several streams within the literature that fuels the notion of invitational governance. At the same time, much is unknown about the question *how* invitational governance can be applied, which instruments can be used, which specific institutional prescriptions support this way of governance and which rules of the games contribute to its effectiveness. There is also much unknown about the conditions that explain the success of invitational governance. In this paper we use a design perspective to unravel the main design criteria or parameters that are used to compose invitational governance arrangements. Based upon these parameters we will detect the various prototypes behind invitational governance. We will use these findings to reflect upon the approach used in Rotterdam, by giving citizens the right to challenge.

## **3. From understanding to design: principles of a design-oriented research process**

### **Design-oriented research**

Over the last couple of years we can see an interesting trend to approach policy and governance issues from a design perspective. This development has at least two elements. First of all, there is a growing interest to analyze design choices regarding governance and policy and to reflect upon the consequences of different design choices (Howlett, 2014). In this perspective the outcomes of policies

and governance processes are related to the underlying design choices, which enables us to reflect upon the effectiveness of that specific design.

Secondly, from a more prescriptive perspective, there is growing attention to approach policy and governance issues as a matter of design. Then the question is posed: how to design effective policies or governance strategies (Bason, 2016; Considine, 2012). An interesting attempt to combine both perspectives is done by Bryson et al. (2013) who formulated 12 evidence-based design principles for public participation processes, based upon a review of circa 250 books and articles.

We can label these two perspectives analogous to the famous distinction of Lasswell (“analysis of policy versus analysis for policy”), as “design of policy versus design for policy”. Both perspectives make use of insights from design studies and from more recent insights in ‘design thinking’.

The main goal of design science or design science research is to develop knowledge that the professionals of the discipline in question can use to design solutions for their field problems (Van Aken, 2005). Hevner (2007) states that the main purpose of design science research is achieving knowledge and understanding of a problem domain by building and application of a designed artifact.

## **Methods**

In this paper we combine both perspectives. We aim to unravel the design parameters that define the arrangements used to implement the Right to Challenge in five Dutch cities and look at how these design choices worked out in practice. In above we use these insights to develop some more generic prototypes of different arrangements that can be used to implement the Right to Challenge, dependent upon the specific aims and conditions of the implementing government.

The design parameters we used in our analysis are based upon a series of iterations between a conceptual exploration of invitational governance and an empirical investigation of invitational governance in practice. During our analysis certain parameters were added or reformulated in order to do justice to the items that were raised by our respondents. In addition we developed three different prototypes of invitational governance. Designing these prototypes was an iterative process between exploration of the literature on invitational governance and our empirical investigation of design choices, the motives behind these choices and their impact within the five cities analyzed.

Several steps have been taken, which are summarized in figure 1:

1. A first set of provisional parameters was formulated, based upon the different elements of invitational governance we found in literature.
2. This first set of design parameters was used in a desk study on invitational governance in five Dutch cities. The parameters were the starting point to code the documents. Based upon the desk study, the design parameters were refined and the first set of prototypes we found in practice was designed.
3. The design parameters and prototypes were related to the literature on invitational urban governance and refined.
4. The design parameters and prototypes were discussed in the interviews with key actors in the five Dutch cities and experts on invitational governance. Based upon these interviews, the design parameters and prototypes were further detailed.
5. With the design parameters and prototypes, we enriched the literature on invitational urban governance
6. Based upon this ultimate set of design parameters and prototypes, we contributed to the process of redesigning invitational governance in Rotterdam by formulating prescriptions how to improve the instrument of Right to Challenge.

