Policymaking for Broad Prosperity: Closing the Ambiguity Gap between Theory and Application

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Abstract

Broad Prosperity (BP) is the answer to the question of how to organize an economy focused on wellbeing, and values that make living worthwhile. Under BP, three things are understood: (1) it is a conceptualization of everything that makes living worthwhile; (2) it is a measurement framework of indicators that serves as a lens through which to look at policy, and (3) it is a tool for policymaking. The question of how to apply BP in policymaking remains largely unanswered. The aim of this research is to overcome the ambiguity around policymaking for BP, and to propose a comprehensive policymaking process.

First, three societal characteristics are identified: societal complexity, societal unpredictability and regional specificity. In order to cope with these characteristics, policymaking processes for BP need to be adaptive, learning-based, intersectoral and participatory.

Furthermore, the main findings of this research are that a condition for the transition to BP requires commitment of all those involved in the policymaking process. Secondly, in order to transition to policymaking for BP, it needs to be institutionalized. Thirdly, evaluation and justification becomes more qualitative. Fourthly, there seems to be a gap between the knowledge that is available, and the perception of the availability usable and applicable knowledge among practitioners that are involved in applying BP into policymaking.

Finally, a policymaking process is proposed, explained and visualized, that takes all of the above into account.

Keywords: Broad Prosperity, Institutionalization, Policymaking, Wellbeing, Learning-Based, Adaptive, Participatory, Intersectoral

Contents

Introduction

The Netherlands is transitioning towards a new type of society, away from the industrial model based on material growth and consumption at the cost of human and natural capital, towards a circular economy aiming at self-sufficiency with an emphasis on quality and selective growth (Putters, 2023). This was mentioned in the keynote speech at the last presentation of the national monitor Broad Prosperity/SDGs by the chairperson of the Dutch Social and Economic Council, Kim Putters. Climate, biodiversity, digitalization, demographic aging and migration, increased social inequality, discomfort, polarization, political fragmentation, the gap between politics and society, and the lack of executional power and complexity of rules are all problems that have been pushed forward, and that ask for an integral long-term vision (Putters, 2023). These cannot be solved by the government or the market individually, but ask for better collaboration among all levels of governance, the private sector, knowledge institutions, NGOs, and civil society (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020; Putters, 2023).

Broad Prosperity (BP) provides an answer to the question on how to organize this societal transition. Under the concept of BP can be understood three things: (1) it is a conceptual framework that allows policymakers and decisionmakers to consider the (i) long-term impact of policy, (ii) trade-offs between other policy areas, (iii) interconnectedness with other policy areas, and (iv) effect of policy on other policy areas. Additionally, (2) BP is an integral measurement framework, and (3) a tool for making policy that is integral, adaptive and specific to the context in which it is applied, with wellbeing as a goal (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020; Weterings et al., 2022). Although BP can be understood as these three aspects, the focus of this research is on the latter.

Even though the transition to policymaking for BP has been on the agenda of many public institutions since 2018, there is still a lack of knowledge about the implementation of BP as a policymaking process (Weterings et al., 2018, Putters, 2023). Next to a lack of knowledge, there also seems to exist a lot of ambiguity in regards to the application, conceptualization and meaning of BP. It was mentioned by both Kim Putters in his keynote speech and by participants of this research, that the present moment is critical in this transition (Putters, 2023). This is the case because the momentum and priority that is necessary for the transition to BP is present, however it is required that BP becomes applicable for policymakers in order to have this transition succeed. Otherwise, BP risks to become a buzzword, according to participants of this research.

The aim of this research is to overcome the ambiguity around policymaking for BP, and to proposed a comprehensive policymaking process for BP, specifically for regional governments. The regional level was chosen as a scope, as the regional level is where wellbeing is created (OECD, 2014). Aiming to close this gap is done by identifying discrepancies between theory and practice, and to finding answers to these discrepancies.

Therefore, this research is about the institutionalization of BP, and specifically how BP can be applied in policymaking in Dutch regional governments. In order to gain a better understanding of the policymaking process, focus is put on (1) institutional implications of the transition to BP as a way of policymaking, (2) bottlenecks that hinder the implementation of BP, and (3) conditions that are necessary in order to implement a policymaking process for BP. The findings of this research could serve as a blueprint for implementing BP as a way of policymaking for Dutch regions and regional governments (municipalities and provinces), as it is intended to clarify how policymaking processes for BP could be designed. Although BP entails being a goal, being a measurement framework, and being a way of policymaking, the emphasis of this research will be on BP as a goal and way of policymaking.

The research is meant for people that are involved in the application of BP to policymaking, regional political leaders and members of parliament that want to gain a better understanding of what it means to make policy for BP, and academics that are working on knowledge production about BP.

The research is conducted through both a literature review and by interviews with both experts and practitioners. Experts where interviewed based on the role they play in the academic field regarding BP. Practitioners where selected in two Dutch regions that have BP high on the agenda: Friesland and Metropole Region Eindhoven (MRE). These two regions were selected as they both have the transition to BP high on the agenda, and both are different in terms of social, economic and demographic characteristics.

Following the outline of this research, first, a literature review is conducted that consists of two parts. In the first part, the international and macro-level context is depicted. In this part, it is explained how the focus on economic growth and GDP are shifting towards a focus on what is called ‘beyond growth’. This paradigm-shift leads to the question of how to organize an economy based on wellbeing. In the second part of the literature review, it is explained how BP serves as a solution to this question. First, a broader overview of BP is provided after which the focus is put on theory about the policymaking process for BP. Subsequently, a methodologies section is provided, which is followed by the results and discussion. In the results and discussion, bottlenecks to applying BP, and conditions for successful implementation of BP are explained. This leads to a detailed description of the policymaking process for BP.

This research has multiple findings. First, a condition for policymaking for BP, is that everyone that is involved in the policymaking process should be committed to this. The second condition is that BP needs to be institutionalized in order for the transition to be successful. Third, it needs to be accepted that evaluation and justification might be of a more qualitative nature, in order to prove causality between the intervention and the effect. Fourth, there seems to be a discrepancy between the available knowledge in the academic field and what is known or used by practitioners. Finally, this research proposes a comprehensive description of the policymaking process for BP (Figure 4).

Theory part I: GDP, Economic Growth and the Paradigm shift beyond them

In order to understand the development and role of BP within Dutch regional governance, it makes sense to fist get an understanding of the broader, international context of the paradigms around economic measurement frameworks and indicators, and economic policy goals that exist and change. In this section, it is described what role GDP has had in economic olicy, and how it is interconnected or coupled with economic growth policy goals and outcomes. Then, the narrative shifts ‘Beyond GDP’ and ‘Beyond growth’ are explained, which are interconnected through the same mechanism as GDP and economic growth as a policy goal. Finally, the connection is drawn between the Beyond GDP movement and the first developments that have led to the introduction of BP.

GDP and Economic Growth

Gross Domestic Product is an indicator, reflecting the economic activity within a market (Constanza et al., 2014). Often, countries, economic regions or markets are compared, using GDP over the number of citizens, or GDP per capita (Bergh, 2009). For the past seventy years (in 2020), GDP has been a popularly used measure, and the increase of GDP has been one of the main policy goals for many western countries (Bergh, 2009). Therefore, the rest of this section uses GDP as an indicator, and as a policy goal interchangeably, as they are coupled and interconnected.

This was appropriate, since according to the OECD, increasing GDP could be well associated increases in average living standards through signified rising household incomes, raised employment levels, reduced poverty rates, higher government spending on public services through tax receipts, better environmental quality through pollution control, and decreasing inequality (Jacobs, 2020).

The second reason that the increase in GDP has been a dominating policy goal is that ‘what we measure is what we do’, which was emphasized in the paradigm-changing report from the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, or the “Stiglitz-SenFitoussi” Commission (Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi, 2009). Or as Stiglitz, Fitoussi and Durand (2018) put it; “If we measure the wrong thing, we will do the wrong thing. If we don’t measure something, it becomes neglected, as if the problem didn’t exist.”. Therefore, through GDP being a popular indicator, increases in it became a popular policy goal (Bergh, 2009). Therefore, it can be said that statistical indicators cannot be seen separated from policy goals and outcomes (Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi, 2009).

Although GDP has been associated with, and used in relation to measuring societal development, it was not purposed for this end. Already at the time of the development of the modern concept of GDP, its architect Simon Kuznets (1934) warned that GDP is not a measure for welfare. GDP leaves social costs, environmental impacts and income inequality out of scope (Costanza et al., 2014). The following passage from the speech of Robert Kennedy in 1968 outlines well why GDP does not suffice for measuring welfare:

> *“Our Gross National Product […] counts air pollution and cigarette advertising, and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage. It counts special locks for our doors and the jails for the people who break them. […] Yet the gross national product* does not allow for *the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play. […] It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country, it measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.”*

This is also observed by the OECD. Where the increase of GDP was associated to positive societal developments, nowadays the increase of national income also causes significant harm to socio-economic dynamics and the environment (Jacobs, 2020).

First, through the increasing inequality that, since forty years, is positively correlated with economic growth (Alveredo et al., 2018). The concentration of economic capital rises, towards those that already own capital, rather than those who don't (Dao et al., 2017). Through this mechanism, the increase of GDP does not anymore necessarily lead to the decrease of poverty (OECD, 2018).

Second, GDP growth is no longer associated with improvement of wellbeing. The understanding we have of a people's fulfilled life now extends to the experienced security and satisfaction in work; physical and mental health, social, personal and family relationships; social factors like crime and societal trust, and the quality of public services like health and education, to name a few examples (Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi, 2009; Boarini, Kolev & McGregor, 2014; Helliwell, layard & Sachs, 2012). The automatic improvement of these is no longer observed in relation to increased GDP (Jacobs, 2020). In the OECD report Beyond Growth, it is stated that "… these aspects can often be harmed by the ways [economic growth is] generated - particularly for those on lower incomes and in more precarious work, and where private consumption is prioritized over public goods" (Jacobs, 2020). Therefore, only for few people, the rise of GDP is a sufficient measure for their own wellbeing or their view on society's economic progress (Stiglitz, Fitoussi & Durand, 2018; Case & Deaton, 2020). These notions are important, underlying the rest of this research.

