

**'It's the management, stupid!'**

*On the importance of management in complex policy issues*

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Uitgeverij LEMMA  
The Hague  
2008

An abridged version of this text was delivered as the inaugural speech on June 20, 2008 at the acceptance of the chair “Public Administration, in particular policy and management issues”, at the Department of Public Administration of the faculty of Social Sciences of the Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Cover design: Haagsblauw, The Hague  
Layout: Textcetera, The Hague

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ISBN 978-90-5931-261-6  
NUR 805

[www.lemma.nl](http://www.lemma.nl)

## Summary

Of late, more and more politicians are telling us that we need decisiveness and that at long last decisions need to be made. The media is keen to pick up on these sounds. One could even rightfully claim that the media actively participates in this image-formation. Thus a situation is created that various commentators and scientists have come to refer to as a drama democracy: a democracy in which politics has become personified and theatrical. Displaying powerful images and directing the show have become more important for politicians than the implementation of policy.

However, this drama democracy is at loggerheads with everyday reality, in which complex policy issues, such as the restructuring of a housing estate, the realisation of water storage or the promotion of the quality of education have to be solved. The parties involved in that reality often want different things, and do not agree on the nature of the problem. Often we do not know what a good solution is at the beginning of the process, and knowledge of the network and the parties involved in making the decisions, as well as the implementation reality, is indispensable. Carefully managing these processes as well as ensuring various forms of democratic anchorage are crucial for finding good social outcomes. This involves commitment from various parties and a certain amount of dedication to the process instead of powerful, unilateral, political interventions.

## 1 Introduction

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the summer of 2003, the City Elderman of Delft was believed to be enjoying the finest hour of his political and managerial career. Finally, the ‘railway tunnel’ project, that the municipality has been working on for so long, would begin the implementation phase, and money would become available. Together with Prorail, a department of the Ministry of Transport and Public Works as well as the administrator of the Dutch railways, the officials of the Delft municipality had been working, in the months prior to the summer of 2003, on possible variants for the tunnel that had to rid Delft of the railway section straight across the city centre. Things were looking good. The newly designed tunnel was cheaper than budgeted for and the Ministry of Transport and Public Works’ decision to implement the project seemed likely to occur.

However, reaching this moment of the negotiation process with Prorail had not been easy. By 2003, the project had already had a long history. It all started in 1988 when the first plans of the NS (Dutch Rail), which had not yet been privatized at that time, were laid out, to turn the section near Delft into four tracks, in the same way as the Rijswijk and Rotterdam sections had been built. NS suggested building an extra viaduct on the existing one, which would then make it about 15 meters high. There would then be two separate tracks – one for the slow trains and another for the express trains. Not surprisingly, this plan was not received favourably by the Delft municipality, because of the high barrier that would then be created through the city centre. The municipality faced the challenge of preventing what they saw as a horror scenario while at the same time coming up with an interesting as well as workable solution.

This turned out to be no easy task. In the beginning, other important players were interested in the railway tunnel zone project. This was during the time when there were discussions about a high-speed train to Paris, and if such a train was to run on existing tracks, building a tunnel near Delft would be unavoidable. The discussions about the high-speed train ended with the decision not to use the existing track, but a separate track instead, and the other actors thus lost interest in the project. By now, it had become apparent that this would be a very complex project, and Dutch Rail as well as the ministry thought that the four-track section could wait. The withdrawal of crucial actors removed the possibility of a solution for the municipality to the problem of the Delft bottleneck.

Only after extensive canvassing by the municipality did the Dutch Lower Chamber decide in 1998 that money would be made available through the *Meerjarig Investerings Plan Transport* (long-term investment plan transport, MIT). After that, the game was kick-started and after a lengthy process, the municipality was able to agree on a covenant in 2002 with the other public parties

(Ministry of Transport and Public Works, Housing, Regional Development and the Environment, the province of Zuid-Holland and the Haaglanden region) to begin working on a proposal for the improvement of the rail connection of Den Haag – Rotterdam (preferably through the use of a tunnel). The covenant indicated that there were as yet insufficient financial means to ensure the realisation of the tunnel, but spoke of an ‘effort obligation’ of all parties involved to ensure that the budget met the wish list. The Delft municipality and Prorail reviewed the variants and in the summer of 2003, a plan seemed to be ready that met most of the preconditions. However, all of a sudden, the funds appeared to have been removed from the budget of the Ministry of Transport and Public Works. In the summer of 2003, much to the municipality’s dismay, the plans were unceremoniously abandoned, leaving the chairman amazed and confused.

### *Solving complex policy issues in networks*

The case of the Delft is one of many examples of a complex policy issue – or ‘wicked problem’ – (see Rittel & Webber, 1973; Hoppe & Van de Graaf, 1992; Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004). Wicked problems are policy issues that involve many actors, where the actors often disagree about the nature of the problem and the desired solution. In addition, there is usually insufficient or controversial knowledge about these problems, which makes it difficult to interpret them and to find appropriate solutions for them.<sup>1</sup> The aforementioned case is a classic example of a wicked problem. Is it a transport problem, as the Dutch Rail claims, or is it a noise problem, as the people who live alongside the track claim, or is it an environmental planning problem for the city, as the town council claims?

It is no easy task to come up with a solution for complex policy problems. The most important reason for this is that it almost always involves tricky conflicts between values. Should we prioritize transport values, liveability values or environmental values? I will come back to this issue later. These kinds of conflicts of value are often seen in environmental planning processes, but complex policy problems also emerge in other policy areas. Recent discussions about education, readjustments to the health care system and problems related to child welfare have proven this. However, I will mostly refer to environmental problems in this speech, since that is where my expertise lies.

Complex policy issues have another characteristic that makes them special: they often occur within actor networks. A large number of actors are often involved in these complex policy problems, all of whom have an interest in the policy issue, and they often hold the necessary means to a solution of the problem. For example, without the financial support of the Ministry of Transport and Public Works and the Ministry of Housing, Regional Development and the Environment, a solution would have been unthinkable in the Delft case. However, the Delft municipality, as the local authority, was also indispensable. If we delve deeper into this, we can suddenly see that there are, in fact, many actors of more or less importance. These include residents who can add legitimacy to decisions, private parties such as property developers who have the capacity to realise actual solutions, provinces as supporters and funders, and so on. In keeping with this, there are other aspects of the problem that cause more actors to surface, such as safety issues, environmental issues, etc.<sup>2</sup>

In short, solutions for complex policy issues often occur within networks of actors. Recent research that I conducted together with Jurian Edelenbos and Bram Steijn shows that more than 11 different organisations are involved in an average environmental planning project in The Netherlands

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<sup>1</sup> The opposite of a wicked problem is a ‘controlled problem’. This is a problem about which there is little controversy and for which much undisputable scientific information can be found.