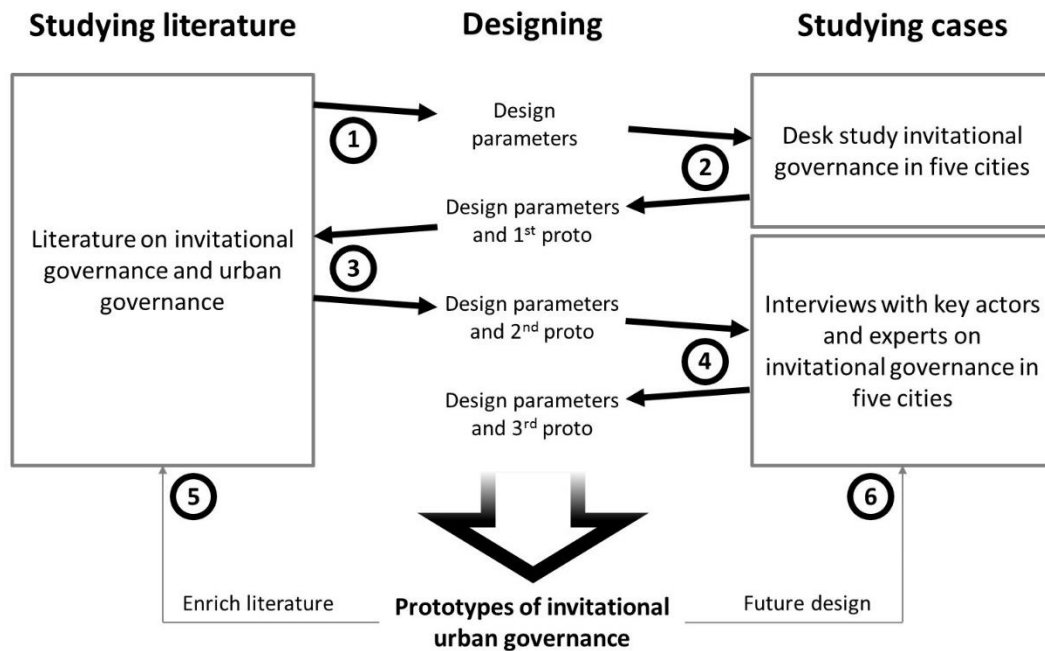


Figure 1. The design-oriented research process

To analyze invitational governance in practice, we choose five large cities who function as leading cities for Right to Challenge in the Netherlands: Amsterdam, Eindhoven, Rotterdam, Tilburg, and Utrecht. In a desk study, we analyzed all formal documents about Right to Challenge in these cities. We used the documents to analyze the characteristics of the arrangements for Right to Challenge. We used software (Atlas TI) to conduct this analysis.

From the five cities, the city Rotterdam was our leading case. For this case we had meetings with key actors, interviews with civil servants, and interviews with citizens who want to take over public services. For the other four cities, we conducted besides the desk study one interview with the key actor.

#### 4. Eight design parameters for invitational urban governance

In the design process, based upon the literature on invitational governance and the desk study and interviews in five Dutch cities, we developed eight design parameters for invitational urban governance.

##### Scope of the invited space

The first design parameter for invitational urban governance is the scope of the invitation, the demarcation of the invited space that is constructed by the inviting agency (Cornwall, 2004). Scoping is easily associated with the kind of tasks which could be challenged by citizens and the tasks which are not. However, being invitational is challenging the scope in another way.

Firstly, citizens choose issues which are close to their everyday life and which are not characterized by the sectoral boundaries which are used by governments. We found for example in the city Rotterdam a community organization who want to realize a water retention below the parking of a football stadium and want to manage this water retention facility by activating unemployed youth. The

scope of this issue touches various public tasks, like ensuring water management, strengthening the quality of life in the city, and decreasing unemployment.

Citizens who challenge this kind of public tasks, are in theory mentioned as the 'everyday makers' (Bang & Sørensen, 1999). Their involvement in a public issue is bounded by a specific location and is holistic (Bang & Sørensen, 1999; Bovaird, 2007; Lowndes & Sullivan, 2008). Scoping is then about the question whether the demarcation is based upon the sectoral boundaries of the government or upon the holistic and place-based boundaries of citizens.

Secondly, scoping could be more or less part of the deliberation of citizens and officials. Barnes et al. (2004) frame this scoping process as agenda setting. Various approaches could be found in the praxis of the five Dutch cities. Governmental officials and experts emphasize the importance of deliberating the scope, because only by deliberation connections between citizen issues and governmental tasks could arise. Others emphasize the importance of a clear scope of invitational governance, because this creates clear expectations of citizens and ensures that only public tasks instead of additional tasks are challenged.

### **Opportunity structure**

The willingness of citizens to respond to the governmental invitation, is mostly out of the control of governments. However, as least as important is the ability of citizens to respond to the governmental invitation. This ability is partly determined by the skills and knowledge of citizens and partly by the ease with which the government could be challenged (Alford, 2002). This is what Barnes et al. (2004) call the opportunity structures which are provided by the government.

Opportunity structures are an important element of invitational governance. Being invitational has two sides. At the one side, it is about the way citizens know about the possibility to challenge the government. In some Dutch cities, the opportunity to challenge the municipality is hardly communicated and only already known citizens with their initiative become involved. In other cities, the opportunity is communicated and civil servants invite citizens in different kind of setting to challenge the municipality. At the other hand, opportunity is about the easiness of realizing their initiative after citizens know about the possibility. In for instance the city of Rotterdam, many citizens know about the possibility. But once challenging the municipality, the opportunity structure is limited because of the time-consuming procedures.

Being invitational is thus not the same as easy access. Barnes et al. (2004) describe in their study on citizens participation how opportunity structures are part of the deliberation. In determining the opportunity structure, different concerns are made: political ambition to create opportunity, the willingness of civil servants, the trust between civil servants and citizens, the ability of information, et cetera (Barnes et al. 2004; Bovaird, 2007; Jones & Ormston, 2014; Kiser, 1984). This result in difficult or easy opportunity structures.

### **Collaboration between citizens and officials**

Thirdly, invitational governance challenges the existing interaction patterns between citizens and officials. In the existing interactions, people are citizen or client in relation to the government. If they challenge public tasks, they become more like an (equal) partner of the government (Bovaird, 2007).

In the Dutch cities we studied, officials feel themselves challenged. Citizens are convinced that they could fulfill the public task for which officials were responsible for a long time. The negative impacts on collaboration are mentioned by Bovaird (2007). Based on experiences in the UK, he concluded that the transfer of public tasks to communities has negative impact on the identity and status of

professionals. Others focus on the way the cooperation between officials and citizens could be improved. Especially trust and an open attitude are important conditions for successful collaboration (Nederhand et al. 2016; Span et al. 2011; Voorberg et al. 2015).