Third, economic growth cannot be seen separate from environmental degradation (IPCC, 2022). Next to the exploitation of natural resources and the fossil-dependent economy being unsustainable for the long-term, climate change already now has direct impacts on the livelihoods of people and the environment through air pollution, marine pollution and ecological breakdown. Moreover, climate change causes the risk of a catastrophic damage to our economies and societies if current production and consumption is not changed radically (Case & Deaton, 2020).

There is no simple indicator that encompasses the quality of life and wellbeing of people, which is why by many economists, GDP has also been used as an indicator for societal development (Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi, 2009; Nikolova, 2016). In other words, GDP is used as a proxy for both economic and general prosperity. The aforementioned arguments, however, show the need for a shift of this paradigm. The Beyond GDP movement, that is in search of a better statistical framework for measuring wellbeing and societal development, has marked the beginning of this paradigm shift (Stiglitz, Fitoussi & Durand, 2018). The shifting paradigm away from GDP-increases being the dominating policy goal is often referred to as Beyond Growth (Jacobs, 2020).

Beyond GDP and Beyond Growth

The limitation of GDP and GDP growth as indicator and policy goal that is discussed in the previous section have paved the way for moving Beyond GDP and Beyond Growth. The paradigm shift beyond growth started already 50 years ago with the Club of Rome report called ‘Limits to Growth’ (Meadows, et al., 1972). Since the publication of this report, the paradigm shift is gaining popularity among also settled politicians like the current president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen who stated that: “… a growth model centred on fossil fuels is simply obsolete” (Leyen, 2023). Economists, politicians and public institutions have been searching for an economic model that allows for societies to live within the planetary boundaries[1] (Rockström et

[1] The planetary boundaries are defined critical values across various indicators, that cannot be overshot in order to prevent climate tipping points from materializing (Rockström et al., 2009).

al., 2009). In other words, searching for an economic model that goes ‘Beyond Growth’. There are three main theories about such economic model, being ‘green growth’, ‘steady state economy’ and ‘degrowth’. However the three hypotheses might seem like concrete policy trajectories, at the moment they are rather fruit for the discussion of what might come beyond growth.

In the green growth hypothesis, it is argued that economic growth within the planetary boundaries is possible, by decoupling GDP growth from negative effects such as CO2 emissions (Jänicke, 2012).

The steady state economic theory still takes into account the importance of decoupling economic growth from negative effects of economic activities. However, it leaves behind the desire for a growth-based economy. It is argued that the economic profit should fluctuate around a certain level. With that, also the level of prosperity stays steady, fluctuations aside.

In the degrowth hypothesis, the most important argument is that only (temporally) lowering economic activities will allow for society to function within the planetary boundaries. However important decoupling is, it does not go as far as arguing that it is enough for reaching an economic model that functions within the planetary boundaries. Even if complete decoupling would be possible, it is impossible to decouple fast enough to limit certain planetary thresholds to be overshot, resulting in non-reparable damage to the earth system.

Whichever one of these hypotheses becomes the dominant narrative, the measure that is used for measuring economic progress cannot only be GDP, deriving from the logic in the “Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi” Commission’s report that ‘what we measure is what we do’. For example, order to capture the rate in which the ‘green growth’-based economy is succeeding, more information is needed than purely the economic output in monetary terms, as it for example is also necessary to take into account the planetary pressures that are a result of this economic activity. Only if both are taken into account, the performance of the economic model can be assessed, as the nature of the sustainability of the model is in the success rate of decoupling. The same logic holds up for both the steady state economy and the degrowth economy, as also in these models economic growth is not the core objective, so in order to measure progress a more broad variety of indicators is needed.

As only measuring GDP does not suffice any more in an economic model beyond growth, a joint taskforce of the UNECE, Eurostat and the OECD was set up in 2009 to come up with a new framework for measuring sustainable development. This resulted in the Conference of European Statisticians recommendations on measuring sustainable development (CES Recommendations) (UNECE, 2014), which is also fundamental to the development of the Dutch concept of Broad Prosperity (Raspe, Content & Thissen, 2019). As a conceptual foundation for sustainable development, they use ‘the Brundtland definition’, which takes into account three different dimensions: human well-being of the present generation in one particular country (referred to as “here and now”), the well-being of future generations (“later”) and the well-being of people living in other countries (“elsewhere”) (Brundtland, 1987).

Based on these three dimensions, the recommendation contained two large sets of indicators that serve as example indicators, over 20 themes. The indicators can be sorted using a conceptual characterization and a thematic characterization (see appendix 1). These two ways of characterizing can be used separately or in combination.

Theory part II: The Development of- and Policymaking for Broad Prosperity

Broad Prosperity is an answer to the question on how to organize a decision making process that is meant for increasing wellbeing rather than solely aiming to improve economic performance. The essence of BP is in observing society and the world, taking into account the interrelatedness of societal aspects. It provides a framework and the necessary tools to guide policymakers and decisionmakers to create policy in a complex and unpredictable context, with the increase of wellbeing as a goal. There are three things that can be understood under BP: BP is a goal; BP is a measurement framework of indicators; and BP is a way of making policy. BP as a way of making policy is the way in which BP is applied to- and implemented into policy.

Next to monetary measures and conventional socio-economic indicators, the BP measurement framework aims to quantify aspects of society and the environment in order to make it possible to include these aspects of society into deliberation of a decision-making process. In other words, it provides the lens through which policymakers and decisionmakers can look at policy. In appendix 2, it is visible how this data is visualized in the national BP monitor of 2023, and serves as a tool to monitor progress among indicators in the three dimensions of ‘here and now’, ‘later’ and ‘elsewhere’.

Using BP as a tool for policymaking, it allows policymakers and decision makers to clarify the effects of certain decisions on policy domains that would normally not be associated with the policy domain in which the intervention takes place. This way, it allows the policy- or decision maker to get an insight into the interconnectedness of societal aspects, and specifically consider trade-offs in that are made in policy areas other than the one in which the intervention takes place.

In this section, each of the three aspects of BP are further elaborated upon, however the emphasis is on the policymaking process. First, it is explained how BP has developed until now.

The development of BP

In 2017, the Dutch Planning Bureau for the Physical domain (PBL), Social Cultural Planning Bureau (SCP) and the Central Planning Bureau (CPB) published a policy brief, in which they explored the concept of BP (Dietz et al,. 2017; Raspe, Content & Thissen, 2019). Simultaneously, for the first time, the Dutch Central Statistical Office (CBS) established the first set of indicators for measuring BP in their monitor for BP in 2018 (CBS, 2018).

In their first exploration, the PBL, SCP and CPB focused on what BP as a concept means, which they based on both the Stiglitz report and the CES recommendations (Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi, 2009; UNECE, 2014; Dietz et al., 2017). They established BP as being a politically neutral ‘canvas’ that would showcase a wide variety of values that are held by society, while also taking into account present actions on other geological locations and throughout time (Dietz et al., 2017). Therefore, the conceptualization of BP also follows Brundtland’s definition of sustainable development, approaching it through the dimensions of ‘here and now’, ‘later’ and ‘elsewhere’ (Dietz et al., 2017; Brundtland, 1987). This conceptualization also means that certain values should be warranted different weight in their deliberation.

Next to the conceptualization of BP, the Brundtland dimensions of sustainable development are also adopted in the framework of indicators of BP (see appendix 2), as is established in the first publication of the CBS about BP, the BP monitor 2018 (CBS, 2018). In order to cope with the complexity of wellbeing, the framework of indicators for BP is not an index, but rather a ‘dashboard’ of indicators across all aspects that create wellbeing (appendix 3) (CBS, 2018). This way, detailed information across policy domains remain available to serve decision- and policymakers to be able to consciously deliberate trade-offs between policy domains, consider the impact of decisions on other policy domains and to take the interconnectedness of policy domains into account (CBS, 2018. The measurement framework of BP aims at resembling the wide array of values that have been established in the conceptualization of BP.

The regional scale

The regional scale level is of great importance in the context of BP, as the wellbeing of people is shaped by the characteristics in their neighborhood or of the place they live (OECD, 2014). In 2019, the Dutch Planning Bureau for the Physical domain published a position paper in which they conclude an inherent link between BP and *the region* and regional policy (Raspe, Content & Thissen, 2019). Therefore it's important to both measure the wellbeing of people and to create policy for BP on this level (Horlings & Smits, 2019).

In this research, regional governance is approached as "the space where subnational authorities – provinces, municipalities and regions – come together to make and implement policy, alongside other actors, at other levels" (Groenleer & Hendriks in 2020). These parties can all be seen as a functioning ecosystem. The further implications of the importance of the region to BP are further elaborated upon later in this literature review.

Policymaking for Broad Prosperity

In order to be able to use BP as a tool for policymaking, it is important to understand the role that BP should play in policymaking. Literature about policymaking for BP is not always clear about what tools, mechanisms and theory about policymaking is needed for policymaking for BP. It lacks a clear connection between different societal characteristics that have an effect on BP as an outcome, and therefore have an effect of the needed approach to policymaking for BP. In order to understand why policy for BP requires particular policymaking methods, it is necessary to understand the connections between these societal characteristics, theories about policymaking that seek to cope with these societal characteristics, the policymaking tools that are designed put theories into practice, and lastly how these different tools are combined in the case of policymaking for BP. These relationships are visualized in figure 1.