<sup>2</sup> This also means that the limitations of the network will always be more or less arbitrary and are closely connected with the *boundary judgments* of the actors and the researcher. It is possible to reduce this slightly arbitrary character. For instance, a survey can be conducted to find out the amount of contact that actors have with one another, and determine on the basis of that information who does and who does not belong to the network. However, this means that the choice shifts to the question of what frequency of contact will determine whether an actor is a part of the network, a choice that is still made by the researcher. In addition, the researcher has thus identified an *empirical network*. It is possible, however, that some actors are excluded from or show no interest in interaction, even if they seem interesting on the basis of their resources. Thus, from a normative as well as a practical viewpoint, the factual boundaries of the network may be undesirable or ineffective. Networks are on the one hand a very powerful and practical concept for analyzing complex policy problems and searching out solutions for complex problems, but on the other hand they also have an empirical and normative reality.

(Klijn et al., 2008). These are organisations that are in regular contact with one another, although not equally so. This network-character increases the complexity of managerial processes.

*Effective governance: the focus of this inaugural speech*

This development, where decision-making increasingly occurs within networks of actors and agreement on the nature of the problem and the desired solution seems trickier every time, has not gone unnoticed in the field of public administration.

The literature often refers to the fact that in western society, and perhaps even beyond that, we are dealing with a transition from government to governance (Pierre, 2000; Frederickson, 2005; Sorenson & Torfing, 2007; Klijn, 2005). This is a transition in which we are moving from a situation where public actors handle problems mostly through vertical steering, for example with the help of law and legislation or more or less unilateral policy measures executed by civilians and social organisations, to a situation of horizontal steering, where policy outcomes are, sometimes performed, realised in cooperation with a large variety of public, private and semi-private organisations. An interesting recent illustration of this phenomenon can be seen in the determination of the number of hours of lessons for secondary schools.

Recently, there has been much discussion about the minimum number of lessons that secondary schools should offer their students. This subject appeared on the agenda due to complaints by parents about the cancellation of lessons and led to a national discussion about the quality of education. The Lower Chamber thought it should take action with regard to this dossier, and initiated a minimum lessons norm for the number of lessons that schools would be obliged to offer per year: 1040 lesson hours. It is interesting that the Department of Education had earlier (2005) argued in favour of a bandwidth, but this proposal was rejected by the Chamber at that time. There had to be a universal, univocal norm for all schools. The schools inspectorate began to enforce the norm, the State Secretary got her teeth into it and imposed fines, and resistance against the norm grew, not only in society but specifically in the schools. After all, the schools had indicated from the beginning that the proposed norm was not feasible. Lo and behold, before long, the first hesitations were visible in the Chamber, who had themselves initiated this subject. This dossier is currently the subject of continuing discussions as part of the quality agreements between the State Secretary and the education sector.

This case shows beautifully how complex and dynamic an apparently simple issue such as determining the number of lessons in schools can be. The implementation is often more complex than it seems. This also shows the current difficulty of these kinds of dossiers to steer developments from a central political point. I will come back to this issue later.

The pivotal question I ask in this inaugural speech<sup>3</sup> and in the research programme I would like to devote myself to in the years to come, is: under what conditions do networks involved in complex policy issues, which I will refer to as governance networks later on, ensure an effective approach to these problems? This must be an approach that also meets the democratic demands of our society.

The title of this inaugural speech already indicates the direction I wish to take, but I do not mean to suggest that the entire search has already been completed, although an important element can be found there, as I will explain later. I will return to the Delft case, which I introduced at the beginning of my speech, a few more times to illustrate a number of my statements.

## **2 Governance and governance networks: what are we talking about?**

The term 'governance' has been a buzzword for some time. Scientifically, it has attracted much attention, especially from Public Administration.<sup>4</sup> I would even go so far as to say that governance is more or less the new consensus in Public Administration, after the idea in the 1980s that 'New Public Management' would become the new consensus (also see: Osborne, 2006; Bekkers et al., 2007; Klijn,

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<sup>3</sup> I wish to thank Joop Koppejan, Marlies Post and Sandra van Tiel for their comments on earlier versions of this inaugural speech. This naturally does not exonerate me from taking full responsibility for this text.

<sup>4</sup> However, attention has also been paid to it in practice. This term is frequently found in policy documents and numerous branches have their own governance codes.

2008b). This is an observation which, in itself, should made us modest though in pronouncing a new consensus. Science also has its modes.

There has been a deluge of articles about governance or its related concepts, such as governance networks, in scientific publications.<sup>5</sup> The American Public Administration scientist Frederickson (2005) says, in his overview on governance in the *Handbook of Public Management*, that ‘governance is everywhere’, and he is not alone in thinking that much, if not everything, seems to be about governance (see: Rhodes, 1997; Pierre, 2000; Bekkers et al., 2007; Klijn, 2008b). At the same time, it should be noted that there are still many government tasks where the dominant mode is classical vertical steering as well as a strong focus on internal organisation of the government machinery, which, according to the literature, corresponds with the terminology of government and is opposed to governance. Just think of classical government tasks such as the levying of taxes, administration of justice, the police / maintenance of order, and so on.<sup>6</sup> There are also other ‘simple’ public tasks, such as waste collection and social security, although social security often involves rather more complicated processes than are initially expected. There have been many discussions about privatization with regard to executive tasks, such as prisons, the granting of subsidies, the land registry, and so on, for good reason. Often, simpler government tasks have a somewhat lower ‘wicked problem’ level.

#### *Governance and governance networks*

Governance has been defined in many different ways by many different authors. I do not wish to devote my speech to a precise treatment of the concept of governance or the many meanings it has been laden with in the course of the debate, because I wish to focus on other themes.<sup>7</sup> There is consensus in most of the literature that with governance, the processes of decision-making and management are stressed instead of the organisation, and that these processes can usually be characterised as being strongly horizontal and complex, due to the large number of actors involved as well as the complexity of the problems (see: Rhodes, 1997; Pierre, 2000; Sorenson & Torfing, 2007). I do not think there is much reason to differentiate between governance and governance networks. At best, we can specify that governance relates to the interaction process (and its guidance) while networks relate to the empirical phenomenon that policy issues are solved within networks of actors.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Scopus alone counts over 8,000 articles in the last 15 years (in the category of the social sciences, but Public Administration and urban and rural planning take up a fair share) in which the word governance can be found in the title, abstract or subtitle (when the scope is broadened, for example by including economics, the number exceeds 10,000). If we look at the numbers per year, a steady growth can be observed in the number of articles about governance, with rapid increases after 1996 and in the period after 2003 (1990:12; 1991: 7; 1992: 19; 1993: 28; 1994: 54; 1995: 64; 1996: 106; 1997: 248; 1998: 346; 1999: 408; 2000: 548; 2001: 574; 2002: 621; 2003: 715; 2004: 866; 2005: 1059; 2006: 1133; 2007: 1193. The word ‘networks’ gives even more ‘hits’.