Besides trust and an open attitude, the new role play between citizens and officials also requires other skills. Several authors mention that officials need facilitating and networking skills, instead of designing and decision-making skills (Bovaird, 2007; Jones & Ormston, 2014). In our cases we found also the importance of specific skills of citizens, like organizational skills and bureaucratic competencies.

The type of collaboration is thus about how interaction is organized in invitational governance. Some local governments continue the hierarchical relation with citizens, while others try to create new interaction patterns within a 'level playing field' between government and community.

### **Interrelatedness with the governmental organization**

In the literature on urban governance, less attention is paid to the question whether invitational governance is more successful when it is embedded within the governmental organization or when it is organized at a safe distance from the existing organization and thus more separated. In other studies we found some interesting insights related to this question, for instance in the literature on project and program management. One of the most important characteristics of these arrangements for projects and programs, is their distance from the organizational hierarchy. This distance is created to strengthen the focus on specific goals, to speed up decision-making, and to come to a coherent process which fit with the specific issue (Johansson et al. 2007; Lycett et al. 2004).

In this way, one could argue that invitational governance must be organized at a distance from the standing governmental organization. Various Dutch cities choose to create this distance. However, they are many times confronted with the governmental organization. Each citizen initiative must be assessed and approved by the governmental organization, which delayed and hindered the ambition of being invitational.

We found these downside of distance also in the literature. If invitational governance is not embedded within the governmental organization, the current practices and institutions will remain the same and invitational governance remains the exception rather than the rule. As long as these institutions are unchanged, invitational governance is an exception instead of the standard option (Bakker et al. 2012; Barnes et al. 2004).

### **Organizational structure**

As said, invitational governance is based upon the principles of self-organization: people organize themselves without external control. In several studies is stated that consequently invitational governance has to be accompanied with at least structures, rules, and procedures as possible. Only some general and flexible principles could be useful, but all kind of external control from the government to initiatives must be prevented (Boons & Boelens, 2011; Nederhand et al. 2016).

Others emphasize the complexity of invitational governance. In this complexity a clearly defined organizational structure with detailed procedures is helpful. By these detailed structures, the role of the local government is clear and the procedures in which the government decides about initiatives are transparent and equal for everyone (Span et al. 2011).

In the Dutch cities, we found room for self-organization as well as detailed structures for invitational governance. In the city Tilburg, each initiative is coupled to a civil servant and together they go through a standardized procedure. And the city Rotterdam has a standardized procedure in which for each step

is determined who has to take which decision based upon which information. On the contrary, the city Utrecht has no procedure and even no policy for invitational governance. Invitational governance for them is a joint learning process, with only some general principles about how to harvest the value of bottom-up initiatives.

In this way, the organizational structure varies between some general principles and detailed structures and rules. With the first the focus is on creating room for self-organization, while in the second the focus is on transparency and clear expectations.

### **Conditions**

In public service delivery, governments are used to set the conditions and requirements. They formulate all kind of conditions about *how* service delivery has to be organized, to ensure not just efficient and effective, but also legitimate service delivery. In invitational governance, the government could still set such conditions. Studies to invitational governance in de UK show the importance of several conditions. Lowndes and Sullivan (2008) studied neighborhood governance and argue for conditions which ensure public values like equity and minority rights. Bovaird (2007) shows, in his study to coproduction in the UK, the importance of conditions which ensure equal chances for private and community initiatives. In this way, the 'invitation' is combined with many conditions.

Others concluded that setting many and strict conditions is one of the main barriers for becoming really invitational and open for external initiative. Citizens organize themselves and this could only flourish if the government keep at distance. In this line of argumentation the invitation has to be only accompanied with a few general conditions (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Nederhand et al. 2016).

These different views on conditions are also seen in the five Dutch cities. The city Utrecht, for instance, has just one condition: the initiative must have social added value. And the city Eindhoven sets two conditions: the public service which is delivered by citizens is for the clients better (quality) and is delivered for at most the same budget. In other cities, the government sets all kind of conditions about quality, budget, domain specific conditions and conditions about the contribution to policy goals.

### **Accountability**

Being invitational challenges the existing bureaucratic accountability structures. In invitational governance, a transfer of tasks, resources and power take place. This raises the question in which way accountability is organized with regard to these tasks, resources and power allocation. Besides the transfer of tasks, invitational governance leads also to more complex relationships between citizens and the government. The well-known relation between citizen and government, and client and government, is widened by a relationship as co-producers. These multiple relations in one relationship, challenges accountability structures (Bovaird, 2007; Jones & Ormston, 2014).

