



Resituating the Local in Cohesion and Territorial Development

Nationaal Programma ROTTERDAM ZUID



Pictures courtesy of Kees Dol

**nationaal programma
gr^oningen**

D 6.2 National Report The Netherlands

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Report Information

Title: Deliverable 6.2 **National Report The Netherlands**
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Version: Final
Date of Publication: 20 May 2019
Dissemination level: Public

Project Information

Project Acronym RELOCAL
Project Full title: Resituating the Local in Cohesion and Territorial Development
Grant Agreement: 727097
Project Duration: 48 months
Project coordinator: UEF

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Abbreviations

Please revise this list after writing your report.

EC	European Commission
EFRD	European Fund for Regional Development
ESF	European
EU	European Union
GBB	Groninger Bodembeweging
GG	Groninger Gasberaad
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRA	Hazard and Risk Assessment
LAU	Local Administrative Unit
NAM	Nederlands Aardolie Maatschappij (Dutch Oil Company)
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
NCG	Nationaal Coördinator Groningen
NPG	Nationaal Programma Groningen
NPRZ	Nationaal Programma Rotterdam-Zuid
SoDM	Staatstoezicht op de Mijnen (the Dutch Mining Safety Board)
UIA	Urban Innovative Actions

Executive Summary

Background

In the Netherlands, spatial justice is not a common term among policymakers, practitioners and the general public. Manifestations of spatial justice are usually addressed through the broad notion of social inequality (*sociale ongelijkheid*), under which a wide range of more specific terms and is used, such as deprivation, concentration, and distrust.

The first Dutch study (Dol *et al.*, 2019) concerns the district Rotterdam South (**NPRZ**), an area of about 200,000 residents. Here, spatial injustice relates to a concentration of socio-economically vulnerable households and the resulting negative implications, ranging from the hardships created by unemployment, poverty, educational deficiencies and dependence on social benefits, to the accumulation of such problems in specific areas, intergenerational transmission of poverty and a negative (external) reputation of Rotterdam South.

The second Dutch case study (Trip & Romein, 2019) analyses spatial justice in the wake of frequent earthquakes occurring in the region of **Northeast Groningen** in the Netherlands. The locality in which the action takes place consists of ten municipalities. Spatial justice in this case concerns the various consequences of the earthquakes, which go beyond direct material damage to dwellings, but also include financial problems due to prolonged procedures for damage repair and, increasingly devastating, physical and mental health problems related to the fear for new earthquakes, insecurity regarding financial arrangements in arrears, and increasing distrust of the national government and oil company, who are being accused of stalling any form of compensation. As such this is a case of truly spatial injustice, which is hardly covered by the concept of social inequality mentioned above: people suffer from injustice purely on the basis of where they happen to live, almost regardless of differences income, education etc.. The Action refers not to a single policy, but to the collective of policies and interventions to assess, to compensate for and to repair earthquake damage (curative) as well as to prevent further damage (preventive).

Findings

The co-ordination and implementation of the action in the NPRZ is much more effectively structured in terms of co-operation, but also in terms of mutual trust, an asset which is clearly lacking between many of the action partners in Northeast Groningen. NPRZ has a goal that is shared and agreed upon by all stakeholders, while in Groningen the interests of the oil company and residents oppose. Moreover, the NPRZ seems to have a much smaller unequal balance of power, compared to the Groningen case. On the other hand, the overall representation and engagements of residents, through various informal and formal associations, is much stronger in Northeast Groningen than in Rotterdam. This is reflected most clearly by the very existence of an umbrella organisation in Groningen that helps the individual associations to join forces, whereas no such step is observed in the NPRZ. Whereas the Action in the NPRZ seems to have developed in a coherent way over time, the case of Northeast Groningen reveals that a flawed delivery of mitigation policies and interventions has contributed to a fundamental form of procedural injustice, i.e. a growing distrust in all the actors which are associated with the gas extraction and are accountable for the various forms of damage. In both situations, expected outcomes will only be achieved in the long term.

Outlook

Overall, the analysis of the Dutch cases shows that, even in a 'policy-dense' and affluent country such as the Netherlands, achieving greater spatial justice in localities of various scales is notoriously difficult. Although there is a clear role of government partners on national level, both the Dutch case studies are a reflection of the principle of subsidiarity,

i.e. the need and rationale to solve the observed problems on the lowest appropriate level, which is often the regional or local/city level. The national level is considered as the wider economic, financial and legal context that should enable partners on the local level to jointly address the problems observed in the actions, but the actual 'actions' are on the local level. Generally, we conclude that the NPRZ case currently has a more favourable outlook in terms of achieving the long-term aims of the Action than the case of Northeast Groningen, which is still characterised by high levels of distrust and reluctance between partners of different types.

1. Introduction

In the Netherlands, spatial justice is not a common term among policymakers, practitioners and the general public. Manifestations of socio-spatial justice are commonly addressed through the broad notion of social inequality (*sociale ongelijkheid*), under which a wide range of more specific terms and is used, such as deprivation, concentration, and distrust. Even so, the understanding of spatial (in)justice is fundamental to both of the RELOCAL case studies in the Netherlands. In line with the project requirements, both case studies analyse and contextualise a place-based action to promote spatial justice by means of a policy, a project or other initiatives in a specific locality. The aim of the case studies is “to investigate whether spatial justice, as a fair and equitable (process and) distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them, can be achieved through place-based strategies, and whether these can be achieved within as well as across places and times” (Madanipour *et al.*, 2017: 79). In doing so, this report will make a distinction between **procedural justice** and **distributive justice**.

The two Dutch case studies are: Rotterdam South and Northeast Groningen. While both cases are highly different in terms of local context, socio-spatial characteristics, the action, its governance and the intended implications, they share a key characteristic: both localities refer to a set of problems related to spatial justice that are widely considered to be of a magnitude that local policies and resources alone are deemed to be insufficient to address the root causes of the problems. Consequently, both localities are the target area of a ‘national program’ (*nationaal programma*). Below, the cases and associated **actions** are introduced shortly.

Rotterdam South (NPRZ)

This case study (Dol *et al.*, 2019) concerns the district Rotterdam South, an area of about 200,000 residents, with a high concentration of socio-economically vulnerable households. The current concentration of lower income households originates from a historically grown form of distributive injustice. In earlier days, the district was the heart of a harbour area, with residential districts mostly targeted at the working classes.

Spatial injustice in Rotterdam South relates to a **concentration of socio-economically vulnerable households and the resulting negative implications**. Apart from the hardships created by unemployment, poverty, educational deficiencies and dependence on social benefits, the accumulation of such problems in specific areas can create negative **neighbourhood effects** (cf. Galster, 2012), and children and adults having a somewhat restricted ‘window on the world’. This leads to little awareness of opportunities (for social mobility) that reach beyond the individual experience of neighbourhood residents. As many adults have to cope with a multitude of socioeconomic problems, they are predominantly in a ‘survival mode’ which hinders them in supporting educational trajectories of their children or participating in local societal organisations. A spatial injustice of a distributive nature is the lack of higher-level secondary schools (grammar schools), cultural facilities and libraries.

On the individual level, **intergenerational transmission of poverty** might be more important than neighbourhood effects, but the distinction between these two factors is not always clear. Many children living in the southern part of Rotterdam do not choose educational trajectories that match with the demand of employers, who require technically skilled people and mid-level (health) care professionals. Employers regard the mismatch between abundant work and a **large underused labour reserve** as a form of injustice.

Another form of spatial injustice is related to the **negative (external) reputation** of Rotterdam South. This stigma can impede successful job applications, particularly for those youngsters that are more or less trapped in a local street culture.

This brings us to the **Action**. The NPRZ is a local network organisation, which coordinates and stimulates participants to commit themselves to a long-term project (2012-2030), which is focussed on improving the levels of education, employment and living quality up to the average level of the four largest cities in the Netherlands. Stakeholders are from the government (municipality, state), employers, housing associations, school boards, industry, police and care organisations. Local stakeholders use their own means for NPRZ projects, but they also receive additional grants from the national government, especially for the purpose of strengthening education. The NPRZ bureau received a strong mandate from stakeholders to keep the program on course. It coordinates the actions with a small but persistent staff. The NPRZ is not a platform that distributes funding nor is it a top-down extension of the central government in the Hague. It is a network organisation in which all stakeholders commit themselves, contribute their own projects and execute them.

Northeast Groningen

This case study (Trip & Romein, 2019) analyses spatial justice in the wake of frequent earthquakes occurring in the region of Northeast Groningen in the Netherlands. The locality in which the action takes place consists of ten municipalities. The demarcated municipalities are an approximation of the area considered most vulnerable to non-natural earthquakes, covered by the *Meerjarenprogramma Aardbevingsbestendig en Kansrijk Groningen* (NCG, 2015: 64). These earthquakes are, fundamentally, man-made, induced by the extraction of natural gas in the region. While they have a maximum magnitude of only 3 to 4 on the Richter scale until now, they cause severe damage due to their shallow depth of about three kilometres, the instable clay underground in which they occur, and the vulnerable brick houses that were never meant to withstand earthquakes. Northeast Groningen is a peripheral, mostly rural region. As such, it has its fair share of typical problems, such as an ageing and declining population, a relatively high unemployment rate and an, on average, low education of the labour force. The specific problems related to earthquakes, however, are unique to the region and add up to the macro-related trends of ageing and depopulation.

Spatial justice in this case concerns the various consequences of the earthquakes, which go beyond direct material damage to dwellings, but also include financial problems due to prolonged procedures for damage repair, and physical and mental health problems related to the fear for new earthquakes, insecurity regarding financial arrangements in arrears, and increasing distrust of the national government and oil company, who are being accused of stalling any form of compensation. The various consequences have been addressed by multiple policy measures that have varied considerably over a relatively short period since 2012. A turning point in many respects was the earthquake near the small village of Huizinge in 2012 which caused extensive damage and forced authorities to respond in a substantive way. The case study takes this earthquake as a starting point for the Action as considered in this case study.

Accordingly, the **Action** does not refer to a single policy, but to the collective of policies and interventions to assess, to compensate for and to repair earthquake damage (curative) as well as to prevent further damage (preventive). The analysis has revealed that a flawed delivery of these policies and interventions has contributed to a fundamental form of procedural injustice, i.e. a growing distrust in all the actors which are associated with the gas extraction and are should be held accountable for the various forms of damage.