This section aims to close the ambiguity gap that seems to exist about the aforementioned relationships and ultimately policymaking for BP. This section first explains the societal characteristics of complexity, unpredictability and regional specificity, and their impact on BP as an outcome, as is visible in the first layer of figure 1. Then, it is explained how adaptive policymaking, learning-based policymaking, intersectoral policymaking and participation are theories that are designed to cope with the effects of aforementioned societal characteristics on policymaking, as is visible on layer two of figure 1 (Evenhuis, Weterings & Thissen, 2020; Weterings et al., 2022; Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020; Walker, Rahman & Cave et al., 2001). Then, two existing policy making tools are explained (layer 3 of figure 1). Then, it is explained how a combination all four policymaking theories are related, and together form a nexus in which policymaking for BP finds itself (layer 4 of figure 1). This section follows the visualization in figure 1. In the results section of this research, the policymaking process that is proposed in this section is further specified in the context of regional governance for BP.

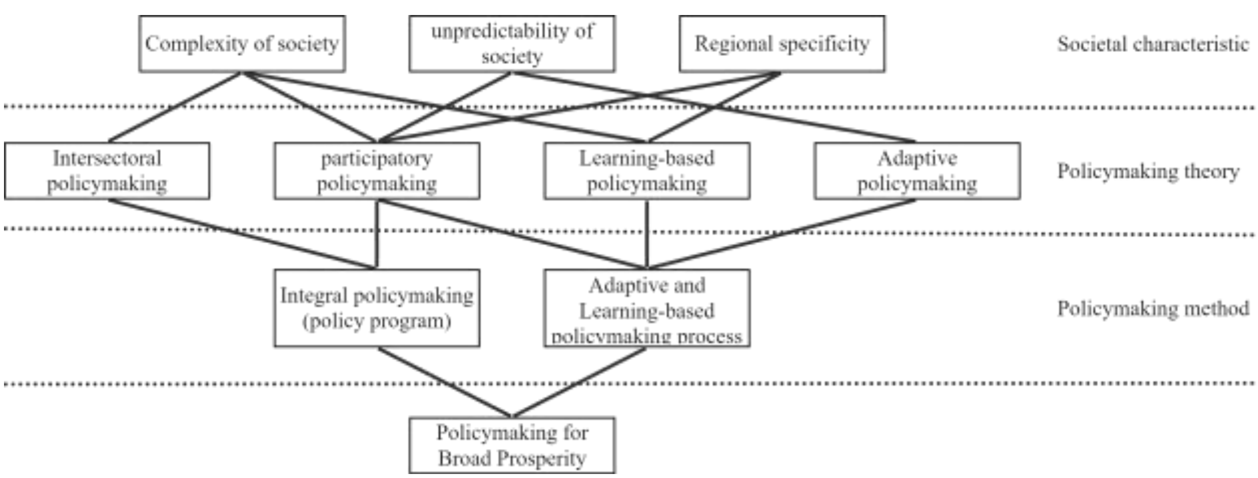

Figure 1: From societal characteristic to policy theory, policymaking method and policymaking for broad prosperity. This figure follows the outline of this section.

The Unpredictable, Complex and Unique Region: Three assumptions about society

Complexity. The word 'broad', in BP refers to approaching the wellbeing of people in a broad sense, taking into account that wellbeing is created through various factors that are interrelated (Weterings et al., 2019). BP as an outcome therefore consists of many aspects, and each of these aspects can be influenced by multiple different societal causes that are also interrelated (Weterings et al., 2022). The interrelatedness of these factors derives from the fact that societal aspects influence each other, or in other words that society is complex. Therefore, influencing one aspect might have an effect on another, positively or negatively. This societal interrelatedness, or complexity should be taken into account, when creating policy that aims to tackle complex tasks, like promoting BP (Weterings et al., 2022). Ways to cope with this complexity are intersectoral policymaking, learning-based policymaking and participatory policymaking (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020).

Thus, in order to cope with the complexity of society and the policy tasks this brings along, policy can be designed to be intersectoral, learning-based and participatory. Later in this section, the learning-based policy program is explained more in dept.

Unpredictability. romoting BP often takes long and societal circumstances may change over time. Therefore, at the beginning of a policy action, it is impossible to know exactly what is needed over the entire duration of a policy to improve regional BP (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020; Weterings et al, 2020). The unpredictability of society is partly a result of the complexity of society, as societal dynamics are not always predicable because of how interlinked they are. On the other hand, society is unpredictable inhearently. A good example is the effect of the covid pandemic on the effectiveness of policies (Weterings et al., 2022). It is therefore desirable to be able to respond to changing circumstances in society (Weterings et al., 2022).

Regional specificity. The wellbeing of people is dependent on the circumstances of the region in which they live, as the ‘daily live’ occurs in their region (Raspe et al., 2019; Evenhuis et a., 2020). Besides, regions vary in their demographic, economic, socio-cultural or environmental characteristics (Weterings et al., 2022). Also the wellbeing of citizens over the variety of BP indicators can be very different among regions (Horlings & Smits, 2019). Moreover, the value that citizens warrant to different aspects of BP differs between regions (Thissen & Content, 2022). Therefore, policy meant for promoting BP, should ideally be specific to the region in which it is applied, as it is regionally dependent what is needed in order to increase BP (Evenhuis et al., 2022).

Four policymaking theories to account for the societal characteristics

Learning-based policymaking. Learning-based policymaking copes with societal complexity and regional specificity. The effect on BP of certain policy instruments is dependent on the region it is applied in. Therefore, a policy that might work for increasing BP in a certain region, might not work in another region. As a result, at the beginning of a policy cycle, the effects of the policy might not be fully known (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020; Morgan, 2019).

Another reason that the effect of policy instruments or actions is often not known at the start of the policymaking process, is that societal aspects influence each other in ways that are not always predictable due to societal complexity. Moreover, the policy itself may influence certain societal dynamics. Because of the uncertainty, unpredictability and interconnectedness of the societal dynamics, also the influence that the policy itself has on certain societal aspects may affect the policy’s effectiveness in ways that are unknown at the start (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020).

In order to cope with this complexity and regional specificity, the policy and policymaking process should be learning-based (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020; Weterings et al., 2022). The way learning-based policymaking can be practiced is explained later in this section.

Intersectoral. Next to coping with societal complexity through learning-based policymaking, it is also necessary to approach policymaking intersectoral (Weterings et al., 2022). As societal aspects are interconnected and influenced by each other, they might also affect each other negatively or positively as a result of a policy intervention. Therefore, policy that is aimed at promoting BP should take into account the interrelatedness of the societal aspects that lead to BP. This specifically means that policy actions that are aimed at promoting BP should combine policy sectors. On the one hand, this is to make sure that policy actions promote each other's effectiveness in coherence. If this is not possible, intersectoral policymaking is necessary to make sure that negative effects of certain policy actions on other policy domains are considered deliberately. Ideally, policy action across policy domains should take place in synergy. This can be organized by the use of policy programs, that will be elaborated upon later in this section.

Adaptive policymaking. Adaptive policymaking embraces uncertainty by using a policymaking process that allows for a changing policy. It is closely connected to the learning-based policymaking process, as the policy and the assumptions that underly it are considered as being initial, and the definition of success is defined as a set of acceptable outcomes (Walker, Rahman & Cave, 2001). The process leaves room for changing the policy and its theory, if the context of the policy changes.

Participation. Participation might strengthen all three of the aforementioned theories about policymaking in their practice (Arnstein, 1969;Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020). Besides, it might cope with regional specificity directly as well. As citizens warrant different values to the different BP aspects among regions, it is important to define the policy goal together with citizens and other parties (Weterings et al., 2022). This way, the policy connects as close as possible to the actions that are needed to increase BP.

Next, participation may also help coping with societal complexity. Different societal dynamics may be better understood by citizens, knowledge institutions, private organizations, interest groups or other representatives as they can be part of the societal dynamics themselves, or have experience working within the context of complex interdependent aspects of society (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020). Involving participants can be done in order to increase the quality of the initial assumptions that are the base of the (learning-based and intersectoral) policy, and they can even execute parts of the policy (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020).

Participation might also strengthen learning-based policymaking. Participants can serve in increasing the quality of evaluating the initial assumptions that underly the policy, through for example providing feedback on the effectiveness of the policy during its functioning (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020). This can be done by citizens if they are the target group, or by other parties if the evaluation is benefited by expert opinions. If participants are consulted throughout the policy duration, the policy will end up fitting better to the region, and will therefore be more effective for increasing BP (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020).

Adaptive policy also is improved through participation. In the adaptive policymaking process, it is important that certain societal characteristics are monitored so that if they surpass a critical value, the policy is adapted. However, since the context of the policy that is monitored can be complex, this mechanism is more effective if participants are involved, as they might be able to signal changes in relevant aspects more adequately and effectively (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020).

Next to increasing the quality of the policy through these ways, involvement of non-governmental parties may also increase political trust, more support for the policy and a feeling of co-ownership (Blamey & Mackenzie, 2007). This leads to more effectiveness and more political and societal support (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020; Weterings et al., 2022).

Adaptive, Learning-based and Integral Policymaking

In the previous part of this section, it is described how participatory, intersectoral, adaptive and learning-based policymaking can help to cope with the societal characteristics of complexity, uncertainty and regional specificity. In this part, it is explained how the theories come together in the case of policymaking for BP (Figure 2). For policymakers, learning-based and adaptive policymaking can be combined with a relatively low threshold, as both consist of multiple phases in which policy is evaluated and improved or changed (Walker, Rahman & Cave, 2001; Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020).

Intersectoral policymaking can be seen as a separate tool for policymaking. However, in the case of policymaking for BP it is combined (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020). A tool for intersectoral policymaking is the policy program (Broekhoven, & Buuren 2020; Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020). The policy program, combined with participation and the use of the BP framework with its dimensions of ‘here and now’, ‘later’ and ‘elsewhere’, make for an integral policymaking tool.

However the policy program is not always used, for example not for infrastructural projects, the rest of this research still assumes that it is used, to serve the understandability and brevity of the research. For this same purpose, in the rest of this research, integral, adaptive and learning-based policymaking are grouped and used together as a tool.