Skelcher (2005) described how in this complexity, accountability can be organized following two different logics: the logics of accountability or the logics of consequentiality by necessity and preference. Many times, the logics of accountability is used in invitational governance. The focus is on accountability as democratic value. Accountability is organized following the usual procedures for accountability, based upon legislation and the primacy of elected representatives (Jones & Ormston, 2014; Skelcher, 2005). We found this logic in the Dutch cities, among which Eindhoven. At the moment a task is delegated to citizens, accountability is organized following the usual procedures for subsidies. These procedures are determined by the council.



In other cities we found the logics of consequentiality. For instance in Amsterdam, civil servants discuss with citizens the way accountability could be organized. In some cases, a regular meeting is organized in which the citizens tell about the public services they delivered. In other cases, a small report was drafted which is related to, but not fully incorporated in, the usual procedures for subsidies. In this way, accountability is based upon necessity and preference. Following this logic, a bottom-up system of accountability arises based upon the interactions between citizens and civil servants (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Skelcher, 2005).

### **Transfer of resources**

Invite citizens to challenge public tasks, leads to transfer of tasks and herewith the transfer of resources. In many studies, the importance of financial resources is emphasized (Jones & Ormston, 2014; Voorberg et al. 2015). However, we found also strong indications that non-financial resources are at least as important. Alford (2002) analysed the motives for citizens to challenge public tasks and concludes that non-financial incentives are more important than financial incentives. And in the five Dutch cities, we found a wide variety of resources which are transferred: housing, support in communication, information, expert knowledge, et cetera. In this way, the transfer of resources in invitational governance must be interpreted broadly.

Invitational governance comes with a dilemma related to the transfer of resources. Based upon an economic rational, public service delivery by citizens could be cheaper. In some cases cutbacks are even one of the main motivations to become invitational (Barnes et al. 2004; Jones & Ormston, 2014). Consequently, the transfer of resources is very limited.

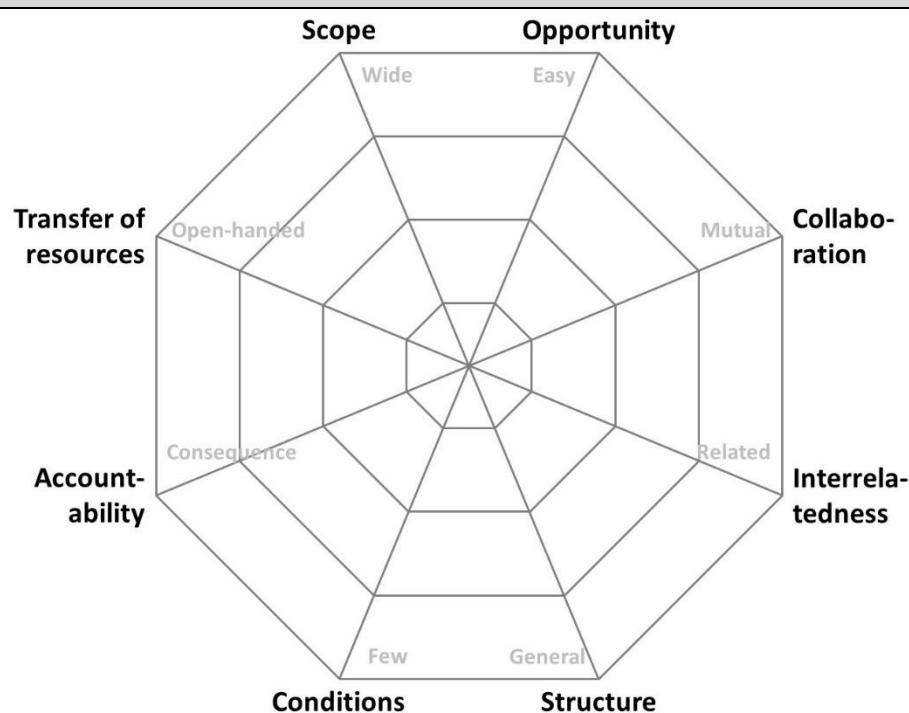
In the practice of the Dutch cities, we found however that the transfer of resources is less limited than expected. Citizens are support in many ways, varying from printing a flyer or a speech from the mayor, to hosting accommodation in governmental buildings and providing additional budget. In this way, many resources were provided.

The transfer of resources is thus an important element of invitational governance. It could be tight-fisted, but we also have indications that invitational governance is about open-handed transfer of resources.

### **Summary of the design parameters**

Based upon literature on invitational governance and upon the experiences with invitational governance in five Dutch cities, we presented eight design parameters. These parameters are summarized in figure 2 and table 1.

