How to encourage citizen engagement & participation?

An overview on concepts, forms & methods
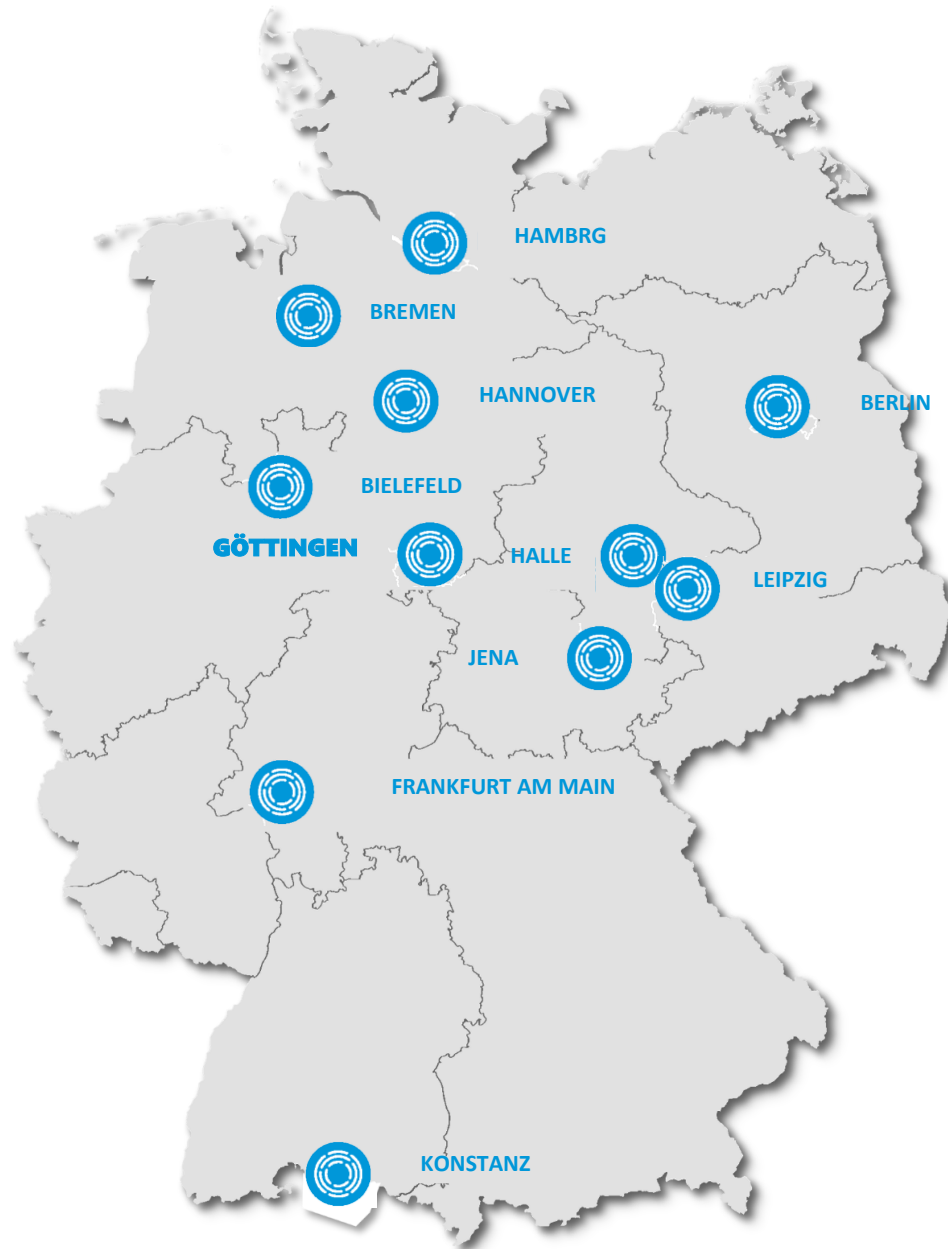
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Jessica Nuske, M.A.