This report

In line with the requirements as set out in the case study manual (D6.1), this national report will provide a cross-case analysis from the perspective of the national context of both cases. The implication is that the report will not make any attempt to make generalized statements about a country or to represent territorial coverage. Instead, the report will analyse how the different localities and actions that intend to promote spatial justice reveal similarities and disparities within the same national context, and briefly discuss the reasons behind these differences and similarities (see Weck *et al.*, 2018).

This Introductory chapter has very briefly defined the case studies, in particular the characteristics of their localities and the related actions. Chapter 2 will introduce the national context of the Netherlands, and in particular the policies and context factors that affect the identified Actions and spatial justice in a broader sense. Chapter 3 is dedicated to discussing the main findings of the two case studies in a comparative way. Apart from comparing maturity and other characteristics of the case studies, the analysis focusses on comparison of the key analytical dimensions as set out in the case study reports.

Finally, chapter 4 provides the Conclusions. This chapter seeks to answer the ultimate question: what is being achieved in terms of delivering greater spatial justice to the respective localities?

2. The Case Studies in a National Context

2.1 Unpacking Spatial Justice in a National Context

This section presents a brief analysis of terms that relate to the concept spatial justice in the Netherlands and how it was framed in the two case studies.

Rotterdam South (NPRZ)

As mentioned in the Introduction, spatial injustice in the NPRZ case relates to a **concentration of socio-economically vulnerable households** and the resulting negative implications, ranging from the hardships created by **unemployment, poverty, educational deficiencies and dependence on social benefits**, to the accumulation of such problems in specific areas, **intergenerational transmission of poverty** and a the **mismatch** between abundant work opportunities in certain economic sectors and a large underused labour reserve as a form of injustice. Another form of spatial injustice is related to the **negative (external) reputation** of Rotterdam South, which may can impede job applications. In fact, all of these terms are represented in both the policy and academic discourses in the national Dutch context, although intergenerational transmission of poverty is a concept which has only recently percolated into the policy discourse (see e.g. Corluy & Vandenbroucke, 2017).

Northeast Groningen

Spatial injustice related to the earthquakes in Northeast Groningen manifests itself in many ways, which affect people's right to **safety, economic security, (mental) health**, and even the **right to be taken seriously by one's government**. Lack of trust by people in the area concerns the national government much more than the regional (provincial) and local (municipal) government. Various effects of the earthquakes jointly arise, mutually influence each other and are very hard to disentangle. At the same time, the effects are addressed by different policy measures. Despite this, in chapter 3 we will try to describe the main impacts of the earthquakes, focussing on the two key forms of spatial injustice as outlined by Madanipour *et al.* (2017).

2.2 Capturing Policies Promoting Spatial Justice in a National Context

Rotterdam South (NPRZ)

The NPRZ revolves around three main pillars (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2011)

1. Talent development through education and formation of skills
2. Economic strengthening and employment i.e. reduction of unemployment
3. Physical improvement (housing and living environment)

Especially the first two pillars of NPRZ (education and employment) reflect **national government's approaches** that have increasingly promoted **Active Labour Market Policies (ALMP)**. It contrasts to former approaches that included high degrees of employment protection and/or generous unemployment benefits (see e.g. Veldboer *et al.*, 2015).

These labour market (re-integration) policies also target unemployed people on unemployment benefits. Since 2012, Dutch local authorities are authorized to demand unpaid 'voluntary' work from welfare recipients. The policy discourse underlying this 'workfare volunteerism' seems to include a strong connection between contemporary ideological views and mundane financial inevitability. Ideologically the policy embodies a vision of maximum (and preferably meaningful) participation in society, either through paid em-

ployment or (obliged) volunteering (or both). At the same time, the policy reveals the harsh reality of a local authority that has to implement drastic public budget cuts (Kampen *et al.*, 2019). As such, another underlying idea is that volunteers may take over work from social professionals and welfare workers whose jobs have disappeared as a result of wider budget cuts.

Today, liberal Prime Minister Mark Rutte's third coalition government strongly urges individuals to remain active and stay in work whenever they can. Similar objectives as in pillar 1 and 2 of the NPRZ were being developed in earlier approaches to problematic neighbourhoods (see e.g. Schiller, 2010; VROM-Raad, 2006), but the NPRZ now aims to focus much more directly on individuals in problem neighbourhoods, with a more comprehensive approach. Regarding the role of the EU, there is no mention of social cohesion or direct reference to other EU policies (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2011). However, the NPRZ has drawn on ESF/EFRD budgets and was awarded a grant from the Urban Innovative Action program.

The third pillar of the NPRZ is probably the most controversial one. The district still has a disproportionate share of cheap rental dwellings, both in the social rented and private sector. Unintentionally, regional differences in municipal housing policies during the 1970s and 1980s reinforced selective migration. While neighbouring municipalities built owner occupied housing to meet the preferences of emerging middle classes, Rotterdam focused on affordable rental housing renovation programmes for the working classes on the South Bank (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2011). These differences lead to an outflow of socio-economically mobile households from Rotterdam South, while the district continues to attract lower incomes. Although it would be grossly unjust to state that all residents of Rotterdam South lack any perspective and depend on welfare, there is a disproportionate share of residents that is inactive and has a multitude of (social) problems.

To counterbalance an influx of lower incomes into the most deprived parts of Rotterdam South, a special national law was introduced in 2005. The full name is the **Act on Extraordinary Measures for Urban Problems** (*Wet Bijzondere Maatregelen Grootstedelijke Problematiek*). However, because the act was so strongly advocated by the city of Rotterdam and has been used most extensively by Rotterdam since its inception, it is commonly referred to as the 'Rotterdam Act'. The basic idea behind the Act is that it should 'counteract a spiral of neighbourhood decline by making neighbourhoods demographically 'balanced', meaning that the proportion of poor and low-income households should not be too high' (Van Gent *et al.*, 2012: 2340). The Act enables selective, area-based, housing allocation (by refusing or granting a housing permit) in the regulated rent sector, which has a maximum rent price of €720 per month. Applicants should receive an income from work, pension or student grants/loans. This income criterion only applies to housing applicants who have lived in the metropolitan region for less than six years (newcomer criterion). Applicants can also be excluded on the basis of police records of criminal behaviour or particular forms of previously recorded nuisance (e.g. intimidation, violence, vandalism, extremism – a specified list of offences). In Rotterdam, a number of neighbourhoods, largely similar as the ones falling under the jurisdiction of the NPRZ, are designated target areas for this strict housing allocation.

The Act on Extraordinary Measures for Urban Problems is rooted in a long-term recognition by both national and municipal policy circles that (forced) concentrations of lower-income households is negative and might restrict the full potential of the population (see Van Kempen and Bolt, 2009; Kleinhans, 2004). From the early 1990s (local) policy discourses came to revolve around a need to create more **social mix**, based on the premise that areas with a limited social mix had little social cohesion (MVRM, 1997). Policy mak-

ers' expectations range from the general idea that lower incomes will benefit from the examples set by middle-class residents, to more concrete arguments that the middle classes often have more capabilities to organise themselves and improve the general situation in the neighbourhood in terms of liveability, social organisations and schools (Kleinhans, 2004). Lower incomes in the same neighbourhood would then benefit from the middle classes' organisational skills. There is a kind of assimilation thinking behind this, which became even more visible when the ethnic dimension started to emerge in policy documents (Van Kempen and Bolt, 2009: 464). Some policy makers argued that ethnic concentration in a neighbourhood could impede social cohesion because several ethnic groups often live 'parallel lives' alongside mainstream Dutch society.

For Dutch policy makers, a logical measure to stimulate social mix was to demolish the worst parts of the housing stock and rebuild dwellings for the middle classes (see e.g. Dol and Kleinhans, 2012). These urban restructuring operations were often aimed at retaining emerging middle classes in the neighbourhoods and certainly not solely at attracting middle class residents from outside the district (see Dol *et al.*, 2019 for a more detailed analysis of this debate and definitions of gentrification).

This **urban restructuring policy** (MVRM, 1997) was in force from 1997 until 2015. It was characterised by a top-down, national policy framework and hundreds of millions of euros investment capital from housing associations and other actors. The abrupt termination of this policy framework and the associated funding in 2015 followed shortly after a strongly increased emphasis on decentralisation of urban policies from the national to the local level, as well as significant budget cuts and reforms in policies regarding youth and elderly care, education and employment (re-integration).

In the domain of housing and urban regeneration, the termination of national policy and funding implies that local governments now turn more to 'the market' in terms of housing construction and area upgrading. In fact, Rotterdam is actively stimulating bottom-up manifestations of **gentrification**. The city is now depicting itself as a thriving, self-conscious place to be city, that attracts young and creative people, the so-called 'strong shoulders' who enjoy living in the city centre and surrounding neighbourhoods (Hoogstad, 2018). "Help we are popular!" is the title of a recent book by Liukku and Mandas (2016). It reflects a longstanding inferiority complex that existed amongst residents of Rotterdam and their shock when they spot tourists in their town. However, this new elan mostly applies to Rotterdam North while Rotterdam South still keeps struggling. Although Kop van Zuid and Katendrecht are now subject to processes of gentrification, it is unlikely that this process will expand to the whole of Rotterdam South.

The desire to attract middle class households to deprived neighbourhoods is reflected in policy rhetoric. At the city level in Rotterdam examples are the 'strong shoulders, strong city' policy programme, in which 'strong shoulders' are defined as highly educated young professionals, middle class families (with or without children), students and highly-educated empty nesters (see <https://www.rotterdam.nl/wonen-leven/sterke-schouders>).