**Figure 2. Visualization of design parameters for invitational governance**



**Table 1. Description of the design parameters for invitational governance**

Scope	Narrow: the government determines strictly defined tasks that are allowed for invitational governance	Wide: citizens determine the holistic and place-based tasks they want to challenge
Opportunity	Difficult: opportunity structures make it hard and time-consuming for citizens to challenge the government	Easy: opportunity structures are facilitative and supportive for citizens who want to challenge the government
Collaboration	Hierarchical: the existing hierarchical relation between government and citizens is continued	Mutual: a more equal relationship is settled based upon reciprocity between government and citizens
Interrelatedness with government	Unrelated: invitational governance is organized outside the standing public organization	Interrelated: invitational governance is organized fully within the governmental organization
Organizational structure	Detailed: detailed system of standardized structures, rules and procedures	General: small amount of general principles on which invitational governance is based
Conditions	Many: the government assesses initiatives based upon many detailed conditions	Few: the government assesses initiatives based upon a small set of general conditions
Accountability	Logic of accountability: accountability in existing procedures based upon legislation and political primacy	Logic of consequence: bottom-up system of accountability which arises from citizen-government interactions
Transfer of resources	Tight-fisted: resources transferred to citizens are less than the provided resources for the existing task	Open-handed: resources transferred to citizens are more than the provided resources for the existing task

## 5. From design parameters to prototypes

Both in the literature as well as in practice we found different configurations of design choices which form different prototypes of invitational governance. These prototypes put different ambitions and values at the center of their approach of invitational, whether this is improving organizational efficiency, or organizational innovation or even setting a new standard. Based upon a confrontation of the theory and the empirical data we were able to distill three prototypes of invitational governance.

### Prototype “performance trigger”

Based upon the Dutch cities and the literature on invitational governance, we developed the first prototype which we named ‘performance’. In this arrangement for invitational governance, the focus is on financial resources. By a strong demarcation of scope and opportunity, the government gives only room for bottom-up initiatives in policy areas in which this financial benefit could be realized. Standard procedures, embedded in the organization, are used to give everyone the same opportunities to deliver public services. The prototype performance and its characteristics are visualized in figure 3.

From the five Dutch cities, the city of Eindhoven comes close to the prototype performance. In this city, they start Right to Challenge to improve the effectiveness of public services. Therefore, they developed a standard procedure to be invitational in only the social domain. A standardized procedure is implemented, in which the focus is on assessing bottom-up initiatives on several conditions. The most important condition is financial, in which the municipality assesses whether the initiative is initiative cheaper and more effective than the current public service.

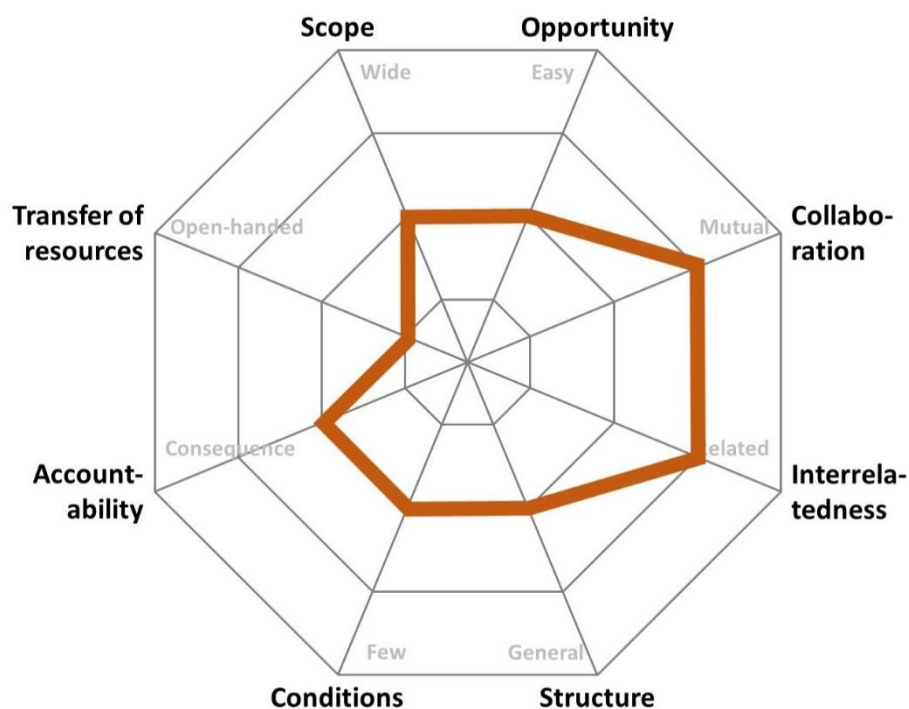


Figure 3. Prototype performance trigger

### Prototype “governance innovation”

The second prototype we designed, is the prototype “governance innovation” (see figure 4). In this prototype, invitational governance is framed as a governance innovation. To let this innovation flourish, invitational governance is organized at distance from the organization. At this distance,

initiatives are facilitated in all possible ways: royal transfer of resources, accountability was based upon the needs from the initiatives and the initiatives are confronted with just a few general conditions. Scope and opportunities are wider than in the prototype performance, but still some demarcations are made to keep the innovation manageable.

Invitational governance Amsterdam comes most close to this prototype. The council provides budget for bottom-up initiatives. Civil servants who work in the neighborhoods, are free to invite and support citizens in delivering public tasks. Based upon the idea that citizens are in charge, the municipality didn't formulate specific conditions. Even if the bottom-up initiative contributes to the neighborhood without contributing to municipal tasks, the initiative is supported. The civil servants in the neighborhoods are closely involved to the initiatives, other civil servants are hardly involved.

