Polder Limits

A Case Study of Value-Conflicts on Dutch Rural Land Use

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Voor Sofie

You know, kid, ethics isn't about choosing between right and wrong; it's about choosing between grey and grey. It's about choosing between two equally desirable but mutually exclusive courses of action. Freedom or security? Courage or comfort? Self-examination or blissful happiness? Column A or column B? (Ferguson 2002:280)

You go to the fields on weekdays
And have a picnic on Labor Day
You go to town on Saturday
And go to church every Sunday
They call it Nutbush, oh Nutbush
They call it Nutbush city limits
(Bullock 1973)

Preface

Making this dissertation was pleasant and interesting. It started in March 2001 with literature research and rewriting the original research proposal. In November the same year I started doing fieldwork: attending meetings of District Committees in the Langbroekerwetering and South-east Fryslân. This created an entry for further research on the way in which values on rural land use are mediated and articulated in Dutch rural policy. The conversations with people concerned with the countryside yielded a lot of interesting information. I would like to thank very much the everybody, with whom I have talked, for their valuable knowledge and time. Especially, I would like to thank the members of the Koningsdiep, Linde and Landbroekerwetering District Committees, because they allowed me to get acquainted closely with value conflict mediation in practice.

Meanwhile, inspired by Flyvbjerg's book *Making social science matter*, I started in 2002 to process the information from the interviews into an article. After much rewriting, with Jaap Frouws as critical editor, it was published in 2005. This article 'Conflicts about water: a case study of contest and power in Dutch rural policy' is important, because it laid the theoretical foundation for this dissertation. Finally, I conducted the last interviews in August 2004 just before Sofie and I moved to Uppsala. Sofie obtained a scholarship to study nine months at the Swedish Agricultural University. In Uppsala, I continued writing the other chapters of this book.

Several people have helped me in my work. I would like to thank Jaap Frouws, my daily supervisor, for his reliable and meticulous concern. I can remember vividly our last conversation at the department, one month before he deceased. His ardency, willpower and humour were overwhelming. I would like to thank my promoter Jan Douwe van der Ploeg for the trust he gave me during my work and for his lively and interesting accounts of the lives of rural people, which made me want to study rural sociology. I would like to thank my other promoter, Adri van den Brink, for his help during the writing and our conversations searching for common grounds between planning and sociology. I would like to thank Bettina Bock, my other daily supervisor, for her critical supervision, her support during the construction of the introduction and conclusion, and all other practical help. Big thanks also to Ans van der Lande for all her help during my PhD. project and especially for helping with editing and printing the book. Thanks to my former collegues at the Rural Sociology Group in Wageningen for their *gezelligheid* ('cosiness', for lack of a better translation) and scholarship. They make the Group a nice and interesting working place. Special thanks also to my new colleagues at the department of Rural Development and Agroecology at the Swedish Agricultural University. The way in which they welcomed me at their department in November 2004 as a guest researcher, and since September 2006 as colleague, is exceptional.

This preface also provides a good opportunity to thank people who have been important outside university. I very much enjoyed many things. Making the play 'Pour Vivre Heureux, Vivons Caché', together with Tjerk Ridder and Inge Raadschelders; learning how to trim and shoe horses from farriers Dolf Noppen, Jörgen 'Rock and Roll' Gunnarson and Henrik 'Ardenner' Jonson; playing volleyball with H1 and H2 at WAHO; embarking on adventures such as 'Cabourg, never again' together with the Reviusboys Ernst de Wit, Edo Lagendijk and Willem Gispen; enjoying, amongst others, the slopes of Fulufjället and the innercity of

Tallinn with my paranimphs Arjen de Boer and Sander Brinkman; with my ‘neighbours’ Anneleen Kool and Hugo de Boer watching movies in the ‘barncinema’, brewing beer, holiday in Tenerife, fixing up an 1968 Volvo, making jokes, and all other things necessary for the good life in the Swedish countryside.

I thank Johannes, Jannie, John, Hilja, Pake and Beppe for all the good things we share as family. Lastly, Sofie, I want to thank you for the time we have been together, and which coincides with this PhD. project. The latter stops today; we continue together in Uppsala!

Voorwoord

Werken aan dit proefschrift was plezierig en interessant. Het begon in maart 2001 met literatuuronderzoek en herschrijven van het originele onderzoeksvoorstel. In november datzelfde jaar ben ik gestart met veldwerk: het bijwonen van vergaderingen van gebiedscommissies in de Langbroekerwetering en Zuidoost Fryslân. Dat verschafte me een ingang voor verder onderzoek naar de wijze waarop waarden t.a.v. ruraal landgebruik tot uitdrukking komen en worden gemedieerd in het Nederlandse plattelandsbeleid. De gesprekken met mensen betrokken bij het platteland leverden veel interessante informatie op. Ik wil iedereen met wie ik heb gepraat hartelijk danken voor het beschikbaar stellen van hun waardevolle kennis en tijd. In het speciaal, wil ik de leden van de gebiedscommissies Koningsdiep, De Linde en Langbroekerwetering bedanken, omdat ze me in staat hebben gesteld van zeer dichtbij kennis te maken met waardenconflict mediëring in praktijk.

Ondertussen, geïnspireerd door Flyvbjerg's boek *Making social science matter*, was ik in 2002 begonnen om informatie uit de gesprekken te verwerken in een artikel. Na veel herschrijven, met Jaap Frouws als kritische eindredacteur, is het in 2005 gepubliceerd. Dit artikel 'Conflicts about water: a case study of contest and power in Dutch rural policy' is belangrijk, omdat het de theoretische basis heeft gelegd voor dit proefschrift. Tenslotte heb ik in augustus 2004 de laatste gesprekken gevoerd. Sofie had een beurs gekregen om negen maanden aan de Zweedse Landbouw Universiteit in Uppsala te studeren. In Uppsala ben ik verder gaan schrijven aan de andere hoofdstukken van dit boek.

Verschillende mensen hebben me geholpen bij mijn onderzoek. Jaap Frouws, mijn dagelijkse begeleider, wil bedanken voor zijn betrouwbare en precieze begeleiding. Ons laatste gesprek op de vakgroep, een maand voordat hij overleed, herinner ik me goed. Jaap's gedrevenheid, wilskracht en humor waren overweldigend. Ik wil mijn promotor, Jan Douwe van der Ploeg, bedanken voor het vertrouwen dat hij in me stelde gedurende mijn werk, en voor zijn levendige en interessante verhalen over het leven op het platteland, waardoor ik rurale sociologie ben gaan studeren. Adri van den Brink, mijn andere promotor, wil bedanken voor zijn hulp en de plezierige samenwerking bij het schrijven en voor onze gesprekken over de raakvlakken tussen sociologie en planning. Bettina Bock, mijn andere dagelijkse begeleider, wil ik bedanken voor haar kritische begeleiding, en hulp bij het in elkaar sleutelen van de inleiding en conclusie, en voor alle andere praktische hulp. Ans van der Lande, wil ik bedanken voor al haar hulp tijdens mijn promotietijd, en in het bijzonder voor het editen van dit proefschrift. Mijn oud-collega's op de vakgroep Rurale Sociologie in Wageningen wil ik danken voor hun gezelligheid en geleerdheid. Ze maken de vakgroep tot een prettige en interessante werkplek. Speciale dank verdienen ook mijn nieuwe collega's op het departement van Rurale Ontwikkeling en Agroecologie aan de Zweedse Landbouw Universiteit in Uppsala. De manier waarop ze me met alle gastvrijheid in november 2004 hebben ontvangen als gastonderzoeker, en sinds september 2006 als collega, is erg bijzonder.

