

Mapping the landscape of participation in Geneva

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Research Context and Objectives

This study takes place in the context of the Geneva program for geothermal energy, **GEothermie 2020**, which is funded by the public utilities SIG and the canton of Geneva. We accompany the program in its work on participation and the public.

This study maps participatory experiences of GEothermie 2020 program managers and inhabitants, and confronts those to their expectations and ideal types of participation.

The goal is to analyze the interplay between the different formats of participation used in GEothermie 2020 and identify potential misalignments between what is expected by participation and what specific formats can deliver.

Research Questions

How can the landscape of participation be drawn for geothermal in the Geneva context?

Does this landscape differ for program managers of the geothermal program and for local inhabitants? And if so, in what way?

Methods – two different perspectives on participation

We conduct a qualitative analysis in order to identify preferences about participation in the actors' own words.

Participant observation in strategic management meetings:

- Attendance to weekly sessions during 18 months
- Internal meetings with their project partners and public events
- *Data: observation notes, Memos and documentation.*

Focus groups with inhabitants:

- 6 focus groups in different municipalities and neighborhoods
- 5-10 participants in each group
- Same structure for all groups
- *Data: focus group transcripts and Memos.*

Framework for Analysis

We analyze the data using a framework that focuses on 3 aspects of the participatory process:

- Formats of participation: the ideal format for participation that leads to the implementation of a specific participatory process
- Subjects: the actors that participate in the given format
- Objects: the issues that are addressed in the given format

Each of these aspects is related to a wider space that influences the content of a specific participatory format and is simultaneously affected by what happens during participation. These relationships constitute a landscape of participation.