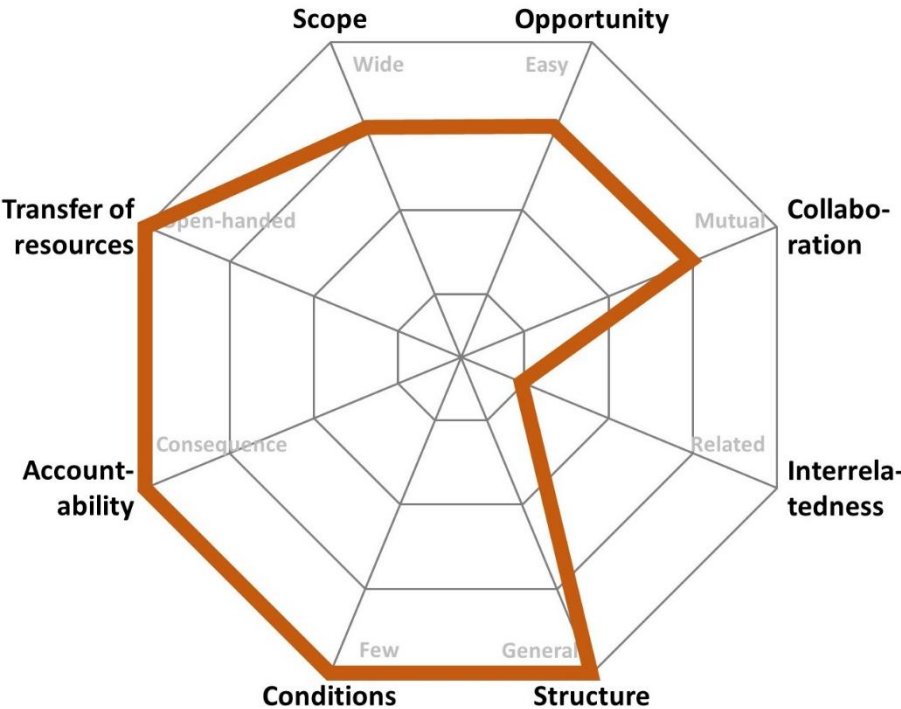


Figure 4. Prototype governance innovation

**Prototype “organizational routine”**

The third prototype we designed based upon the literature and the Dutch practices, is the prototype organization (see figure 5). In this prototype, the arrangement for invitational governance is designed in such a way that the organization becomes more invitational. Compared to the former prototype, this one is much more on incremental organizational change instead of rapid innovation in the niches of the organization. Therefore, invitational governance is strongly embedded in the organization. Invitational governance is the new standard procedure, in which citizens collaborate with the government in a mutual relationship. To ensure the organizational embedding, existing structures for assessment based upon multiple conditions and existing practices for accountability are used.

In the Dutch practice of invitational governance, invitational governance in Tilburg has some characteristics which correspond with this prototype. Invitational governance was first organized as innovation at distance from the organization. In the last year, invitational governance is more embedded in the organization. A standard procedure is designed. For each bottom-up initiative a civil servant of one of the departments is designated as coordinator and civil servants which are responsible

for finance and licenses, are early involved. Civil servants were also trained in being receptive for external initiatives.

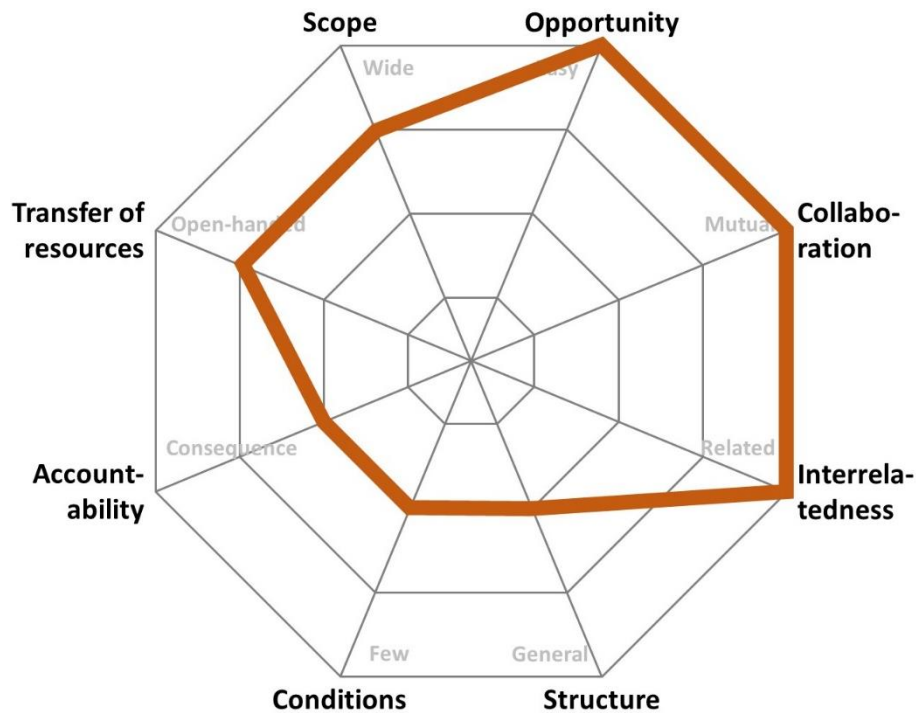


Figure 5. Prototype organizational routine

## 6. Application of the prototypes and design parameters: Right to Challenge Rotterdam

After developing the design parameters and designing the prototypes, we used them to analyze and improve Right to Challenge Rotterdam. We present some parts of this analysis to illustrate the application of the parameters and prototypes.