Northeast Groningen

While in this report we apply a relatively narrow definition of the Action, the problems with gas extraction and induced earthquakes are related to a range of policies and institutions concerned with broader national policies. These are, notably, regional development and energy transition. The first because, apart from the specific issues discussed above, Northeast Groningen also is a peripheral, relatively poor and shrinking region. The second because termination of the gas extraction in Groningen will require the Netherlands to look for alternatives as soon as possible, either other sources of energy or imported gas. The available options for the latter concern gas of a different composition than the gas from the Groningen field and can only be used in Dutch households when mixed with ni-

trogen. In addition to these challenges, termination of the gas extraction confronts the national government with a large decrease in income, as well as with possible claims from Shell and ExxonMobil, the co-owners of the gas extraction company (NAM or *Dutch oil company*)

In contrast to this, we found no reference – neither in literature nor interviews – of any EU policies addressing the issue of earthquake damage in Groningen. In this context, it is remarkable that when the Fund Economic Structural Reinforcement (*Fonds Economische Structuurversterking*) that was fed directly by gas revenues existed between 1995 and 2011 less than 1% of these funds were invested in the region of Groningen itself (Commissie Meijer, 2013: 16). For decades, this distribution was somewhat reluctantly accepted; with hindsight, however, this is where the first feelings of spatial injustice originated

After the Huizinge quake, the *Staatstoezicht op de Mijnen* (SodM, the Dutch Mining Safety Board) SodM in 2013 published a report forecasting more and possibly stronger earthquakes and advising a strong reduction of the level of gas extraction to 12 billion Nm³ a year. In sharp contrast to this advice, the then responsible minister of Economic Affairs and Climate (EZK) insisted that no absolute scientific evidence for the cause of the quakes was available and commissioned a series of detailed studies. Many in Groningen considered this a way to buy time, the more so while the minister increased (rather than decreased, as advised) the level of extraction to 54 billion Nm³ in 2013. The latter decision in particular led to strong feelings of anger and distrust in national government, that last until today.

Unsatisfied with this response of the national government, the Province of Groningen installed an independent committee – the Commissie Meijer – to investigate the problem and propose policies. Its report, published in 2013 and still relevant today, noted an alarming level of feelings of unsafeness, anxiety and distrust and presented a long list of suggestions along three lines: 1) providing safety and perspective to inhabitants and businesses in the area; 2) improving the quality of the living environment; 3) providing a sustainable economic perspective (Commissie Meijer, 2013: 6-7). The first of these largely corresponds to the Action as defined in this case study. It entailed measures to reinforce buildings, improve the procedures for compensation of damage and measures to compensate for the value depreciation of buildings. In addition, the report proposed the instalment of a *Dialogtafel* (Dialogue Table) a platform of the various levels of government, the NAM and a range of stakeholders and interest groups, most notably the *Groningen Bodembeweging* (GBB). The *Dialogtafel* was succeeded after only one year by the *Groninger Gasberaad* (GG) due to internal conflicts, which did not include national government and the NAM. It also led to the establishment of a dedicated government agency, the Nationaal Coördinator Groningen (NCG), to deal with the problems in the region itself.

Another important national context factor is the so-called *energy transition*. The decision to decrease gas extraction in Groningen rapidly in the coming years is not only based on considerations of social justice but is also part of national climate policy and its required transition in terms of the use of fossil fuels and greenhouse gas reduction. Obviously, all of these are shaped within the context of the global discussion and the Paris Climate Agreement. According to the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL), if the Netherlands were to decide to implement national climate policy conform the Paris Climate Agreement, the following principles should apply:

- Focus policy on a greenhouse gas reduction of around 50% by 2030, compared with 1990 levels, and 85% to 100% reduction by 2050.
- Ensure a transition policy that is focused on the timely implementation of all infrastructural, technological and institutional preconditions required for the largescale application of low-carbon technologies.

- All this must be guaranteed, to create a stable environment for investments in an energy supply system with zero-carbon emissions, and the public must be involved in its implementation (Van Vuuren *et al.* 2017).

The final episode in this story involves the planning of a *Nationaal Programma Groningen* (NPG), a national programme not unlike the one in Rotterdam. This would be much broader than the Action as discussed here, addressing regional development and sustainability of the region. The NPG that is currently in preparation should be seen from this perspective as well. It addresses the earthquake dossier in connection to the more general problems of population decline, ageing, energy transition and regional development. The NPG aims to foster investments in the region in for instance innovation, sustainable energy and education (EZK, 2018: 23-42). It has an initial budget of 1.15 billion Euros, which should be increased by the cofunding of projects, and which is not intended for the compensation and repair of damage or the reinforcement of buildings. The role of the NCG will probably be reduced to a more administrative one, and its activities may be included in the new NPG (EZK, 2018: 60). The fact that it is inspired on the NPRZ does not guarantee its success, as the situation in the two cases is rather different. For one thing, an unambiguous shared focus among all stakeholders involved is lacking compared to the Rotterdam case. The fear exists, therefore, that the much broader scope of the NPG may bring about competition between stakeholders within the region or a transfer of attention and funds from the repair of damage and reinforcement operations to more general aims, i.e. from affected individuals to projects. On the other hand, there are hopes that the NPG may also address issues that have received too little attention so far, such as health issues.

On 5 March 2019, Dutch Parliament unanimously decided that a *parlementaire enquête* (parliamentary investigation) will be held on the Groningen case. In the Dutch context, that type of investigation is the most comprehensive means that parliament has to investigate cases in which it assumed policy failure. Individuals involved can be summoned and heard under oath. During the interviews conducted for this case study, interviewees were mostly positive about the perspective of such a parliamentary investigation (Trip and Romein, 2019), if only because it would imply recognition and the need for accountability. No timeframe has been set for the investigation, but it is unlikely to begin before 2020. In the meantime, the region was startled again, at 22 May 2019, by an earthquake of a magnitude that approached the one at Huizinge.

2.3 Framing the Cases

The tables below offer some arguments for the relevance of the Dutch cases in both the context of RELOCAL research and in the larger national territorial context.

Wider Dutch territorial context	In 2011, a national expert committee concluded that the scale of societal problems (see further on) in the southern part of Rotterdam can be considered as of “an un-Dutch magnitude” and had proven to be quite persistent. A range of problems such as unemployment, reintegration issues, discrimination by employers, educational underperformance, insufficient language skills, school drop-out, mental health problems, drug addiction, domestic violence, financial debts and poor housing conditions often interrelate and accumulate in Rotterdam South.
RELOCAL context	The NPRZ represents a locality with obvious challenges of spatial justice and coping strategies for improving socioeconomic and living conditions, as well as promoting a more balanced and sustainable development in the long term. All NPRZ stakeholders have an identifiable, shared long-term vision and have established a preferably long-term action plan that addresses the identified forms of spatial justice and starts from the agencies and resources of local/regional groups and stakeholders, seeking to create added value from co-ordinating all interventions. This is done by a network organization, a specific form of territorial governance.

Table 2.1 Relevance of the Nationaal Programma Rotterdam Zuid (NPRZ) case

Wider Dutch territorial context	The north-eastern part of the province of Groningen is peripheral in the Netherlands and has been focus of (a partly failed) industrialisation policy by the Dutch government in the 1960-1970 period. From the 1960s, an enormous natural gas reserve gave high revenues to the Dutch government and the energy companies that extract the gas (NAM). Still the region does not do well economically and there is some population decline. From around 2010 and onwards, earthquakes from gas extraction damage the living environment, both physically and mentally. Although the national government at first looked away from the problems, local associations (and authorities) have exerted strong pressure on the central government to act.
RELOCAL context	Local groups exerted prolonged pressure on the national government in order to acknowledge the earthquake damage. The residents of the region experience fundamental forms of spatial injustice. Residents and local governments feel they are not taken seriously by the national government. The national government benefited greatly from the natural gas extraction and was unwilling to acknowledge the problems. Recently (Oct 2018), the national government has initiated a <i>Nationaal Programma Groningen</i> , following a similar philosophy as with the <i>Nationaal Programma Rotterdam-Zuid</i> , the other Dutch case study.

Table 2.2 Relevance of the Northeast Groningen case

3. The Studied Cases in a Comparative Perspective

This chapter is dedicated to discussing the main findings of the two case studies in a comparative way. Apart from comparing maturity and other characteristics of the case studies, the analysis focusses on comparison of the key analytical dimensions as set out in the case study reports (Dol *et al.*, 2019; Trip & Romein, 2019).

3.1 Characterising the Cases

Maturity

While both the addressed Actions have been around for several years, we can identify a clear difference in the level of maturity between the two cases. First of all, the Action in Rotterdam (NPRZ) has been around longer and is pivoted on a network organisation of involved partners. Compared to the case of Northeast Groningen, this has resulted in much less of a battle between different government levels. Moreover, the Rotterdam approach has been rooted better in place-based and people-based approaches towards tackling concentrations of vulnerable people, unemployment, poverty, educational deficiencies and dependence on social benefits.

Political sensitivity

A second key difference concerns the level of political sensitivity. Because the NPRZ has been established as a network organisation in which all actors commit to the long-term vision (until 2030), but manage their own projects, the Action is relatively insensitive to political wavering. In Northeast Groningen, the action has continuously suffered under various forms of wavering and political manipulation, in particular by the state and by the oil extraction companies.

Actor constellations

A similarity concerns the **complex actor constellations** (see figures 3.1 and 3.2). Both the actions are a clear example of multi-level governance, combinations of institutional actors NGOs and citizen(s) associations, although the levels of effective co-operation and trust vary enormously. No actor is dominant, although the national government is important as key funder behind the *nationale programma's* (national programs) in both localities.

National programs for local problems?

A final similarity is that both localities refer to a set of problems related to spatial justice that are widely considered to be of a magnitude that **local** policies and resources alone are deemed to be insufficient to address the root causes of the problems. Consequently, both localities are the target area of a '**national program**' (nationaal programma). For Rotterdam, this has been the case for several years, while the *National Programma Groningen* only started in 2019, and will need some time for elaboration and to become 'established'.

3.2 Findings Analytical Dimensions 1-5

Analytical Dimension 1 – Perceptions of spatial (in)justice

Rotterdam South (NPRZ)

Spatial injustice in the NPRZ case relates to a **concentration of socio-economically vulnerable households** and the resulting negative implications, ranging from the hardships created by **unemployment, poverty, educational deficiencies and dependence on social benefits**, to the accumulation of such problems in specific areas, **intergenerational transmission of poverty** and a the **mismatch** between abundant work opportunities in certain economic sectors and a large underused labour reserve as a form of injustice. Another form of spatial injustice is related to the **negative (external) reputation** of Rotterdam South, which may can impede job applications. In fact, all of these terms are represented in both the policy and academic discourses in the national Dutch context, although intergenerational transmission of poverty is a concept which has only recently percolated into the policy discourse (see e.g. Corluy & Vandenbroucke, 2017).

