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Abstract

Many local councils aim to (re)connect citizens to public planning. This article presents the Collaborative Communities through Coproduction (3C) method as a way to establish cooperation between residents and professionals in improving neighborhood livability. The authors describe common challenges to citizen participation and identify the dilemma of sustainable cooperation as an additional challenge for citizen participation efforts that aim to establish coproduction. To deal with this dilemma, the 3C method was designed as a continuous, circular process of plan making, plan implementation, and plan evaluation. The authors describe the implementation of the 3C method in two neighborhoods in the Netherlands. Findings from the two case studies demonstrate workable solutions to the dilemmas of citizen participation. Nonetheless, the study findings show that shifting council priorities pose an additional risk to the sustained continuation of coproduction efforts.

Keywords

citizen participation, coproduction, neighborhood liveability, participatory neighborhood planning, empowerment

An active role of citizens in governance is an important ideal in many contemporary Western democracies. Direct citizen participation can be defined as “the process by which members of a society (those not holding office or administrative positions in government) share power with public officials in making substantive decisions and in taking actions related to the community” (Roberts, 2004, p. 320). Many authors have described direct citizen participation as a way to empower citizens to contribute to the public good (Barber, 1984; Wandersman & Florin, 1990; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988), in addition to increasing democratic stability and the effectiveness of public policies (Burby, 2003; Pateman, 1970; Salisbury, 1975).

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This article describes a way to empower neighborhood residents to improve the liveability in their neighborhood through participatory neighborhood planning. The 3C method refers to Collaborative Communities through Coproduction. Coproduction is the joint provision of a public service by a public agency as well as citizens (Alford, 2009; Levine, 1984; Ostrom, 1996; Parks et al., 1981; Pestoff, 2006). Coproduction in communities implies a synergistic relationship between professionals and citizens, where professionals have the role of “regular producers” and citizens’ involvement comprises voluntary efforts by individuals and groups to enhance the quality and/or quantity of the services they use (Ostrom, 1996). We add to the theory building around the concept of coproduction by arguing that nurturing the so-called collective orientation among and between citizens and professionals considerably enhances the likelihood of successful coproduction. We will use the term “professionals” throughout this article to refer to individuals in local councils as well as service provision (e.g., neighborhood police officers and social workers).

To enable an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the 3C method in establishing coproduction, we first discuss the key challenges of citizen participation in governance. Subsequently, we specify the design rationale that underpins the 3C method. We argue that there are two key requirements to not only establish but also maintain coproduction among and between residents and professionals and describe how these requirements are reflected in the method’s core process steps. We then outline our experiences with implementing the 3C method in two neighborhoods in the Netherlands, specifying how the method has tried to find a workable solution to each of the dilemmas of citizen participation. Last, we summarize lessons learnt during the two case studies to inform further theory building and future citizen participation efforts.

The challenges of Direct Citizen Participation

To achieve successful citizen participation in public planning, Roberts (2004) has pointed to several dilemmas that need to be addressed.¹

The dilemma of size. The dilemma of size poses the question of how citizen participation efforts can involve numerous groups and individuals, while at the same time allowing for face-to-face deliberation between them. Establishing a shared understanding between individuals ideally involves face-to-face deliberation (Bohman, 1998; Elster, 1998). Yet this is often at odds with the aim of including a wide range of stakeholders or “publics” in the participatory process on the principle that it will increase the sense of ownership and the legitimacy of the outcomes (Bloomfield, Collins, Fry, & Munton, 2001). Inclusiveness generally results in large group settings, which allow individuals less time to express themselves and learn from others through deliberation.

The dilemma of excluded or oppressed groups. Numerous authors have criticized citizen participation efforts for failing to involve a diverse range of citizens with different background characteristics (e.g., see Dahl, 1998; Kathlene & Martin, 1991; Verba & Brady, 1995). The dilemma of excluded or oppressed groups is about finding ways to include groups that are systematically underrepresented in participatory practices.

The dilemma of technology and expertise. Direct citizen participation efforts are challenged by differences in power between professionals and the wider public, with professionals generally having the advantage of higher levels of expertise and better access to technical information regarding the issues under discussion. How can the wider public engage with professionals in joint planning efforts as more or less equal partners?

The dilemma of time and crises. In governance, decisions often have to be made quickly without the time necessary for large-group deliberations. Nevertheless, the time invested in citizen participation in the early stages of plan making may well save time in the implementation stage

because citizens are more likely to support something they had a voice in approving or designing (Callahan, 2007). The dilemma of time and crises is thus about allowing room for deliberation, while at the same time acknowledging the importance of making quick decisions when needed.

The dilemma of the common good. Last, the dilemma of the common good focuses on how participatory practices can be more deliberative and stimulate people to think more seriously and fully about public issues. As Roberts stresses, the common good depends on thoughtful deliberation, not just on the capture of public opinions through the latest polls, surveys, and/or public hearings.

To these dilemmas, we add the *dilemma of sustainable cooperation*. This dilemma refers to the question of how citizen participation efforts can ensure enduring forms of coproduction between citizens and professionals. It involves complex questions of how to design citizen participation efforts as continuous processes rather than one-off projects and how to establish and maintain sufficient levels of motivation among residents and professionals to continue working together in coproduction. Without this motivation, coproduction is likely to never get off the ground or to dwindle.

While describing the 3C method, we will refer back to these dilemmas of citizen participation and specify how the developed method has tried to find a workable solution to each of the dilemmas.

Direct Citizen Participation in Neighborhood Planning

The neighborhood appears to be a unique locality to establish coproduction through direct citizen participation (see also Berry, Thomson, & Portney, 1993; Fung, 2006; Musso, Weare, Bryer, & Cooper, 2011). In the neighborhood planning process, residents and professionals can come together as more or less equal partners. Residents know arguably better than anybody else what is going on in their neighborhood. This street-level knowledge of residents is critical for professionals to tailor their planning to the specifics of each neighborhood (see also Musso et al., 2011). Moreover, compared to many other policy issues that seem far removed from the everyday lives of citizens, residents often have at least a minimal level of concern for issues relating to their direct living environment. This is likely to increase their willingness to take part in the participatory process.

The 3C method aims to establish coproduction among and between residents and professionals in enhancing and subsequently maintaining neighborhood liveability. Neighborhood liveability refers to the tangible and intangible qualities of a neighborhood environment. Low neighborhood liveability is commonly characterized by poor physical appearance of the neighborhood, low feelings of safety, relatively high crime rates, and dysfunctional relationships between (groups of) residents. On the contrary, neighborhoods with high levels of liveability are generally clean, safe, with well-maintained dwellings and other buildings and with residents being respectful of one another and each other's property.

There are many neighborhoods where residents have relatively low neighborhood engagement. In such neighborhoods residents may nonetheless enjoy a high degree of liveability because they don't cause any nuisance for one another, feel safe, and each individually looks after the physical appearance of the neighborhood. However, where neighborhood liveability becomes an issue, cooperation between residents is often a necessary condition for improvement. Research shows that cooperation between residents plays a key role in achieving positive change even when neighborhood problems, such as burglaries and vandalism, are not directly caused by neighborhood residents themselves (e.g., see Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). Unfortunately, particularly in neighborhoods that are affected by liveability issues, widespread cooperation between residents is not likely to come about naturally, nor can its longevity be

taken for granted where it does arise. As Forrest and Kearns (2001, p. 2139) have argued, disadvantaged neighborhoods tend to lack the necessary qualities of self-help, mutuality, and trust that could assist in their regeneration, which in part explains, and is a cumulative product of, their decline.