Dit voorwoord geeft me ook een goede gelegenheid om mensen te bedanken die belangrijk zijn buiten de universiteit. Ik heb met heel veel plezier samen met Tjerk Ridder en Inge Raadschelders de toneelvoorstelling 'Pour Vivre Heureux, Vivons Caché' gemaakt. De hoefsmeden Dolf Noppen, Jörgen 'Rock and Roll' Gunnarson en Henrik 'Ardenner' Jonson wil ik bedanken omdat ze me hebben geleerd hoe ik een paard moet beslaan. Met veel plezier

heb ik gevolleybald met H1 en H2 van WAHO. De Reviusjongens, Ernst de Wit, Edo Lagendijk en Willem Gispen, bedankt voor ‘Nooit meer Cabourg’ en andere avonturen. Mijn paranimfen, Sander Brinkman en Arjen de Boer, voor hun vriendschap tijdens reizen naar o.m. de hellingen van Fulufjället en de binnenstad van Tallinn. Mijn ‘buren’, Hugo de Boer en Anneleen Kool, voor hun vriendschap, het goedgekeurd krijgen van een Volvo uit 1968, bier brouwen, vakantie in Tenerife, schuurbioscoop, grappen maken en alles wat nog meer nodig is voor het goede leven op het Zweedse platteland.

Johannes, Jannie, John, Hilja, Pake en Beppe wil ik bedanken voor al het goede dat we als familie delen. Ten slotte, Sofie, ik wil je bedanken voor de tijd die we samen zijn, en die precies samenvalt met dit promotietraject. Dat laatste houdt vandaag op; wij gaan samen door in Uppsala!

Part 1

Value-Conflicts in Theory

1 Value-conflicts on rural land use

1.1 Rural differentiation

> *'It is a beautiful challenge to turn the brook into a low-level brook dale nature reserve. This will be something unique in The Netherlands. Nature has always been cut into and now we can create nature. That is a whole new development in land use'* (Ecological researcher).

> *'The farmers' heart will say that meandering of the brook is rubbish. Thirty years ago we straightened and canalised the brook and we had a land consolidation scheme, which improved this area tremendously. And now we have to turn back time, give up the developments we achieved over the years!'* (Farmers' representative).

These statements belong to participants of a Dutch project aiming to integrate different rural land use functions in South-east Fryslân. For this purpose a committee was set-up in which representatives of the different stakeholders advise on developing the region. The representatives quoted here, are members of the Koningsdiep District Committee. Management of the Koningsdiep brook was a major controversy in this committee, which will be elaborated on in Chapter 3. These quotes introduce the subject of this dissertation: value-conflicts within rural policy and planning. This dissertation explores how these conflicting values over rural land use are resolved in practice. Resolving such value-conflicts is difficult, especially within societies characterised by social and economical differentiation.

Several studies have analysed processes of social and economic differentiation within rural areas of Great Britain (Murdoch *et al.* 2003), The Netherlands (Frouws 1996), Europe in general (Symes 1992) and Australia (Wilson 2004). These processes are referred to as 'a shift from productivism to post-productivism' (Wilson 2001); 'a change from countrysides of production to countrysides of consumption' (Slee 2005); or as 'a replacement of a modernisation paradigm by a new rural development paradigm' (Van der Ploeg *et al.* 2000). Wilson and Rigg (2003) identify six indicators of this differentiation process: policy change; organic farming; counter-urbanisation; the inclusion of environmental NGOs within policy-making; consumption of the countryside; and on-farm diversification activities. These differentiation processes are closely connected with a process of value differentiation concerning rural land use (Nooij 1993). Currently post-productivist countrysides are not only valued for their agricultural productivity but also for their environmental qualities, possibilities for leisure activities and as living areas. These disparate values over rural land use possess the potential for social conflict due to problems of value incommensurability.

1.2 The problem of value incommensurability

> *'In modern societies there are few if any common, binding values. Values and norms are pluralistically applicable on the basis of situations, persons and times. Thus, what is crucial is the definition of the situation. And this situation is not simply 'given'. Rather, it is a bargain struck for the time being by the participants in the episode'* (Lyman and Scott 1970:8-9).

Value incommensurability has been a topic of study in sociology, political science, planning studies and philosophy. It means that distinct intrinsically valued properties, such as autonomy, knowledge, freedom, beauty, amongst others, are so basically different that they cannot be realised together at the same time (Chang 1997; Griffin 1997). Commensuration involves the expression or measurement, of such characteristics, represented by different values, according to a common scale or overarching value (Espeland and Stevens 1998).

Value incommensurability is particularly a problem in conflicts on rural land use. These conflicts are not only on (economic) interests, but also on values concerning what is right or wrong in a moral sense, e.g. justice in the distribution of goods and burdens, fairness in decision-making and accountancy for future generations and for non-humans (Beatley 1994; Dean 1999; O'Neill and Spash 2000). Incommensurability is an essential difference between interests and values, which is often not considered[1]. Interests can be made commensurable (often financially[2]). Values cannot be measured with a common scale. Different values might appear as ultimate values in their own right and as such cannot be resolved rationally; i.e. they are incommensurable. Therefore decision-making on rural land use and resolving conflicts on rural land use typically involves problems of value incommensurability[3], and provides a dilemma for modern democracies.

The following section will outline a well-rehearsed sociological analysis, which states that solving value-conflicts is becoming more difficult in modern democracies, which are characterised by diversifying values. This process of value differentiation is closely connected to a process of de-institutionalisation, in which traditional institutions gradually lose their capacity to discipline social action. These interrelated processes make a democratic resolution of value-conflicts problematic in two ways: a) more values have to be taken into account, and b) institutionalised modes for value-conflict resolution lose their previously undisputed legitimacy and trust. In consequence, value-conflicts become more difficult to solve.

Despite the amplified difference between values over rural land use, it is puzzling that in practice value-conflicts are being solved anyway. It makes one wonder how this is possible and if, or to what extent, the above analysis might be wrong? This puzzle and the questions it raises lies at the basis of the general research question of this dissertation.

If values are incommensurable, how can we explain that value-conflicts on rural land use are nevertheless being solved in practice?

The next sections discuss and clarify this key research question and the underlying dilemma drawing on the theories of Weber, Habermas and Foucault.