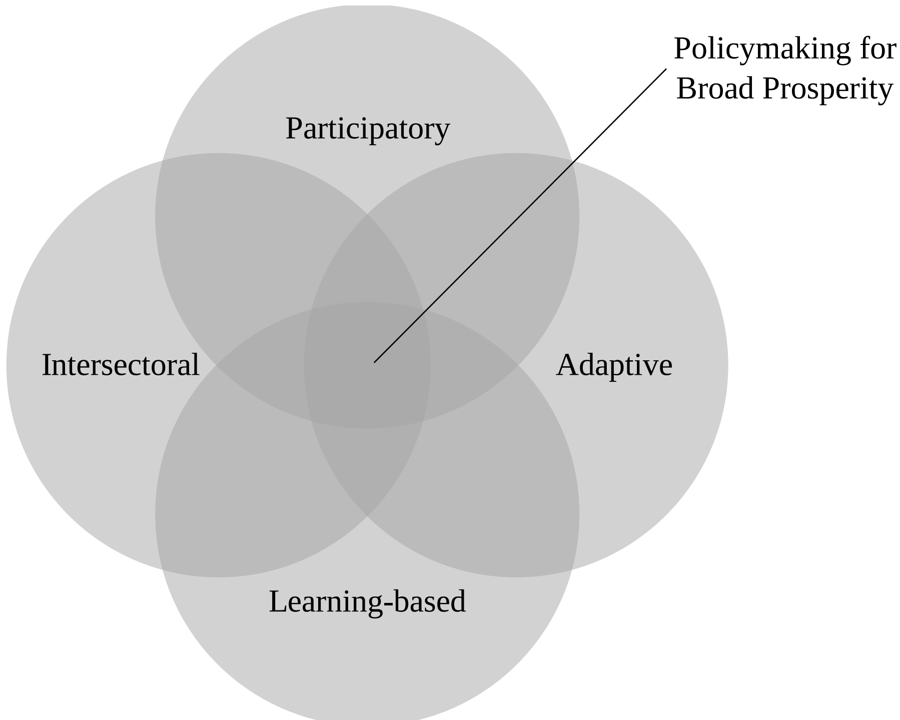

Figure 2: Policymaking for Broad Prosperity: a nexus of four theories (self-created)

Limitations and institutional barriers to policymaking for Broad Prosperity

These ways of making policy know barriers that stand in the way of implementation (Evenhuis, Weterings & Thissen, 2020). The main barrier is the sectoral organization of the governmental organization. This complicates intersectoral policymaking, as justification procedure, budgets and working procedures are often organized within one sector (Evenhuis, Weterings & Thissen, 2020). Intersectoral policy asks for coordination among departments, which can take time and effort. This is also the case for participation, as more people are involved in the initial creation of the policy. Moreover, justification also changes as a result of the dynamic nature of both learning-based as well as adaptive policymaking (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020). These limitations also be covered later in the results section of this research.

Methodologies & Research framework

Research design

The goal of this research is to close the ambiguity gap around policymaking for BP for regional institutions, for implementing BP as a way of policymaking on the regional level. In order to do this, regional institutions are looked at through the lens of regional ecosystems in the context of regional governance (Groenleer & Hendriks, 2020), and analyzed using a case study. Two Dutch regional ecosystems (Friesland and Metropole Region Eindhoven) where identified that have had BP high on their agenda and, that compared to other regions, are relatively far in the development of BP as a goal and means within the region and its institutions. The lessons that could be learned from these two regions, are then intended to be transferred into lessons that can be learned in order to contribute to the aim of this research.

This research is conducted using mixed-methods. Following the outline of this research, first a literature review was conducted in order to combine the concepts and theories that are used in this research. Then, both regions of the case study are quantitatively described, in order to contextualize the qualitative part of the research. After the quantitative description of both regions, a qualitative case study is conducted, in order to test hypotheses that resulted from the literature review, gain a deeper understanding of influence of the transition to BP on the role of institutions within the regional ecosystem, gain a deeper understanding of the institutional barriers and implications of the transition to BP, and gain a deeper understanding of the conditions that are necessary for the transition to BP.

Ethical approval

The design and proposal of this research have been subject to the review of the ethics committee of the University of Groningen, Campus Fryslân.

The case study

In order to adhere to the aim of this research, a case study is executed. The chosen case study consist of the two regions of Friesland and Metropole Region Eindhoven (MRE). Both regions have had BP high on the agenda (Provincie Fryslân, 2019; Metropoolregio Eindhoven, 2023), and are relatively far in their development regarding BP. For the selection and demarcation of the regions, the approach of regional ecosystems by Groenleer & Hendriks will be used. They defined this as “the space where subnational authorities – provinces, municipalities and regions – come together to make and implement policy, alongside other actors, at other levels“. Figure 3 (the most northern marked region being Friesland, the most southern marked region being MRE) visualized the amount of corporation agreements between regional government. In this figure, it is visible how these two areas form regions in the sense of the aforementioned definition.

Next to Friesland and MRE both having BP high on the agenda, they also are interesting to compare as MRE is economically more prosperous than Friesland, whereas Friesland is the happiest region of the EU (appendix 4). This is coined to be the Frisian paradox.

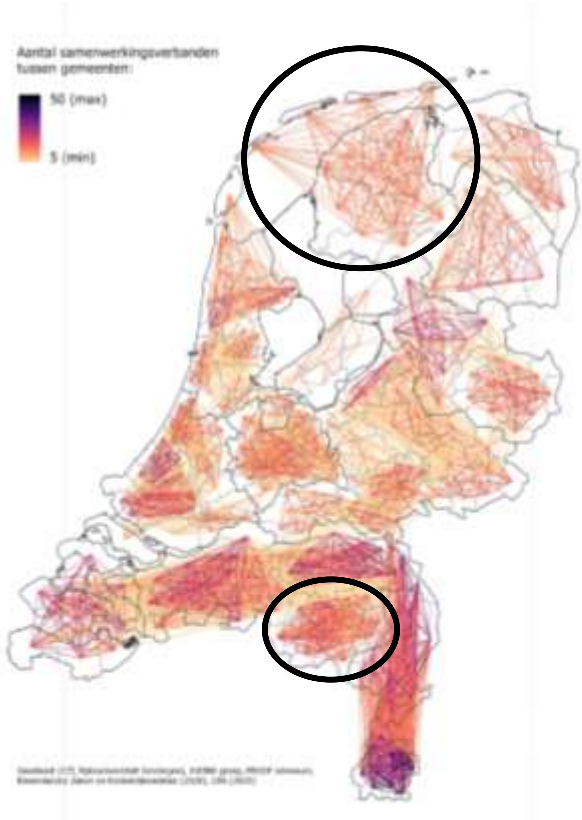

Figure 3: Regional ecosystems visualized through municipal partnerships (Berenschot, n.d.)

The comparative case study consists of Friesland and Metropole Region Eindhoven (MRE).

Participants

For the qualitative comparative case study, six interviews were conducted. Interviewees where selected through purposive sampling. The group of interviewees existed out of two civil servants, one in each region, two people in leadership/strategic positions in strategic regional partnership-organizations, one in each region, and two experts from academia. The civil servants and people in leadership and strategic positions where recruited in the two regions that were part of the comparative case study, through a gate keeper in both regions. Academic experts where selected based on their expertise and dominant role in the field. Five participants where male, one participant was female and all where educated on the university level. At the start of the research, it was intended to interview at least two academic experts and 3 people form each region, however due to logistic reasons this number was not reached.

Interviews

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured set of questions. An identical set of interview questions was used for academic experts, and an identical of interview questions was used for interviewees from the regions in comparative case study. The set contained approximately 29 all open questions (appendix 5), for the academic expert interviews, and approximately 35 questions (appendix 6) for the interviews with participants in the regions of the case study. The interview questions are based on the research questions and literature review. The questions that where covered where sorted per theme, being the context and introduction of BP, the BP policymaking process, institutional implications and development and the role of institutions in the region. An example of a question was: “What are institutional barriers for implementing BP for regional governments?”. At the end of the interview, interviewees were facilitated to bring in any information or comment they felt the need to. Interviews were recorded and notes were taken simultaneously by the interviewer. The audio records were later used for analyzing the qualitative data that was collected.

Results and Discussion

Now follows a section in which results are presented, that follow from the interviewed participants. First, conditions that are necessary for the implementation of BP are presented, alongside with barriers that stand in the way of the implementation of BP. This combination is made, as some barriers that are solved, are conditions simultaneously. Finally, a policymaking process is proposed, based on the literature reviews, results from participants and based on two existing policy making theories: those of Walker, Rahman & Cave (2001) and Weterings & Verwoerd (2020). All information that is mentioned in this section until the description of the policymaking process, is retrieved from participants, unless otherwise mentioned.

Importance and context

Among participants, the importance of creating policy for BP is clear. When asked about this importance, participants linked back to the problem of GDP-focussed policy, and brought forward that BP is a solution that answers the question of how an economy beyond extraction- and exploitation-based growth can be organized. Participants have also stress that BP is explicitly not one of many innovations that take, and have taken place in the public sector. They claimed that BP is a solution that the majority of academia and politicians agree on, as it provides a politically neutral frame in which policy can be made along the aforementioned BP indicators in their dimensions of ‘here and now’, ‘later’ and ‘elsewhere’. Participants claim to trust that BP could well be a way out of the crises we are in, including the decreasing trust in public institutions.

However, participants have also put forward the warning that it is a risk that if BP does not soon becomes applicable, it might become a soleless buzzword that is misused in order for politicians, decisionmakers and policymakers to push their personal agenda. The current phase in which the development of BP is now, leaves room for a lot of ambiguity. When asked, participants that are occupied with making policymaking for BP applicable declared that they are not provided with the tools that they need, and that knowledge about how to create policy for BP does not suffice for application. Examples of unclarity are how and where the framework of indicators relate with the policymaking process, how evaluation in an adaptive learning-based policy process works and how and when to involve decisionmakers. Therefore, the urgency for closing this ambiguity gap is evident, which is the goal of this research.