### Application of the design parameters: Right to Challenge Rotterdam

Since several years, there was growing attention to citizen involvement in Rotterdam. End 2014, councilors proposed to start Right to Challenge and half a year later Right to Challenge Rotterdam was launched. We used the design parameters to describe and analyze Right to Challenge Rotterdam.

In Rotterdam, citizens are only allowed to challenge the tasks which are already conducted by the local government. It is not allowed to challenge tasks of other government or tasks which are recently giving up because of cutbacks. In this way the scope is somewhat narrowed. The municipality communicates actively to citizens about the opportunity to challenge governmental tasks. This is done by media, a website and by the community managers. Once citizens want to challenge a task, there is a procedure to facilitate this. However, this procedure is experienced as very time-consuming.

An important element of Right to Challenge Rotterdam was to improve the cooperation between citizens and civil servants. This proved to be difficult. Most civil servants continue the existing hierarchical relation with citizens and don't feel the need to change this. Only a few civil servants interact in a mutual way.

For Right to Challenge Rotterdam, an organization was set up which was fully interrelated with the municipal organization. One civil servant is coordinator for Right to Challenge Rotterdam. For each challenge, various civil servants from different departments are involved and this is organized by the

coordinator. Decisions were taken by a board of managers of the different departments. Part of the organization, is a standard procedure for each challenge. This standard procedure was an important element at the start of Right to Challenge. However in practice, the procedure is applied in a different way for each challenge. Also the people involved don't experience clear rules and procedures in the Right to Challenge process. In this way the structure is more general than detailed.

At the start of Right to Challenge, many conditions for challenges were set. Conditions are for instance the effectiveness of a challenge, support for the challenge by the community, and all kind of quality standards for the information an initiator had to deliver. Also many criteria for accountability were set, based upon the municipal procedures of accountability. Once started, citizens were confronted with all kind of additional conditions. Each municipal department sets its own additional criteria. For accountability, however, the conditions were less strictly. One specific condition was related to resources: citizens are only allowed to challenge the existing budget, no additional resources are available. However, the first challenges can all count on additional budget, like expert knowledge, budget for additional investments, or budget to prepare the challenge.

The just described arrangement of Right to Challenge Rotterdam is summarized in figure 6.

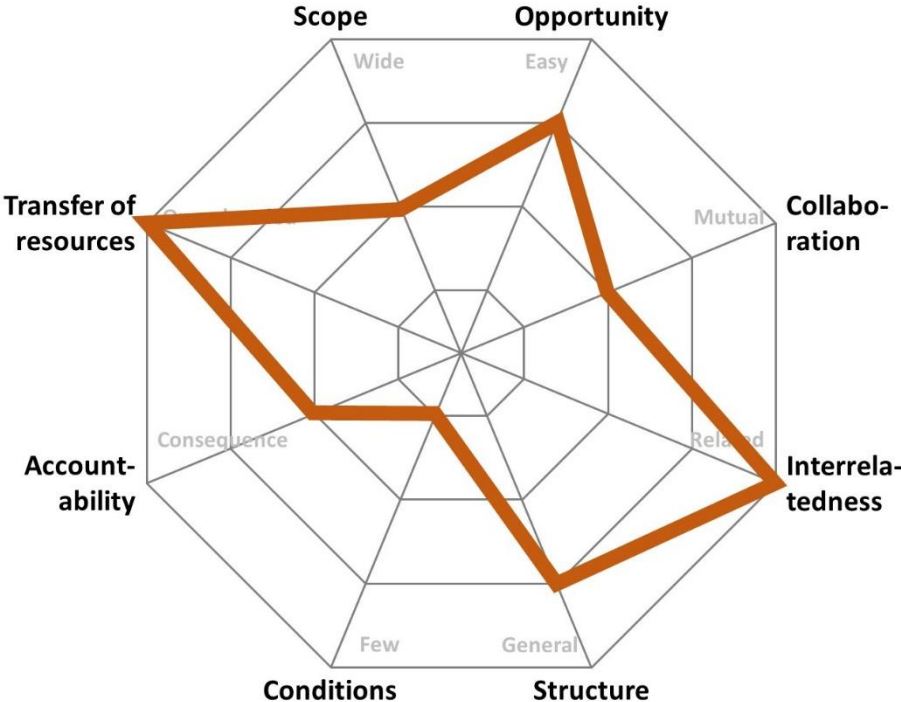


Figure 6. Right to Challenge Rotterdam

**Reflection: what characterizes the Right to Challenge of Rotterdam?**

The arrangement of Right to Challenge Rotterdam can be compared to the three prototypes. We found hardly similarities with the prototype innovation. Especially the logic of accountability instead of the logic of consequence, the amount of conditions, and degree of interrelatedness differs. Within the Rotterdam case there are many provisions to minimize risk and surprises, instead of allowing for them in order to enable experimentation and learning.