1.3 Institutionalisation of value-conflict resolution

> *'This whole process of rationalization in the factory and elsewhere, and especially in the bureaucratic state machine, parallels the centralization of the material implements of organization in the hands of the master. Thus, discipline inexorably takes over ever larger areas as the satisfaction of political and economic needs is increasingly rationalized. This universal phenomenon more and more restricts the importance of charisma and of individually differentiated conduct'* (Weber 1922 [1978]:1156).

Traditionally, sociological theory has always reserved an important role for institutions in coordinating social action (Durkheim, 1893 [1963]; Weber 1922 [1978]). Institutions are:

> *'Collective and objective patterns of acting, thinking and feeling, which exert a stimulating and controlling influence on individual and subjective actions, thoughts and feelings'* (Zijderveld 2000:32).

Institutions are keys in resolving value-conflicts. Focussing on institutions and the process of institutionalisation can help to clarify how and why value-conflicts over rural land use are resolved in practice. They are resolved because modes for resolution become institutionalised. Cohen and Ben-Ari (1993:277) describe institutionalisation of value-conflict resolution as:

> *'A process through which binding rules of conduct are established so that (1) the respective domains of incompatible values are defined and (2) the boundaries between them are marked out in a manner that (3) the potential conflict between the practical implications of the values is mediated and (4) an acceptable trade-off between them determined. Institutionalised rules thereby provide 'ready-made' accounts for individuals.'*

Value-conflict resolution becomes objectified and routinised through this process of institutionalisation. This means that a certain mode for resolution is perceived as natural or normal and therefore needs no further justification. Institutionalisation obscures its essential socially constructed nature (Berger and Luckmann 1966) as well as the incommensurability between values. It is an important imperative for social action, because it facilitates people's ability to deal routinely with otherwise complex moral dilemmas, and establishes a reproduction and continuation of society (Giddens 1984).

To be precise, this means that institutionalisation never completely resolves value incommensurability but rather mediates it time and again. This is a crucial difference, which has also consequences for the terminology used to describe the resolution of value-conflicts. The word 'resolution' is not very useful if one assumes that values are incommensurable, because 'resolution' entails a commensuration of values. In this case, it is more appropriate to use the word 'mediation', which indicates efforts in which values are realised together.

1.4 Substantial and functional modes for value-conflict mediation

Weber (1864-1920) is one of the first sociologists who described different modes of value-conflict mediation. He analysed the effects of the emergence of modern society on patterns of social action and human values through a comparative analysis of religious systems in China, India and Europe (Giddens 2001). Based on this study he argued that in modern societies people gradually substitute traditional, common values based on habit, superstition and religion for values based on norms of efficiency and effectiveness, aiming at personal success (Collins and Makowsky 1998). He labelled this substitution process as rationalisation. In his theory Weber discusses, as ideal-types[4], two ways of dealing with value incommensurability. The first is substantial-rational action which is characterised by 'a conscious belief in the unconditional intrinsic value of a given conduct or end state, irrespective of its success' (Cohen and Ben-Ari 1993:269).

> *'Social action may be value-rational, that is, determined by a conscious belief in the value for its own sake of some ethical, aesthetic, religious, or other form of behaviour, independently of its prospects of success'* (Weber 1922 [1978]:25).

These intrinsic values are people's (often unconscious) ideas about right and wrong and what is desirable in its own right. These values are absolute, which means that:

> *'All other potential values become significant only as means and conditions, possible aids or hindrances, to the attainment of this central value'* (Weber cited in Cohen and Ben-Ari 1993:270).

This absolute value is non-negotiable, i.e. it cannot be traded off against other values. So, people who act substantial-rationally never experience problems of incommensurability, because there is always one absolute value, which they prioritise.
The second way of dealing with incommensurability of values is by functional-rational mediation; matching ends with means. It is conscious, rational action aimed at success, focused on means, methods and procedures for effective and efficient realisation of certain values. According to Weber (1922 [1978]:27):

> *'Action is functional rational when the end, the means, and secondary results are all taken into account and weighed'*

A functional-rational person 'weighs off the desired against the undesired consequences of alternative courses of action and calculates the cost of the realisation of the desired goal in terms of the consequent injury to other values' (Weber cited in Cohen and Ben-Ari 1993:270). A standard of evaluation or common measure is essential for functional-rational mediation to compare and evaluate options. Following the appropriate procedures will allow assessing the relative gains and losses of the implementation of certain values, to ensure value commensuration (Hadari 1988).

1.5 Institutional incapacity and value incommensurability

> *'That is, the problem of democratisation is precisely the fact that these values* [freedom and equality] *are mutually contradictory, yet intrinsically linked. Actually, democracy is an impossible dream'* (Zijderveld 2000:195).

Once again, Weber (1922, [1978]:27) analysed the modernisation of society as a gradual substitution of substantial rationality for functional rationality. This means that modern societies will increasingly experience problems of value incommensurability, due to value differentiation, but will try to solve these problems functional-rationally, i.e. by evaluating costs and benefits of certain courses of action.

Since Weber, the rationalisation or modernisation of society has been problematised. Several authors have argued that the frequent incapacity of institutionalised modes for value-conflict mediation and the obstinacy of value-conflicts are typical features of modern democratic societies (Hooghe and Houtman 2003; Hajer 2003; Zijderveld 2000). As illustrated for rural land use at the start of this chapter, values in modern democratic societies are differentiating with people becoming more individualistic and self-conscious. This process is inextricably linked with a 'de-institutionalising impetus' in which social structures become more pluralistic and abstract (Zijderveld 2000:91). Institutionalised modes of value-conflict mediation lose their previously undisputed legitimacy and trust. Instead, trust and legitimacy have to be actively constructed and maintained. Problems of value incommensurability surge up as dilemmas when institutional arrangements fail to provide a satisfactory mode for mediation of value-conflicts. In its turn, this institutional incapacity enlarges the discrepancy between norms and practices. At these moments the objectivity or 'normalness' of value-conflict mediation is exposed and people might reject conventional solutions[5]. In other words, the discrepancy between the norm and practice, i.e. how value-conflicts have to be mediated and how they are actually mediated, intensifies. According to basic democratic norms all values need to be accounted for, to ensure that people are free to act according to particular values, without the use of force or power abuse (Kleefmann 1985; Schnabel 2004). In practice, these democratic norms are translated functional-rationally into conventional solutions consisting typically of an aggregation of individual values by electoral mechanisms such as voting. These practices have been criticised by theorists of deliberative democracy because they stimulate strategic behaviour rather than a shared agreement (Knight and Johnson 1994).