Institutionalization and seriousness as a condition

Next to regional context and conditions, it is crucial to also understand conditions and practices that are necessary on the institutional level. In this regard, the first major condition that was put forward by multiple participants, is that the transition to policymaking for BP should be taken 'serious'. It needs to move beyond a project and really be institutionalized throughout the whole organization, throughout departments, policy sectors and layers of the organization. Any case in which BP ends up in a silo or project that runs within one department or on one layer of the organization would be inherently against the purpose of BP, as "it [BP] should get into every fibre of the organization", according to participants.

The institutionalization of BP can take multiple forms, which strengthen each other. First, it can, and according to participants *should*, be included in the coalition agreement in order to give a fundament for the importance of BP that can be referred back to throughout the political term. This is also where a barrier could arise: if the political mandate for the urgency of BP is lacking. According to participants, when this occurs, a solution might be to explain the necessity of BP to politicians. Secondly, if BP is agreed upon in the coalition agreement, both the political leadership of the concerning government and its parliament have shown commitment to making policy using the methods that associate with BP. This commitment is important, and should be present at all those involved in the policymaking process, which is explained later in this results section.

A risk that sometimes stands in the way of taking BP serious by deliberately weighing decisions, is the presence of agitation in the public organization. BP requires 'a step back', in order to oversee the potential results and implications of certain policy. It takes effort to 'do your homework': acquire information about implications on other policy areas; get an overview of the interconnectedness of the policy domain(s) in which the intervention is needed; involve participants into the policy process; and deliberately weigh trade-offs and implications on other policy areas. However, for the success of BP, this is crucial, according to participants.

Something else that might stand in the way of creating policy for BP is the four-year electoral cycle hindering a long-term perspective on policymaking. BP inherently means taking into account the third dimension of the framework 'later' (CBS, 2018). Therefore, in order to create policy for BP, this short term should be overlooked. A way of doing this that has been brought up by participants is through the creation of longer term funds that are allocated for a certain goal, but have not been designated to certain projects or investments. As this research focusses on the policymaking practices, this aspect of institutionalization went beyond the scope of this research and will therefore not be further elaborated. The institutionalization of BP through the use of its policymaking process however will be further explained later in this results section.

Conditions in the public institution

Sectoral organization

Conventional policymaking processes are organized in the silos of policy areas, which come together at the political leadership where a holistic approach is provided. This is a barrier for policymaking for BP, as the policy itself needs to be intersectoral.

Therefore, in the case of BP, a broader intersectoral approach already takes place lower in the organization. This change might have the result that policy proposals lower in the organization already requires policy areas to be weighed off to each other. As it is the role of the political leadership to deliberate on trade-offs between policy areas, it is for this reason that also the political leadership needs to be committed to policymaking for BP, as they need to be involved earlier in the process as it is their role to deliberate on trade-offs and interests. This change to the policymaking process is further explained later in this results section. Furthermore, because of the holistic deliberation of interests and trade-offs lower in the organization, the political leadership should accept that the policy proposals they receive are intersectoral in nature. By one of the participants, it was even brought up that the until now uncontested given of having a specific alderperson or regional minister for a certain set of policy areas is still desirable if the transition of BP proceeds.

On the other hand, participants also brought up practices that can be implemented without changing the organization structure. “Sectors are necessary because there will aways be borders between policy areas, however we shouldn’t build walls between departments”, said one participant. In order to overcome these ‘walls’, people from different policy areas should structurally meet, in order to promote intersectoral thought and cross-pollination, in order to reach intersectoral solutions for policies. Another participant proposed to organize communications structures is by organizing knowledge in ‘communities of expertise’, within the organisation. These can be formal or informal entities within the organization in which people can share knowledge with each other that cross policy areas.

Lastly, the network of the policymaker plays a bigger role in policymaking for BP, compared to a conventional policymaking method. In order to prepare information about implications on a broader set of indicators, information of different natures is required. It was brought up by participants that pragmatically, a way to acquire this information is through the input of external parties, interest groups or citizens, for which the network of the policymaker is “essential”. Moreover, also the internal network within the organization is of increased importance, as “… you need to efficiently acquire information about other policy areas in order to create policy that is intersectoral.”

commitment of those involved

An important condition is that everyone that is involved in policymaking should be committed to BP. Starting with the policymakers and civil servants, they should be committed as this requires a change of practice that might take more effort. Their role becomes also more facilitating to acquire information and interests about a wider set of policy areas than originally.

The first reason that the political leadership should be committed to BP is described in the previous section. The second reason, that the political leadership needs to be committed, as policymaking for BP means that different aspects of BP need to be deliberately weighed off to each other while knowing all of the positive or negative effects the policy has on other policy domains. These decisions might be difficult or according to participants, when information about impacts on other policy domains is made available, political decisions might not fit to the political agenda of the politician or its party. Furthermore, making intersectoral decisions might mean that policy domains of college politicians might get priority in a certain case, which can have implications on personal dynamics or dynamics within the leadership.

For members of the regional parliament, the same implications can be expected as for the aforementioned. However, policymaking for BP might also require a different way of evaluation and justification which is relevant for the controlling tasks of parliament, which is why commitment among members of parliament is extra important. The implications on the justification of policy are further explained later in this results section. Secondly, when policy is initiated in the regional parliament, the framework of the proposal should already be defined in the framework of BP. This is necessary for policymakers to be able to take the freedom and initiative to include indicators, participants and interests that exceed the policy area(s) in which the core of the policy falls, but are interconnected to it.

Thus, initiative to create policy for BP should come from all of those involved. Ideally, already in the formulation of the coalition agreement, ways of concretization of BP should be designed and included to the extent possible. Moreover, according to participants, it is evident that policymaking for BP should get 'into every fibre of the organization'.

Knowledge gap between knowledge institutions and civil servants

When participants that are occupied with applying theory about BP into policy or policymaking processes, are asked about barriers that that exist for implementing policymaking for BP, they signal a lack of knowledge or available literature on the application of BP. However, when academic participants were confronted with this observation, they did not recognize a lack of available knowledge in the field. This knowledge gap specifically exists around the policymaking process and its application. This might have multiple reasons.

First, the knowledge that is available might not be as concrete as is desired by policymakers in decentral governments. A reason that was brought forward by one of the academic participants was that this might be a result of the more abstract nature of knowledge institutions that are producing knowledge about BP. As a solution, they mentioned that policymakers should be involved in knowledge production if this is not the case already.

Second, it was brought forward that policymakers cannot keep track of all theory that is available or published. A solution that was put forward, is the use of internal communication channels or more informal ways of communicating. The National Network BP might also solve part of this problem, as it is intended to spread the knowledge that is available.

Another goal of the National Network BP, is the coordinated production of new knowledge about BP. This would solve a third reason, which could be that the necessary information actually is not available.

This knowledge gap is also described in an essay by Groenleer (2022), reflecting on the ways in which policymaking for BP has been applied in the region deals. He also concludes a that on paper, the policymaking processes for BP are attractive but in practice hard to implement. He emphasizes the value of peer-to-peer learning among regions and government institutions, like the National Network intends to do.

Trust

According to participants, the transition to policymaking for BP evokes a change in the dynamic between policymakers, political leadership and the regional parliament. Specifically, evaluation and justification becomes more qualitative and subjective. Also, as interdisciplinary decisions need to be made earlier in the decision-making process, the dynamic between the policial leadership and the policymakers changes. Moreover, policymaking for BP asks for making trade-offs between policy areas, and between the short- and long term.

It was mentioned by participants, that trust suffers from uncertainty. This trust is needed for nuance and compromise, and in order to make trade-offs. It was mentioned, that when trust lacks, political dynamics rise that hinder the practices that are needed for policymaking for BP. However, uncertainty is inherently part of policymaking for BP, as it is learning-based (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020).

As a solution, participants put forward that trust could be increased if discussions about the deliberation of policy options can be done in private, without the necessity for making decisions right away, and when the narrative of the discussion is based on shared long-term values.

The policymaking process

In this part of the results and discussion, a policy process is proposed that takes into account both the theory that is described in the literature review and the results that have been gathered from participants. It is based on two theoretical frameworks, namely the one proposed by Walker, Rahman & Cave (2001) and the one proposed by Weterings & Verwoerd (2020). Both theories are combined, and complemented with results from participants of this research. This way it aims to account for as many of the lessons that are learned about policymaking for BP so far.

The policy process that is described is meant for policy ambitions that relate to increasing BP as a goal. On the other hand, it can also be applied to for example infrastructural projects that are less complex in nature. Therefore, the process is described with the use of policy programs, however it can used for a variety of policy ambitions. Therefore, it is also not intended as a one-size-fits-all solution, but rather a complete overview of steps that can be taken if it benefits the policy. The policymaking process is visualized in figure 4.

The process combines learning-based, intersectoral, participatory and adaptive policymaking, in order to cope with regional specificity, societal complexity and societal unpredictability. The process consists of four steps that are intended to be executed sequentially, however some steps are executed parallel to each other.