„Knowledge creates politics":
A transdisciplinary research arena on citizen participation and social cohesion

University Bremen,
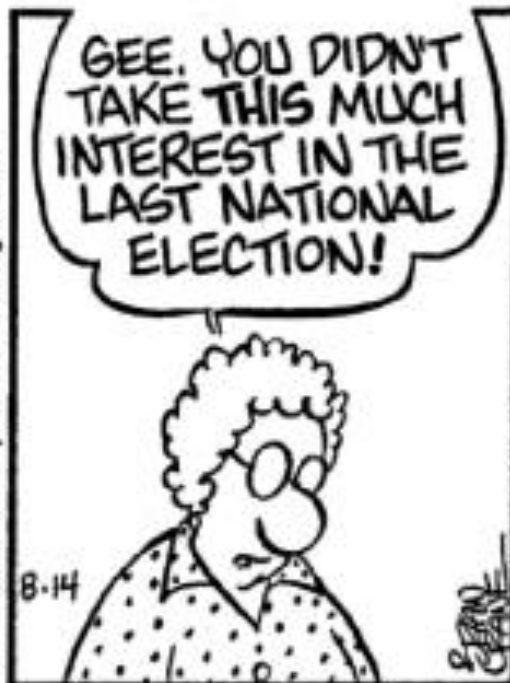Research Institute Social Cohesion

Content

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   - Forms
   - Effects

2. Focus: Co-creation of sustainable solutions
   - Education
   - Collaboration
   - Acceptance
   - Implementation

3. Obstacles and potential conflicts

4. Building reliable citizen participation: Recommendations for action

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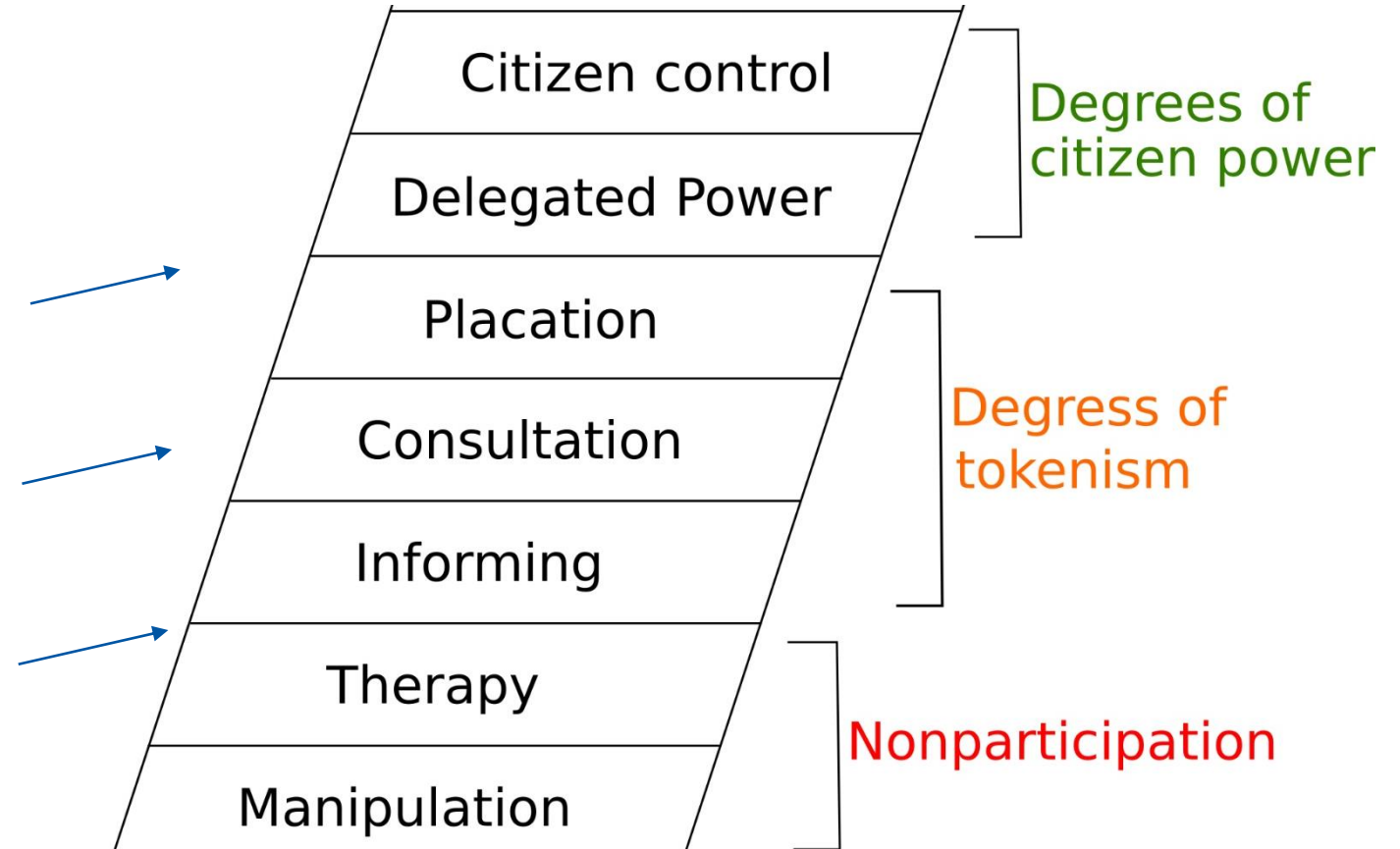
Citizen Participation