1.6 Habermas and Foucault

> *'Taken together, the works of Jürgen Habermas and Michel Foucault highlight an essential tension in modernity. This is the tension between the normative and the real, between what should be done and what is actually done. Understanding this tension is crucial to understanding modern democracy, what it is and what it could be'* (Flyvbjerg 1998:210)

The founding father of theory on deliberative democracy, Habermas (1929), aims to offer an alternative institutionalised mode for value-conflict mediation, to avoid strategic behaviour due to a dominant functional rationality. Habermas explicitly tries to search for a middle ground between Weber's rationalities by introducing a *communicative* rationality (Habermas 1984). A communicative rationality can be established through a process of intersubjective rational deliberation and argumentation. This generates new commonly held values and reduces strategic behaviour of stakeholders and the exercise of power. For this purpose Habermas

defined general, normative guidelines or procedures, for democratic decision-making, which stimulate seeing one's own values as comparable to the values of others (Espeland and Stevens 1998). Habermas acknowledges value-subjectivity, which makes it impossible to address specific contents of deliberation beforehand. Much of the deliberative turn in both theory and practice of policy and planning is premised on the approach of Habermas because it offers a rigorous method for democratising decisions and sharing power. In this view, policy and planning is the art of establishing new shared values from a discussion of value differences.

The theory of Habermas received, next to broad theoretical and practical support, also criticism. This critique, which is based on the work of Foucault (1926-1984) doubts the worth of the theory of Habermas for practical value-conflict mediation. Foucault argued that power relations and the exercise of power are always irreducibly part of social action. Power not only limits social action but also shapes it by producing social preferences, values, truth and rationality (Foucault 1976 [2000a]). These are all socially constructed within relations of power between people. He continuously highlighted how rationality is not universal or objective but depends on power relations between people in context. He stressed this point because the idea of a universal objective measure to mediate value-conflicts obfuscates the actual workings of power, inherent to social action. Foucault agrees with Habermas that values can develop within deliberation processes but he refuses to believe that these new values can be a result of a power-free mediation. From his arguments it follows that value-conflicts are inherent features of social and political life and always involve a 'tragic choice' (Sunstein 1994). Thus power cannot be shared or neutralised between stakeholders through institutionalised normative guidelines. Such procedures to establish new values and consensuses constitute power in itself. According to this critique Habermas' theory fails to integrate the ideal with the real of value-conflict mediation because it does not pay attention to the productive dimension of power, i.e. how power is exercised in the production of shared values.

1.7 Specification of the research question

Based on the general research question, the objective of this dissertation is to use the theories of Weber, Habermas and Foucault to explain why and how conflicts on rural land use are mediated in practice, even when values are conceived as incommensurable. This section divides the general research question into three subquestions, which are formulated on the basis of presented theories. First, following Weber, to be able to know how value-conflicts are mediated it is important to know which modes for value-conflict mediation are institutionalised. This insight is used to formulate the first sub-question:

Which mode of value-conflict mediation is used in practice? What does this mean for the articulation of values concerning rural land use?

Second, due to a process of de-institutionalisation modern democracies are frequently confronted with a strong discrepancy between the ideals (or norms) and practices of value-conflict mediation. What looks fair and just in theory often runs into the sands of messy value-conflicts. The effort of Habermas to outline an alternative mode for value-conflict mediation shows that it is necessary to understand how precisely the

normative ideal differs from its empirical reality. This insight is used to formulate the second subquestion:

In what sense does the normative ideal of value-conflict resolution differ from the empirical reality of value-conflict mediation?

Furthermore, the confrontation between Habermas and Foucault indicates that it is important to know how power is exercised in value-conflicts. Habermas believes that institutions can be redesigned to mediate value-conflicts through rational deliberation, which produces new commonly shared values. In contrast, Foucault thinks that such mediation does not equalise power but rather obfuscates the dynamics of power at work. This insight is used to formulate the third sub-question:

Which power relations are produced within value-conflict mediation of rural land use?

1.8 Research methodology

> *'How are choices made among incommensurable goods?* […]. *Relatively little can be said in the abstract. Instead we need to offer detailed descriptions of how such choices are made, and how to tell whether such choices turn out well'* (Sunstein 1997:856).

The previous discussion on value-conflicts shows that the content of values and their articulation is inextricably connected with social context. One very important method to generate context-dependent knowledge is case study research (Stake 1995; Flyvbjerg 2001; Thacher 2006). With a case study, researchers can get close to real-life situations, which allows for a realistic and nuanced view of social action including agency, contingency and complexity. At first sight, generalisation and theory building appear not particularly strong in case study research. But the use of a case study for generalisation depends on its particularities and its selection. The strategic choice of a case can contribute extensively to its generalising power (Stake 1995). According to Flyvbjerg (2004:425) an extreme or unusual case is able to provide an 'understanding-oriented and an action-oriented perspective', which can 'clarify the deeper causes behind a given problem and its consequences'. The next sections outline why rural policy and planning in The Netherlands can be considered an extreme case of value-conflict mediation.

1.9 The case study: value-conflict mediation in the Netherlands

> *'A good example of a society minimising such clashes of interest is The Netherlands* […]. *I never understood why, until on a recent trip to The Netherlands I posed the question to three of my Dutch friends while driving through their countryside'* (Diamond 2005:519).

For this dissertation two cases of value-conflicts on rural land use have been analysed. Both cases are situated in The Netherlands. The next sections discuss why several geographical and social characteristics of Dutch rural land use make it a particular suitable case considering the research questions of this dissertation.

1.9.1 Heterogeneity

A striking feature of the Dutch countryside is its heterogeneity both in a physical and a social sense (RLG 1999). A relatively small area exhibits a broad range of distinct landscapes, resulting from different land use traditions. Historically, this social and physical heterogeneity has been a source of strive and conflicts in The Netherlands[6]. Recently, social heterogeneity concerning rural land use increased. While the Dutch countryside used to be valued primarily for its agricultural production, nowadays it is also valued for its environmental and cultural qualities and possibilities for leisure activities (NIPO 2001). Consequently, the values of various rural stakeholders diversified, with more and new actors claiming space in the countryside (Leeuwis 2003). These changes increased the potential for value-conflicts, e.g. often agricultural modernisation does not fit in with nature restoration (see the quotes at the start of this chapter). Furthermore, the Dutch demographical and geographical characteristics – a small country with a high population density – makes value-conflict mediation even more complicated.

Especially in the Dutch context several critical enabling conditions for a sustainable use of common natural resources are absent (McCay and Acheson 1987; Ostrom 2000; Dietz *et al.* 2003). Agrawal (2001) identified 36 factors which are responsible for sustainable use of common property. Although these factors are almost exclusively discussed with reference to low-income countries, they are also applicable to Dutch rural land use. Agrawal (2001: 1659) argues that characteristics such as: small group size and shared norms are beneficial for sustainable resource management. Another enabling factor he discusses are the characteristics of institutional arrangements, such as: simple and understandable rules; locally devised access and management rules; and ease in enforcement of rules. Especially, these characteristics of rural policy and planning hamper governance of the Dutch countryside.