<sup>6</sup> These tasks can be very complicated (and so are some patterns of the maintenance of law and order!), but – and this is the point here – they all show characteristics of what is called government.

<sup>7</sup> I have already done this in other places (Klijn, 2005, 2008a, 2008b).

<sup>8</sup> There are authors who equate governance with New Public Management or group the trends and developments that have come from New Public Management under the denominator of governance (for an overview, see for example Rhodes, 1997; Bekkers et al., 2007). In these cases, authors are usually referring to the changes that have taken place in many countries with regard to the organisation of the government machinery. Changes that have resulted in increased efficiency, the separation of policy-making and policy execution and the distancing of many executive government services are stressed. This way of looking at the government, which is strongly oriented by economic thinking, stresses performance indicators, free market processes and performance incentives as core concepts to achieve more efficient government services. In the famous words of Osborne and Gaebler (1992): the government should steer and not row, with which they want to indicate that public officials should limit themselves to assessing targets, and leave the complex process of execution as much as possible to independent services, or private or semi-private organisations. This is an appealing thought, indeed, for many politicians. It is, after all, a plea for the rehabilitation of the primacy of politics! This is, of course, until they find out that they really have to know what they want in this representation of management, and that they have to record this precisely, in distinct specificity, about the product, service or policy outcome that is to be achieved. After all, nothing can be outsourced and tested against clear performance indicators if what is desired has not been recorded! Above all, you should not change your mind midway through. Political reality, however, tends to be obstinate and managerial problems are often tricky. However, representing this New Public Management-

Thus, I will use governance networks as an indication of *more or less stable patterns of social relationships* (= interactions, cognitions and rules) between mutually dependent public, semi-public and private actors, that arise and build up around complex policy issues or policy programmes.<sup>9</sup> It is characteristic for these patterns of social relationships to exist over a longer period of time, and they can change over time as a result of the interactions between the actors involved and their interpretations (for a more elaborate discussion of these ideas, see Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004). Governance networks manifest themselves in concrete policy interactions, which I call policy games, between actors. During these games, the actors attempt to influence policy issues, but they also re-interpret the available information and informal and formal rules that were generated earlier.<sup>10</sup> In short, governance networks can be characterised by a high degree of complexity and dynamics (Teisman et al., 2008), which makes it very difficult to manage them. Managers and other involved parties are often in for many surprises, because unexpected events occur or because the interactions between the strategic choices of the individual actors create unexpected effects.

This has been shown to be the case time and time again in the Delft case, and culminated in the sudden decision by Minister Peijs of the Transport and Public Works department to drop the financial reservation for the project from the MIT in 2003. That decision was the result of active lobbying by the management of Dutch Rail, Prorail and others for more funds for railway maintenance, and of the fact that part of the ministry had never really been convinced of the Spoorzone Delft project, or, in any case, was not prepared to pay so much money for it. This shows how complex policy games in governance networks can become when they are also connected with other policy games in other networks. This should, in fact, not really have surprised the Delft municipality, because their original funds had been obtained in 1998 from the budget for the A4 Midden Delfland, another large environmental planning project, and the parties involved in that project had been just as surprised at the time, as the parties involved in Delft were in 2003.

#### *Governance and governance networks: not technocratic but political!*

I have already spoken of the ‘wicked’ character of policy issues in governance networks. However, I have not yet touched on the misunderstanding with regard to governance and governance networks that exists in some parts of the literature, that governance is a technocratic matter. Especially in the United States, there are a large number of publications that describe governance as a technocratic management process. ‘Governance is the way government get its jobs done.’<sup>11</sup> This is clearly an important aspect of governance. Not one single political system, especially a democratic political system, can do without the output legitimacy, without their citizens recognizing and acknowledging that good results are realised. However, governance processes are intrinsically political in nature, because it is essentially a struggle between values.

If we consider politics to be the authoritative allocation of values, following Easton (1953), as many political and Public Administration scientists prefer to, I would say that this kind of politics has been removed, as argued earlier by others (Bovens et al., 1995). Politics has been dissolved, as it were,

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approach of management as governance is definitely a misconception. The New Public Management, certainly in its original meaning, is mainly focused on the internal organisation of the government machinery (even when execution can be considered as part of a policy cycle, it still remains the cycle of an internally-oriented organisation, and this is far from the governance representation, where other autonomous organisations come into the picture as co-determiners of policy targets). Insofar as extreme relations are concerned, these are characterised by intrinsic univocality and relational hierarchy, while most governance processes are characterised by intrinsic ambiguity and relational equality. I certainly do not rule out the possibility that both approaches are capable of learning from each other and influencing each other, but originally, they are two very different theoretical approaches aimed at very different empirical phenomena.

<sup>9</sup> Despite the stability in the relations of the network, interactions within networks can still be capricious, because actors deploy their own strategies. For an elaboration of this point, see Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004; Klijn, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Governance networks can thus be seen as the temporarily solidified form of these policy games: the pattern of interactions at a certain moment in time, the set of perceptions of the actors (and the resemblances and differences) at that moment and the set of valid informal and formal rules at that moment.

<sup>11</sup> This quote is taken from Kettl (Kettl, 2002, XI, quoted by Frederickson, 2005, p. 286). In the American literature about networks, there is a strong focus on the technical character of network management, while the European literature pays more attention to value choices in relation to democratic bodies (see Klijn, 2008b).

or at least been partially dissolved, in the network itself, where the struggle between all the different groups is taking place (also see Klijn & Skelcher, 2007).<sup>12</sup> Also, the political institutions, the Lower Chamber, city councils, Provincial States and political parties are in the middle of the network of actors, instead of realizing the public interest far above the turmoil of battle. Thus, the often-heard complaint that all these networks and involvement of interest groups are a threat to democracy essentially means that we no longer recognize politics as a visible centre of power. I will come back to this point later, because I think that there are a few paradoxes here that I want to touch on in this speech, and that are also a part of the research programme I have set out for myself in the years to come.

### **3 The search for good, socially relevant outcomes**

How will we find ‘good’, socially relevant outcomes from these complex and political processes in governance networks?<sup>13</sup> This is a question that is more easily asked than answered.