3C: Establishing Coproduction Between Residents and Professionals

In the past few decades, many participatory neighborhood planning methods have been devised that aim to increase residents' involvement in improving neighborhood liveability. However, many of these participatory planning efforts have focused relatively one-sidedly on the needs and wants of residents. For example, residents are given a role in setting priorities for neighborhood improvement or are asked to select their preferred option from a range of scenarios for neighborhood improvement. These participation efforts may improve public service delivery by tailoring public services to meet residents' needs and wants. However, by treating residents as clients and consumers rather than coproducers of neighborhood liveability, these efforts are likely to be unsuccessful in increasing residents' own initiative to improve their neighborhood.

In contrast, other participation methods, such as the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) method, specifically focus on the development of neighborhood community assets to improve neighborhood liveability (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). The ABCD method shifts the responsibility for developing neighborhood plans from a professional-led effort to an effort led by neighborhood residents. Local professionals are positioned as mere facilitators of resident initiatives. These asset-based methods are likely to increase a neighborhood's communal strength. Nonetheless, a one-sided focus on facilitating resident initiatives disregards the importance of aligning community assets and constraints with those of local professionals in order to effectively improve a neighborhood's liveability.

The 3C method seeks to complement needs-based approaches by taking neighborhood community assets as the starting point for improving neighborhood liveability. At the same time, it aims to enrich existing asset-based participation efforts, first, by aligning the assets and constraints of neighborhood residents and professionals and, second, by aligning the services of different professionals so that they can optimally support and complement community competences where needed. There are already initiatives in the field based on the concept of coproduction (e.g., see Boyle, Clark, & Burns, 2006). However, these initiatives do not yet operate from an inventory of what can go wrong (dilemmas) and a methodical way to arrive at possible solutions. The 3C method aims to enhance the successfulness of coproduction initiatives by explicitly dealing with possible obstacles to coproduction.

As was mentioned above, one of the obstacles that was recognized in the design of the 3C method was the dilemma of sustainable cooperation, which includes the complex question of how to establish and maintain sufficient levels of motivation among residents and professionals to continue working together in coproduction. It is important to note the conditions under which such motivation is easier or more difficult to establish and maintain. There is a continuum of coproduction: At one extreme there is coproduction that necessitates continued coordination between fairly stable team members, and at the other extreme are "community enterprises" or "crowd-sourcing" initiatives (see Frey, Luethi, & Osterloh, 2011) such as Wikipedia (Alford, 2009), where contributors are fairly independent and substitutable. They all involve "partners" rather than "clients" (Thomas, 2012) and require motivation for coproduction (Lindenberg & Foss, 2011). However, in coproduction processes where close coordination is not necessary and contributors are relatively independent and substitutable, participants' ongoing motivation is less

crucial to ensure the sustainability of the coproduction process as people can self-select in and out of the joint project. On the contrary, where close coordination and a fairly stable membership are required, the sustainability of motivation is much more important and the dilemma of sustainable cooperation is more likely to pose serious challenges. The case of resident participation in neighborhood liveability projects sits somewhere in the middle of the continuum. Residents must coordinate to some degree, but there can be a certain amount of changeability in who actively participates. With regard to the cooperation of residents with professionals in such projects, a more serious dilemma of sustainability can be expected because it presupposes coproduction among residents, among professionals, and coordination between two groups.

The 3C method builds on the idea that to not only establish but also sustain effective coproduction between residents and professionals, two things are important: (a) to regularly strengthen residents' collective orientation, that is, their group identity, shared vision, and concrete collective goals, and (b) to continuously align the assets and constraints of residents and professionals. To meet these objectives, the 3C process was designed as a continuous circular process of plan making, plan implementation, and plan evaluation. As will be argued, the local council plays an important role in enabling this continuous process of coproduction to take place.

Regularly strengthening residents' collective orientation: Group identity, shared vision, and concrete collective goals. Although neighborhood residents are interdependent in establishing mutual well-being, particularly in neighborhoods with low liveability, residents often don't perceive themselves as a group, let alone a group with common goals. We therefore argue that strengthening residents' group identity is fundamental to increase their motivation to contribute to neighborhood interests (Lindenberg, 1998). A wide range of studies has shown that once individuals' group identity develops, the well-being of the group becomes more important to them, with the relative weight of conflicting individual interests decreasing (e.g., Brewer & Kramer, 1986; Otten & Moskowitz, 2000).

To strengthen residents' group identity, the 3C method focuses on the development of a shared vision of neighborhood liveability among residents, including the specification of concrete collective goals. To this end, a residents' panel is established consisting of residents with different background characteristics. The participants in the residents' panel work together in identifying concrete collective goals and in establishing a joint understanding of what they themselves can contribute to the realization of these goals and the support they need from others. The development of a shared vision and the identification of concrete collective goals subsequently form the basis for coordinated action between residents to make improvements to the neighborhood.

It is important to realize the fragile nature of this process, however. There are often conflicting views and interests between groups of individuals. Arriving at a joint vision and shared goals thus already requires some form of initial motivation among individuals to invest in the participatory process. As we will argue further on in this article, having an independent process facilitator guide the participatory process helps to establish this initial trust among residents that something good can come out of their participation in the process.

Moreover, continued effort, sacrifices experienced in the coproduction process, and uncertainties of outcomes, all contribute to the likelihood that the shared goal of residents to maintain or improve their neighborhood's liveability is pushed into the background by goals that are more directly related to their self-interests in the shorter or longer term (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007). Without a mechanism that regularly strengthens their collective orientation, and thus reinforces their motivation for coproduction, individual interests generally become more salient than collective interests (see Andreoni, 1995; Fehr & Fischbacher, 2004). We therefore argue that residents need to be regularly reminded of their collective interests, shared vision, and concrete collective goals; otherwise, their motivation to contribute to neighborhood liveability is likely to automatically decline with time.

Continuously aligning the assets and constraints of residents and professionals. In the context of improving and maintaining neighborhood liveability, residents are not just dependent on each other. They also rely on professionals who are responsible for governing or serving a neighborhood, such as local council officials, welfare workers, housing corporations,² and neighborhood police officers. Because of these interdependencies, we argue that less professional involvement in neighborhoods does not necessarily mean more active citizenship. On the contrary, research shows that citizens are generally more willing to contribute to collective goals when they trust public officials to do the same (see Tyler & Blader, 2000, for an overview). In addition to a residents' panel, the 3C method therefore establishes a professionals' panel that enables different professionals to explore how they can jointly facilitate and complement neighborhood community initiatives.

A continuous circular process of joint plan making, plan implementation, and plan evaluation. Acknowledging (a) the ongoing decay in residents' motivation for coproduction to improve their neighborhood, and (b) the importance of regularly aligning community competences and professional services to effectively enhance neighborhood liveability in coproduction, the 3C method was designed as a continuous circular process of joint plan making, joint plan implementation, and joint plan evaluation. The circular process serves as a perpetual mechanism for residents to identify—and to focus anew on—shared goals, as a way to stabilize their motivation for cooperation in the short and longer term. Moreover, bundling their knowledge and experience in each of these three phases of the 3C process enables residents and professionals to anticipate and prevent neighborhood problems in coproduction rather than reacting to them as individual actors.

The continuous circular process of plan making, plan implementation, and plan evaluation that is central to the 3C method is reflected in Figure 1, which gives an overview of the initial outline for the 3C method, as developed by the authors of this article in preparation of the two case studies. Steps 1 and 2 in Figure 1 set the stage for an effective coproduction process by appointing an impartial process facilitator and ensuring stakeholder, including local council, commitment. Steps 3 to 5 focus on strengthening the collective orientation among and between residents and professionals. Together, these steps form the plan-making phase in which residents and professionals work together in an interactive panel approach to establish a neighborhood improvement plan. In Step 3, residents identify liveability issues, community competences, and concrete collective goals to tackle these issues. Step 4 focuses on establishing a collaborative network of professional service providers who can mobilize and complement community competences where needed. In Step 5, the assets and constraints of residents and professionals are aligned in a joint neighborhood improvement plan.