1.9.2 Consensual mode of value-conflict mediation

Due to this heterogeneity Dutch rural policy and planning (RPP) has always played an important role in the mediation of value-conflicts on rural land use. Traditionally, Dutch society has been divided socially, culturally and politically. In reaction, policy and planning institutionalised a consensual mode of dealing with value-conflicts to secure national economic success and to prevent the disintegration of Dutch society (Lijphart 1997; Hendriks and Tops 2000). Consensus was built between leaders of the different sub-national cultures, i.e. secular (Socialist and Liberal) or confessional (Catholic and Protestant), which were organised ‘perpendicularly’ (intersecting the various horizontal socio-economic classes) (Zijderveld 2000:147). These so-called ‘pillars’ were ruled top-down by men from upper or upper-middle class families (Zijderveld 2000). The ruling elite of each group built a consensus across them, without reducing the distinction between the different cultures. The norm was that the constituencies within the different pillars accepted the decisions of their leaders.

During the second half of the 20th century this hierarchal consensual mode of value-conflict mediation malfunctioned due to a de-institutionalising impetus (see 1.5). As a result RPP democratised in two ways. First, it broadened its objective from an exclusive agricultural modernisation towards inclusive rural development. This meant

that from the 1970s onwards RPP began to target more forcefully environmental regulation, the preservation of nature and landscape, recreation and housing besides an agricultural modernisation. With the broadening of its scope, RPP aimed to integrate the various rural land use functions. Central concepts used to obtain this goal were: 'multipurpose land use' (*multifunctioneel landgebruik*), which indicates that land use could serve different functions simultaneous, and 'spatial quality' (*ruimtelijke kwaliteit*), which is an indicator of overall quality of landscape including all different forms of rural land use.

Second, to gain legitimacy and support for policy proposals, the government could no longer rely solely on the political leadership of the traditional pillars. Consensus between different values now had to be struck on lower socio-political scales, and between more stakeholders often through various participative and interactive policymaking initiatives within rural land use projects. This new mode promised to involve stakeholders, taking account of their views and acknowledging their competence and abilities to co-operate in policy and planning. A view that RPP needed to provide and facilitate coordination, integration and cooperation between groups in society, became dominant (Pröpper 2000). Deliberation and consultation circuits of policy and planning therefore opened up to include new kinds of stakeholder- and interest groups. Participation was thought to enable the tailoring of regional and local solutions and was meant to increase regional support for general policymaking. At the start of the 1990s regional rural land use projects became important instruments meant for the integration of different land use functions, different values and interests of stakeholders and for facilitation of collective action through stakeholder participation and deliberation. Typical for this period was the construction of 'area-based policy'[7], which was considered a device to cope with value-conflicts on regional rural land use.

This new mode of RPP is based on several assumptions: that individuals have self-governing capacities (SCP 2005); and that their actions are interest-driven (RPB 2003), which means that interests about rural land use can be clearly identified, measured, compared, interchanged and harmonised through participation of stakeholders in rural land use projects. In this way, RPP is able to stimulate and create so-called 'win-win situations'. Typical for these assumptions is that they are based on an objective, generalising, economic definition of interest. In other words, people are no longer driven by common socialist, liberal or confessional values, but rather through individual economic self-interests. Dutch RPP could have been very well used by Weber to substantiate his modernisation thesis.

1.9.3 A Dutch discrepancy

Recent studies suggest that Dutch RPP is ill-equipped to handle conflicts over rural land use (Driessen *et al.* 1995; Van Tatenhove and Leroy 1995; Leeuwis 1995; Bock 2002). Dutch RPP fails to link up appropriately with rural regions. Its emphasis is too much on accountability and realisation of detailed state goals (Boonstra 2004). Dutch RPP fails to account for the growing plurality of rural land use activities, which are based on very conflicting values. These tensions between different values have the potential to end in tenacious social conflicts. This short description shows that the Dutch countryside faces a problem typical for democratic societies: how to integrate the ideals of rural land use in a situation of growing value differentiation (see 1.5).

1.9.4 Two regional projects for rural land use

Two different projects for rural land use have been studied. The first is the *Langbroekerwetering Project*, which was implemented to negotiate overlapping claims for rural space of different stakeholders. The co-operation in the committee seemed quite harmonious. At least there was no history of deep conflicts. Because of the characteristics of the regional landscape, the overlapping claims and the apparently consensus-steering committee, it seemed ideal as a case to analyse if this project managed to take successful account of the disparate values concerning rural land use and which mode of value-conflict mediation institutionalises (Chapter 4 and 7).

The second one is the *ROM project* in South-east Fryslân, which started in 1991 and is still operating today. This remarkable long duration is the result of long and complicated struggles between participants. These struggles concerned the allocation of future nature reservations, the effects of generic ammonia policy for farm development and water management. They were played out on different policy levels: from individual farm-level up to the Dutch national parliament. An in-depth study of the development of the ROM project South-east Fryslân was used to analyse the use of power between rural stakeholders over a longer period of time. This could generate information about the way in which RPP has been used to mediate value-conflicts. Also the many events that had taken place in the history of the ROM project allow an analysis of how power relations between participants came into being. To be able to use the ROM project as a case, different in-depth information was needed. Initially, only the planning process in the District Committee Koningsdiep from 2001 until 2003 was studied (Chapter 3). However, for a full understanding of the dispute within this committee, it was necessary to gain information on the start and further development of the ROM project during the 1990s (Chapter 8), the *Koningsdiep* land consolidation project in the 1950s (Chapter 6) and the particular values held by the farmers of the region (Chapter 5).

1.10 Outline dissertation

This dissertation consists of three parts. Part 1 encompasses this introduction together with an elaboration on the theoretical framework used to study value-conflicts onr rural land use. Chapter 1 introduces the problem studied and presents the general research question. It outlines the sociological theory that underpins the general research question and uses this theory to specify this general research question. In Chapter 2 the theoretical foundation of the research questions is explored further through a comparative discussion of the work of Habermas and Foucault.

Part 2 comprises six papers that each make up a chapter. Some of these chapters have been published previously in peer-reviewed scientific journals and books. For this reason they also contain information on theory, methodology and background of the problem studied. Although it has been tried to minimise repetition as much as possible, this causes some overlap between part one and two. Chapter 3 is written together with Jaap Frouws and has been published in the *Journal of Rural Studies* and contains an analysis of the difference between the normative ideal of consensus in Dutch RPP and the actual policy and planning practices by focusing on a power struggle in the District Committee Koningsdiep. Chapter 4 has been published in *The*

Netherlands Geographical Studies. It investigates how people's values are relevant within RPP and how these values can be studied and identified. Empirical material for this paper derived from the case study on the Langbroekerwetering Project. Chapter 5 appeared as a chapter in the *Liber Amicorum for Jaap Frouws*. It summarises the critique against deliberative democratic theory and discusses an alternative approach towards political theory and practice based on Foucault's analysis of modern power. This analysis is illustrated with the attempt of a farmer to establish *The Koningsdiep Environmental Cooperative*. Chapter 6 is written together with Adri van den Brink and will be published in *Planning Theory and Practice* and analyses the institutional transformation of Dutch rural planning concerning conflict mediation and its consequences for the dynamics of power in planning. This analysis is based on a comparative case study of land use planning in South-east Fryslân. Chapter 7 consists of a paper, published in *Sociologia Ruralis*, which discusses the validity of two hypotheses regarding the perceived void between Dutch rural policy and practice. Using information from the case study on the Project Langbroekerwetering it argues that both hypotheses neglect processes of re-institutionalisation and re-politicisation in Dutch rural policy. Chapter 8 is written together with Bettina Bock and has been submitted to *Science, Technology and Human Values*. It compares the deliberation processes concerning ammonia regulation between farmers and government in North- and South-east Fryslân. This comparison elucidates the factors responsible for success and failure of deliberative democracy in context. Part 3 consists of the general discussion and conclusion. It recapitulates and summarises the research results and discusses how these could benefit the theoretical and practical understanding of value-conflict mediation concerning rural land use.