#### *Simple tasks, simple answers?*

Finding out what good results are in the context of governance networks is, in itself, rather tricky. This is strongly connected to the ‘wicked’ character of the policy issues in governance networks.

This seems relatively simple for a classic government task such as taxation. We assess the outcomes of the tax authorities as ‘good’ when the taxation is performed efficiently and fairly. Thus, when the tax authorities do not make too many mistakes and do not send wrong assessments, and when the entire process is wrapped up in time and when people are not too displeased with it, we can say that a good result has been achieved. It is also relatively simple to translate these kinds of requirements for a good outcome and a good process (the taxation itself) into relatively simple performance criteria, such as the desired pass time of an application, the number of allowed mistakes, and so on. As you will see, we now find ourselves in the world of the New Public Management (Hood, 1991; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). We have a fairly clear picture of what we want, and how we want to monitor it. We can also link an organisation to this relatively easily. An executive service, such as the tax authorities, but also related tasks, such as social welfare subsidies and the determination of punishment (prisons), can be privatized in a relatively simple way, or ‘hived off’ or organized as a separate agency and monitored through prior determined performance indicators. Problems do occur regularly even with tasks such as these which can be quantified quite easily. Executive processes and the agencies that perform them are nearly always more complex than anticipated beforehand. Executive government bodies also regularly come under fire. We must realise, however, that only a small proportion of the total number of bodies are usually involved, and that media attention in fact usually involves a strong magnification of the problems (Van Thiel, 2008).

#### *The political dimension of network outcomes: a battle of values*

Regrettably, things do not work as simply with the more complex decision-making processes, as my opening case has shown. In these kinds of processes, it is often not very clear what a good outcome is, or which criteria should be used to assess a good outcome. Let us go back to the Delft case, which I

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<sup>12</sup> I find myself coming from a long Dutch history with this view. Daalder (1984) has already stated: “If nor the operation of a multi-party system with decreasing social bonds, nor the interweaving between government and social groups offers a firm basis for policy from the top down, the possibility exists of an appeal to plebiscitary support and a regression into doctrines that we hoped we had overcome, about the high mission of the state, above the parties, above parliament and above society. A ‘primacy of politics’, in that sense, is in a way un-Dutch. It is also a definition of ‘politics’ that is far too restrictive for me, as if politics is not being made everywhere in society and government, even if one chooses to call it something else.” (Daalder, 1984, p. 22).

<sup>13</sup> A policy proposal in this view is better when (see Kloppenjan & Klijn, 2004):

- more of the actors involved are content with the proposal (*satisfying* criterion, see also Teisman, 1992);
- later versions of the proposal are more capable of incorporating criticisms of earlier versions (intrinsic quality);
- the proposal does not charge the costs of the solution unilaterally outside the actors involved/the network.



have just discussed. Is an extra viaduct a good outcome? Perhaps it would be for Dutch Rail, but definitely not for the municipality or for the neighbours. This solution would actually worsen the problem for these parties. An extra viaduct would increase the amount of noise and pollution for the neighbours because of the larger rail capacity, and the barrier-effect of the railway would become even stronger.

The reason for the fact that univocal criteria for good outcomes are not easily defined has to do with the conflict of values in complex policy issues that I mentioned earlier. Here, transport values conflict with liveability values, economic values and environmental values. All these different values are represented by different actors, who all want to be involved in the decision-making process. There is nothing illegitimate about this, because it is a part of a mature democracy in which actors can articulate their interests and where decision-making is a relatively open process.

From this point of view, complaints about lengthy decision procedures, too many interest groups, and so on seem questionable. Faultfinders often really mean that their values are traded off too much against other values. These include ministries who find that interactive processes only lead to superfluous discussion sessions, as for instance during the Investigation Phase Space Problem Mainport Rotterdam (VERM-phase) of the Maasvlakte II-project in the period between 1996 and 1997 (see: Klijn & Koppenjan, 2000). Alternatively, they feel that decision-making takes too long, and think that they can simplify the decision-making process to find a solution by unilaterally making some decisions. One example of this is the current Minister of Transport and Public Works' ideas for an urgent law procedure.

However, in my view, this repudiates the essence of these kinds of processes, the value conflict and in line with that, the fact that we often do not have cut-and-dry answers for these problems, no matter how eagerly the media makes us believe that we do. Many of these issues involve problems we have little knowledge of, or whose knowledge is contested, where we differ in opinions about the desired solutions and which involves the interests of civilians or other groups of people. These are problems we just cannot solve with quick unilateral measures, and for which we must search for solutions during the decision-making process, and attempt to assess which solutions would be acceptable for the parties involved. The decision-making process itself is a quest for solutions and the collection of the necessary information to be able to do so. It is an attempt to unite the various values with one another. To put it another way and repeat what I stated earlier: these kinds of complex processes are politics to the core, because what is politics if not a battle of values?

This means that we can only judge the outcomes of complex processes in networks by checking if a good attempt was made to combine the various values. This usually has to be done through the process itself. Only there do actors learn about the possibilities, does new information become available, and where creativity is required, because many different parties must be satisfied.

If interesting social content and outcomes are developed during the decision-making process, the idea of a common interest literally has become an empty concept, and something that can only refer to the generally accepted ways in which we have organised our actions (such as the general principles for good management, an open and accessible process, etc.). Policy proposals should be able to be justified and withstand criticism in a sound open democracy. They have to be capable of acquiring support from a solid coalition of actors, and this can be achieved by taking the interests of the parties involved into account when developing solutions and connecting them with one another.<sup>14</sup> A healthy distrust of actors who appeal to the common interest seems appropriate.

For example, in the Delft case, what was initially a simple plan for a tunnel evolved over the years into a much more complicated plan, in which town planning, multiple use of space, safety and other themes found a place, and this increased the amount of support for the proposal among various ministries (Ministry for the Interior, Ministry for Housing, Regional Development and the Environment and the Finance Department) and other authorities (province, Haaglanden region, and so on; see: Klijn, 2007). Comparable processes can be seen with other environmental planning processes (see for instance: De Bruijn et al., 2004).

#### **4 'It's the management, stupid!' : the crucial role of network management**

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<sup>14</sup> See note 9.

