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Citizen Participation

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2020

document version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

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citation for published version (APA)

Glimmerveen, L. M. (2020). *Citizen Participation: Bargaining over boundaries in the organization of care services*.

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An aerial photograph of a landscape featuring a central point where numerous dirt roads radiate outwards, creating a starburst pattern. The roads are light brown and contrast with the surrounding green fields. A small blue car is visible on one of the roads on the right side. The overall scene is captured from a high angle, looking down on the terrain.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Bargaining over boundaries
in the organization of care services

Ludo Glimmerveen

An aerial photograph of a vast, green landscape. A winding river or stream flows through the center, bordered by light-colored dirt roads or paths. The terrain is mostly flat with some subtle undulations. The overall color palette is dominated by various shades of green and earthy tones.

Hailed as a way to grant citizens more control over the services they use, advocates often portray citizen participation as a crucial ingredient for service improvement. At the same time, and despite widespread support for participation as a policy imperative, its pursuit often proves contentious. Critics consider participatory efforts to be something of a Trojan horse, noting they are often used to legitimize decisions that have already been made or to compensate for cutbacks in public spending.

In this doctoral thesis, Ludo Glimmerveen investigates how these disparate accounts of citizen participation—and the organizational practices associated with them—interact within concrete participatory efforts. Approaching participatory efforts as instances of boundary work, his research focuses on the inclusionary and exclusionary actions people use to open up or narrow down the space available for participation. How do participatory initiatives evolve as people bargain over participation's parameters?