In Step 6 the neighborhood improvement plan is communicated to more indirectly involved stakeholders, again including local council officials, to safeguard their commitment to the dialogue's outcomes. Step 7 represents the plan implementation phase during which residents and professionals put the ideas for positive change into action. Step 8 forms the plan evaluation phase, where residents and professionals reflect on the process and outcomes of their coproduction. The evaluation phase then feeds into a new cycle of plan making, plan implementation, and plan evaluation. In the next section, using the following two case studies, we will outline in more detail our experiences with implementing these steps and how they dealt with the dilemmas of citizen participation.

Two Case Studies

The 3C method was initially developed as part of a participant-observer study, commissioned by the city council of Groningen, a city in the north of the Netherlands. The Groningen City Council was one of 26 Dutch city councils that had received funding from the Ministry of

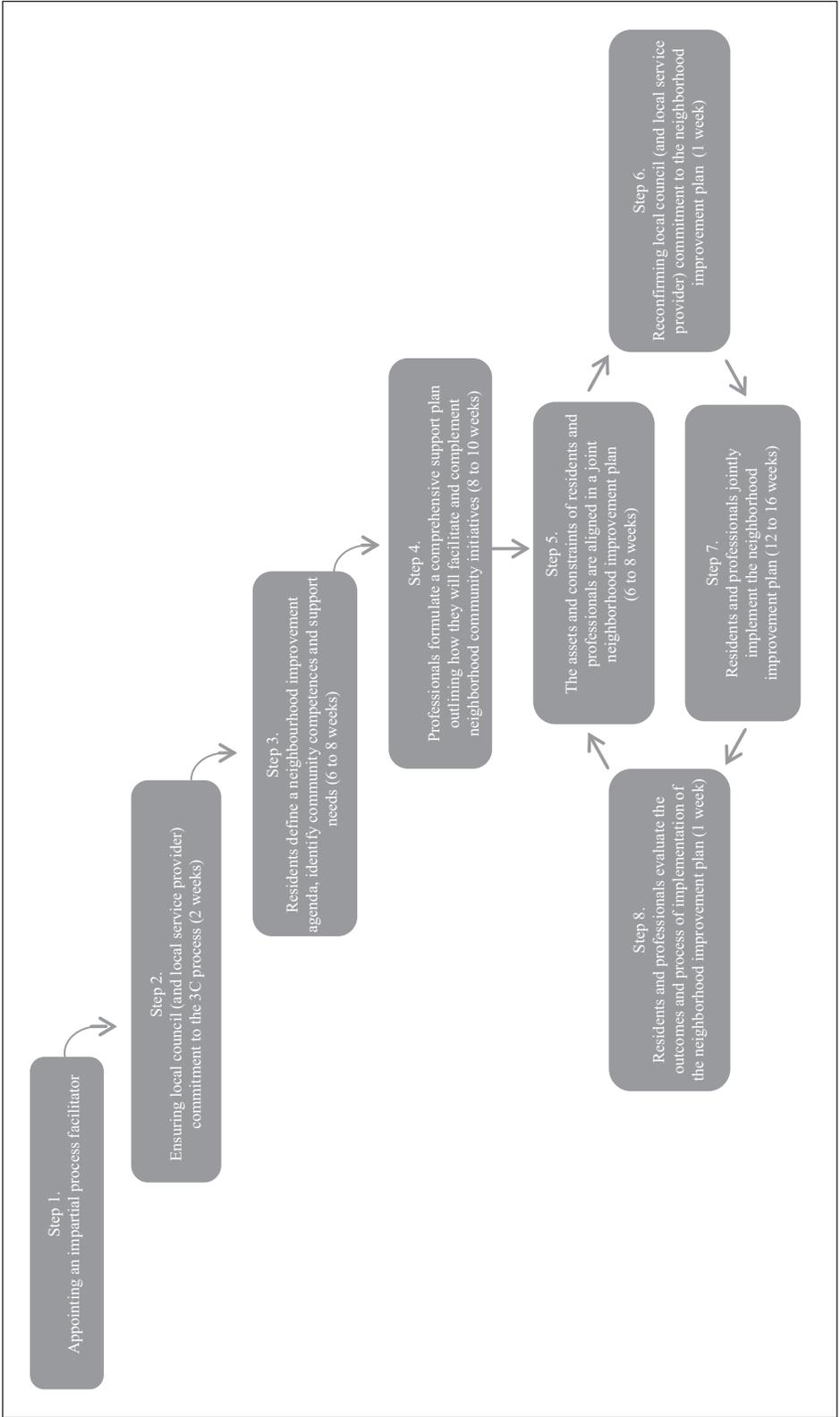


Figure 1. Overview of consecutive steps in the 3C method

Health, Welfare and Sport in 2006, to explore new ways of increasing direct citizen participation, in preparation of the introduction of the Social Support Act in 2007. This act aims to increase active citizenship behavior within the Dutch welfare state and emphasizes the importance of citizen involvement in local council planning in order to do so.

The 3C method was first implemented in the Groningen neighborhood, Lewenborg, in 2006. Afterwards, it was refined based on lessons learnt and was implemented in a second neighborhood, the Parkwijk, in the city of Winschoten in 2008. Both case studies were carried out in cooperation between the local city council, as the project owner, the social work agency that operated in the respective neighborhood, and the authors of this article, as part of a university-based consultancy group. In both cases, the managers of these three organizations formed a steering group. The facilitators of the 3C processes in the two neighborhoods, a role taken up by two researchers in the university-based consultancy group, reported on the progress of the 3C processes to the steering group during monthly meetings. In addition, regular semistructured conversations were held with residents and local professionals involved in the 3C processes.

Lewenborg is a neighborhood in the city of Groningen. With a population of 188,000 residents, Groningen is by far the largest city in the north of the Netherlands and is the main urban center in this part of the country. Located roughly 6 kilometers from the Groningen city center, Lewenborg is characterized by its green environment. The neighborhood is set up around a small shopping mall, two schools, and a community center. In 2006, the neighborhood had approximately 8,750 residents. Of all residents, 78.1% were native Dutch. Residents owned 46.2% of all dwellings in Lewenborg. The Groningen council had appointed Lewenborg for the pilot to be held because the liveability in the neighborhood had degraded in recent years and the council felt that their relationship with Lewenborg residents was deteriorating.

The Parkwijk is a neighborhood in Winschoten, a provincial town with a population of about 20,000 residents in an agricultural region in the northeast of the Netherlands. The Parkwijk is located 3 kilometers from the town center and has approximately 1,500 residents. Although it is a relatively small neighborhood, it has many facilities nearby, including a school, a community center, and a supermarket. Compared to Lewenborg, the Parkwijk was somewhat more homogeneous in terms of the ethnic backgrounds of residents, with 86.8% of residents being native Dutch. Yet the neighborhood was characterized by an immoderately high unemployment rate, with 25% of neighborhood residents between 15 and 65 years of age being unemployed.³ Residents owned roughly one in three dwellings in the Parkwijk. In previous years, the liveability in the Parkwijk had declined and the Winschoten council had encountered more and more difficulty in trying to get in touch with residents to achieve positive change. The council saw the 3C method as a way to reconnect with residents.