Northeast Groningen

Spatial injustice related to the earthquakes in Northeast Groningen manifests itself in many ways, which affect people's right to **safety, economic security, (mental) health**, and even the **right to be taken seriously by one's government**. Various effects of the earthquakes jointly arise, mutually influence each other and are very hard to disentangle. At the same time, the effects are addressed by different policy measures. Despite this, we now describe the main impacts of the earthquakes, focussing on the two key forms of spatial injustice as outlined by Madanipour *et al.* (2017).

Distributional injustice concerns, first of all, material damage to buildings and infrastructure such as dikes. The numbers involved are considerable. Postmes *et al.* (2016; 2017) calculated that the population in the area that suffers from earthquakes amounted to 410,000 people, of which one sixth of which reported a single damage to their houses, and another sixth multiple subsequent damages. The Groninger Bodembeweging (GBB) confirms that as of February 2019, over 85,000 people in the area have reported multiple damages, while a total of 101,313 claims have been filed since the Huizinge quake in 2012. Earthquake damage and the danger of demolishment is a particular risk as well for the cultural heritage in the area, which includes numerous monument (notably many medieval churches).

A second type of damage is the **decrease in (market) value of houses**. This does not just concern houses that have been damaged. Due to the earthquakes, the perception of Northeast Groningen as a residential has deteriorated, leading to a distorted housing market with lower prices and a significant number of houses that are unsaleable. In fact, it is even doubtful if a housing market still exist at all in the area. This is hard to quantify, as the value decrease is additional to the effects of the peripheral region and a shrinking population and varies considerably between locations.

Finally, the earthquakes have severely damaged the **image** of Northeast Groningen not just as a residential area, but also as a place to invest. This is reflected in a deterioration of the entrepreneurial climate. Again, this reinforces the problems of unemployment and stagnation that hampered the development of the region in the first place.

In addition to the experience of distributional injustice, there is a wide-spread and increasing perception of **procedural injustice**. This includes the feeling of being powerless, of not being taken seriously. These feelings have evolved over time, largely due to the policies and measures that were taken and the way they were implemented. Procedures for both the compensation of damage and the preventive reinforcement of buildings are very lengthy and complicated, and are experienced as highly unfair (NCG, 2016: 8).

During the first decade of the gas extraction the NAM provided a fair compensation for all damage done, even with regard to the first earthquakes. However, when it became clear there would be more frequent quakes, the NAM denied (and even ridiculed) every relation between the earthquakes and the gas extraction; even now, after years of damaging earthquakes, it is reluctant to acknowledge an unambiguous relation.

Altogether, the experience of distributional and procedural spatial injustice leads to a range of secondary effects in the form of stress, anger, fear, anxiety and eventually health problems which are documented in the case study report (Trip & Romein, 2019).

Analytical Dimension 2 – Tools and policies for development

In the **NPRZ**, all interventions under the umbrella of the Action are centred around three pillars in the overall approach: Education, work/employment, and housing and physical environment (see Dol *et al.*, 2019 for an extensive overview). Altogether, the interventions amount to a pretty encompassing set of strategies towards tackling the human, economical and physical conditions of area deprivation and (the concentration of) socioeconomically vulnerable households. The co-ordination and implementation of the Action (see the analysis of dimension 3 below) enables that complementarity is sought in terms of delivering policies and interventions, or at least ensure that different interventions do not oppose each other.

The situation in **Northeast Groningen** is different in many respects. The two main elements of the Action here are the compensation and repair of earthquake damage (i.e. curative measures) and the reinforcement of buildings that are considered as unsafe (preventive measures). These are to a large extent different trajectories, which involve largely the same stakeholders, although sometimes in different roles.

Compensation and repair of earthquake damage originally started before reinforcements, right when the first earthquakes occurred. At that time compensation by NAM was rather generous, but this changed when damage became more frequent and extensive. The main problem is the independence of the damage assessment. Initially this was done by NAM itself, an obvious case of the auditor marking his own paper. Subsequent changes aimed to make damage assessment more individual. The general picture is that of experts negotiating with people who often do not have the required expertise. There was a serious arrears of about 18,000 damage claims at the time of the interviews (January 2019).

Reinforcement of unsafe buildings was initially based on inspection of buildings within certain Peak Ground Acceleration (PGA) contours, demarcating the area considered most vulnerable to earthquakes. This caused discussion about specific case of damage just outside these contours. Since 2018, reinforcement is based on a computer model, the Hazard and Risk Assessment (HRA). This again leads to feelings of injustice, as identical houses in a row may receive very different assessments. Also, HRA outcomes often contradict the results of previous inspections and the agreements and plans based on these, leading to new delays.

Several interviewees have suggested these continuous changes in the procedures are a way to buy time while not doing anything meaningful. An effect of the complex and continuously changing procedures and institutional arrangements is that filing a damage claim or getting a decision on the reinforcement one's house is a lengthy, very complicated process that tends to occupy people.

In sum, the effectuation of compensation and reinforcement policies has been perceived generally as unjust, too complex and time-consuming, and reflecting a huge power imbalance between various partners, in particularly residents and local authorities versus the oil companies and the national state. In other words, compared to the NPRZ, the case of Northeast Groningen lacks a coherent approach in which interventions are properly

geared towards each other and co-ordinated in such a way that they do not oppose each other. The fundamentally different situation in Northeast Groningen is most painfully reflected by two phenomena. First of all, it seems that not the earthquake damage itself breaks people's spirits, but the almost Kafkaesque situation in which they find themselves trapped (De Kam & Raemaekers, 2014: 6; RUG, 2019: 57). Second, people who are affected by earthquakes generally share the opinion that the provincial and municipal authorities in Groningen are 'on their side' in a common struggle with stakeholders on the higher levels of the national government and NAM. The fact that local and regional authorities have no financial stake in the gas extraction at all, and thus are assumed to have no other main interest than the safety and well-being of the population – in sharp contrast to the enormous financial interest of the national government – is very important. This is a main reason why local and provincial authorities are widely trusted, while the national government is perceived as to take side with NAM (Van der Voort & Vanclay, 2015: 5; Helmich, 2018) whose main economic interest it shares. In the **NPRZ**, the national government is not distrusted to such an extent, but merely seen as a financial contributor.

Analytical Dimension 3 – Co-ordination and implementation of the Action

As mentioned in section 3.1, both actions are characterised by complex actor constellations (see figure 3.1 and 3.2), which multi-level governance, combinations of institutional actors NGOs, interest groups and citizen(s) associations are connected in an intricate way. There is, however, a fundamental difference between the two cases.

The **NPRZ** is a local network organisation, which coordinates and stimulates participants to commit themselves to a long-term project (2012-2030), which is focussed on improving the levels of education, employment and living quality up to the average level of the four largest cities in the Netherlands. Stakeholders are from the government (municipality, state), employers, housing associations, school boards, industry, police and care organisations. Local stakeholders use their own means for NPRZ projects, but they also receive additional grants from the national government, especially for the purpose of strengthening education. The NPRZ bureau received a strong mandate from stakeholders to keep the program on course. It coordinates the actions with a small but persistent staff. The NPRZ is not a platform that distributes funding nor is it a top-down extension of the central government in the Hague. It is a network organisation in which all stakeholders commit themselves, contribute their own projects and execute them.

The case of **Northeast Groningen**, as reflected in Figure 3.2, is not co-ordinated by a 'single entity' which safeguards actor contributions, planning, progress and the prevention of 'mission drift.' The case study report has extensively documented the genesis of the current co-ordination and implementation, but for the purposes of this section, it is important to reiterate three main problems:

1. The inspection and compensation of damage;
2. The assessment of buildings that need to be reinforced, and
3. The compensation of value depreciation.

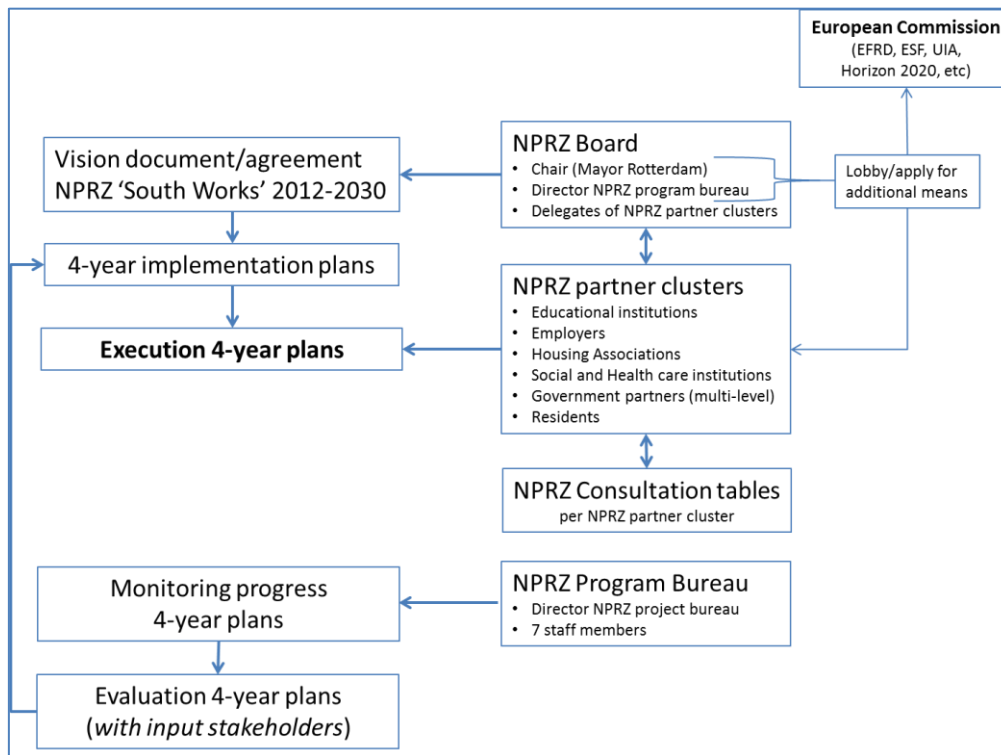


Figure 3.1 Main working structure of the NPRZ
Source: Dol *et al.* (2019).