If good outcomes are to be achieved in complex decision-making processes that are not easy to control, then the way in which these processes are managed is probably very important. If we take another look at the Delft case, you will see that management and steering activities, which I will call *network management*<sup>15</sup>, took up a lot of energy. The municipality invested a lot of energy in involving various actors in the process and also in maintaining these contacts. Much energy also went into continuously improving the content of the plan, and monitoring where these improvements linked up with policy ideas, policy programmes and the interests of other actors, especially the various ministries. In this way, the planning phase involved an attempt to link up to the government's wishes with regard to public-private cooperation, the policy objectives from the Ministry for Housing, Regional Development and the Environment about innovative use of space and ideas from the Ministry of the Interior about safety effect reports and how they should be processed in concrete proposals for projects. At the same time, regular consultations with tenants and local economic actors were arranged. Also, the purchase of buildings that had to be demolished was begun, ways in which the tunnel could be built were investigated, and so on. Network management, that is, conscious attempts to govern the process as well as the content of governance networks and to facilitate and speed up the decision-taking process, was one of the main ingredients in the case and also one of the most important reasons why the rail tunnel dossier ended up on the national and regional agendas again after the completion of the discussion about the high-speed rail link, and it was also why the attention towards the Delft rail tunnel issue faded again after 1992 (Klijn, 2007).

#### *The importance of network management in complex decision-making processes*

Every project leader of an extensive environmental planning project in The Netherlands or anywhere else knows that it takes a lot of dedication, many management activities and a great many management skills to ensure success. This is also obvious from the Public Administration research that has been performed in the past on these cases (see for example: Edelenbos & Monninkhof, 2001; De Bruijn et al., 2004; Klijn et al., 2006). Together with Jurian Edelenbos, not long ago I looked at a few interactive decision-making processes, and compared them with one another. We looked at the way in which they were managed, the kinds of relations that existed with political institutions involved in the project, i.e. mainly city councils, the way in which different parties were involved, the outcomes and whether the parties involved were content with it.<sup>16</sup> Our conclusion was that the processes that could be characterised as having had good (network) management resulted in outcomes the involved parties were satisfied with (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2006). An interesting and rather unexpected outcome was that, in general, the relationship with political institutions was not very strong, nor was it decisive for achieving good outcomes and satisfaction from the actors.

One possible criticism is that since the research was based on qualitative research into a number of cases, how can we be sure that these outcomes represent a more general pattern? Together with Jurian Edelenbos and Bram Steijn, I recently conducted research among respondents involved in environmental planning projects. We asked them questions about the outcome of environmental planning projects, about the presence of certain network management activities and about trust, but also asked various questions about the characteristics of the project, such as organisational form and the level of complexity. I am unable to provide a detailed description of the research here, but it is interesting to note that we found a clear relationship between the number and the intensity of the applied network management strategies and good outcomes. Projects in which many network management strategies are applied (according to the respondents) are characterised by a high valuation of the outcomes (Steijn et al., 2008).

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<sup>15</sup> By network management, I mean the conscious governing and supervisory processes in governance networks. These activities can be aimed at the interactions (activation of actors, supervise interactions, create temporary organisational arrangements, and so on) as well as at content (explicit perceptions of actors, organise research activities, explore alternative options or launch new ideas for solutions, and so on; see Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004). In this case, governance refers to the ways in which processes are steered in networks, which can be more or less subconscious (habits or routines) or determined outside the network (statutory regimes). All network management activities are governance, but not all governance (mechanisms) is network management.

<sup>16</sup> Following note 9, we considered the outcomes to be good when more parties were satisfied and when the policy proposals showed a certain amount of innovation (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2006).

In addition, when we take a look at more recent international research, the importance of network management is also highlighted. Meier and O'Toole's (see: Meier & O'Toole, 2001; Meier & O'Toole, 2007) extensive research into education districts in Texas, USA clearly shows that the network management activities of the district managers have an effect on education in any district. They have found positive correlations between the behaviour of the managers (more active contact with other organisations, etc.) and rather solid data such as the number of graduates. A lot of other work by American researchers has also shown the positive effects of network management (see for example work by Agranoff (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003) and by Mandell (Mandell, 2003).

Research into the effects of processes in governance networks is still in its infancy, despite the fact that a lot of research into network decision-making has already been conducted. Most research so far has been concerned more with the course of processes, the behaviour of managers, access to actors involved, and so on. Systematic comparative research into the effects of network management activities is still rare. Part of the reason for this may be because the effects are not easily measured. After all, there can be many different results, and actors assess the outcomes quite differently. This makes systematic research into the effects of governance networks quite complicated.

Yet, the aforementioned outcomes of research seem to indicate that network management is a very important factor in understanding what makes governance networks effective, in the sense of producing socially relevant outcomes. This will be an important topic in the research I intend to conduct in the years to come. Since it is probable that the context determines the most effective management strategies, I do not want to limit this research to The Netherlands, but instead, will make an attempt at international comparisons.

#### *The importance of network management in comparison with other possible factors*

It is quite possible that further research into the role of network management will reveal even more important information than research into other factors, such as the chosen organisational forms in cooperation processes. For instance, we have not found a relationship in our research between the form of the projects, such as a project group, a project organisation, a formal legal form or no organisational form, and the outcomes of the projects (Klijn et al., 2008). Also, recently, Michiel Kort, who is a doctoral student whom I supervise, could find no relationship between the organisational form of the Urban Regeneration Companies (Wijk Ontwikkelings Maatschappijen) and the outcomes, in his research.. These examples do not provide conclusive proof, but they may indicate that we tend to overestimate the importance of the chosen organisational form for the realisation of outcomes in complex policy processes.

An explanation for this last finding could be that in the case of complex processes, managers have to deploy the whole range of network management strategies anyway in order to achieve good results. To put it more concretely: for a public-private partnership project, it simply does not matter whether it is being cast in a separate legal organisation as a consortium, or that there is 'only' a project group structure. In order to achieve interesting results, managers of both organisational forms will have to use the whole repertoire of network management strategies anyway. Our survey research of the respondents in environmental planning projects has also shown this. We were unable to establish a relationship between the organisational form and the number of network management strategies used (see: Klijn et al., 2008). In other words, , the form is not predicative of the number and the kinds of strategies used.

The research programme that I wish to undertake in the years to come should furnish a sturdier foundation for these primary results. This will help meet the challenge of developing more refined evaluation methods that do justice to the varied diversity of outcomes and judgements that are at issue with governance networks.

#### *Network management is also political in nature!*

Good network management is of course no guarantee for success. Processes in governance networks remain complex and can be influenced by unexpected developments, such as political changes or other events. Yet, in view of the above-mentioned research outcomes, it does not seem too bold of a proposition to consider factor network management as one of the central explanations for achieving good outcomes of processes in governance networks.