Step 1: Appointing an impartial process facilitator. The first step in the implementation of the 3C method in both Lewenborg and the Parkwijk was to appoint a process facilitator as a neutral third party to guide the 3C process. (See Figure 2 for an overview of the implementation of the 3C processes in Lewenborg and the Parkwijk). From the three initiating bodies, that is, the local city council, the social work agency, and the university-based consultancy group, the latter was appointed to fulfill the role of process facilitator in both neighborhoods, given that the other two parties both had a direct stake in the outcome of the 3C process (see also Musso et al., 2011). The importance of a process facilitator as a neutral third party becomes clear when we look at the *dilemma of technology and expertise*. A well-known criticism of participatory practices is that citizens' input is not taken seriously and that they are symbolic rather than substantive (see, for example, Arnstein, 1969; Taylor, 2007). Much research has shown that the confidence of individuals in the fairness and impartiality of a plan-making process strongly affects their willingness to participate in the process, to accept its outcome, and to contribute to its realization (see Tyler & Blader, 2000, for an overview). To establish initial trust and motivation among

Lewenburg	The Parkwijk
Step 1 Appointing an impartial process facilitator	
In both neighbourhoods, the process facilitator role is taken up by a university-based consultancy group.	
Step 2 Ensuring local government (and local service provider) commitment to the 3C process	
Local council commitment to the 3C process is ensured during a meeting between the process facilitator and directly and indirectly involved council officials.	
	A kick-off meeting for local service providers is held to also strengthen their commitment to the 3C process.
Step 3 Residents define a joint neighbourhood improvement agenda and identify community competences.	
The process facilitator systematically identifies resident groups that are likely to have different needs regarding neighborhood liveability.	
The process facilitator interviews three individuals for each of the identified groups about the liveability in their neighbourhood. This forms the start of the neighbourhood improvement agenda. At the end of each group interview, one representative is asked to participate in a residents' panel.	A survey on neighbourhood liveability is used as the start of the neighbourhood improvement agenda. Participants for the residents' panel are recruited during an open meeting about the survey results. Subsequently, additional residents are recruited to represent three resident groups that were not present at the open meeting.
Together with the process facilitator, the residents' panel defines and prioritises objectives on the neighbourhood improvement agenda. Subsequently, the panel identifies what they can do themselves and what support they need from professionals to achieve their objectives.	
Step 4 Professionals formulate a comprehensive support plan	
The process facilitator establishes a professionals' panel. For each objective on the neighbourhood improvement agenda, professionals define how they will jointly facilitate and complement the specified resident initiatives.	
Step 5 The assets and constraints of residents and professionals are aligned in a joint neighborhood improvement plan	
Based on residents' and professionals' inputs, the process facilitator drafts a neighborhood improvement plan. The neighborhood improvement plan is fine-tuned during a number of joint meetings between the residents' and professionals' panels.	
Step 6 Reconfirming local council (and local service provider) commitment to the neighborhood improvement plan	
The process facilitator and local council project owner present the final neighborhood improvement plan to indirectly involved local council officials to guard their commitment.	
	An additional session is held for managers of the service providing organizations involved to also sustain their commitment.
Step 7 Residents and professionals jointly implement the neighborhood improvement plan	
Funding for the 3C process finishes. The process facilitation role is carried over to the social work agency.	
A city-wide covenant is signed between the Groningen city council and two main housing corporations for the physical and social restructuring of 14 deprived neighbourhoods, including Lewenburg. The city council reappoints the social worker who was responsible for the continuation of the 3C process to become the process facilitator of the 'Heel de Buurt' method. The Heel de Buurt method frames residents as customers rather than co-producers of neighborhood liveability.	Under the guidance of the social work agency, residents and professionals carry out their planned activities. Residents set up a best kept garden competition and organise workshops on home maintenance with help from the housing corporations. Together, residents, the housing corporations and city council organize a joint neighborhood clean-up. The social work agency implements a program for long-term unemployed residents to participate in a neighborhood watch team on a weekly basis.
Step 8 Residents and professionals evaluate the outcomes and process of implementation of the neighborhood improvement plan	
An independent researcher who is hired as part of the covenant to evaluate the Heel de Buurt process in Lewenburg concludes that, while residents are generally enthusiastic to contribute to their neighborhood, an important step remains to be made from residents thinking along about neighborhood improvement to residents joining in to make the change.	Residents and professionals evaluate the outcomes and process of their co-production. Soon after, the mayor of Winschoten announces the start of a new program in the Parkwijk to tackle the high unemployment level. The social work resources for the 3C process are reinvested in the new program. Despite best efforts of residents and professionals, the 3C process disappears into the background.

Figure 2. Overview of 3C process in Lewenburg and the Parkwijk.

residents to participate in the 3C process, they would thus first need to trust that their input would be equally considered.

Step 2: Ensuring local council (and local service provider) commitment to the 3C process. Working with an independent process facilitator had important implications for the role of the local council. The 3C approach shifts the traditional responsibility of local councils for plan making with regard to neighborhood liveability to the collective participation of residents, local service providers, and the local council. Rather than planning and implementing actions to improve neighborhood liveability themselves, the local council's role changes to enabling a continuous process of coproduction between residents and professionals. This includes an active advocacy role for the coproduction process toward other professionals involved and securing the funding for the required active coordination by an independent process facilitator. This enabling role is crucial to ensure the sustainability of the coproduction process.

To safeguard the willingness of the local council to enable an ongoing process of coproduction between residents and professionals preceding the start of the 3C process in Lewenborg and the Parkwijk, the process facilitators each organized a meeting with city council managers and politicians. Both directly and indirectly involved council officials were invited, as the city council neighborhood coordinators who took part in the 3C processes in the two neighborhoods would need to be supported by their colleagues and superiors to change their ways of working. During the meetings, the process facilitators explained the aims and design rationale of the 3C method (as outlined above). The managerial and political commitment of the local councils to the 3C's coproduction approach was set as a precondition to start the 3C process. To maintain their commitment throughout the 3C process, the process facilitator and neighborhood coordinator in each neighborhood regularly updated the indirectly involved managers and politicians about the progress and outcomes of the 3C process in the respective neighborhood during follow-up meetings.

Step 3: Residents define a neighborhood improvement agenda and identify community competences. To strengthen residents' group identity and identify a shared vision and concrete collective goals that could underpin their joint action, the 3C method established a residents' panel in which residents' worked together in defining a joint neighborhood improvement agenda. In trying to do so, the 3C method had to overcome the *dilemma of excluded and oppressed groups* and the *dilemma of size*. How could the 3C method include groups that are usually underrepresented in participatory practices? And how could the 3C method involve numerous groups and individuals, while at the same time allowing for face-to-face deliberation between the individuals involved?

The formation of a residents' panel in Lewenborg. Acknowledging the *dilemma of excluded and oppressed groups*, the process facilitator in Lewenborg systematically identified resident groups that were likely to have different needs and wants regarding their daily living environment, including those that are usually underrepresented in participatory practices. To do this, she used official neighborhood statistics and the expertise of local professionals, in particular the neighborhood social worker. The identified resident groups included residents in three different age groups (15-35, 36-55, 56+), residents with different ethnic backgrounds (Dutch, Antillean, Indonesian, and Surinamese), residents with different household compositions (families, couples, and people living alone), renting and home-owning residents, and residents living in different parts of the neighborhood (distinguishing between three different areas). In addition, a member from the neighborhood council was invited to take part in the 3C process.

For each distinguished resident group, the process facilitator interviewed three representatives about their experiences with regard to the liveability in Lewenborg, in a semistructured group interview. Representatives were found by personally approaching residents on the streets and in community centers in Lewenborg. The interviews generally took 1 to 2 hours and, depending on residents' preferences, took place at the neighborhood center or in one of their homes. Topics that were discussed included the neighborhood's strengths and weaknesses, the sense of community within the neighborhood, feelings of safety, and levels of satisfaction with local facilities. The process facilitator wrote down the neighborhood problems that residents mentioned. At the end of the interviews, she asked the interviewees to rank the listed issues in order of importance in terms of their impact on the neighborhood's liveability. This formed the starting point for the development of a neighborhood improvement agenda.

Taking into account the *dilemma of size*, at the end of each group interview one representative was asked to participate in a residents' panel. After the interviews, residents were generally very willing to do so. The residents' panel in Lewenborg was thus composed of 15 residents, representing each of the distinguished resident groups. The participants in the residents' panel did not carry any representative accountability toward the group they were part of. Yet

distinguishing between different resident groups ensured that a diverse group of residents was involved in the development of a group identity and the identification of a shared vision and concrete collective goals.