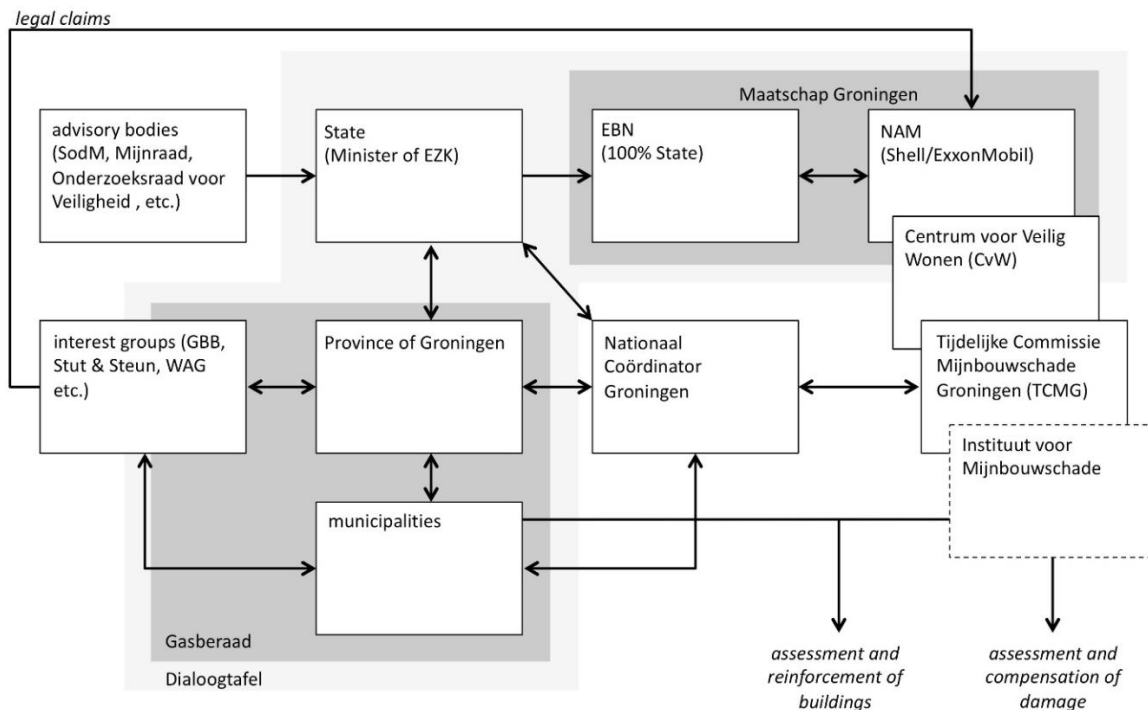


Figure 3.2 Overview of the main actors involved in the Northeast Groningen case
Source: Trip and Romein (2019).

Inspection and assessment were done by subsequently the NAM (which also caused the damage), the *Centrum voor Veilig Wonen* (CVW), the *Tijdelijke Commissie Mijnbouwschade*

Groningen (TCMG) and soon the *Instituut Mijnbouwschade*, coordinated by the NCG and a range of auxiliary organisations such as arbiters and expert boards. Local and regional authorities are involved in the reinforcement of buildings, but not in the assessment and compensation of damage. As the various organisations are being succeeded by others, the now 'old' organisations often are not replaced but continue to exist, although sometimes with unclear competences. The result is a very complex and expensive accumulation of institutions in which citizens have to find their way (Figure 3.2).

In sum, the co-ordination and implementation of the action in Rotterdam seems to be much more effectively structured in terms of co-operation, but also in terms of mutual trust, an asset which is clearly lacking between many of the action partners in Northeast Groningen. Moreover, the NPRZ seems to have a much smaller unequal balance of power, compared to the Groningen case.

Analytical Dimension 4 - Autonomy, participation and engagement

In general there are ample possibilities for those stakeholders in the **NPRZ** network to participate and express their ideas and opinions about the progress of the NPRZ. However, as indicated, the NPRZ project bureau is quite strict in keeping all committed stakeholders on course. This is done through 'Consultation Tables'. For each partner cluster within NPRZ (i.e. schools, employment, housing, health & care, government, and residents), these consultation tables feed the designated delegates of the partner clusters with crucial inputs that are brought to the table of the NPRZ board (see Dol *et al.*, 2019). In other words, the NPRZ adopts a multi-stage/multi-level approach towards participation and engagement. Strikingly, within the NPRZ network there is a delegate of the residents but this is only one single person who serves as eyes and ears in the entire district. This person is no formal representative of neighbourhood associations, ethnic collectives or bottom up projects. It implies that *at the lowest level the representation of marginalised groups within the NPRZ network is not very strong*. And yet the NPRZ is targeted at marginalised groups and the NPRZ bureau continuously stresses that it stimulates residents' participation: not so much in a formal voice but in grasping the opportunities that NPRZ provides in terms of education, employment opportunities and assistance from neighbourhood teams when a multitude individual problems become insurmountable.

The situation in **Northeast Groningen** is clearly different. At the lowest level, i.e. the local population of the municipalities that are most affected by earthquakes, participation in decision making with regard to the two dimensions of the Action is being done by local and regional interest groups. The first of these, the *Groninger Bodembeweging*, was set up in 2009. Its main objectives are to stand up for the interests of inhabitants whose dwelling are damaged by earthquakes, and to give publicity in the Netherlands as a whole to the problems related to gas extraction (Helmich, 2018). The number of such platforms has increased considerably since the severe earthquake near Huizinge in 2012, the turning point in this dossier. Most interest groups are set up autonomously by concerned or angry citizens. Some are still operating independently but quite a few have joined forces in the umbrella organisation Foundation *Groninger Gasberaad* (GG). Taken together, the member groups of the Gasberaad and all other interest groups cover a wide range of specific objectives and scopes. In general, they respect each other's specific interests and opinions. There is some resentment now and then, but at the end of the day they support each other and work together closely when possible because they all share the common interests of a rapid, fair and generous implementation of the Action, against the partly (and previously almost completely) conflicting interests of the national government and NAM. In addition, they share anger and distrust to national government and NAM for the way how these deal with the Action (Trip and Romein, 2019).

The quite close cooperation within the region, in spite of mutual differences, also includes local and regional authorities. These work together with a range of organisations and interest groups, such as health care organisations, higher education, churches and employers, many of which are also united in the *Groninger Gasberaad*. Cooperation between national government and other levels of government, on the other hand, is characterized by a long-term distrust and lack of transparency.

In sum, the overall representation and engagements of residents, through various informal and formal associations, is much stronger in **Northeast Groningen** than in the **NPRZ**. This is reflected clearly by the existence of an umbrella organisation (*Groninger Gasberaad*) in Groningen that helps the individual associations to join forces, whereas no such step is observed in the NPRZ. Note however that this is not a reflection of the (lack of) effectiveness of such organisations to fight against spatial justice – it is manifestation of a governance structure which has developed in the context of the specific actions.

Analytical Dimension 5 - Place-based knowledge and adaptability

The case studies grapple with different issues in relation to this dimension. **NPRZ** itself is the product of decades long learning in neighbourhood interventions in the Netherlands, and particularly in Rotterdam, especially from the 1990s onwards. Dol and colleagues (2019) concluded in their case study report that the diagnosis and solutions to observed problems have, over time, developed from rather abstract, top-down formulated conceptions of social mix to increasingly **place-based knowledge** that recognises the problems and (lack of) choice local households and also consults the locality in the formulation of contextually-embedded solutions. In terms of the management of the NPRZ, the scope of the project is too large to properly identify organisational learning, or even suggest that such an overview is possible. However, there are a few relevant remarks to be made. First of all, it appears that the long-term perspective of NPRZ (2011-2030) enables stakeholders to learn. The objectives are clear and stakeholders in the field can experiment with methods, while not being exposed to (political) pressure to deliver very quick results. The strict course of the NPRZ bureau enables this, but at the same time there are some doubts whether the bureau is maybe too strict and inhibits a certain level of adaptability. Many interviewees from the NPRZ have indicated that, rather than adaptability, *continuity* is a key in achieving success in the long term. It fosters long term relationships much needed, while it also allows some room for experimentation in approaches. But the fundamental idea is to deploy interventions and strategies long enough in order to make sure that they have an impact.

Northeast Groningen is a different story, in particular in relation to the role of research in supporting the action. While research has been done, e.g. in relation to the structure and conditions of the soil, the housing market, on socio-psychological health problems and other issues (for an overview, see Trip and Romein, 2019), but the region is nevertheless still ‘under-served’ with research, at least with serious and independent research according to academic standards. In fact, most research has been commissioned, and funded, by the NAM and by the minister of EZK, but several studies have been under severe academic criticism.

Compared to NAM and the ministry, local interest groups have much less money available to commission research on their own behalf. Nevertheless, a body of place-based knowledge that obviously proved negative impacts of earthquakes on health conditions and on housing markets has been collected in their interest by professional academic researchers at several Universities (Groningen, Delft) and other knowledge institutions, in particular by local mental health care organisations and academic hospital in Groningen.

There is no reasonable doubt that both organisational and individual learning has occurred in the region during the almost seven years of discussion, research projects, meetings, books and items on an almost daily basis in the regional press. It is impossible to have a reliable assessment of place-based knowledge that is lacking, but one should take into account that NAM and the ministry are quite reluctant to make information that they consider confidential public.

3.3 Findings Synthesising Dimensions A-C

Synthesising Dimension A: Assessment of promoters and inhibitors

The **NPRZ** consists of a multitude of projects such as the ones to enhance educational achievement, stimulate children/teenagers to choose educational trajectories that offer good career perspectives, activate adult long-term unemployed, and stimulate social mix through diversification of the housing stock. Furthermore, the neighbourhood intervention teams in the Action address households that face a multitude of interrelated problems such as debt, domestic violence, substance abuse and health conditions. Dol and colleagues (2019) have argued that it goes beyond the scope of the case study report to identify promoters and inhibitors on a detailed level. However, there are two issues that can be raised.

First of all, the long-term focus of NPRZ is *both a promotor and possible inhibitor*. Everyone agrees that a long-term perspective is much needed, because history has shown that new municipal councils can lead to drastic changes or even abandonment of the programs. This risk becomes greater when results fail to materialise in the shorter run. Continuity is regarded as a form of procedural justice. Interviewees indicated that a steady course of the NPRZ is important in order to avoid political wavering. It creates clarity for the recipients as well as for the stakeholders themselves. Sudden changes in policies can lead to change of staff or abandonment of programs, which can lead to discontinuity of carefully moulded relationships and trust. This also applies to high turnover levels of staff in primary schools and other professional settings within the action.