However, one important point must be made here. Earlier, I characterised governance processes in governance networks as political. They are, after all, about the battle between value conflicts. This means that the network management required to govern these processes and to achieve a favourable conclusion is political. In contrast with other representations that view management as a technical operation, I consider management to be a strongly political activity, at least network management as I analyze it in this inaugural speech. After all, the network manager is important for the way in which solutions are being sought, and for which value issues are and are not addressed, but also for the selection of actors and how selection processes are organised. This also means that the activities of managers, because there can be many in a complex process, should be subjected to accountability and openness. Here we touch on the important issue of the relationship between networks and the regular institutions of our parliamentary democracy (see, for an overview: Klijn & Skelcher, 2007; Sørensen & Torfing, 2007), but also the important issue of how decision-making and management in governance networks can be democratically embedded (Sørensen, 2002; Skelcher & Sullivan, 2007). This is the next theme I wish to address in this speech.

## **5 Drama-democracy and democratic anchorage of decision-making in governance networks**

How does this discussion about networks, complex decision-making and value conflicts relate to our prevailing political processes?

*The Political spectacle: a world in itself!*

When it comes to politics, the average person on the street usually thinks of developments in or at the *Binnenhof* in The Hague or at the White House, or of all the other places in the world where parliaments and central governments do their work. These places are even often referred to as ‘inner circles’, because they sometimes seem like a world in themselves (see: Van der Berg & Molleman, 1974). Hundreds of journalists attempt every day to pick up shreds of news for their newspapers or other media, and every remark, no matter how innocent, is collected, sounded and magnified in newspapers, news items or talk shows. On their part, politicians use the media to draw attention to their careers or plans or to speed them up. The impression this makes sometimes is that politics and the media are more involved with each other than with anything else.

I am not the only one, nor the first, to have observed this. It has, in fact, been expressed more aptly by others. The democratic political process seems to have increasingly become a drama-democracy, to use a term coined by the Belgian social scientist Elchardus (Elchardus, 2002). He has shown that news and media processes have become more important in the democratic political process. In addition, the news has become more individualized and individuals have taken on more importance. Although this may not yet be happening on the same magnitude in Europe as in the USA, the trend is unmistakable. On the other hand, and linked to this, is the fact that politics has become more and more theatrical, which has largely been boosted by the media. In the drama-democracy, with its focus on individuals and powerful imagery, it is crucial for the politician to direct his performance, but he can also be ‘demonised’ by the media processes. A slip of the tongue, a strong one-liner or a mistake is instantly placed on media like YouTube or is distributed numerous times via text messages.<sup>17</sup>

To govern then becomes to communicate continuously, and policy announcements become much more important than policy implementation. After all, policy announcements are news in a drama-democracy, while the implementation is much less newsworthy, except when things go wrong. Implementation is even dangerous, because enemies can be made during the execution, and one can be damaged by problems that occur during the implementation. Elchardus defines the rules of a drama-democracy as follows: ‘In a drama-democracy it is tempting to score via communication and

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<sup>17</sup> One of the most striking examples from 2008 in The Netherlands is the interview with Minister Vogelaar (ministry of Housing and responsible for a large renewal program for deteriorated city areas in The Netherlands), when she was questioned critically and to which she had no answer. Fragments of the interview could be seen on YouTube shortly after the broadcast, and so could be reviewed by many time and again, rather than be quickly forgotten.

representation. That is usually easier than clearing files and taking decisions, activities with which one always has the possibility of making enemies. A communication strategy takes up the place of ideology, announcing measures takes the place of taking measures, the convincing language replaces a supportive concept.' (Elchardus, 2002, p. 82, also see: Luyendijk, 2006, on how news is made).<sup>18</sup>

The remarks made by Elchardus in a sense echo the analyses of Edelman in the 1970s. Edelman (1977, 1988) talked about 'Words that succeed, policies that fail', by which he wanted to indicate that politics is mainly a verbal game, whose actual outcomes are not really important.<sup>19</sup> This representation of the political game is considered too gloomy by some, and perhaps it is a little in the representation of these two authors, but it does furnish an explanation for the continuing call for more steering, more decisiveness and stronger leadership in an administrative world that is becoming more and more complex and that requires dedicated political leadership on processes for a longer period of time. The image of the strong leader suits a personified, media-political world. The risks facing strong leaders, when they do not fulfil the high hopes placed upon them, is naturally high.<sup>20</sup> We tire quickly of our heroes in a drama-democracy.

#### *The drama-democracy: an example*

We only have to look at a recent political-administrative dossier such as the lessons norm for schools, which I mentioned at the beginning of this speech, to show the workings of the drama-democracy. The media commotion about the 1040 lesson-hours norm occurred, on the one hand, because schools could not meet the requirements of the norm and took all sorts of measures to find ways to meet it anyway, and on the other hand, because the LAKS, the national action committee for school pupils, took up the issue to create a distinct profile of themselves. The school demonstrations seen on television, organized by LAKS, were organised rapidly through modern communication strategies (text messaging, msn and YouTube) and the issue became widely known.<sup>21</sup> Through catchy terminology, such as *ophokuren* (penning-up hours), to describe lessons that schools instituted when lessons are cancelled due to sickness or other causes, further trouble was stirred. Consequently, unparalleled media hype was created. The media did not only take over coverage of the LAKS-activities, but also created a situation where each statement by the responsible state secretary and others was magnified through one-liners. The same state secretary, cornered by the media, got her teeth stuck in the subject more and more. Her slip of the tongue in the Lower Chamber, that schools should simply work harder, could be downloaded immediately from new media outlets. In the meantime, the contents of the proposal, to ensure and improve the quality of education, gradually disappeared from view.

#### *Drama-democracy and governance networks: clashing worlds!*

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<sup>18</sup> The strength of the drama-democracy has already been shown through the presentation of the Dijsselbloem committee, the parliamentary committee that reported on the effects of the system changes in education. The central message of the parliamentary committee was that politics wishes to utilize education for too many objectives, subjects education to too many unilaterally imposed measures without ever having researched what these measures concretely mean in daily practice, and does not listen to voices from the field. Less than 24 hours after publication of the report, one member of Parliament submitted a proposal for a subject in the school curriculum.

<sup>19</sup> Following Edelman, other authors have also used this image. Fisher's representation (Fisher, 2003) resembles Elchardus and Edelman quite closely. He states: 'Politicians and the media, as Edelman has shown, have turned contemporary politics into a political spectacle that is experienced more like a stage drama than reality itself. Based on socially constructed stories designed more to capture the interest of the audience than to offer factual portrayal events, the political spectacle is constructed by a set of political symbols and signifiers that continuously construct and reconstruct self-conceptions, the meaning of past events, expectations for the future, and the significance of prominent social groups (...). The spectacle of politics is a modern-day fetish, a creation in part of political actors that come to dominate the thoughts and activities of both its audience and the actors themselves' (Fisher, 2003, p. 58).

<sup>20</sup> The quick decline of President Bush's popularity in the USA is an example of this. Despite all the criticisms (especially from Europe), his popularity remained high for a long time, until it became clear that he could not fulfill the high hopes he had announced with regard to Iraq, crises and the war on terrorism.