Forms of participation

- Petitions, referendum
- citizens' or neighbourhood budgets

- round tables, planning workshops, neighbourhood committees, citizens' committees, citizens' forums

- Citizens' reports, neighbourhood pacts, arbitration and moderation procedures
- district or neighbourhood management

Citizen control	
Delegated Power	Degrees of citizen power
Placation	
Consultation	Degress of tokenism
Informing	
Therapy	Nonparticipation
Manipulation	

Sources: Sackmann 2014: 5-11; Schuldt/Mumenthaler 2017

Effects of citizen participation I

Advantages of citizen participation		
	Advantages to citizen participants	Advantages to initiators
Decision process	• Education • Persuade decision-makers • Gain skills for active / democratic citizenship • Self-efficacy experiences	• Education • Persuade citizens • Build strategic alliances • Gain legitimacy of and acceptance towards decisions
Outcomes	• Trust in political procedures • Better policy and implementation decision	• Break gridlock; achieve outcomes • Better policy and implementation decisions • Citizen compliance • Social capital

Sources: Irvin/Stansbury 2004; Schmidthuber et al. 2019, 2020; Vetter/Remer-Bollow 2017; Bayer-Eynck et al. 2012; Gohde-Ahrens 2013; Vetter et al. 2015; Fernández-Martínez et al. 2020; Gabriel/Kersting 2014; Wagner 2019; Weiß/Bonk 2019; Neunecker 2016