Second, the main initiator and well-willing funder of the NPRZ is the central government. In case of political wavering on their part leads, this could be disastrous for the continuation of the NPRZ. However, the Dutch government committed itself to the initial, long term agreement and even though Dutch national politics have become increasingly decentralised and liberal (i.e. less state intervention), the latest coalition government has provided generous funding for the 2019-2022 implementation plan.

In **Northeast Groningen**, Trip and Romein (2019) have outlined the Action as the whole of the curative and preventive measures with respect to the damage caused by the earthquakes in the case study area. As such, the main *promoters* can be found within and the main *inhibitors* outside the region. Promoters are the people and businesses suffering from earthquake damage in any form, interest groups representing them, and local and regional authorities (including water boards). The main inhibitor is the NAM. However, a number of issues complicate this seemingly simple pattern.

First, the position of the national government, mainly represented by the ministry of Economic Affairs, is rather ambiguous. Until 2013, this ministry could clearly be considered among the inhibitors alongside the oil companies. Its policies were primarily based on the interest of gas exploitation and not on the safety of the population. Especially after 2017, gas extraction was reduced much further and will be terminated in the near future. On the other hand, measures for the reinforcement of buildings have been slowed down, and the compensation of existing damage is still not dealt with in an efficient way, nor – in the regional perception – in a fair way. This suggests that also in recent years, na-

tional government has been a reluctant promoter at best, and one that in Northeast Groningen is clearly still considered an inhibitor.

Second, the main inhibitors in this case study are the actors that are responsible for the damage (as they are responsible for the gas extraction) and that control decision-making with regard to both the gas extraction and the compensation and prevention of damage (i.e. the Action): the oil companies and the state respectively. In other words, those responsible for the Action are the least willing to implement it.

Finally, if we look at the implementation of the Action so far, it is striking that while the problems regarding earthquake damage started primarily as a case of distributional spatial injustice, the approach taken by the Action has been mainly a procedural one. As a result, organisational and procedural costs now absorb most of the time and money available, while hardly any progress seems to be made in solving the distributional injustice. Moreover, the procedural framework that individuals involved in damage compensation or building reinforcement has become so complicated and inefficient that it actually can be said to contribute to procedural injustice rather than to improve this matter.

In sum, the case of Northeast Groningen reflects a much stronger *division between promoters and inhibitors* than the NPRZ, with the national government taking on a rather ambivalent position in the first case.

Synthesising Dimension B: Competences and capacities of stakeholders

In the **NPRZ**, the municipality is the decision-making body with the formal democratic mandate. In Rotterdam and in Dutch policy culture in general, it is regarded as a good practice to reach out to other actors when policies are developed, even if they are known (or expected) to have opposing views. Furthermore, the central government is less inclined than before to coordinate urban actions from the central level but requires municipalities to do a proper job at the local level.

The NPRZ is a network organisation with a mandate from relevant stakeholders, including central government and municipality, to coordinate actions. There is a great deal of support from a wide range of stakeholders. The main task of NPRZ is to keep stakeholders committed. So far there have been no major breaches in the network. In fact, the NPRZ network has expanded when new measures were deemed necessary with regard to safety and undermining activities of criminal gangs. Still, there have been some disagreements between NPRZ and the housing associations about the scope of the latter's input and their contribution to financing housing interventions, e.g. demolition of social rented housing.

Participate! (Meedoen!) is a term often used by the NPRZ bureau when it engages residents of Rotterdam South. NPRZ organised several well attended events for residents, where participants could express their concerns and desires with regard to Rotterdam South. The NPRZ continuously attempts to motivate children and parents to grasp the opportunities that NPRZ projects provide. Still, direct formal representation of vulnerable groups is not sufficiently granted in the NPRZ network. The representative of the residents is one single person who acts more like 'eyes and ears' in the district. NPRZ aims to coordinate a few strategic objectives that are endorsed by residents and stakeholders in quite a large geographic entity (over 200,000 inhabitants). Although it has a positive stance towards initiatives from neighbourhood groups it does not finance nor coordinate their actions. A major complicating factor is that it is hard to speak about a single 'local community' in Rotterdam South. There is a mosaic of community groups, who muster around a multitude of ethnic, religious and social backgrounds. Many residents only undertake action when their personal interests are directly harmed, such as urban renewal operations. Until relatively recently, there were formal neighbourhood pressure groups but they were often

dominated by the older, Dutch native residents and had little grip on the increasing diversity of the neighbourhood. Furthermore, many people are in the survival mode, which inhibits participation

In **Northeast Groningen**, a wide range of formal and informal stakeholders are involved (see Figure 3.3). A lack of participation and empowerment of informal stakeholders – and to some extent of formal stakeholders as well – is an important element in the problems of Northeast Groningen. Decisions with regard to the gas extraction, such as where, when, and how much to extract, are formally made by the minister of EZK, although it is widely assumed that NAM, i.e. Shell and ExxonMobil, have an important say in this as well. But these arrangements are highly confidential.

In the case of the Action, many indications point at a lack of participation and empowerment on all levels. This entails individuals involved in a damage claim or reinforcement operation. It also concerns the interest groups and local and regional authorities who left the process because they did not feel they had any significant influence in the discussion. Even municipalities often feel taken by surprise or put on the spot by national policies. In the case of damage to houses, they have no formal involvement at all – in fact municipalities do not even have formal knowledge about the cases of damage in their jurisdiction – although they tend to be addressed by inhabitants experiencing problems with compensation.

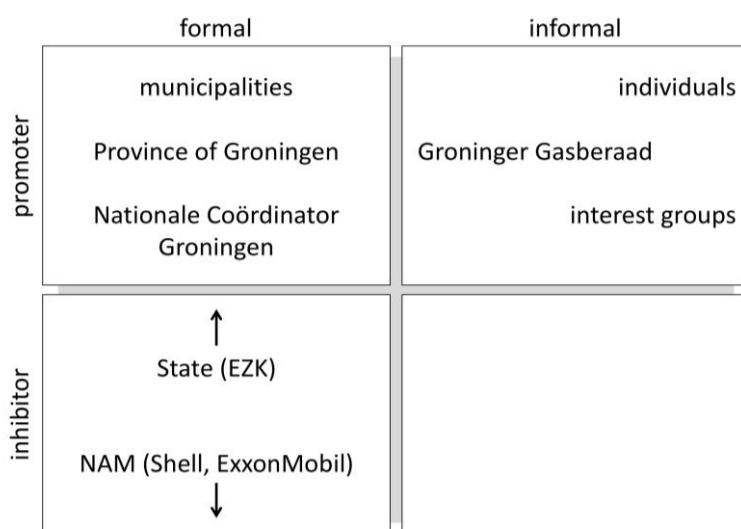


Figure 3.3 Main formal and informal promoters and inhibitors of the Action

If we comprehend both dimensions A and B, we see a lack of participation and empowerment of the (formal and informal) promoters of the Action, and a concentration of decision-making power and financial means among the inhibitors and more ambiguous actors. Behind this is, of course, a clash of interests. Those stakeholders that largely control decision-making with regard to the Action also have an interest in maximizing the extraction of gas, as they wish to maximize their revenues. This includes NAM, but for a long period the State as well. Those stakeholders that lack participation – let alone control – have an interest in minimizing the extraction, as they suffer from the consequences.

To conclude, there seems to be a severe imbalance of competence, capacity, means and willingness of the main stakeholders involved in the Action in **Northeast Groningen**. Nonetheless, it is far from certain that an alternative approach based on local knowledge

and led by local stakeholders would be viable. On the other hand, while the **NPRZ** does reflect a certain level of imbalance in competencies and capacities, this Action obviously reflects much more consensus on the overall course and intended outcomes. However, **both Actions** show a limited amount and level of participation from individual citizens – in the NPRZ because the overall governance structure does not properly allow it, and in Groningen because citizens are fighting a seemingly endless fight against ‘the system’ to get their share of reinforcement and compensation.

Synthesising Dimension C: Connecting the action to procedural & distributive justice

There is evidence to assume that Rotterdam South would be even worse off without the interventions of the **NPRZ**. It is beyond the scope of this report to assess all the output indicators for the different policies and interventions within NPRZ. There are monitoring instruments issued by the NPRZ project bureau, and for all they are worth, indeed it seems that there is some positive momentum. The NPRZ annual progress report of 2017 states that of all the sub-projects, about two-thirds are now on course to reach the expected target in the long term (Programmabureau NPRZ, 2018). However, the NPRZ itself admits that the progress is still fragile and many residents do not benefit from the general economic growth in Rotterdam and the rest of the country (Programmabureau NPRZ, 2019).

The main institutional change is the creation of the NPRZ project bureau. It is an independent network organisation, which relies on the goodwill of all stakeholders, but once stakeholders commit, the NPRZ bureau will strictly commit them to the long-term vision. This can be regarded as a means to enhance **procedural justice**, because too much flexibility and political wavering may harm the continuity of the project. Critics (such as primary schools) argue that the overall approach leaves too little space for manoeuvre, but plans are realigned every four years and any aspects that appear not to be effective at all, are abandoned. One critical note is that Rotterdam South, especially the seven Focus Areas, receive much funding and expertise, while there are still also problematic areas on the other parts of the South Bank, as well as the North Bank of Rotterdam. Non-focus areas in Rotterdam South that struggle with similar problems may as such suffer from some kind of **distributive injustice**, simply because of being outside of the NPRZ target area.