<sup>21</sup> It is also interesting that there were various sites where the arguments of the LAKS were criticized, and where many nuanced stories about the 1040 lesson-hours norm could be found. These sites were hardly noticed by the media and the Ministry of Education. The media clearly chose to give the LAKS standpoint a lot of attention.

In this way, a strange split occurs, in which a significant part of empirical decision-making takes place within complex processes in which involved interests, including involved groups of citizens, attempt to intervene themselves, or at least to become involved. This is where politics is conducted intensively, but not always recognizably, and where processes require long-term dedication and a lot of network management in order to bring them to a favourable conclusion. On the other hand, the politics visible to the media and the citizen takes place more and more in an almost surrealistic media landscape, which requires powerful imagery, quick decision-making and clear steering. This call, as we have often observed, leads to strong intervention in complex processes, which often backfires. Politicians intervene in complex network-like processes through what they consider to be powerful measures, and in doing so are more likely to disrupt the results that have already been achieved.<sup>22</sup>

The rules of the drama-democracy, the stress on theatre, quick communication and individuals, seem to clash hard with those of complex decision-making processes in governance networks. The complex policy processes usually take a long time, are not easily communicated in terms of fast, simple measures, many unexpected events are possible and a lot can go wrong. These large projects are thus usually a thorn in the flesh of political authorities.

### *Solution: democratic anchorage and openness?*

In the discussion on drama-democracy, the analysis is more strongly represented than proposals for good solutions. Many seek to boost the parliamentary system, to separate politics from the media (see: Elchardus, 2002), or little attention is paid to the relationship between media and democracy.<sup>23</sup> The relationship between media and politics is probably a fact that will not be easily changed. New means of communication will probably increase the variety of media sources, but on the other hand will much sooner strengthen the nature of the drama-democracy, the stress on individuals, communication, the importance of media attention and the dominance of policy proposals over policy implementation. At the same time, complex processes in governance networks are linked to the world of the drama-democracy, if only because many policy proposals coming from the governance networks require financing. Support from public opinion can, thus, be of vital importance for complex decision-making processes at times.

This means that, in governance networks, various forms of democratic anchorage will have to be sought in order to provide the proposals with (political) legitimacy, and to make sure they survive in the drama-democracy. This makes the task of the network manager even more demanding.

This anchorage can be shaped in various ways (also see: Sørensen & Torfing, 2005; Skelcher et al., 2005; Bekkers et al., 2007; Skelcher & Sullivan, 2007).<sup>24</sup> One is that political authorities themselves can take on the role of network manager, or at least partially fulfil this role themselves. The political legitimization of the policy issue or policy project the governance network forms itself

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<sup>22</sup> Halfway through a complex process about the Zuidplaspolder, supervised by the province of Zuid Holland, another department of the province introduced, with political support, a reorganisation proposal for the municipalities concerned. There are many examples of strongly disruptive political interventions, which seem to be motivated by media attention or a sudden need for decisiveness, rather than by knowledge of the process itself. The 1040 lesson-hours norm mentioned earlier is also an example of this.

<sup>23</sup> In parliamentary circles, much more attention is paid to strengthening democracy.

<sup>24</sup> The concept of democratic anchorage refers to the way in which processes in governance networks are linked to notions of democratic representation. Much attention is paid to links with traditional political institutions (parliament, city council, provincial states), but democratic anchorage can also refer to other principles of democratic representation, such as the direct influence of citizens, grassroots representation and procedures with the actors involved in decision-making, and election rules of special institutional arrangements that have been instituted (such as consultation structures, soundboard groups, and so on; for instance see: Sullivan & Skelcher, 2002; Skelcher et al., 2005). For instance, Sørensen & Torfing list four ways of viewing democratic anchorage:

- Are networks controlled by democratically elected politicians?
- Do networks represent the interests, preferences and opinions of the members of the various groups that are a part of the network?
- Is the representation divided over territorially defined groups of citizens?
- Are the networks democratically organised themselves, i.e. are they organised in accordance with specific (democratic) rules?

Other authors tend to stress the importance of process rules (for example, that networks should be accessible to the actors involved; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2000; Edelenbos, 2005).

around is then at least partly derived from the fact that the political authority, for instance an alderman or member of the provincial states, assumes direct responsibility for the decisions made, the progress, the (intermediate) results, and so on. This seems self-evident, but political authorities are often far from the heart of the decision-making in complex decision-making processes. It also frequently is the case that they quickly distance themselves from a project when it is in deep water. A different role is required from the political authorities, in which they have to interact, negotiate, and so on. People will probably say that that is happening now, because we see secretaries of state, ministers, etc. consulting the field all the time and paying working visits. While this is certainly the case, tension continues to exist between these activities and the world of the drama-democracy, which can decide at any moment that these activities are progressing too slowly or are not decisive enough.

In short, the role of the political authority as network manager will always be at loggerheads with the rules of the drama-democracy in which the political authority is depicted as the strong initiator of new proposals and where there is no patience for negotiating processes with interested parties, executors, or other parties that are involved. The political authority as network manager is more of an actor among the actors, rather than the big leader.

However, it is also possible to achieve democratic anchorage in various other ways. Examples include various forms of process agreements for the involvement of politicians and stakeholders, forms of direct involvement of stakeholders, usually referred to in The Netherlands as 'interactive decision-making', but also various forms of consumer involvement such as consumer panels (see: Edelenbos, 2000; Lowndes et al., 2001; McLaverty, 2002).

Various forms of democratic anchorage can also lead to greater variety in the number of solutions that are taken into consideration. Much research into interactive decision-making has shown this to be the case (see: Edelenbos & Monninkhof, 2001; Edelenbos & Klijn, 2006), although, at the same time, we know from research that it is not always easy to use this variety well in the process, and to convey it in the results. In this sense, increasing democratic anchorage is not only recommendable from a normative point of view, but also from the viewpoint of effectiveness. In the aforementioned research into environmental planning projects, we found a clear relationship between the involvement of the stakeholders and the satisfaction of the respondents with the achieved result. These outcomes suggest that increasing democratic anchorage, in this case by involving stakeholders, is helpful for achieving satisfactory results. In my research programme for the years to come, I would like to pay more attention to the question of the ways in which various forms of democratic anchorage contribute to decision-making as well as the results of complex processes in governance networks, but also how they can be united with the rules of the drama-democracy.

With the subject of democratic anchorage I have, I hope, connected the most important threads of this presentation together. My plea for the importance of network management in complex policy issues within governance networks and my observation that these kinds of processes are political in nature link the care for democratic anchorage.