The formation of a residents' panel in the Parkwijk. In the Parkwijk, the residents' panel was constructed slightly differently (see Figure 2). A month before the start of the 3C process in the Parkwijk, the city council had held a survey among 158 Parkwijk residents to gain a better understanding of their experiences of neighborhood liveability. As many residents had been approached to take part in the survey, the process facilitator in the Parkwijk was hesitant to use the interview approach as set out above. Instead, to avoid interview fatigue among residents, he decided to use the recent survey data as a starting point for the development of a neighborhood improvement agenda and formation of a residents' panel. Together with the analysts who had been involved in administering the liveability survey, the process facilitator organized an open meeting to present the results of the survey to the Parkwijk residents. Residents were informed about the meeting through flyers and notices in the local newspaper and on the council website. The idea was to use this meeting to verify and further specify the issues to go on the neighborhood improvement agenda and to recruit residents for the residents' panel. Depending on the resident groups that would show up at the open meeting, additional residents would be recruited afterwards, to ensure the panel's representativeness.

However, at 7 p.m., when the open meeting was supposed to start, only one resident had come to the neighborhood community center. For professionals this confirmed their view that residents didn't care about how things were going in their neighborhood. They even suggested to cancel the meeting and to stop further investing in setting up the 3C process in the neighborhood. "If they don't care, then why should we?" they argued. The process facilitator, on the contrary, proposed to postpone the meeting for 1 hour and to jointly go into the neighborhood, knock on doors, and personally invite residents to the meeting. Initially, the professionals were reluctant. However, when the sole resident who had shown up to the meeting enthusiastically went into the neighborhood to persuade other residents to come to the meeting, they could not sit back. Consequently, at 8 p.m. there were 16 Parkwijk residents in the neighborhood community center.

The analysts presented their findings. Afterwards, the process facilitator started a group discussion, asking residents whether they recognized the issues that had been outlined and whether there were any issues that had not been captured by the survey. After explaining the planned 3C process to deal with the identified issues, eight residents indicated to be willing to participate in the residents' panel. In the following week, three additional residents were recruited for the residents' panel to include the views of three important resident groups that had not been present at the start-off meeting, that is, the older adults, neighborhood youth, and the unemployed.

Encouraging thoughtful deliberation and developing a neighborhood improvement agenda. A third dilemma for direct citizen participation that was identified by Roberts is the *dilemma of the common good*. How could the 3C method encourage thoughtful deliberation among participants, rather than simply listing residents' wants and wishes? During the first meeting of the residents' panel in both neighborhoods, the 3C method focused on aligning the needs and preferences of the different resident groups to encourage a shared understanding of neighborhood issues. The meetings of both residents' panels, all of which were chaired by the process facilitators, were organized in the neighborhood early in the evening to maximize the opportunity for participants to attend. At the start of the first meeting in both neighborhoods, the neighborhood issues that had been identified and their relative priorities were verified. Issues on the neighborhood improvement agenda in Lewenborg focused on perceived threats to the neighborhood's green environment, vandalism by neighborhood youth, and tensions between residents with different ethnic backgrounds. Liveability issues in the Parkwijk included littering, vandalism, and graffiti and a lack of social cohesion between neighborhood residents.

Collective decision-making based on majority voting, consensus or consent?

Fung & Wright (2001) argue that to achieve empowered participatory governance, the decision-making process should be based on reason. There are many different ways through which groups can reach collective decisions. While it is among the simplest of all voting systems, an important disadvantage of majority voting is that it disregards the minority vote. This is inconvenient, especially when broad commitment is needed to implement the decision made. As an alternative, consensus decision-making seeks to resolve or mitigate the objections of the minority to achieve the most agreeable decision. In practice, it is often difficult to reach a group consensus however, particularly when there is large diversity in individuals' positions regarding an issue.

Given the advantages and disadvantages of majority rule and consensus-based decision-making, an important question in the initial design of the 3C method was how neighborhood residents could come to a shared neighborhood agenda, fostering broad commitment as well as discussion about possibly conflicting preferences. To that end, the 3C method adopted the consent principle as its decision-making rule. The consent principle can be defined as 'the absence of any argued objection' (Enderburg, 1981; Buck & Villines, 2007). It doesn't require opponents to say 'yes' to the proposal under discussion. Instead, it asks them to weigh up their individual objections against the collective interests of the group. As Fung and Wright (2001, p. 19) noted "the important feature of genuine deliberation is that participants find reasons that they can accept in collective actions, not necessarily that they completely endorse the action or find it maximally advantageous". In the 3C method, so-called consent rounds, during which all meeting participants were asked for their consent, were held to ensure residents' and professionals' respective support for the neighborhood improvement agenda and the professional support plan and to ensure their joint support for the neighborhood improvement plan.

Figure 3. Collective decision making based on majority voting, consensus or consent?

Together, the participants in the residents' panels reformulated the identified liveability issues into concrete collective objectives to improve the neighborhood. The process facilitators pointed out any possibly conflicting goals of residents. For example, in Lewenburg, a goal to preserve natural amenities conflicted with another goal to create more parking spaces. In discussion between participants, the wish for more parking spaces was thus reformulated as the wish to use the existing parking spaces more efficiently, without impacting on natural amenities. Stimulating residents to evaluate their multiple goals and priorities simultaneously and in relation to each other ensured that the 3C method established an actionable neighborhood improvement agenda in both neighborhoods. In doing so, the 3C method used a decision-making procedure that encourages open discussion about conflicting interests, while simultaneously stimulating each participant to weigh up his or her self-interest against the collective interests of the group (see Figure 3).

Identifying community competences. In a second meeting of the residents' panel, residents defined how they could contribute to achieving each of the identified neighborhood improvement objectives. For example, to counteract youth vandalism, residents in Lewenburg proposed to create more facilities and activities for neighborhood youth. Other suggested initiatives in Lewenburg and the Parkwijk included residents organizing a best-kept garden competition, setting up a joint neighborhood clean-up, organizing a multicultural food fair, and residents organizing home maintenance workshops for other residents. In the Parkwijk further ideas were raised for unemployed residents to form a neighborhood watch group. The residents' panel members subsequently specified the professional support that they thought they would need to achieve these initiatives. For example, in both neighborhoods, residents indicated that they would like help from the housing corporations in setting up workshops on home maintenance. Moreover, in the Parkwijk, residents suggested they would need support from the social work agency to encourage unemployed residents to participate in a neighborhood watch group on a regular basis.

By systematically identifying the liveability issues that different resident groups experienced and by aligning potentially conflicting interest and preferences between residents, the 3C method enabled the development of a shared vision and the identification of concrete collective goals. In turn, this strengthened the group identity between residents. As we have argued above, strengthening residents' group identity is important to increase their willingness to invest in neighborhood liveability. The specification of concrete collective goals and ways in which residents themselves could contribute to achieving these goals transformed this general willingness among residents into a motivation to jointly deliver on the identified actions.

In both neighborhoods, once the neighborhood agenda had been established, the process facilitator presented the agenda and the planned resident initiatives to the more indirectly involved city council managers and politicians during a joint meeting, in order to foster the local council's commitment to the 3C process (see Step 2).

Step 4: Professionals formulate a comprehensive support plan outlining how they will facilitate and complement neighborhood community initiatives. As argued above, local service providers play an important role in supporting and complementing residents in addressing neighborhood issues. However, there are some obstacles to overcome for professionals to form a supportive network. Within their everyday duties, local professionals often don't find the time to effectively cooperate or communicate with each other. Thus, for them too, strengthening their collective orientation is important. To that end, the process facilitators in the two neighborhoods set up a second panel, a professionals' panel. The professionals' panel enabled a wide range of professional service providers to explore how they could jointly facilitate and complement the planned resident activities.