Unlike the NPRZ, commitment of all actors (especially those in the most powerful position), comprehensive and periodic program alignment and clear outcome monitoring are highly problematic or very weakly developed in the context of the **Northeast Groningen Action**. The mismatch between interests, capacities and decision-making power is reflected in the policy measures in this Action. We consider them as measures rather than as a comprehensive policy, as they are largely ad hoc responses to the failure of previous ones: new institutions to complement existing ones, new auxiliary bodies in the form of arbiters or additional inspection teams, and a constant reassessment of safety criteria. At least until very recently, when the focus shifted to the larger aim of the (national) energy transition, national government seemed to lack a clear long-term perspective on the problems in Northeast Groningen. All this points at a distinctly **procedural approach**. Regional promoters of the Action mainly aim to shift the focus back to distributional injustice – compensating damage and preventing further damage – but as discussed earlier (see also Trip and Romein, 2019), regional promoters largely lack the decision-making power and the means to define or influence the Action. Measures are taken to address **distributional injustice**, although the true intentions are widely doubted in the region due to the general distrust in the national government and the NAM. We observe that in effect this procedural approach in many aspects contributes to procedural spatial injustice, by making procedures increasingly complicated and incomprehensible, while it is not sufficiently effective in solving distributional injustice.

In the cases where damage is being repaired and houses are being reinforced, measures obviously affect spatial justice on a small scale. They may discriminate between villages, streets or even neighbours living in identical row houses, decisions often experienced as seemingly random and unfair. Overall, the Action does not seem to develop spatial justice in a single clear direction until now. To be fair, the attention of national government for the problems and the safety of people in Northeast Groningen has indeed increased in recent years. Yet, still it fails to express this in an unambiguous policy strategy concerning all aspects of the issue. In addition to this, any new policy initiative faces (in the region) the lack of credibility attached to the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

In sum, while the **NPRZ** shows clear signs of the merit of targeting procedural justice as an enabler to improve distributive justice in the long term, **Northeast Groningen** reveals a highly procedural approach that appears to contribute to procedural injustice, by making procedures increasingly complicated and incomprehensible. Hence (and partly also as a result of this procedural injustice), the Action largely fails to effectively solve distributional injustice in terms of compensation, reinforcement and mitigation of all other earthquake- and procedure related damages and chores.

4. Conclusions

This chapter seeks to answer the ultimate question: what is being achieved in terms of delivering greater spatial justice to the respective localities? Overall, the analysis of the Actions in the two Dutch cases shows that, even in a ‘policy-dense’ and affluent country such as the Netherlands, achieving greater spatial justice in localities of various scales is notoriously difficult. The analysed Actions address ‘wicked’ problems (cf. Rittel & Webber, 1973) that are widely considered to be of a magnitude that local policies and resources are insufficient to address the root causes of the problems. Moreover, the governance structure of both Actions has become increasingly complex. Although there is a clear role of government partners on national level, both the Dutch actions can be considered to be a reflection of the principle of subsidiarity, i.e. the need and rationale to solve the observed problems on the lowest appropriate level, which is often the regional or local/city level. The national level is considered as the wider economic, financial and legal context that should enable partners on the local level to jointly address the problems observed in the actions, but the actual ‘actions’ are on local level.

Generally, we conclude that the **NPRZ** case currently has a more favourable outlook in terms of achieving the long-term aims of the Action than the case of **Northeast Groningen**, which is still characterised by high levels of distrust and reluctance between partners. Below, we will provide a more detailed elaboration of this main conclusion.

What is being achieved in terms of delivering greater spatial justice?

NPRZ Rotterdam

The long running project is into its’ eight year now and one major pitfall would be to expect significant changes in the socio-economic structure of the district. However, there are positive signs now, as educational achievements improve, long term unemployment is declining and new (lower middle income) housing projects attract more interest. About two thirds of the multitude of projects are now on the expected trajectory, but the NPRZ bureau admits that the achievements are still fragile. The percentage of households with complex problems is as high as before the start of the crisis in 2009. For many residents the general improvements are not tangible. Yet the stakeholders think the marching route is overall positive and additional funding of € 260 million by the government has been granted for the implementation program of 2019-2022. In the last few years, the NPRZ bureau has also attracted funds from the European Commission for improving education-to-employment trajectories for youths in Rotterdam South. Also, local employers keep providing new career guarantees to young people that choose for education in technique and (health) care. Although significant results may not be very visible, NPRZ seems to have avoided further decline in Rotterdam South. When the national neighbourhood approach was abandoned, it turned out that the situation in several other well-known ‘problem districts’ in the Netherlands has aggravated (e.g. Uytterlinde and Van der Velde, 2017).

Northeast Groningen

Our analysis shows that spatial injustice is widely and deeply experienced in the region, in particular by citizens, whether or not organised in associations and interest groups. This widely felt experience entails both distributional injustice and procedural injustice. While injustice is experienced within the region, the overwhelming feeling is one of Northeast Groningen versus the State and the oil companies. **Spatial justice** concerns the consequences of the earthquakes, which are several, and which are addressed by multiple policy measures that have varied considerably over time. Accordingly, the Action does not refer

to a single policy, but to the collective of policies and measures to compensate for and repair earthquake damage (curative approach) as well as to prevent further damage (preventive approach). The promoters of the Action are all located in Northeast Groningen: local and regional authorities, as well as other formal and informal stakeholders in the region. The main inhibitors, on the other hand, are Shell, ExxonMobil and national government, which are all external to the region.

In terms of **distributional injustice**, numerous damages have indeed been assessed and repaired and many buildings have been reinforced or repaired. Nevertheless, these accomplishments are not nearly as much as is considered necessary by those directly or indirectly affected by the earthquakes in terms of damage to housing, but also in terms of mental health. Moreover, there is widespread dissatisfaction with the way in which the procedures, assessment, financial compensation and physical repairs have been handled. There is a large arrears in the assessment of damage claims, and in many cases a clear reluctance to compensate for damage. With regard to the reinforcement or replacement of damaged housing, prolonged uncertainty exists among homeowners due to changing assessment methods and the price they receive for their house.

Regarding **procedural injustice**, it is important to note that while the Action primarily aims at the compensation and prevention of distributional injustice, the measures taken are largely of a procedural nature. Because the measures that are actually taken with regard to damage and reinforcement tend to be insufficiently effective and efficient, new procedures and institutions are introduced regularly, while the existing ones mostly stay in place as well. The result by now is an extensive, inconsistent and highly complicated procedural framework that absorbs most of the funding that is actually intended for compensation of damage and reinforcement of buildings. Individual citizens often find themselves trapped in an almost Kafkaesque situation, because this complexity is increasingly inhibiting their efforts to 'receive' justice in terms of the aforementioned mechanisms of compensation, repair and further damage prevention. This, rather than earthquake damage per se, now seems to be the main source of anger, fear and anxiety, which means that at least part of the Action can be considered to be counterproductive.

Our analysis of the Northeast Groningen case reveals some characteristics that may partly explain how the situation evolved to this point. First, the main promoters of the Action are all found within the region, while the main inhibitors are located outside it, both in spatial and administrative terms. The position of national government has been rather ambiguous over time; at least in recent years it took various measures to promote the Action, but these tended to be rather ineffective and inefficient, and were alternated with measures that were perceived as clearly inhibitive to the Action. A prime example of this is the important decision to terminate the gas extraction, which was quickly followed by the putting on hold of the reinforcement operation. As a result, uncertainty continues to exist distrust in national government remains, or even become more widespread in the region.

At least until very recently, when the focus shifted to the larger aim of energy transition, national government seemed to lack a clear long-term perspective on the problems in Northeast Groningen. In addition to this, there is a lack of participation and empowerment of local and regional stakeholders with regard to the Action. This is mostly true for informal stakeholders, but to a certain extent also for the Province of Groningen and the municipalities. In the end most of the funding for the Action has to come from NAM as the exploiter of the gas field – i.e. from the main inhibitor of the Action – either directly or via the national government.

The mismatch between interests, capacities and decision-making power is reflected in the policy measures taken in the context of the Action. The main inhibitors in this case study are the actors who are responsible for the extraction and, hence, for the damage and who control decision-making with regard to both the gas extraction and the com-

compensation and prevention of damage (i.e. the Action). In other words, those responsible for the Action are the least willing to implement it. As a result, while the Action does have small, local effects on distributional injustice – as some houses are repaired or reinforced and other are not – but on the whole it does not altogether seem to develop spatial justice in a single clear direction until now. Over time, the way in which the action has evolved, has partly shifted the attention to distributional injustice to the procedural aspects.

What are the policy changes ahead for bigger impact?

At the time of writing this report the central government granted € 130 million additional funding for the next round (2019-2022) of the **NPRZ (Rotterdam)** on the premise that the municipality (and other stakeholders) grant another € 130 million. There is thus little doubt on the part of policy makers on all levels that the NPRZ project is promising, but that perseverance is necessary to make any significant changes in the long term. Despite the funding from government, it is questionable whether the NPRZ will have any implications for national policies. Until recently (with the establishment of the *Nationaal Programma Groningen*, see below), the NPRZ was seen as a one-of-a-kind program with an exceptional position, in line with the fundamental trend of decentralisation of policies from the national to local level. It seems unlikely that relatively small changes in national policies will change the way of working. In fact, it may be the other way round, i.e. that the approach in the NPRZ, run by a network organisation, will be ‘copied’ in other localities.

With respect to the Action in **Northeast Groningen**, in a narrow sense, it is unclear what policy changes ahead will bring. Relations between Northeast Groningen and ‘The Hague’ (a commonly used acronym for the national government, which is both spatially and mentally considered to be at a significant distance) have grown sour to an extent that concrete progress and demonstrable achievements are probably needed before trust can start to grow again, while the level of distrust in itself hardly contributes to a fruitful cooperation in the near future. In recent years, however, the problems in Northeast Groningen have increasingly been considered in a wide policy context, i.e. as part of the regional economic development of the area, as part of the transition of other sources of energy, and with respect to a new financial balance of the national budget without gas revenues.

The **Nationaal Programma Groningen (NPG)** that has been recently initiated should be seen from this perspective as well. It addresses the earthquake dossier in connection to the more general problems of population decline, ageing, energy transition and regional development. The NPG aims to foster investments in the region in for instance innovation, sustainable energy and education (EZK, 2018: 23-42). It has an initial budget of 1.15 billion Euros, which should be increased by the cofounding of projects, and which is not intended for the compensation and repair of damage or the reinforcement of buildings. The role of the NCG will probably be reduced to a more administrative one, and its activities may be included in the new NPG (EZK, 2018: 60).