Effects of citizen participation II

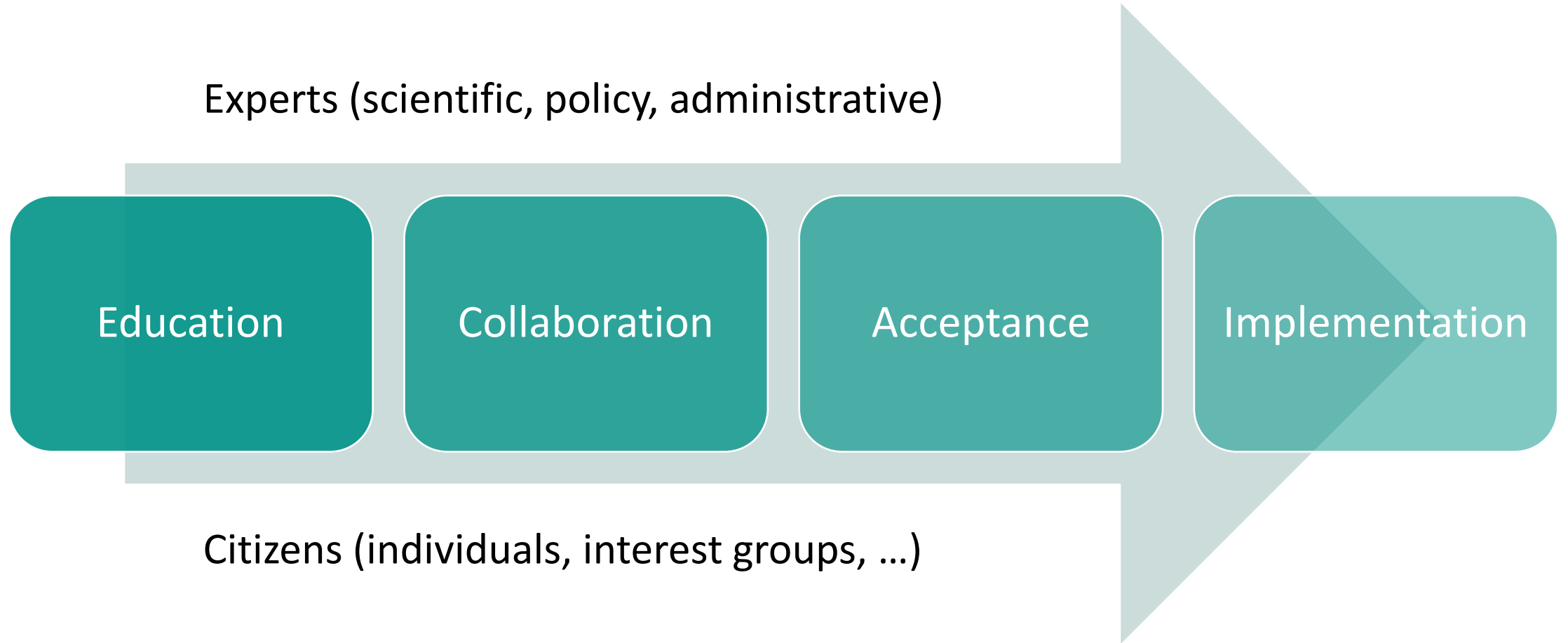| Disadvantages of citizen participation		
	Disadvantages to citizen participants	Disadvantages to initiators
Decision process	• Time consuming (even dull) • Pointless if decision is ignored • Loss of trust in political procedures • Disenchantment with politics	• Time-consuming • Costly • May 'backfire' and create hostility towards (policy) change • Disenchantment with politics
Outcomes	• Worse policy decision if heavily influenced by opposing interest groups or 'loud minorities'	• Loss of decision-making control • Possibility of a bad decision that is hard to ignore • Less budget for implementation • Less compliance

Sources: Irvin/Stansbury 2004; Schmidthuber et al. 2019, 2020; Vetter/Remer-Bollow 2017; Bayer-Eynck et al. 2012; Gohde-Ahrens 2013; Vetter et al. 2015; Fernández-Martínez et al. 2020; Gabriel/Kersting 2014; Wagner 2019; Weiß/Bonk 2019; Neunecker 2016: 18

Focus: Citizen participation to co-create eco-social sustainability solutions

Co-creation of sustainable solutions

Experts (scientific, policy, administrative)

| Education | Collaboration | Acceptance | Implementation |

Citizens (individuals, interest groups, ...)