Notes

1 For example, Bourdieu (1998) does not make the distinction between interest and value. Due to this collation he is being blamed of reducing social action to purely strategical, egoistical, a-moral action (Alexander 1995; Sayer 1999). Bourdieu supporters on their turn argue that the critics have poorly read Bourdieu (Potter 2000), which is likely considering Bourdieu's ambiguous and complex prose.

2 The financial commensuration of values by reformulating them into interests has a strong affinity with Marx's concept of commoditisation (Van der Ploeg 1990).

3 Other authors refer to problems of value incommensurability in conflicts sometimes as 'wicked' (Lachappelle *et al.* 2003; McCool and Guthrie 2001), 'messy' (Nie 2003), 'hard choices' (Cohen and Ben-Ari 1993) or 'intractable' (Schön and Rein 1994).

4 It is important to realise that ideal-types are analytical distortions of reality. They do refer to social reality but over- or underemphasise certain dimensions of it and as such serve as sociological tools to interpret human action. Ideal-types are often placed on the extremes of a continuum; social practices are located somewhere in between (Zijderveld 2000).

5 Durkheim (1893 [1963]) famously called this institutional failure 'anomie', which he described as feelings of aimlessness and despair induced by the modernisation of society.

6 Israel (1995) explains how this regional heterogeneity developed historically and offers a fascinating account of how the central rule of the Habsburg monarchy led to a political cooperation between antagonistic Dutch regions, which resulted in the Dutch revolt (1568-1648) and the Dutch Republic (1588-1795).

7 Wakeford (2003) and Shortall (2004) describe similar examples from the United Kingdom.

2 Value incommensurability and power: A confrontation between Habermas and Foucault

2.1 The question of value incommensurability

> *'In the philosophical world, big battalions follow views that rather deny the diversity of goods and make unity unproblematic. I am thinking of the various forms of utilitarianism, on the one hand, and the theories inspired by Kant, on the other. On reaction, critics arise who declare values to be unarbitrably diverse. The most popular views of this kind today are the various flavours of postmodernism'* (Taylor 1997:171).

The question of the incommensurability of values is the topic of a broad and long debate with on the one hand the view that general values exist that can be rationally and universally grounded, versus on the other hand, the view that values can only be grounded in specific contexts (Weber 1922 [1978]; Flyvbjerg 2001; Giddens 2001; Berting 2004). This debate will be outlined in the following using a well-rehearsed confrontation between Habermas and Foucault as representatives of opposite positions. This confrontation is useful because it elucidates the discussion about the incommensurability of values. Furthermore, it indicates also which dilemmas need to be considered when dealing with value incommensurability. The two different understandings of the commensurability of values have a long historical legacy. The first one starts with Plato and proceeds via Mill and Kant to Habermas. The second originates with the Sophists and Aristotle and runs via Machiavelli to Nietzsche and Foucault (Flyvbjerg 1991; 1998; 2001)[1].

2.2 The importance of the ideal

Plato argued that a commensuration of values would enable people to prioritise and to choose, because it may point out ways to obtain 'the Good'. Incommensurability of values could create conflicts and could prevent people from making the right ethical choices. For Plato commensuration presented a way of making ethical decisions more rational, i.e. less influenced by emotions or passions. Ethical choices could be made more rational if one was able to give priority to choices using a single overarching value, such as 'the Good' (Nussbaum 1986; Sunstein 1994; Espeland and Stevens 1998). The Platonic idea in which making decisions, choosing between heterogeneous values, on the basis of their contribution to one all-encompassing value – be it 'the Good', God, truth or money – is constitutive for the ideal to produce science, which would be able to predict and explain human activity. If it is assumed that people only maximise one thing, it becomes possible to predict human behaviour. This aim is most apparent in Utilitarianism, Neo-classical Economics and Rational Action Theory. In

their most simple forms they treat humans as calculative beings always involved in cost-benefit analyses, comparing which choice of action will generate the highest benefit in terms of price, utility or self-interest. It assumes that human action and choice exhibit regularities or patterns, which can be captured by general rules or models (Hay 2002). Furthermore, it assumes that rationality is universal and invariable of time and context. Commensuration reduces the complexity of decisions, i.e. it makes choices simple and abstract by omitting social contexts and relations. For this reason, Sunstein (1994) and others (Raz 1997) point out that commensuration comes with a loss of context and human agency. It fails to account for the fact that humans are capable of acting different and may even alter the context in which they find themselves. Agency is responsible for the contingency and indeterminacy of human practices. This is why it is only in abstract possible to define one all-encompassing value or metric, which enables value commensuration. On the contrary, because of human agency different rationalities exist, which makes value commensuration problematic. At the root of these assumptions lies another tradition of social theory.

2.3 The importance of the real

The ideas of Aristotle represent a different scientific tradition. Here the emphasis is on particulars and context instead of general rules to understand human behaviour. Aristotle did not accept Plato's ideal of establishing general principles or values to explain and direct human behaviour. Instead, he argued that it is impossible to construct a general abstract value or metric to guide ethical choices, because the contexts of social action are infinitely different. In each social practice different particular values are at play, which need to be assessed continuously. In his work Aristotle emphasises the particular over universal and general rules (Flyvbjerg 2001). According to Aristotle it is the 'priority of the particular' (Nussbaum 1990:66), which generates experience, necessary to know how to do the right thing under given specific circumstances.

Through the work of e.g. Machiavelli and Nietzsche this tradition is critical of the attempt to construct science to predict and explain human activities. Instead authors working in this tradition aim to 'deconstruct' universal rules and principles to show that they are bound by time and place. They try to capture the complexity and specificity of social processes through studying the interplay of actors in context (Hay 2002). In doing so, they emphasize the difference and singularity of values, which makes claims about the existence of universal homogenous values suspicious. They deny the existence of universal, trans-historical or trans-cultural values such as rationality, freedom or truth (Hay 2002). This awareness of the partiality of seemingly objective and neutral values emphasises power and violence involved in the commensuration of values. Values, such as rationality, are context-dependent and are defined within power relations between people (Flyvbjerg 1998). This means that power can never be equalised or suspended within processes of commensuration. Rather, commensuration of itself constitutes a form of power.