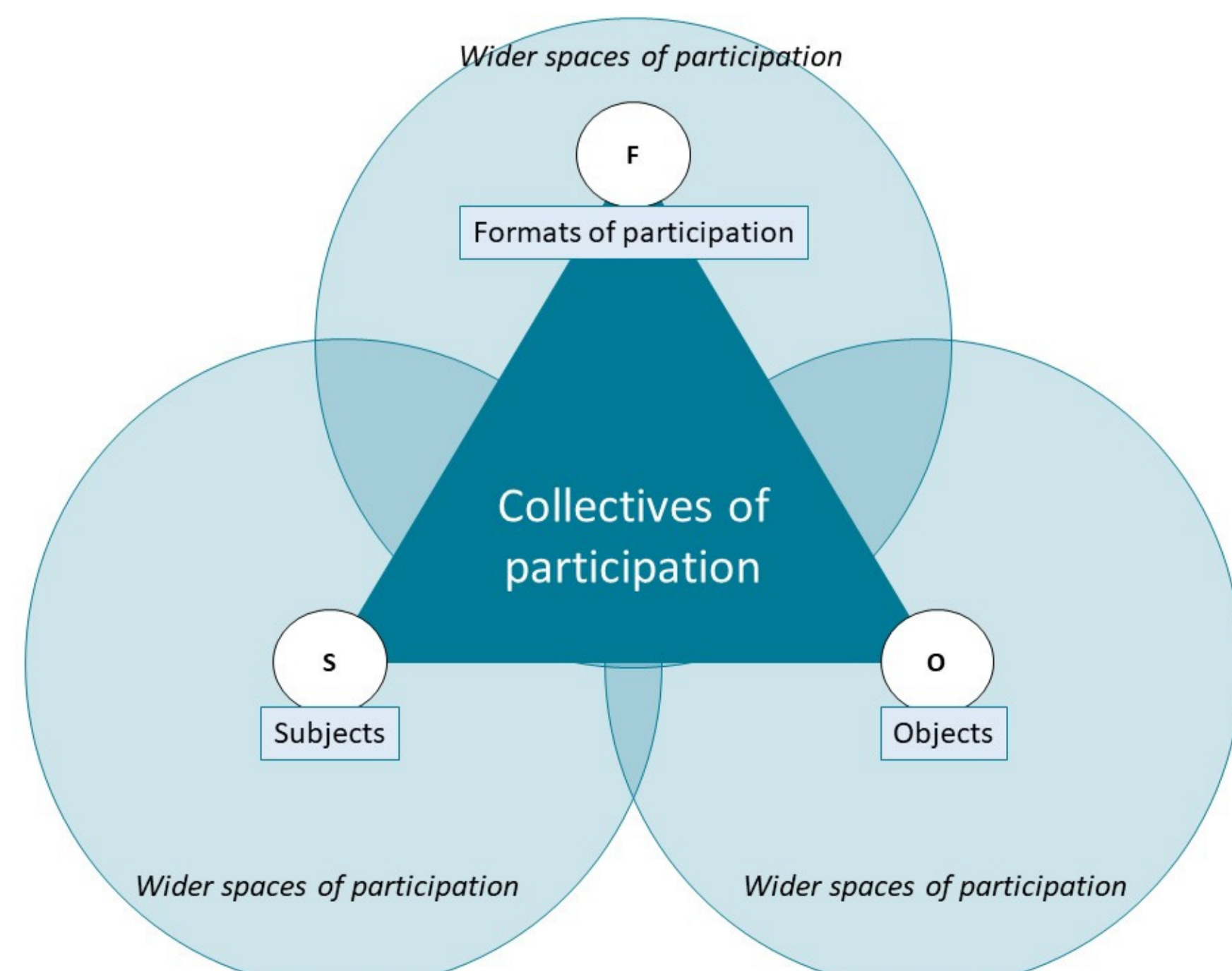


Fig. 1 Relational co-productionist framework adapted from Chilvers, Pallett, & Hargreaves, 2018