Acknowledging the *dilemma of size*, one representative for each of the local service providing organizations was invited to participate in the panel. In both neighborhoods, the professionals' panel included the neighborhood social worker, the neighborhood police officer, representatives from the local schools and housing corporations operating in the area, along with the city council project owner for the 3C process in the respective neighborhood in the capacity of neighborhood coordinator. The professionals who were invited primarily worked at an operational rather than at a management level, often working directly with residents. Due to differences in size between Lewenborg and the Parkwijk, the size of the professionals' panels in the two case studies ranged from 8 professionals in the panel in the Parkwijk to 15 professionals in the panel in Lewenborg. Again, the process facilitators chaired the meetings of the professionals' panels.

A subsequent dilemma was the *dilemma of technology and expertise*. How could the 3C method counter the tendency of professionals to usurp neighborhood control and thereby jeopardize the coproduction between professionals and residents? The 3C method aimed for professionals to come to a systematic combination and/or integration of their services so that they could support and complement resident initiatives. In doing so, the 3C method explicitly started from the neighborhood improvement objectives and community initiatives that were defined by the residents' panel. The neighborhood improvement objectives were divided into three broad liveability themes, that is, "Community life and Recreation," "Physical environment," and "Crime, Safety, and Nuisance." The process facilitators assigned the participants in the professionals' panels to the different theme groups based on their fields of expertise.

To find new ways of working together that supported and complemented resident initiatives, each theme group drafted a support plan by formulating their answers to questions that had been prepared by the process facilitator. The questions focused on the extent to which existing services matched the support questions of the residents' panel; whether the services that matched residents' support questions were well communicated to residents; whether additional services

were required to support or complement resident activities; if so, what the opportunities and limitations would be in providing these services; and how they could integrate and combine their existing and future services to optimally support and complement resident initiatives. After the first joint meeting of the professionals' panel, the participants in each theme group came together once or twice more to finish their plan. Once a theme group had finished its draft support plan, the group met with the process facilitator to discuss the formulated plan, upon which they made further adjustments to the plan where necessary.

The importance of a process facilitator in encouraging professionals to think of new ways of doing things became increasingly apparent at this stage. In defining a support plan, professionals had a strong focus on existing ("customer-oriented") services and programs rather than exploring how things could be done differently in coproduction with residents. Moreover, in thinking about ways to facilitate and complement resident initiatives, professionals tended to focus on opportunities for individual agencies, as opposed to opportunities that cooperation between different professional agencies could create. The process facilitators in both neighborhoods played a crucial role in continuously encouraging professionals to explore opportunities for synergy among and between residents and professional service providers, framing residents as coproducers rather than customers.

The support plans of the theme groups formed the input for a second joint meeting of the professionals' panel. During this meeting, the professionals examined how the activities in the support plans of the different theme groups could complement and strengthen each other. For example, in Lewenborg one of the housing corporations had initiated a Tool Lending Library where its clients could lend tools, such as ladders and lawn mowers. Residents themselves operated the Tool Lending Library, supervised and supported by the housing corporation. To make the library available to all home owning and renting residents, it was decided that the other housing corporation in the neighborhood and the local council would join the initiative. Moreover, the manager of the neighborhood community center argued that many neighborhood activities and programs, organized for residents at the community center, remained unnoticed. Therefore, plans were formed to move the Tool Lending Library to a vacant space in the neighborhood community center. By doing so, the influx of residents into the community center would increase, where they could learn about other neighborhood activities.

Based on the support plans of the theme groups and the outcome of the second professionals' panel meeting, the process facilitators in the two neighborhoods each formulated one comprehensive support plan, which was sent to everyone in the respective professionals' panel for final feedback. Overall, in both Lewenborg and the Parkwijk, approximately 10 weeks were assigned to the development of a comprehensive support plan with the contribution of all professionals involved (see Figure 1 for the time planning of the 3C process). This ensured enough time for professionals to embed their contributions to the neighborhood support plan within the planning process of their own internal organizations.

Involving local service providers earlier on in the 3C process. As outlined above, the process facilitator in Lewenborg had experienced some difficulties in trying to get local service providers to explore new ways of working together with residents and other professionals. Drawing on the Lewenborg experience, the project team in the Parkwijk concluded that local service providers needed to be engaged in the 3C process earlier on. In Lewenborg, local service providers were involved in the 3C process only after the neighborhood improvement agenda had been set (see Figure 2, Step 4). This likely diminished their sense of inclusion and ownership over the 3C process and, as a result, their willingness to invest in the process. Thus, at the start of the 3C process in the Parkwijk, after the start-up meeting to ensure local council commitment, the process facilitator organized an additional start-up meeting for local service providers (see Figure 2, Step 2). During this meeting, the process facilitator explained the design principles

that underpinned the 3C method to the involved professionals and responded to their questions and concerns, for example, about how the 3C method would relate to existing policies and programs. As workers in the field would likely need support from their managers to change their work approach, the professionals themselves as well as their managers were invited to this meeting. The local council neighborhood coordinator was present at this meeting too, to help advocate for the change in work approach by local service providers.

Involving local service providers in the 3C process at an early stage made it easier for the process facilitator in the Parkwijk to reengage local service providers when their motivation to invest in the 3C process seemed to fade. Nevertheless, the role of the process facilitator in encouraging professionals to explore new ways of working together and with residents remained crucial throughout the process, as was illustrated in Step 3 where professionals in the Parkwijk nearly called the 3C process to an end when only one resident showed up for the first residents' meeting.

Step 5: The assets and constraints of residents and professionals are aligned in a joint neighborhood improvement plan. Based on the input from the residents' and professionals' panels, the process facilitators in both neighborhoods formulated a draft neighborhood improvement plan (see Figure 4). For each objective on the agenda, the neighborhood improvement plan outlined the planned initiatives of residents and professionals. While formulating a neighborhood improvement plan, an important challenge was the *dilemma of time and crisis*. This dilemma is about allowing room for deliberation, while at the same time ensuring fast action where needed. Acknowledging this dilemma, it was decided for the neighborhood improvement plan to distinguish between short- and long-term actions. The planned actions in the short term either required fast action or were easily achievable within a short time frame, such as removing graffiti or installing a rubbish bin. Planned actions in the longer term were either less urgent or required more time to prepare. Effectively implementing planned actions in the short term was seen to be crucial to ensure the willingness of participants in the 3C process to contribute to neighborhood liveability in the longer term.

The process facilitators sent their draft neighborhood improvement plans to the participants in the respective residents' and professionals' panels. In both neighborhoods, the neighborhood improvement plan was discussed and finalized in two to three consecutive meetings between the two panels. During these joint meetings, the focus was on creating coherence and synergy in the planned activities of residents and professionals. Given the relatively larger size of the professionals' panel in Lewenborg, the project leader invited two representatives from each liveability theme group (see Step 4) to this meeting, rather than the full professionals' panel. This enabled face-to-face deliberation between residents and professionals and ensured that the number of professionals at the joint meetings didn't outweigh the number of residents.