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Education

Scientific Experts

Scientific expertise and methods

Feasibility considerations, strategies for implementation

Policy and/or administrative experts

Local knowledge, individual 'realities of life'

Citizens

Collaboration

Scientific expertise and methods

Feasibility considerations, strategies for implementation

Local knowledge, individual ‚realities of life'
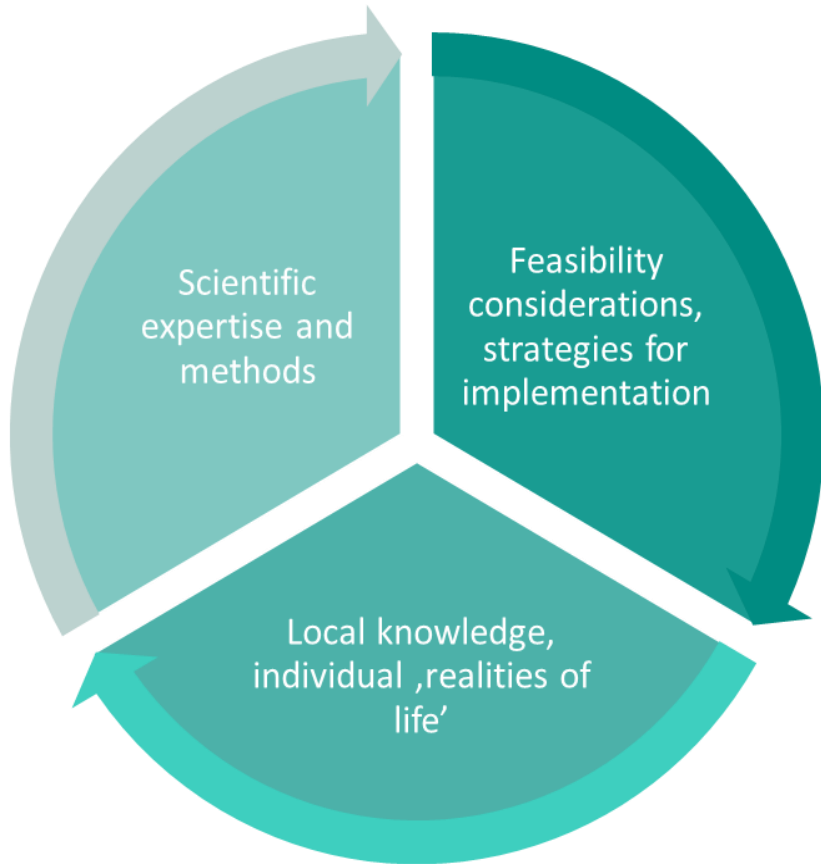
1. Co-design
   - Subject(s) of interest
   - Questions and knowledge requirements
   - Methods