2.4 Habermas versus Foucault

The two controversies of these theoretical traditions, i.e. value incommensurability and the exercise of power, have their focal point in the works of Habermas and Foucault. Both Habermas and Foucault try to critically analyse the use of power in modern societies and are committed to a democratic ideal. Both strive to strengthen freedom and democracy, but each does this in a very specific way: while Habermas tries to limit power (abuse) through the explication of a set of general normative ground rules; Foucault tries to show in context how normative ideas discipline social action. It is for this important difference that they are often considered as opposites (Hoy and McCarthy 1994; Ashenden and Owen 1999; Flyvbjerg 1998; 2001). The following outlines the strengths and weaknesses of both authors.

2.4.1 Habermas' idealism

In his Theory of Communicative Action Habermas argues that modern societies are characterised by heterogeneity of values and normative pluralisation. For him this heterogeneity of values is a motive to specify normative ground rules and procedures for rational interpersonal communication according to a communicative rationality. Without these procedures, people will not be able to reach a shared agreement, which would lead to power inequalities, loss of social cohesion, contextualism, relativism and nihilism. This is his reason to outline procedures, needed to secure impartial, justified, legitimate and democratic sharing of power (Habermas 1984)

With the Theory of Communicative Action, Habermas offers procedures for intersubjective communication, which can help to produce an 'ideal speech situation' in which 'the force of the better argument' generates fair and just outcomes (Habermas 1984). He argues that these procedures stimulate the creation of a shared reference frame, which forms the basis for a consensus about what needs to be done. They function as a standard of reference, which can test the democratic level of intersubjective communication between stakeholders. In other words, these procedures can regulate the exercise of power in the interest of all concerned, rather than only in the interest of the powerful (Healey 2004).

Habermas works in the tradition of Plato and Kant with his explication of an ethical framework needed to guarantee freedom and equality and to limit power. He aims to construct universal rules to commensurate different values, indispensable to restrict abuse of power. The discourse ethics of Habermas on offers a rigorous method to incorporate people's values, democratising decisions and sharing power (Espeland and Stevens 1998). His procedures to commensurate values are powerful means for coordinating human action and enabling automated democratic decision-making avoiding particularistic deals and local privileges (Cohen and Sabel 1998; Espeland and Stevens 1998).

Much of the current theories of deliberative democracy resonate strongly the line of thinking of Habermas. These theories advocate direct participation and deliberation as means to reach a solution for value-conflicts (Rowe and Frewer 2000). The belief in the positive effect of deliberation on policymaking is based on the use of rational arguments in a public dialogue. Democratic rational deliberation between people produces an inter-subjective communicative rationality, which in its turn enables

commensuration of different values (Hamlett 2003). If a deliberation between people proceeds according to the ideal democratic procedure of Habermas, it constrains people to use power to force a decision. Instead, the decision is based on a comparison of rational arguments. This culminates in the decision best for all participants.

2.4.2 Institutions as instruments for social cohesion?

Despite the theoretical strength of the discourse ethics of Habermas and other theories on deliberative democracy, its Achilles heel becomes clear when it is confronted with practices of real life. The theory of Habermas focuses on integration, homogeneity and consensus within inter-subjective communication. He believes that a common consensus can transcend any social differences (Wrobel 1999). Values of stakeholders are made commensurable with reference to a communicative rationality. In doing so, Habermas discounts any cultural difference between people. The success of the procedures of Habermas depends on an unrealistic high degree of homogeneity between people (Cohen and Sabel 1997). His consensual view – based on Kant's imperative that one needs to respect the norms and rules a society self-imposes, also when they turn out to be negative for personal well-being – is difficult to reconcile with the diversity of values characteristic of current policymaking and democratic debate (Espeland and Stevens 1998). It is precisely for this reason that Habermas argues to translate his ground rules constitutionally and legislatively. In his theory constitutions and legal institutions are important prerequisites for the regulation of power and the commensuration of conflicting values of citizens. In other words, they function as instruments to ensure social cohesion.

However, case studies show that the confidence in procedures for deliberation to equalise power and commensurate values is misplaced. Deliberation does not take place in a social vacuum (Bevir 1999), but instead 'against the background of large asymmetries of social, institutional and economic power' (O'Neill 2002:250). Unequal power relations and asymmetries in knowledge reinforce the status quo, because the more powerful and knowledgeable, the more participants will be able to influence decision-making in deliberative institutions (Hamlett 2003). This makes the distinction between autonomous, rational action and action inspired by power, rhetoric, irrationality and emotion unhelpful (Flyvbjerg 1998). For these reasons the theory of Habermas is less useful for handling disintegration, heterogeneity and value-conflicts (Flyvbjerg 2001). It can even be put stronger: that it is dangerous to trust that procedures for rational deliberation between actors will equalise power between them. This is a position taken in by Foucault, whose work will be considered in the next paragraph.

2.4.3 Foucault's realism

From the criticism on the theory of Habermas[2] can be concluded that only in the theoretical and abstract power can be suspended. The confrontation with real practices shows that the exercise of power is ubiquitous. It is for this reason that Foucault tries to provide an understanding of power based on the analysis of case studies. Knowledge about the effect of power in practice provides the best tools to limit power and to strengthen democracy.

On the basis of his historical case studies on criminality, sexuality and madness, Foucault points out that abstract and seemingly neutral concepts such as truth and rationality are thoroughly contextualised, coloured by time and place. Moreover, he argues that the context of rationality is the context of power. Specific relations of power produce rationalities, but also work the other way around; rationalities in their turn produce power relations (Foucault 1975 [1995]).

Foucault rejects a negative, repressive definition of power and instead defines power as a contextual ubiquitous relational concept, 'a productive network that runs through the whole social body' (Foucault 1976:120 [2000a]). This means that actors can only exist or define themselves in relation to a particular network of power. In this way power is productive, because it produces society and reality (Foucault 1975 [1995]). It also implicates that individuals are never fully autonomous (Bevir 1999). This is the reason why Foucault considers the actor as an effect of power[3]. Foucault's definition leaves no room for communication without power; 'the force of the better argument' is produced through relations of power.

> *'In human relations* […] *power is always present* […]. *The thought that there could be a state of communication, which would be such that the games of truth could circulate freely, without obstacles, without constraint and without coercive effects, seems to me to be utopian. It is being blind to the fact that relations of power are not something bad in themselves, from which one must free one's self. I don't believe there can be a society without relations of power'* (Foucault 1988b:18)

Foucault's ubiquitous understanding of power is important for the debate on incommensurability of values. It denies the existence of universally and rationally grounded values or common metrics, because they are always produced by relations of power. Any commensuration of values through procedures, institutions or norms influence the possibilities of people to act. For this reason it seems unrealistic to presume that efforts to commensurate values of people, such as the discourse ethics of Habermas, create a truly shared consensus and equalise power in democratised decision-making.

The advantage of Foucault's definition is that it raises awareness of the ways in which power not only disciplines but also produces social identities, institutions and norms.