The meetings between the professionals' panel and the residents' panel formed an important step in further strengthening the collective orientation between residents and professionals. The first meeting between the two panels in both neighborhoods was characterized by skepticism among some participants with regard to their cooperation. However, during the following meetings residents and professionals started to increasingly work and think as a team, acknowledging and building on each other's strengths rather than pointing at each other's weaknesses. To facilitate the development of a collective orientation between residents and professionals, the process facilitator actively encouraged different participants to voice their ideas and assured that the focus was on understanding and not on judging. When the participants tended to fall into a negative spiral of negotiating about (unmet) responsibilities, the process facilitator prompted them to rephrase their concerns more constructively by expressing what they would like to achieve and what type of support they needed from others in order to do so. As a result, residents got to understand the opportunities and constraints that professionals face in formulating and delivering their

Neighborhood improvement objective	Existing activities to be continued	Planned actions on the short term (≤ 1 yr)	Planned actions on the long term (> 1 yr)
1. Improve the neighborhood's physical appearance	Residents can call a hotline to report litter problems. By using the hotline, the problem is reported to the appropriate council department, without the inconvenience for residents of being transferred multiple times. In an annual neighborhood viewing, local council officials walk through the neighborhood together with residents to record apparent neighborhood issues and/or problem areas.	The local government will place extra rubbish bins on the different squares in the neighborhood. Residents will empty the rubbish bins themselves. The local Waste Management Department will punish litter violations more strictly. The two primary schools in the neighborhood will organize a theme week to encourage neighborhood children to help to keep their neighborhood clean. The neighborhood youth centre will extend its opening hours during public holidays.	The social work agency will set up a program for long-term unemployed residents to participate in a neighborhood watch and clean-up team on a weekly basis, in return for a small financial reward.
2. Create more facilities and activities for neighborhood youth	The neighborhood youth centre organizes several successful youth activities. The local council is renovating/ replacing old sports facilities in the neighborhood.	Residents will organize sports activities for neighborhood youth, facilitated and supported by the staff of the neighborhood youth centre. The other housing corporation in the neighborhood and the local council will join in the Tool Lending Library initiative, to make the service available for all renting and home-owning residents in the neighborhood. The housing corporations and the local council will write a monthly column in the local newspaper in which they provide tips about home and garden maintenance.	Residents organize several workshops on home and garden maintenance (one in each of the four seasons), supported by the local council and housing corporations.
3. Improve home and garden maintenance	One of the housing corporations initiated a Tool Lending Library in the neighborhood, where neighborhood residents can go to lend tools, such as ladders, lawn mowers and high-pressure cleaners. Residents themselves operate the Tool Lending Library, supervised and supported by the housing corporation.		

Figure 4. Exemplary part of a neighborhood improvement plan

services. In turn, professionals gained more insight in the necessary conditions for residents to make an active contribution to their neighborhood's liveability.

Step 6: Reconfirming local council (and local service provider) commitment to the neighborhood improvement plan. Once both panels agreed on the neighborhood improvement plan, the process facilitator and the local council neighborhood coordinator presented the plan to the more indirectly involved city council managers and politicians during a joint meeting, to boost their commitment. In the Parkwijk, an additional session was held for the managers of the service providing organizations involved in 3C process, to also sustain their commitment.

Step 7: Residents and professionals jointly implement the neighborhood improvement plan—the case of Lewenborg. As was mentioned earlier, the 3C method in Lewenborg was implemented as part of a series of pilot studies for which the national government had provided specific financing. As there was no continuous funding, the budget to employ the process facilitator in Lewenborg, who was part of the university-based consultancy group, finished once the neighborhood improvement plan had been established. The idea was that at this stage the facilitation of the 3C process would be handed over to the social work agency. The social work agency would integrate the joint cycle of plan making, plan implementation, and plan evaluation between residents and professionals into its work program for the area, thus ensuring the sustainability of the coproduction process.

However, in the meantime, the Groningen city council and the two main housing corporations in Groningen had established a new city-wide covenant, the Nieuw Lokaal Akkoord (New Local Agreement). They had created a fund of 20 million euro (10 million euro from the city council and 10 million euro from the two housing corporations) to be invested in the physical and social restructuring of 14 deprived neighborhoods in the city of Groningen between 2007 and 2010. Lewenborg was appointed as one of these neighborhoods. The covenant specified that residents would be involved in the neighborhood restructuring process through a participation method called "Heel de Buurt" (meaning "Heal the Neighborhood" and also "The Whole Neighborhood"). The city council reappointed the social worker who was originally responsible for the continuation of the 3C process in Lewenborg, to become the process facilitator of the Heel de Buurt method in Lewenborg instead. Where possible, the social work agency would integrate the gains from the 3C method into the new participation method.

The partnership between the local city council and the housing corporations was a unique partnership initiative and gave a financial boost to the Lewenborg neighborhood. However, the Heel de Buurt method could be characterized as a needs-based approach rather than a coproduction approach. The 3C method had focused on establishing coproduction between residents and professionals in a continuous circular process of plan making, plan implementation, and plan evaluation. On the contrary, the Heel de Buurt method focused solely on resident involvement in plan making, framing residents as customers rather than coproducers of neighborhood liveability. A core neighborhood group, consisting of a considerably smaller group of residents and professionals than in the residents' and professionals' panels, prepared proposals for how the money now available for neighborhood restructuring in Lewenborg should be spent. Subsequently, during open neighborhood meetings to which all residents were invited, residents could cast their vote on the different proposals for neighborhood improvement that were prepared by the core group. The focus thus shifted from the question, "What can you do and what help do you need?," to the question of how the money that had been made available for Lewenborg should be spent. Accordingly, an independent researcher from the University of Tilburg who was hired as part of the covenant to evaluate the resident participation process in the 14 neighborhoods concluded that although residents were generally enthusiastic, an important step remained to be made, that is, residents moving from thinking about neighborhood improvement to actually joining in to make the change (Regiokrant Groningen, April 14, 2008).

Joint implementation of the neighborhood improvement plan—the case of the Parkwijk. In the Parkwijk, the implementation phase of the 3C process was kicked off during a festive meeting of residents and professionals. As in Lewenborg, once both panels had committed themselves to the neighborhood improvement plan, the process facilitation role was handed over from the university-based consultancy group to the social work agency, to minimize costs. Under the guidance of the social work agency, residents and professionals started to carry out their planned activities. At the start of this implementation phase, the 3C method again encountered the *dilemma of size*. Whereas the plan-making phase involved a limited number of residents to allow for face-to-face deliberation between different resident groups, the plan implementation phase would ideally involve as many residents as possible. At the start of the plan implementation phase, the participants in the residents' panel recruited approximately 15 additional residents to form several working groups. The working groups were arranged around the same liveability themes that were used to organize the participants in the professionals' panel, that is, "Community life and Recreation," "Physical environment," and "Crime, Safety, and Nuisance" (see Step 4).

In recruiting residents for the working groups, the 3C method sought to connect to residents' personal interests, skills, and competences, such as an interest in gardening, the ability to work well with children, or technical skills. By focusing on residents who wanted to contribute to the liveability in their neighborhood based on a personal interest, skill, or competence, the 3C method ensured the involvement of a wide range of residents in carrying out the neighborhood improvement plan. At least one member of the residents' panel took seat in each working group as a team leader. Together, the working group members shaped the resident activities as described in the neighborhood improvement plan. Residents organized a best-kept garden competition during which children went around the neighborhood under the supervision of adult residents to judge different gardens on a range of criteria and picked the one they liked best. With help from the housing corporations, residents organized a first workshop on home maintenance. Moreover, together with the housing corporations and city council, residents organized a joint neighborhood clean-up, removing garbage and litter from public spaces and graffiti from the walls. The social work agency started a program for long-term unemployed residents to participate in a neighborhood watch and clean-up team on a weekly basis, in return for a small financial reward. All the different activities were filmed by the city council and brought out on a DVD that was made available for all residents free of charge.

Step 8: Residents and professionals evaluate the outcomes and process of implementation of the neighborhood improvement plan as input for a new cycle of joint plan making, plan implementation, and plan evaluation. Six months after the start of the plan implementation phase, the process facilitator in the Parkwijk invited the residents' and professionals' panels to a meeting to jointly evaluate the outcomes and process of implementation of the neighborhood improvement plan. Experiences with participating in the 3C method were shared and the (priorities of) objectives on the neighborhood improvement agenda were reassessed. Professionals and residents agreed that important gains had been made in improving the physical environment of the neighborhood and strengthening the social cohesion among residents. One resident told her story about not having known any residents in her neighborhood prior to the 3C process. After she joined the residents' panel, she had been happily surprised that the residents she had got to know came to visit her in hospital after they found out she was unwell.