In the first step, the initial policy ambition is defined. Following, the policy program is designed based on which the definition of success is formulated. This paves the way for step 3, in

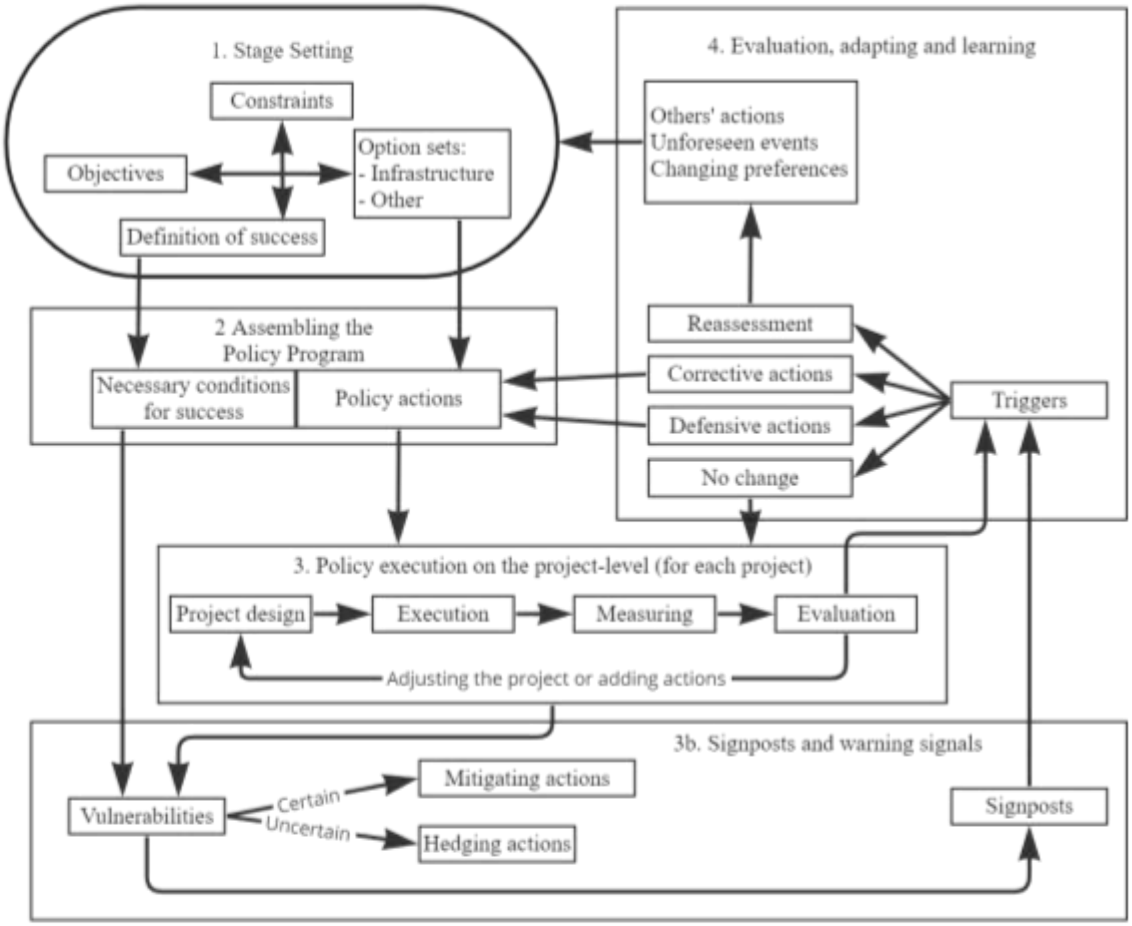

Figure 4: Policymaking process for Broad Prosperity (self-created based on Walker, Rahman & Cave, 2001; Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020)

which the individual projects are shaped. Parallel to this, the resilience for the policy is increased through the identification of vulnerabilities and the installation of learning mechanisms. Fourth, an evaluation mechanism is executed through which the learning mechanism is put into practice.

Step 1: Setting the stage and scoping the program ambition.

In order to design the policy program, it is necessary to set the scope the ambition(s) and goal(s) of the policy program, and create an initial policy theory[2] (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020; Walker, Rahman &s Cave, 2001). As the policy process is adaptive and learning-based, it makes use of a dynamic policy theory, rather than a static one. This means that the policy theory might be changed or developed throughout the duration of the policy execution, and can therefore respond to both societal developments, societal changes, and also to lessons that have been learned so far about the effect of the policy in its context. Setting the ambition(s) and goal(s) of the policy program should be done through the lens of the BP indicators (according to participants). Therefore, the integrality and crossing of policy domains starts already in this step of the process, at the level of policymakers (according to participants). Creating the policy ambition(s), goal(s) and initial policy theory are done in two stages, that might take place parallel to each other. In this step, the following two questions are central: 'What is the difference between the current situation and the desired situation?', and 'What should the policy program change in this regards, for whom and when?'. In other words, these are the defining of the policy task, and the policy ambition (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020)

On the one hand, depending on the nature of the policy, it might be favourable to involve parties from the (regional) triple-helix[3], citizens, the target group or NGOs/interest groups (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020; according to participants). This process is necessary to gain an understanding about the extend in which the program ambition is interconnected with other policy areas or complex societal dynamics, whether it has negative or positive effects on other policy

[2] The policy theory exists of all assumptions about the policy that are held by all different involved stakeholders. This includes their view on the policy task, the ambition or goal of the policy and the way this should be monitored (Hoogerwerf, 1989; Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020)
[3] The triple helix is a term for the combination of the public sector, private sector and knowledge institutions.

domains or BP indicators, what policy theory might work in the regional context, and what values citizens, parties or interest groups adhere to certain BP indicators (SOURCE). Additional advantages of involving external parties in this step of the process, are that potential differences in perspectives among participants become clear early on in the policy process (Verwoerd & Weterings, 2020). Moreover, the insights of participants increase the change that the policy becomes coherent, leading to more effectiveness and political support (Verwoerd & Weterings, 2020; Busscher, 2014). Next to involvement in the design of the policy, external parties may even partly execute the policy, in order to increase its effectiveness and integrality (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020).

On the other hand, this stage is inherently normative as the policy ambition, objectives and its definition of success is formulated in this step (Walker, Rahman & Cave, 2001; Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020). Therefore, it is important to involve the political leadership[4] and the regional parliament[5] in this step (according to participants). The knowledge that is gathered in the first step of setting the stage should presented in form of different option sets or policy ambition alternatives. As a result of the early involvement of the political leadership and regional parliament, the risk that political decisions are being made by policymakers is being avoided. Additionally, this might make the justification of policy outcomes easier, as is described later in this section.

Results of this step are an initial policy theory, the ambition(s) and goal(s) of the policy program and a definition of success (Walker, Rahman & Cave, 2001; Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020).

[4] The political leadership of municipalities are Alderpersons (Dutch: Wethouders). The political leadership in provinces are Regional Ministers (Dutch: Gedeputeerde Staten).
[5] The regional parliament of municipalities is the Municipal Council (Dutch: Gemeenteraad). The regional parliament in provinces is the Provincial Council (Dutch: Provinciale Staten)

Step 2: Setting up the policy program

Based on the program ambition(s), goal(s) and initial policy theory, the approach of the policy program can be designed. The set-up of the program is centred around the question: 'What is needed to change from the current situation, to the desired situation that is described in the program ambition?'. In order to answer this question, it is needed to formulate ideas and about the cause of problems or other aspects of the current situation (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020). Based on the answer, a specification of a promising policy can be formulated, and the conditions that are needed for success can be identified (Walker, Rahman & Cave, 2001). The conditions, combined with a definition of success from the previous step can serve as a warning

However, as policy is supposed to be adaptive and learning-based, this is explicitly not meant to determine the only possible approach. Rather, in this step it is meant to design a thoughtful and coherent approach, based on factors that are known, like for example scientific research on the regional economy, knowledge about the social cohesion and structures, knowledge about the physical domain, experience from previous policies, or by acquiring input from the target group or interest groups (Verwoerd & Weterings, 2020).

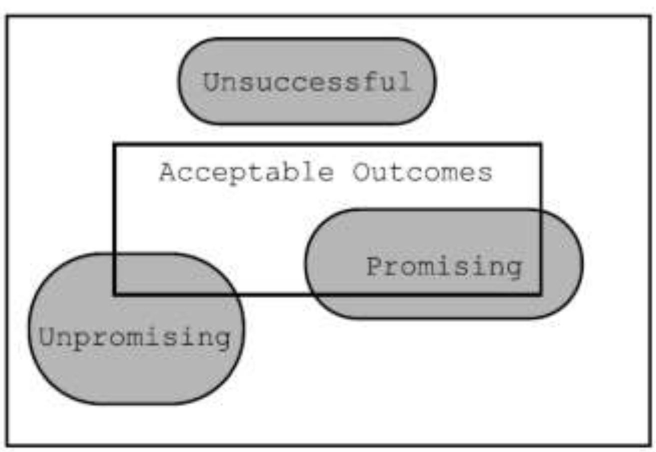

Figure 5: Judging acceptability by sets of failures and successes (Walker, Rahman & Cave, 2001)

Because the outcome of policy is uncertain, the outcomes result of the policy will be a lottery. Therefore, the definitions of success and failure must be defined in terms of sets of possible outcomes that can be classified by acceptable or unacceptable (Walker, Rahman & Cave, 2001). This is visualized in figure 5.

As this step also contains deliberation and weighing of different policy areas, the political leadership should also be involved in this step, as these are political decisions.

Step 3a: Project design, -execution, -monitoring and -evaluation

The policy is executed on the project level. In this step of the process, the policy becomes as concrete as the level on which specific instruments and activities are defined, and what capacity and resources are available and appointed for the use or execution of these instruments and activities (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020). This is based on the necessary conditions for success and framework of the program (Walker, Rahman & Cave, 2001). As the policy is adaptive and learning-based, this step is also about periodically and structurally evaluating and improving the policy during its execution (ex-durante). Therefore, the policy program exists of phases, in between each of which an evaluation and improvement cycle is executed on the project level.

> *"This way, it becomes clear under what conditions the policy theory applies, for whom the theory does or does not apply and why this is the case. As the policy progresses, the policy gets increasingly geared to the region-specific problems and context".*
>
> (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020)

On the project-level, ex-durante evaluation exists of three steps. First, it is judged whether the policy actions have the expected outcome. Then, these insights are reflected upon in light of the initial policy theory. This reflection ideally happens together with as many of the parties that were involved in the process of creating the initial policy theory. In the third step, wrong assumptions in the policy theory are being adjusted and in turn, policy gets adjusted based on the renewed assumptions. On the project-level, three things can happen; (1) the project can stop, the (2) project can continue, possibly with changes, or (3) a new project is desired and has to start in order to reach the program ambition.

Through this mechanism, the policy is adaptive and constantly improving, based on learnings that are gathered throughout the process. As the outcome of the policy program is based on the outcomes of all individual projects, the policy program also improves a whole. As a result, the policy becomes resilient to the complexity of society, regional dependence, societal developments and changes, a changing context, and changes in the target group that are a result of the policy actions themselves.