2. Co-production
   - Disclosing knowledge
   - Knowledge integration

3. Co-evaluation
   - (ongoing) adjustments
   - Conflict resolution

Scientific-based, politically and socially robust knowledge

Acceptance

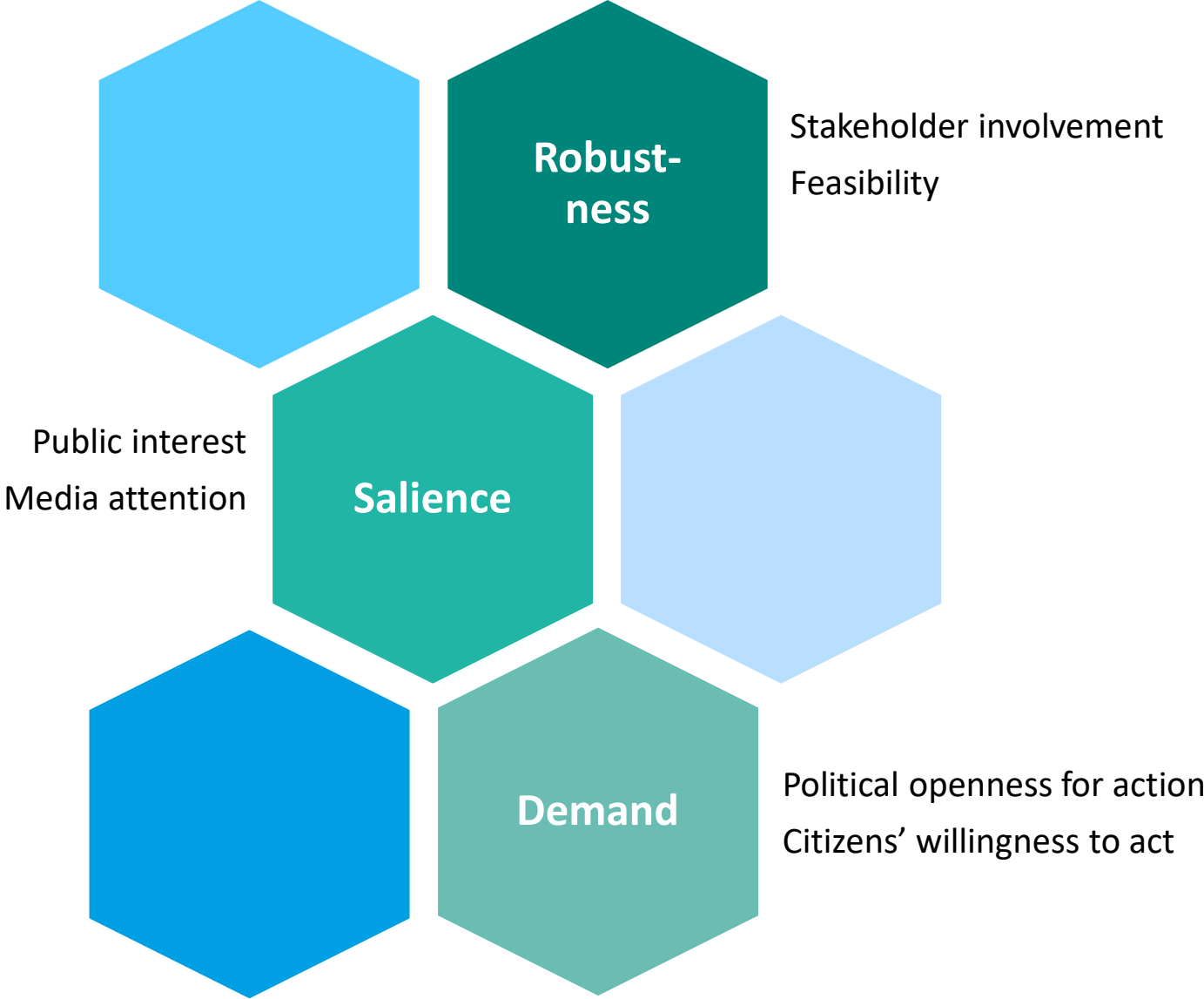|	
Building trust	Expectation-management
Inclusive and unbiased communication	Fair consideration of citizens' viewpoints

Implementation

Robust-ness

Stakeholder involvement

Feasibility

Public interest

Media attention

Salience

Political openness for action

Citizens' willingness to act

Demand

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Obstacles and potential conflicts

the requirements and costs of conducting collaborative efforts

the lack of opportunity for genuine dialogue among competing stakeholders

open meetings laws

the limited time citizens can give to collaboration

the disadvantaged groups who lack the resources to participate

the lack of collaborative skills among planners and citizens

Source: Innes/Booher (2004): 431

Building reliable citizen participation

Recommendations

Recommendations

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Methods and skill training

Translating expert knowledge into commonly used terminology

Transparent and appreciative communication

Continuous expectation management, starting as early as possible

Involvement of crucial stakeholders, starting as early as possible

Sources I

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Thank you for your attention

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GEFÖRDERT VOM

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