The evaluation phase was meant to serve as input for a new cycle of joint plan making, plan implementation, and plan evaluation. In the longer term, the evaluation phase was also thought to be a suitable time to reconsider the resident groups and professional organizations that were represented in the panels and for participants to cycle in and out of the 3C process. However, again the 3C process came to an unexpected end. Soon after the joint evaluation, the mayor of Winschoten announced the start of a new project in the Parkwijk area that specifically focused

on the high level of unemployment. A program that had been successful in the east of the Netherlands in previous years was copied to the Parkwijk area. This program focused on setting up further work-related activities for unemployed individuals in the neighborhood, such as neighborhood maintenance and working in the neighborhood community center, to assist their return to the labor market. The social work resources for the Parkwijk were taken away from the 3C process to be reinvested in the new program. The role of process facilitator thus again got lost. Despite best efforts of residents and professionals in the Parkwijk area to continue the 3C process at their own initiative, the dilemma of sustainable cooperation set in: Everyday practice and individual concerns soon took over and moved their collaboration into the background. The importance of active facilitation of a continuous circular process to maintain the coproduction between residents and professionals was ironically confirmed by these developments.

Conclusion and Discussion

The findings from the two case studies have demonstrated workable solutions to the dilemmas of direct citizen participation that were identified by Roberts (2004). Acknowledging the *dilemma of excluded or oppressed groups*, the method found a way to involve resident groups that are usually underrepresented in neighborhood participation efforts. In response to the *dilemma of size*, a limited number of residents and professionals were involved in the plan-making and evaluation phase, to allow for face-to-face deliberation and to facilitate the development of trust between participants. Yet in the plan implementation phase, the 3C method focused on including as many residents in the action as possible. Dealing with the *dilemma of technology and expertise*, the neighborhood improvement plan explicitly started from the collective objectives and community competences that were identified by the residents' panel. Acknowledging the interdependencies between residents and professionals in improving neighborhood liveability, the 3C method established a professionals' panel in addition to the residents' panel. The professionals' panel enabled professionals to explore how they could jointly facilitate and complement neighborhood community competences.

With regard to the *dilemma of time and crises*, residents and professionals in the Parkwijk effectively implemented those parts of the neighborhood improvement plan that either required fast action or that were easily achievable in the short term. These short-term actions, such as removing graffiti and installing rubbish bins, were seen to be crucial to ensure the willingness of participants in the 3C process to contribute to neighborhood liveability in the longer term. The process facilitator played an important role in dealing with the *dilemma of the common good* by continuously encouraging thoughtful deliberation among and between residents and professionals and by stimulating them to think of new opportunities to create synergy between them. In the words of Musso and colleagues (2011, p. 108), the process facilitators served as "politically neutral sources of knowledge and policy ideas at important junctures." In addition, having an impartial process facilitator guiding the 3C process was important to ensure residents' trust in the participatory process.

With regard to the added *dilemma of sustainable cooperation*, the 3C method specifically focused on establishing and maintaining long-term motivation among residents and professionals to work together in coproduction. As we have argued, local councils can enhance neighborhood liveability by enabling the active facilitation of a continuous process of coproduction between residents and professionals that (a) regularly strengthens residents' collective orientation and mitigates the automatic decay in their motivation for coproduction, and (b) enables a continuous alignment between the assets and constraints of residents and professionals so that they can effectively enhance and maintain neighborhood liveability in coproduction. Accordingly, local council commitment to the 3C method as a continuous coproduction

process, rather than a one-off project, was set as a requirement to start the process. To nurture local council commitment throughout the 3C process, council officials were regularly updated on its progress and outcomes.

Our experiences in the two case studies showed that residents and professionals remained sufficiently motivated to contribute to neighborhood liveability throughout the cycle of plan making, plan implementation, and plan evaluation. Both neighborhoods were selected based on a deterioration of neighborhood liveability and an apparent lack of neighborhood engagement by residents. However, once the 3C process had started, residents showed to be very motivated to improve the liveability in their neighborhood. An independent process facilitator and a personal approach, going up to residents' doorsteps if necessary, proved important to ensure initial motivation among residents to participate in the process. Once their initial motivation was established, the 3C method's focus on the development of a group identity, shared vision, and the specification of concrete collective goals further strengthened residents' motivation for coproduction. New technologies may facilitate broader resident involvement throughout the different stages in the 3C process (e.g., see Klemp & Forcehimes, 2010; Lukensmeyer & Torres, 2006).

However, despite the efforts to ensure local council commitment to an ongoing coproduction process, the design features of the 3C method could not ensure the sustainability of the coproduction between residents and professionals in the face of changing council priorities. Note that local council commitment to an ongoing process of coproduction does not necessarily mean commitment to one and the same resident participation model. There are different ways to encourage coproduction and the method that we have presented in this article is only one possible way. Nonetheless, after a full cycle of joint plan making, plan implementation, and plan evaluation in the Parkwijk, the resources that had been allocated to the 3C method were reallocated to another very important program but one with very different objectives that focused on reducing the high unemployment rates in the area. In Lewenborg, once the neighborhood improvement plan had been developed, as part of a city-wide covenant, the local council reverted back to a needs-based approach to enhancing neighborhood liveability, which positioned residents as customers rather than coproducers.

In both cases, it became clear that without a regular boost generated by the local council to coordinate the actions between residents and professionals and remind them of their shared interests, their motivation for coproduction fades. Despite the initial motivation of residents and professionals in the Parkwijk to continue the coproduction process at their own initiative once the 3C process was put to a halt, everyday practice and individual concerns soon took over and moved their collaboration into the background. In Lewenborg, the Heel de Buurt method kept residents thinking along about neighborhood improvement but failed to encourage residents to actively participate in making the change.

Our experiences in the two case studies raise important questions about how ongoing forms of coproduction between residents and professionals can be established in the face of changing council priorities. It involves tricky questions about how to safeguard ongoing resources to enable coproduction processes, while acknowledging the trade-offs that local councils need to make on a day-to-day basis in terms of how to spend the public money that is available to them. In addition, the case study in Lewenborg has raised questions about how to strengthen local councils' understanding of the fundamental differences between coproduction-based approaches, on the one hand, and assets and needs-based approaches on the other. The 3C method does not offer a clear-cut solution to these issues, other than identifying a need to increase the awareness within local councils of their crucial role in enabling ongoing forms of coproduction between residents and professionals. What is needed is a deeper understanding by local council officials that coproduction processes are precarious engagements that require ongoing support and, therefore, long-term resource allocation.

In terms of the applicability of the 3C method in other neighborhoods and countries, a successful 3C process requires at least a certain level of openness among professionals and residents to work together in improving the neighborhood. Public opinions about the roles and responsibilities of council officials, local service providers, and residents may vary across cultures. In the Netherlands, the 2007 Social Support Act increased the openness of Dutch local council officials and service providers to resident involvement in neighborhood planning. For a successful 3C process, residents as well as professionals must further be willing to recognize the legitimacy of an independent process facilitator. Last, the ways in which local councils and service providers are organized vary across countries. In the Netherlands, many professional services are decentralized, based on the idea that local actors are often in the best position to solve local problems. More centralized governance structures may make it harder to dovetail professional services at a local level. Whereas the identified dilemmas and the principles of the 3C method are not context specific, the extent to which our experiences in applying the 3C method can be generalized to other neighborhoods and countries is subject to further research.

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Notes

1. A further dilemma that was identified by Roberts (2004) is the dilemma of risk, which focuses on how citizens can be involved in dealing with risks, such as global warming and chemical hazards, on an equitable basis.
2. The Netherlands has more than 700 housing corporations that collectively possess approximately 2.5 million housing units. Contrary to many other countries, social housing in the Netherlands is not public housing. Instead it is build by, owned by, and managed by the housing corporations as private, nonprofit organizations.
3. In 2008, when the 3C method was implemented in the Parkwijk, the average unemployment rate in the Netherlands was 3.9%, with a regional estimate of 6.1% for the Groningen province. Source: Statistics Netherlands (CBS).

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