Step 3b: Vulnerabilities, signposts, and triggers

Simultaneous to step 3a, a mechanism is instated that serves the resilience and adaptability of the policy. This consists of two analyses: the identification of vulnerabilities, and the translation of the necessary conditions for success into signposts (Walker, Rahman & Cave, 2001).

Identified vulnerabilities are identified in order to have an idea of aspects of the policy that can lead to a reduced acceptance or a lower chance of success. As a response to identified vulnerabilities that are certain, mitigating actions can be developed that can be put in place immediately. For uncertain vulnerabilities, hedging actions can be developed that, if the risk occurs, diversify or soften its affects.

The second analysis, is the translation of the combination of conditions for- and definition of success (Step 2) into signposts. These signposts are aspects of the policy, policy area, target group or specific societal aspects that should be monitored. This is necessary in order to be certain that the policy theory remains fitting, the implementation is proceeding according to schedule and expectations, and that necessary policy corrections or additional actions are taken in a timely and effective manner (Walker, Rahman & Cave, 2001). Following up on the establishment of signposts, in this step, triggers should be defined that represent the critical levels of the aspects that are monitored in the signposts. A signpost can also be the duration of the project, and therefore evaluation can be triggered after a certain duration (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020).

Step 4: Program evaluation

On the program-level, it is important that all projects are sufficient for reaching the program ambition, individually and in their collectiveness (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020). Similar to the program-level, evaluating this should be done in every phase of the duration of the policy program. In evaluating the program as a whole, the central questions are whether the projects are well enough tuned in with each other, whether there is enough synergy between the projects, and whether there are gaps in the program that are overseen. A response to this, for increasing the effectivity of the program can be to change the set-up of the program by for example changing the coordination between- and integration of projects, or to involve other parties.

Thus, within a policy program, evaluations on the project-level are related to evaluations on the program-level. Whereas insights from project-evaluation influences the composition of the program, influence insights from the program-evaluation the choice and content of individual projects. Simultaneously, program-evaluation is impossible without project evaluation, as the effectiveness of the program is dependent on the outcomes of the projects.

Also in this step of the policy process, participants can be involved in order to get a better understanding of the effect and success of the policy. Responses to evaluation can be reassessment of de fundament of the policy and its policy theory, corrective or defensive actions on the program level, or no change (Walker, Rahman & Cave, 2001).

Evaluation and quantifiability

Participants pointed out that they experience a lack of control instruments. Specifically, they signal that some of the indicators they want to measure in order to monitor the progress of BP or a specific policy are hardly or not at all quantifiable. Moreover, as society is complex, the causality between the policy and a societal effect is not always provable as there are more influences to the target group than solely the policy. The lack of quantifiability and proof of causality make both evaluation and justification harder. Therefore, it is proposed both in literature and by participants to focus evaluation, monitoring and justification more qualitatively, and focussed on the development of the policy theory and policy process.

First, both in literature and by participants, a way to justify was proposed, which is through explaining the development of the policy theory to the one that the policy is justified to (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020). This way, the ones that the policy is justified to can get an idea of why certain decisions are made and why the intervention was designed the way it was. In

Second, both in literature and by participants it was proposed to involve expert participants or participants from the target group in order to get a better understanding of the effectiveness of the policy (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020). Participants from the target group of the policy might have a better ability to understand the effectiveness as they can explain their motives for certain behaviour or explain the reason for societal change. This can be done through surveys or interviews.

Overall, because of the complexity and unquantifiability of the BP indicators and goals that are set by the policymaker, a solution that is proposed by participants is to evaluate, monitor and justify qualitatively. Especially if the target group was involved in the creation of the policy, the policymaker has a close enough understanding and access to the target group in order to use the information of participants in the evaluation and justification (Hassink et al., 2012). If this is done among multiple regions and on a large enough scale, later it might be possible to still acquire quantitative data from this way of evaluating.

As this way of justification changes towards a more qualitative nature, the regional members of parliament and political leadership have to be committed to making policy for BP. As participants brough up, this might require more freedom for the policymaking process and trust from all that are involved in the policymaking process. A way to promote trust is by creating transparency into the policymaking process and by involving both members of parliament as well as the political leadership in the policymaking process.

Conclusion

This research centred around closing the ambiguity gap that exists between the conceptualization of Broad Prosperity (BP), and the application of BP in policy. This way, it is intended to provide clarity in why the policymaking process for BP is designed the way it is, and how it should function. For this purpose, first a literature review was conducted to provide (1) a clear understanding of why the transition to BP is necessary, and (2) to clearly outline what knowledge and theory already exists about BP and its policymaking process.

BP is the answer to the question of how to organize an economy Beyond Growth. It provides a framework that allows policymakers and decisionmakers to look at policy through a broad set of indicators, that represent values that make ‘living life worthwhile’, in the present moment, in the future and in other geological locations (CBS, 2018). Under BP, three things can be understood: (1) a goal, (2) a measurement framework and (3) a way of policymaking. The focus of this research was on the application of BP in policymaking. Policymaking for BP should take place on the regional level, as this is the level where wellbeing is created (OECD, 2014).

In the literature review, three main societal aspects where identified, that influence the way in which a policymaking process for BP is designed: (1) societal complexity, (2) societal uncertainty, and (3) Regional specificity (Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020; Weterings et al., 2022) . In order to cope with these societal characteristics the best way, policymaking should be (1) adaptive, (2) learning-based, (3) intersectoral, and (4) participatory (figure 2). The relations between the societal characteristics and ways of making policy are interconnected, and visualized in figure 1.

For the results and discussion, interviews were conducted with both academic experts and policymaking practitioners, in order to gain an understanding of (1) institutional implications that result from the transition to BP, (2) barriers that stand in the way of applying BP in policymaking, and (3) conditions that are necessary in order for BP to be applied to policymaking. Practitioners in the regions of Friesland and Metropole Region Eindhoven were interviewed, as these regions have the transition to BP high on the agenda, and differ from each other in social, economic and demographic trends. The most important conditions and findings are listed here.

First, the transition to policymaking for BP requires that it is committed to by everyone that is involved in the policymaking process. Policymaking for BP is different from conventional policymaking in for example its intersectoral, uncertain and learning-based nature. This requires different practices from both civil servants, the political leadership and regional members of parliament.

Second, the transition to BP should be taken seriously, by institutionalizing it and carrying the consequences from results that are different than in the conventional policymaking process. Institutionalization should take place by, for example, formulating the importance and trajectory of the transition to BP in the coalition agreement of the concerning government, or by approaching all policy through the framework of BP, taking their interconnectedness of policy domains into account.

Third, it should be accepted that evaluation and justification has to done qualitatively for some indicators or evaluation questions. Through qualitative evaluation, causality of policy interventions and their effects can be better understood and proved. Furthermore, qualitative justification makes justification of policy with a dynamic policy theory easier, as is the case in learning-based and adaptive policymaking.

Fourth, there seems to be a gap between what is known about policymaking for BP in (academic) literature and by academic experts, and what is know about policymaking for BP by practitioners that are occupied with applying BP in policymaking. Practitioners signal a lack of applicable tools that could be used in policymaking processes for BP, and that there is no clear and shared understanding of what BP means for policymaking. This gap could be explained by the level of abstract or lack of applicability of academic literature about the topic. Otherwise, there might be a barrier in knowledge transfer. A solution to this gap might be the involvement of practitioners in knowledge production.

Finally, a policymaking process was designed based the literature review, two existing theories (Walker, Rahman & Cave, 2001; Weterings & Verwoerd, 2020), and results from interviews (figure 4). The policymaking process takes into account the four policymaking theories that are described previously, and aims to provide a comprehensive overview of BP could be applied into policymaking.

The potential of this research was limited by multiple factors. First, the magnitude of the project was limited, which resulted in the limited amount of interviewees that could be involved. Moreover, participants were only recruited in two regions. Both the lack of participants and regions might have an effect on the transferability and generalizability of findings to other regions, as regional specificity plays a big role in policymaking for BP. Second, the research intended to dissolve the ambiguity around applying BP into policymaking. However, this purpose might ask for a less formal platform than a scientific research paper, as the need for scientific rigour and preciseness of describing complex relations and dynamics may have stood in the way of understandability and clarity around the described topics. Thirdly, the restricted magnitude of the project also hindered the scope of the research. For example, (1) implications on funding procedure and practice, (2) implications on the duality of government, (3) the role of BP in specific policy domains, (4) the interaction between governments within the region in the context of BP, (5) the role and implications of BP in multi-level governance, or (6) the role of- and interactions with the private sector could not be further researched. Therefore, the aforementioned are also recommendations for future research.