## **6 Policy, politics and Public Administration: a research agenda?**

It is about time I conclude this speech. You will have understood by now that, after all these years, I continue to be fascinated with complex managerial processes, and how well, in this modern network society, we succeed in generating socially relevant outcomes that are democratically anchored, recognizable and able to be influenced by citizens.

### *Research programme*

I aim to work on a research programme on the research issues I have just elaborated in the years to come. This requires further exploration into the effectiveness of governance networks, the ways in which they are managed and the way that complex policy issues are dealt with. It will also involve further research into the tension between these processes within regular political decision-making and into ways of maintaining managerial processes in governance networks as responsible, open and democratic as possible. This is undoubtedly required because the management of these processes has a strong political character and cannot be dismissed as being technocratic. With these research themes I

find myself, I think, at the heart of the research programmes of the Rotterdam faculty of Public Administration. That, however, probably comes as no surprise, considering my lengthy stay here.

I consider the two elements of my teaching and research commitment, policy and management, to be inextricably bound up with each other. Management and policy in a complex society are now, more than ever before in the history of Public Administration, linked, and Public Administration has become a discipline that pursues the governance of societal problem-solving via direct effort, and no longer the study of government policy, which is what I was trained in as student of Public Administration in the 1970s. The field of Public Administration will continue to develop further in the decades to come. I would not be surprised if at least a part of that development concerns the question of how this governance takes place in a 'mediatised' world, in which pictures and emotions play an important role. Despite all this, as Public Administration scientists, we are used to putting the rational element, a logically chosen strategy, a meaningful argument and analysis of underlying perceptions, first. I will not conceal from you the fact that I consider the relationship between media and democracy with a certain amount of uneasiness. Yet the question of how a society that creates and recreates itself through media pictures will be governed remains an important one. I do not have an answer to that, but I have attempted to engage with this subject through a brief discussion of my view on drama-democracy. I hope I am still able to find time for this subject in the years to come.

#### *The Delft case: everything turned out fine*

I have yet to tell you the ending of my story about the Delft Spoorzone. What happened in Delft after the Ministry of Transport and Public Works removed the project from the MIT-list? As a matter of fact, everything turned out fine in the end. By the end of 2003, the Lower Chamber again stated that money had to be made available for the Delft Spoorzone. Although the minister initially disregarded this statement, later in 2004, money did, in fact, become available for the project. I have already shown that much attention was paid to network management in this project, and also that a plan was formulated that received the support of a broad coalition of involved parties. With regard to content, the project has been able to integrate many different values (for an extensive analysis, please see Klijn, 2007). The success of this case can be attributed in large part to the intensive network management.

## **8 A word of thanks**

To conclude, I wish to extend a few words of thanks. Firstly, I would like to thank all the people I have had the pleasure of writing and performing research with in past years. In alphabetical order, they are: Ellen van Bueren, Arwin van Buuren, Lex Cachet, Jasper Eshuis, Lasse Gerrits, Marcel van Gils, Michael Hughes, Peter Hupe, Walter Kickert, Michiel Kort, Filip de Rynck, Chris Skelcher, Arie van Sluis, Bram Steijn, Geert Teisman, Katrien Termeer, Mark van Twist en Joris Voets. I would like to include those I worked with long ago in my architecture days: Kees van der Flier, André Mulder and Henk Westra. I hope I have not forgotten to mention anyone.

Now there are two people present here who may be thinking, "I have done some writing with him, but my name was not among those he just mentioned". I wish to extend special thanks to Jurian Edelenbos and Joop Koppenjan, with whom I have written more than with anyone else, and always very gladly so.

I wish to thank the Dean and board of governors of the University and the faculty of Social Science for the trust they have placed in me. I will do my utmost to live up to that trust.

To the members of the faculty of Public Administration,  
I have known you a long time, and I know this is a good place to be. In the years to come, I hope to contribute to the growth of the department of Public Administration.

To Professor Pollit and Professor Ringeling,  
I regard this chair as a combination of both your chairs. I hope that you will be content with the way I interpret it. Otherwise, I am sure you will know where to find me.



To the students of Public Administration,

This is the best profession anyone can wish for, and I hope to share my fascination of solving complex policy issues with you for many years to come, and to convince you of the social and scientific relevance of this profession, in case you still have any doubts about it.

To Professor Teisman, dear Geert,

It has been our mutual pleasure to have worked together for many years. I expect that our cooperation will be just as fruitful in this new relationship as it was before.

To Professor Skelcher, dear Chris,

I have tremendously enjoyed our cooperation over the last three years and would like to thank you for the opportunity you gave me to look elsewhere and to stimulate my evolution through a visiting professorship in Birmingham. I look forward to our continued cooperation and friendship.

To Henk Westra,

Thank you for giving a young inexperienced graduate public administration student an opportunity to take his first steps into research. I am still grateful for that and for your support.

Dear Dad,

You have motivated me to read, debate and think critically from an early age. That has, without a doubt, contributed to the fact that I am standing here today. I still cherish memories from my youth when everybody was debating with one another, sometimes quite loudly.

Dear Marlies, Anne and Sander,

My smallest network is also my most important one, and every day you are the best distraction anyone could wish for.

Dear Mom,

You have been gone a very long time, but I still miss your enthusiasm. Don't reach too high, you once said, and don't worry, it's only a simple professorship.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your time.

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Professor Dr. Erik-Hans Klijn is professor of Public Administration at the Department of Public Administration (Faculty of Social Sciences) of Erasmus University Rotterdam.

From the beginning of his career, he has been working on theory and research on complex decision-making in networks and on the question of how institutions influence decision-making in networks as well as how complex decision-making in networks can be managed. His research focuses mainly on the fields of housing, environmental planning and infrastructure but also includes research on public-private partnerships.

He completed his PhD on the influence of network rules on the restructuring of Post-War housing in 1996. His recent research has expanded to include themes of trust in complex decision-making and the tensions between horizontal decision-making in governance networks and representational democracy. The last theme is explored among an international group of researchers located in Birmingham (UK) and Roskilde (Denmark).

He is also actively engaged in the practical world of public administration and urban restructuring and infrastructure in various ways.

He has published many international articles in the last 10 years in influential scientific journals such as *Administration and Society* (1996, 2001 and 2007), *Public Administration* (1995, 2000 and 2007), *Public Administration Review* (2002), *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* (JPART) (2003, 2006) and *Public Management Review* (2000, 2002, 2006, 2008). Recently he co-authored with Joop Koppenjan an article entitled 'Managing uncertainty in networks; a network perspective on problem solving and decision-making' (2004, London: Routledge), which was well received in the academic world of Public Administration.

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