We found several similarities with the prototype performance, like the somewhat limited scope, logic of accountability, and the importance of conditions and standard procedures. However, with regard to the transfer of resources, Right to Challenge is totally different from the prototype

performance. In Rotterdam, many additional resources are available, while in the prototype performance less resources are made available for initiatives.

We found also similarities with the prototype organization. Similarities are for instance the interrelatedness, logic of accountability, the some open-handed transfer of resources and the easy opportunity. Again, we found one main difference. The collaboration is hierarchical, instead of the mutual collaboration which is characteristic for the prototype organization.

Based upon the comparison of Right to Challenge Rotterdam with the prototypes, we conclude that the arrangement is a mix of performance and organization.

### **Redesigning Right to Challenge Rotterdam**

As part of the design process, we discussed these results with key actors in Right to Challenge Rotterdam. In these deliberations, we found that key actors strive for a local governmental organization which is invitational. Financial considerations are much less of importance.

Based upon these deliberations, we focused on the organizational prototype and came to several recommendations to the city of Rotterdam in order to use their Right to Challenge as an instrument for durable organizational change. These recommendations have to do with the design of the instrument but also with the context in which it is applied. Regarding the latter it is important to:

- Explore the factors that explain why it is so hard for civil servant to come to mutual collaborative processes with citizens. We expect that the organizational culture, and especially discretion and acceptance of failure, is of importance. These type of barriers have to be removed before the city government can become more invitational.
- Encourage civil servants to be involved in invitational governance. Strengthen the political support for invitational governance, so civil servants feel themselves supported. And improve the involvement of managers, and strengthen herewith the support of managers for civil servants in invitational governance.

Regarding the design of the Right to Challenge instrument, there are a couple of adjustments necessary to enhance its contribution to a more invitational organization:

- Formulate more general conditions for bottom-up initiatives they have to meet. The current conditions are not only too specific but also leave too much room for agencies to put additional demands on initiatives, based upon their own working routines and preferences.
- Strengthen the focus on collaboration between challenge and public officials: challenges require interaction based upon the idea of partnership instead of competition. That also put specific demands on the skills and attitude of public professionals.
- Reframe each challenge as a learning process for the municipality which has a double ambition: to make the specific challenge a success and to learn from it to become more invitational. This also means that managerial tolerance for mistakes has to be safeguarded.
- Diminish the distance between the instrument of Right to Challenge and the organization of the city administration; strengthen the embedding of this instrument in the city administration and strengthen the interconnectedness of this instrument with the standard procedures in the various municipal departments.
- Develop a strategy to stop with Right to Challenge as an external initiative, outside the governmental organization and start a trajectory to mainstream this line of working within the organization.

At this moment, these recommendations are used to improve the arrangement Right to Challenge Rotterdam.

## **7. Reflections on the design approach for invitational urban governance**

Based upon this paper we can formulate a couple of conclusions about design-oriented approaches for governance and for invitational governance in particular. In general we conclude that the using a design lens (by focusing upon design parameters, design prototypes) is very useful to structure both our theoretical exploration as well as our empirical analysis. By looking for design parameters we discovered the relevant 'switches' for governments they have to organize invitational governance. Such a focus helps to filter the literature and the data, and to select those parameters of an arrangement that are changeable by the involved actors.

Subsequently, thinking in terms of the design of specific arrangements for invitational governance also helps to translate findings and conclusions in concrete recommendations to adjust these arrangements. In other words: a design perspective fosters the researcher to make his recommendations concrete in terms of how a particular design has to be adjusted.

Furthermore, a design perspective enabled us to unravel the (often unconscious) choices made by involved actors who started a process of invitational governance. Thinking in terms of design parameters helped us to unmask these choices and to reconstruct the consequences of these choices.

Finally, looking for prototypes (as specific design configurations) by iterating between theory and empirical data, was very helpful to organize somewhat order in the huge variety of theoretical perspectives and empirical practices. The idea of prototypes as configurations of specific design choices around specific ambitions or values, helped us to discuss whether some design choices aligned with the ambition behind these choices.

In the city of Rotterdam it was very interesting to see – based upon a comparison of the specific design used in Rotterdam and the three prototypes – that the ambition was not really congruent with the design. Such a confrontation can help the search for necessary design adjustments.

The design-oriented study reported in this paper was not a design attempt from scratch, but was an attempt to improve an existing design. The scope that was used to find possible improvements was rather limited: we only analyzed the experiences within Rotterdam, and used comparable initiatives and the literature on invitational governance to reflect upon possible improvements. By doing so, the design attempt thus was mainly expert-driven and evidence-based. From the design studies we can learn that organizing such a process can also be done by making room for out-of-the-box thinking, creativity but also by making it a really collaborative endeavor.



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