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Appendix 1: Indicators from the CES recommendation for measuring sustainable development

	Dimensions		
Themes	Human well-being ("Here and now")	Capital ("Later")	Transboundary impacts ("Elsewhere")
TH1. Subjective well-being	X		
TH2. Consumption and income	X		X
TH3. Nutrition	X		
TH4. Health	X	X	
TH5. Labour	X	X	X
TH6. Education	X	X	
TH7. Housing	X		
TH8. Leisure	X		
TH9. Physical safety	X		
TH10. Land and ecosystems	X	X	X
TH11. Water	X	X	X
TH12. Air quality	X	X	
TH13. Climate		X	X
TH14. Energy resources		X	X
TH15. Mineral resources (excluding coal and peat)		X	X
TH16. Trust	X	X	
TH17. Institutions	X	X	X
TH18. Physical capital		X	X
TH19. Knowledge capital		X	X
TH20. Financial capital		X	X
Context: population			
Economic capital — monetary		X-*M*	
Natural capital — monetary		X-*M*	
Human capital — monetary		X-*M*	
Social capital — monetary		X-*M*	

Table 1: Indicators CES Recommendation for measuring sustainable development, dimension 'Here and now' (UNECE, 2014)

Appendix 2: Indicators of Broad Prosperity

Here & Now

Material prosperity and wellbeing
Happiness with life
True personal consumption

Health
Healthy life expectancy men
Healthy life expectancy women
Overweight

Labour and Education
Long-term unemployment
Net employment rate
Educational attainment
Satisfaction regarding leisure
Time loss due to traffic jams and delay

Living
Quality of housing

Society
Contacts with friends, family or colleagues
Participation and accountability
Trust in institutions
Trust in people
Volunteer work

Safety
Victims of crime

Environment
Protected nature areas
Quality of swimming backwater
Living Planet Index
Urban exposure to fine particles ($PM_{2.5}$)

Later

Economic Capital
Physical capital stock
Knowledge capital stock
Total dept of housel holds

Natural capital
Fossil energy reserves
Installed capacity renewable electricity
Protected nature areas
Phosphorus surplus
Nitrogen surplus
Living Planet Index
Surface- and groundwater extraction
Urban exposure to fine particles ($PM_{2.5}$)
Cumulative CO2 emissions

Human Capital
Labour force
Total hours worked
Educational attainment
Healthy life expectancy men
Healthy life expectancy women

Social Capital
Trust in people
Feelings of discrimination
Trust in institutions

Somewhere else

Trade and aid
Development aid
international transfer
Total import of LDCs

Environment and Raw Materials
Import fossil energy carriers
Import fossil energy carriers from LDCs
Import materials
Import materials from LDCs
Import non-mineral materials
Import non-mineral materials from LDCs
Import biomass
Import biomass from LDCs
Carbon footprint

Table 2: The indicators of Broad Prosperity (Self-made, based on CBS, 2018).

Appendix 3: Broad Prosperity Monitor 2023

Figure 6: Monitor Broad Prosperity 2023: Here and Now (CBS, 2023).

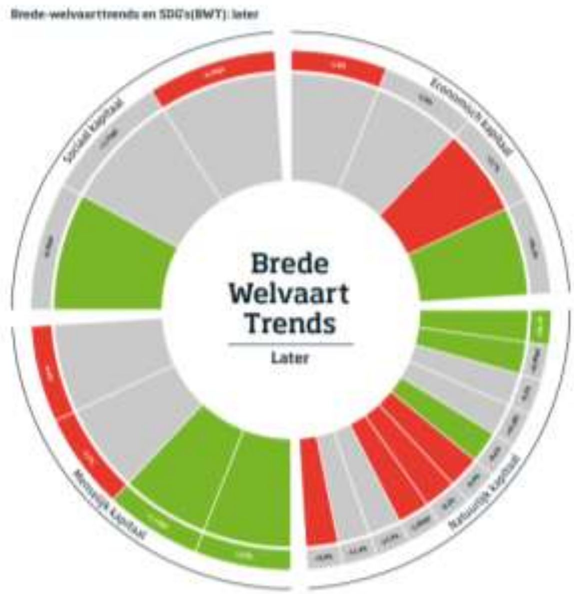

Figure 7: Monitor Broad Prosperity 2023: Later (CBS, 2023).

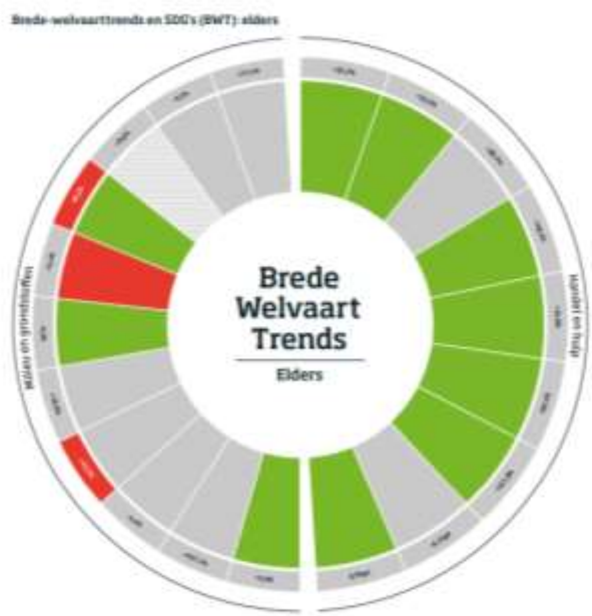

Figure 8: Monitor Broad Prosperity 2023: Elsewhere (CBS, 2023).

Appendix 4: Regions in the comparative case study

Friesland and RME are comparable in demographic size, however where MRE has grown around 10% in the past twenty years, Friesland only grew 3%. According to participants of the research, this growing difference is also visible in human and economic capital. However, Friesland is known to be the happies region of the EU (European Commission, 2021; Landgeist. 2023) even though economically they are less prospered than MRE. This is coined to be the 'Frisian Paradox'.

Region	***Friesland***		***Metropole Region Eindhoven***
COROP-region(s)	- North-Friesland - Southeast-Friesland - Southwest-Friesland		Southeast-Noord-Brabant
Citizens	*2003*	639 787	722 977
	2013	646 862	745 019
	2023	659 551	803 180
	% Difference (20 years)	+3.00%	+9.99%
Municipalities	- Achtkarspelen - Ameland - Dantumadiel - De Fryske Marren - Harlingen - Heerenveen - Leeuwarden - Noardeast-Fryslân - Oostellingwerf - Opsterland - Schiermonnikoog - Smallingerland - Súdwest-Fryslân - Terschelling - Tytsjerksteradiel - Vlieland - Waadhoeke - Weststellingwerf		- Asten - Bergeijk - Best - Bladel - Cranendonck - Deurne - Eersel - Eindhoven - Geldrop-Mierlo - Gemert-Bakel - Heeze-Leende - Helmond - Laarbeek - Nuenen - Oirschot - Reusel-De Mierden - Someren - Son en Breugel - Valkenswaard - Veldhoven - Waalre

Table 3: Regions of the case study (self-created, based on Regio's en regio-indelingen, n.d.; CBS Statline, n.d.).

Appendix 5: Interview Questions

Introductory:

- Name
- Role, passed roles, time at the organization
- Introduction to the organization
- Responsibilities and responsibilities/connection to the topic of BP

The context and introduction of BP to the organization/region

- How and why has the concept been introduced in the organization? Could you describe the process?
- Is this transition to BP necessary, if so, why?
    - What are some typical issues regarding BP, that the region runs into?
- Can you tell how the general development of the topic/BP as a project has gone since it was introduced?
- How does this connect to any other trends or developments in public administration?

The BP Policymaking process

- How would you define policy making processes for BP?
- How is the policymaking process for BP different than the conventional policy cycle?
- To what extend is there a difference in the participation of stakeholders and citizens (Non-governments)?
    - In what way do non-governments, companies and citizens get involved in the policymaking process?
    - How is this different from the conventional policy cycle?
- Do you think policy making processes for BP result in more inclusive policy, and why?
    - Compared to conventional/traditional policy making, what are institutional changes that make for this?
- Do you think policy making processes for BP are better suitable for capturing complexity?
    - Compared to conventional/traditional policy making, what are institutional changes that make for this?
- Do you think policy making processes for BP are better equipped to deal with uncertainty?
    - Compared to conventional/traditional policy making, what are institutional changes that make for this?
- What would you say are factors/conditions that are needed for successful implementation of BP policy making processes?
- What would you say your organization is doing well, for the implementation of BP policy making processes?
- What would you say your organization should do better?

Institutional implications and development

- What are ways in which you are developing the concept/meaning of PB for your organization?
- What are the implications of the transition to BP for your institution/governmental institutions you are working with?
- What are institutional barriers for implementing BP that affect (your) implementation efforts?
- What would you say is the future of BP policy making processes for your organization?
- What would you say are factors that are beneficial for successful implementation of BP policy making processes?
- What aspects of your organization would you say are unique and make for a successful implementation of BP policy making processes?
- What is needed to overcome barriers and implications?

Role in the region

- What do you think is the implication of BP to regional dynamics, in terms of changing roles among institutions/organizations?
    - What was this dynamic? Relation between companies, government, citizens
- How does the role of formal governments change?

Open:

- After explaining the goal of my research, what are questions I should ask you in order to get the correct information?

Appendix 6: Interview academic experts

Introductory:

- Name
- Role, passed roles, time at the organization
- Introduction to the organization
- Responsibilities and responsibilities/connection to the topic of BP

The context and introduction of BP to the organization/region

- Is this transition to BP necessary, if so, why?
    - What are some typical issues regarding BP, that the region runs into?
- Can you tell how the general development of the topic/BP as a project has gone since it was introduced (in your organization)?
- How does this connect to any other trends or developments in public administration?

The BP Policymaking process

- How would you define policy making processes for BP?
- What are institutional implications, in regards to formal decision making process?
    - What are different implications for the 'ambelijke' side, for PS/B&W, for PS/Raad?
    - Is there an implication regarding public law?
- To what extend is there a difference in the participation of stakeholders and citizens (Non-governments), and what are ways to institutionally organize this?
- Do you think policy making processes for BP result in more inclusive policy, and why?
- Do you think policy making processes for BP are better suitable for capturing complexity, and what are ways to institutionally organize this?
- Do you think policy making processes for BP are better equipped to deal with uncertainty, and what are ways to institutionally organize this?

Institutional implications and development

- What would you say regional public institutions are doing well, for implementing BP?
- What would you say regional institutions should do better?
- What would you say are factors/conditions that are needed for successful implementation of BP policy making processes?
- What are the implications of the transition to BP for regional institutions/governmental institutions?
- What are institutional barriers for implementing BP for regional governments?
- What would you say is the future of BP policy making processes for your regional governance?
- To what account does regional culture have an impact on the transition to BP – in terms of the processes that are needed to be established?
- How could this be coped with?
- What is needed to overcome barriers and implications?

Role in the region

- What do you think is the implication of BP to regional dynamics, in terms of changing roles among institutions/organizations?
    - What was this dynamic? Relation between companies, government, citizens
- How does the role of formal governments change?
- What is needed to cope with these changes?

Open:

- After explaining the goal of my research, what are questions I should ask you in order to get the correct information?