Preliminary Results

Below are first results from an analysis on the formats of participation

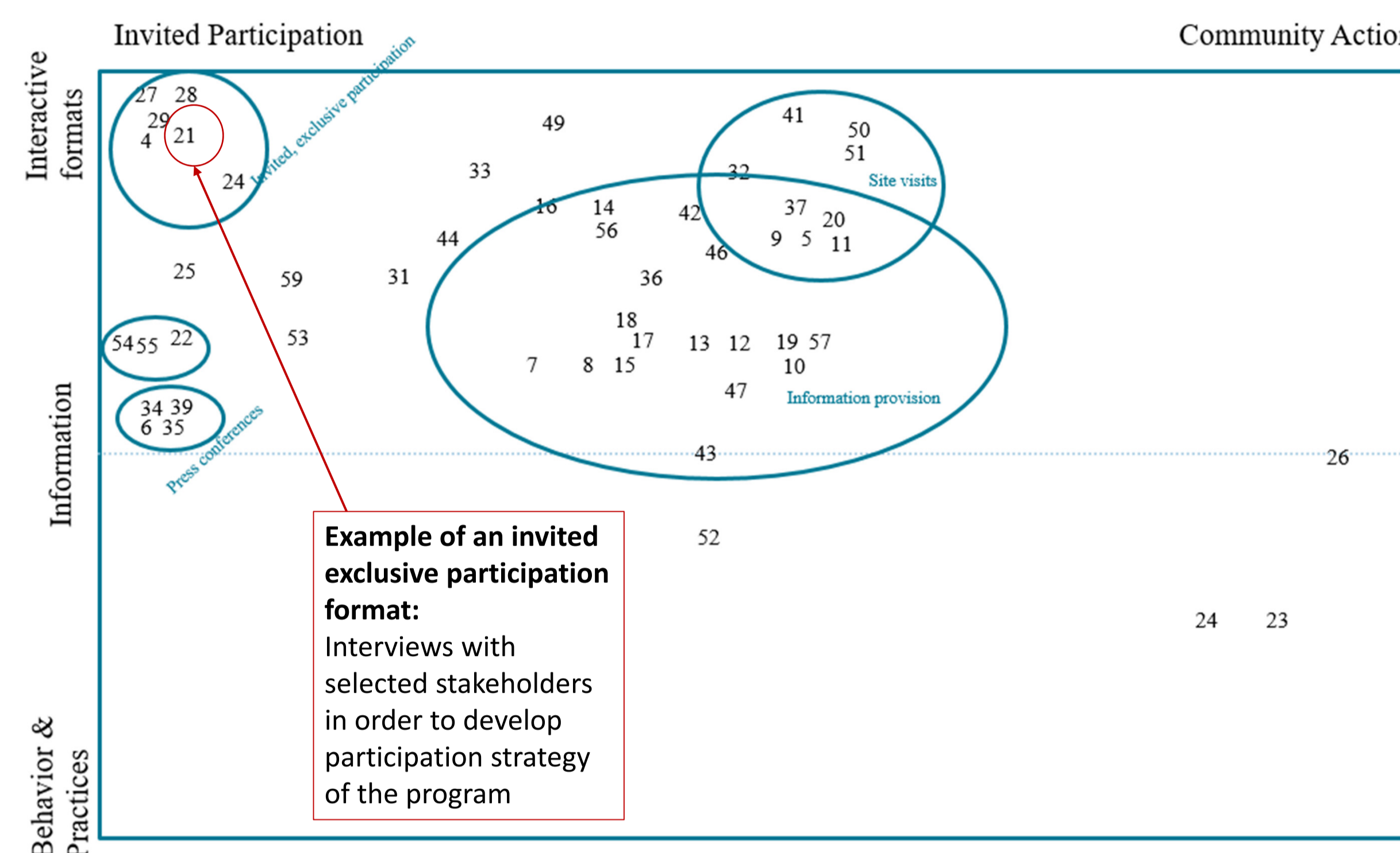


Fig. 2: Wider spaces of participation formats – program managers' perspective

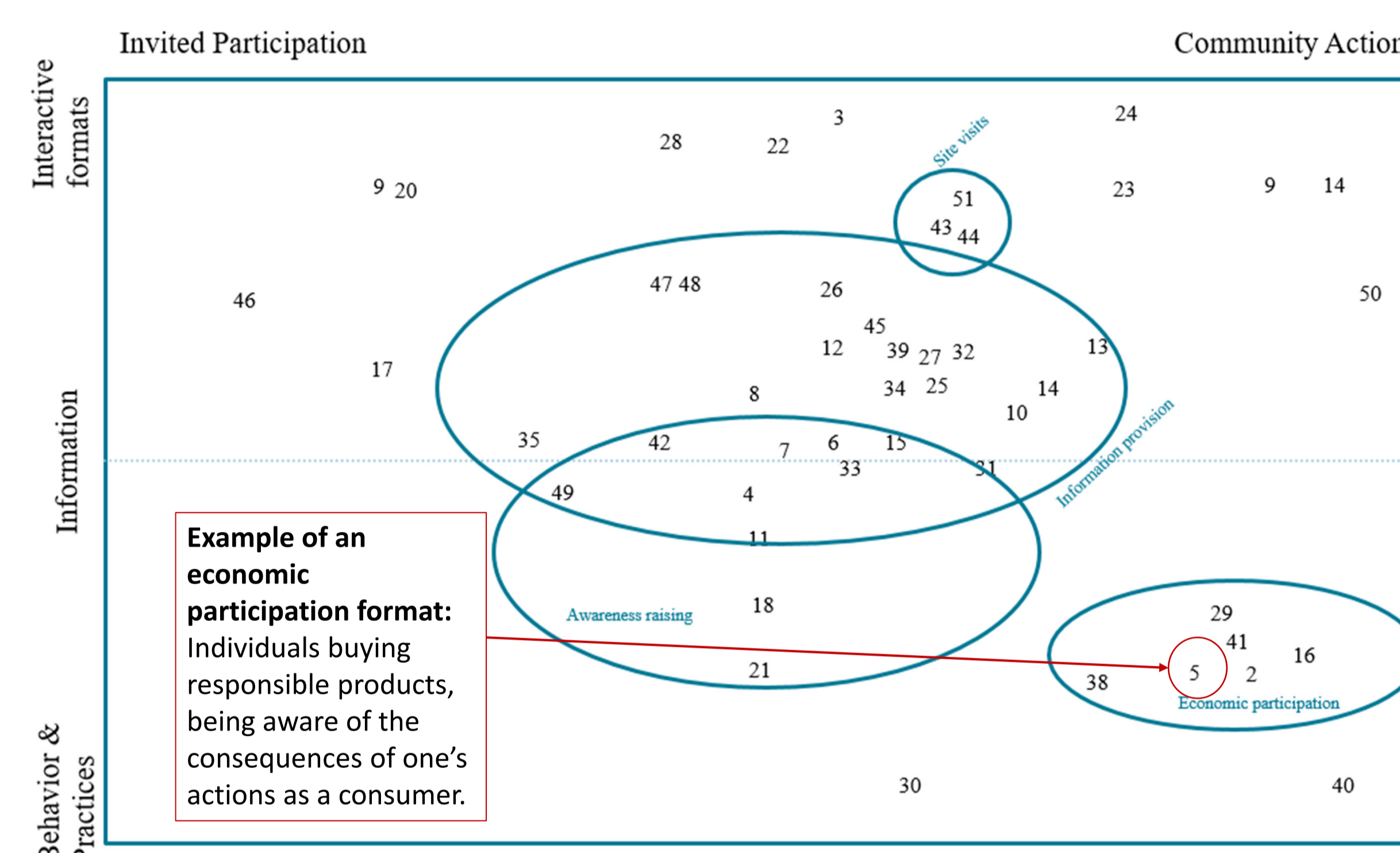


Fig. 3: Wider spaces of participation formats – local inhabitants' perspective

- Numbers represent references to participation formats made by the program managers (Fig. 2) and local inhabitants (Fig. 3).
- Blue circles: wider spaces of participation, thus a grouping of similar formats of participation.

Discussion

- Program managers see participation formats mostly as classical formats of information provision and site visits; only very few references to participation through behaviour and practices.
- Invited/internal participation that is exclusive in terms of who may participate is important in the program managers' view.
- Focus group participants also see information provision as one important format of participation;
- Focus group participants also often referred to other formats going more into individual actions and awareness on an individual level.

The diversity of participation collectives that could be identified for the Geneva context shows that there are many ways in which participation may be considered for a program like the geothermal one. However, depending on the perspective, these collectives may or may not be part of daily decision making of program managers or local inhabitants.

References & Acknowledgement

Chilvers, J., Pallett, H., & Hargreaves, T. (2018). Ecologies of participation in socio-technical change: The case of energy system transitions. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 42(March), 199–210. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2018.03.020>

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