Not much is known about the NPG yet. The fact that it is inspired on the **Nationaal Programma Rotterdam-Zuid** does not guarantee its success, as the situation in the two cases is rather different. For one thing, an unambiguous shared focus among all stakeholders involved is lacking compared to the Rotterdam case. The fear exists, therefore, that the much broader scope of the NPG may bring about competition between stakeholders within the region or a transfer of attention and funds from the repair of damage and reinforcement operations to more general aims, i.e. from individuals to projects. On the other hand, there are hopes that the NPG may also address issues that have received too little attention so far, such as health issues. Only time will tell whether such promises can be delivered.

5. References

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Websites

- Nationaal Programma Rotterdam-Zuid: <https://www.nprz.nl/>
Nationaal Programma Groningen: <https://nationaalprogrammagroningen.nl/>

6. Annexes

6.1 Socioeconomic indicators of the case studies

	Netherlands	Largest cities Netherlands	Rotterdam	Rotterdam South	Rotterdam South 7 focus areas
Households dependent on benefit	9%	15%	17%	21%	27%
Children < 18 in a household with < 110% of social minimum income	11%	20%	24%	31%	34%
% of school leavers without a diploma	1.8%	3.0%	3.1%	3.6%	3.6%
% of youths with a starter qualification	-	-	57%	49%	48%
Pupils in higher level secondary education	46%	46%	38%	29%	27%
CITO scores*	535.1	534.2	533.4	530.8	529.8
Children in elementary school with lower educated parents	9%	16%	20%	25%	31%
Inhabitants with a migrant background	22%	49%	50%	60%	75%
Vulnerable housing stock**	-	-	24%	35%	51%
Average house value x € 1,000	204.5	204.5	149.0	113.7	90.3

* Scores for elementary school pupils which determine access to higher level secondary education

**Small apartments < 75 sq. m., without elevator and at economic value < € 130.000

Table 6.1 Socio-economic indicators of Rotterdam South compared to other Dutch localities (2017)

Source: Programmabureau NPRZ (2017)

Size	1,738 km ²
Total population (2016)	367,505 (of which ca. 200,000 in the municipality of Groningen)
Population density (2016)	211 inhabitants/km ² for the entire area (2,549 for the municipality of Groningen and ca. 100 for the other municipalities).
Level of development in relation to wider socio-economic context	Disadvantaged within a region that for the largest part lags within the Netherlands.
Type of the region (NUTS3-Eurostat)	Intermediate (but with large internal differences)
Name and Identification Code of the NUTS-3 area, in which the locality is situated (NUTS 3 Code(s) as of 2013)	NL111 (Oost-Groningen), NL112 (Delfzijl en omgeving) and NL113 (Overig Groningen).

Table 6.2 Socio-economic indicators of Northeast Groningen

Source: Statistics Netherlands; Eurostat

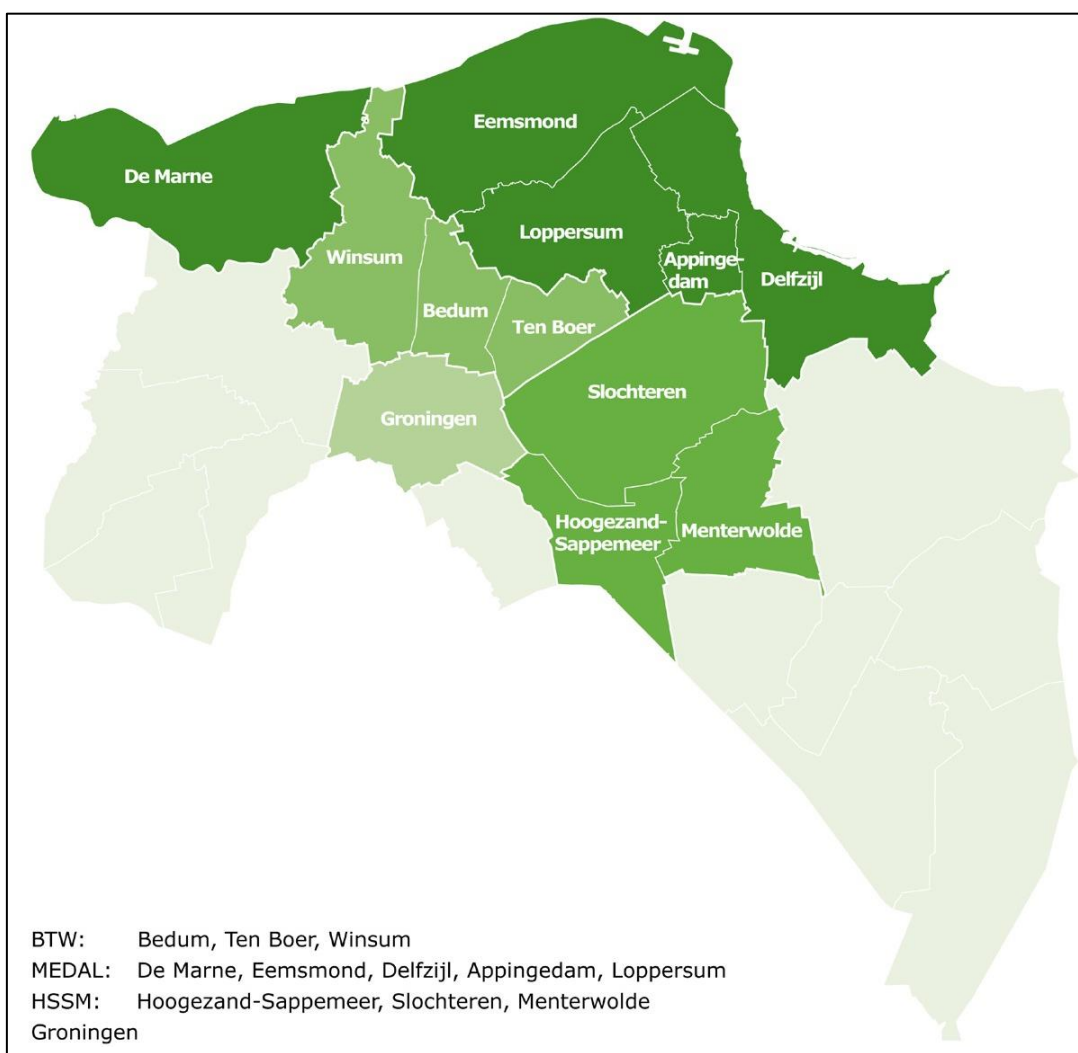
6.2 Additional information

All additional information needed to understand the main text (photos, maps, tables).



Map 6.1 Main target of NPRZ: Focus Areas are Feijenoord, Afrikaanderwijk, Hillesluis, Bloemhof, Tarwewijk, Carnisse and Oud-Charlois.

Source: Kadastralekaart.com



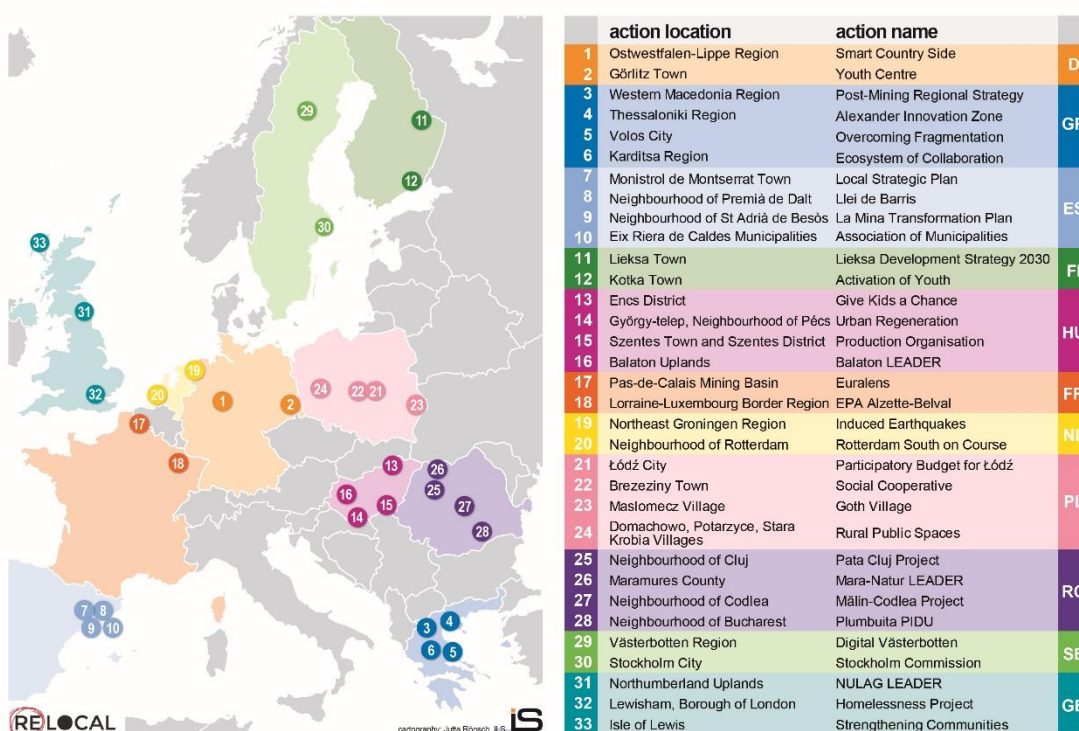
Map 6.2 Location of the Northeast Groningen case study area and its sub-regions (municipalities as of 31-12-2017). Shades of green indicate the various administrative sub-clusters mentioned below and do not represent the degree of vulnerability to earthquakes.
 Source: NCG (2015: 64).

The RELOCAL Project

EU Horizon 2020 research project ‘**Resituating the local in cohesion and territorial development**’ –RELOCAL aims to identify factors that condition local accessibility of European policies, local abilities to articulate needs and equality claims and local capacities for exploiting European opportunity structures.

In the past, especially since the economic and financial crisis, the European Social Model has proven to be challenged by the emergence of spatially unjust results. The RELOCAL hypothesis is that **processes of localisation and place-based public policy** can make a positive contribution to spatial justice and democratic empowerment.

The research is based on **33 case studies in 13 different European countries** that exemplify development challenges in terms of spatial justice. The cases were chosen to allow for a balanced representation of different institutional contexts. Based on case study findings, project partners will draw out the factors that influence the impact of place-based approaches or actions from a comparative perspective. The results are intended to facilitate a greater local orientation of cohesion, territorial development and other EU policies.



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Read more at <https://relocal.eu>

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