> '*What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse'* (Foucault 1976 [2000a])

In other words, power not only constrains but also enables social action.

> *'For Foucault, individuals are subjected, and this in a dual sense; they are subjected to the complex, multiple, shifting relations of power in their social field and at the same time are enabled to take up the position of a subject in and through those relations.'* (Allen 2002:135)

Foucault and others (Murdoch 1995; Barry *et al.* 1996; O'Malley *et al.* 1997; Dean 1999) applied this 'power analytics' to the development of modern (liberal) governance. According to these writers governmental power is exercised and

constituted via a specific 'governmentality' and 'technologies of government' (Foucault 1978 [2000b]). Governmentality is a mode of government, which encompasses institutions, procedures and programmes to simultaneously control and produce social action. Governmentality is the exercise of a complex form of power (Foucault 1978 [2000b]) because governmental technologies function to discipline others as well as ourselves. In other words, actors become 'both governor and governed, subjecting others while simultaneously subject to others' (Kendall and Micheal 2001:7). As Rose and Miller (1992) point out, financial and economic controls established by governments set key dimensions for the social context in which individuals act. These techniques enable governments to 'govern at a distance' (Kickert 1997:742) simultaneously leaving room for social actors to control their own lives. The use of these concepts offers an alternative view of democratisation as a liberating, emancipatory process. Instead it discloses how this democratisation not only offers more opportunities for self-governance but also institutionalises practices in which people discipline themselves.

Foucault's case studies function as tests of the limits of current practices and rationalities (Foucault 1984). The confrontation with difference and conflict forces people to reconsider preconceived perceptions and rationalities. As such they are able to create an awareness of the conditions for social action. It also raises awareness of the ways in which power not only disciplines, but also, amongst others, produces social identities, institutions, and norms. In other words, how power constrains and enables social action. As Allen (1999:57) explains, Foucault's definition of power 'offers a crucial insight into the interplay between constraint and enablement'. Such an insight can fuel new possibilities for thinking, doing and being of which we were previously unaware (Flyvbjerg 2001) and offers an opportunity to learn (Healey 2004).

2.4.4. Institutions as instruments for social conflict?

The arguments of Foucault are not without drawbacks. Despite the promising and elucidating analysis of 'the double bind of power' (Foucault 1980:336 [2000c]), he fails to give an account of how these two dimensions of power function simultaneously in society. In his early work he showed that identity, truth and rationality is historically and culturally specific and contingent. These concepts are products of power relations. In his later work he focused on how power 'works', i.e. how we necessarily invoke power relations when we act. Consequently, critics of his early work object to his definition of power because they find it deterministic. It does not account for social change (Taylor 1984) and does not leave room for agency (McCarthy 1990). Critics of his later work object because here Foucault's definition is too voluntaristic. It fails to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate uses of power (Fraser 1989; Stein and Harper 2003).

In response to the first line of criticism, Foucault (1979 [2000d]) and others (Hay 2002) argue that in Foucault's analysis, agency is not omitted but constituted by power. This means that it is only possible for people to change the way in which power is exercised, i.e. they cannot free themselves from it. Concerning the second criticism, Foucault remains silent (Healey 2004). Foucault is fully aware of the political and moral impact of his analysis, i.e. that it exercises power of itself (Foucault 1988a). Therefore he refrains from any normative judgement or evaluation. In other

words, Foucault aims to establish relations free from domination (Foucault 1982 [2000e]) but he does not tell how to do this[4]. The question how individuals can resist or liberate themselves from regimes of power, intrinsic to their constitution as subjects (Murdoch 1995), remains unanswered. His work elucidates the ubiquitous workings of power and sceptical towards claims of objectivity and truth. However, it is useless if this sensitivity amounts to 'a vow of silence' (Hay 2002:246) or moral-political paralysis (Stein and Harper 2003) without normative grounds on which to change or challenge existing power relations.

Paraphrasing Keulartz *et al.* (2004), this could be called the 'normative deficit of Foucault'. It clearly shows how the ubiquity of power challenges the possibilities of critical sociology. It would imply that in sociology there is no neutral language available any longer to identify and criticise power relations. Our concepts are inherently normative and subjective; there is no objective or universal standard for the critical assessment of the exercise of power. Therefore, several authors argue that this normative deficit could be overcome through the establishment of a 'non-local norm' (Hamlett 2003), which brings us right back to Habermas' normative ground rules and procedures.

2.5 Who has the better argument?

> *'That impasse, as I see it, consists in a confrontation between those who resolutely deny that values can be incommensurable, who hold that whenever we look for incommensurability we will find incommensurability, and who hold that to deny this cant is even morally dangerous and those who believe that incommensurability between values and kinds of value is ever present in our lives, in both trivial and serious ways, and that the failure to recognise this betrays an impoverished way in which value judgments inform deliberation'* (Lukes 1997:184).

Habermas assigns abstract general principles and procedures as instruments to democratise policy and planning. Concerning the mediation of value-conflicts this means that values of rural land-use can be made commensurable through intersubjective communication with reference to rationality. Through deliberation, inclusion and participation of rural stakeholders it is possible to attain a shared consensus if the correct procedures are being followed. These general normative guidelines for democratic decision-making are needed to reach such a legitimate ethical and power-neutral decision. Foucault is highly sceptic about this possibility. Based on in-depth case studies he argues that any consensus or commensuration of values necessarily involves the exercise of power. Value-conflicts and the exercise of power are unavoidably part of policy and planning. Consequently, any formulation of normative guidelines for democratic decision-making will constitute new power relations. However, Foucault fails to differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate use of power. Several authors argue that such a differentiation is in need of an ethics, a normative framework. But, following Foucault, it should be realised that such an effort unavoidably reproduces power relations. The debate on incommensurability of values and ubiquity of power seems to have reached an impasse. This chapter took both Habermas and Foucault to the limit, by presenting them as theoretical ideal-types, which leaves only a few possibilities for an integration of both theories. But,

paraphrasing Lukes (1997:195), the point is not so much to ask which of them has the better of the argument, that continues to divide them, but rather to use both to emphasise different sides of value incommensurability and power in order to prevent a world in which one of them has won. Part two will continue to explain how, first of all, Foucault contributes to the analysis of the value-conflicts on rural land-use, but that, in the end, Habermas needs to be brought in.

Notes

1 For an alternative explanation of these two traditions, see Bruner (1986), Ingold (2000) or Jonsen and Toulmin (1988).

2 Dahlberg (2005) argues against this view and defends Habermas by saying that Habermas idealises for the purpose of critique. According to Dahlberg, Habermas developed a normative framework to distinguish between coercive and non-coercive forms of power.

3 Many authors content that seeing individuals as an effect of power led Foucault to declare the ‘death of the subject’. Allen (2000) rejects such a view and provides an alternative reading, which considers Foucault’s work as research on the possibilities of subjectivity.

4 This is also often typical for other scholars, who use Foucault. Exceptions are Flyvbjerg (1998), who at the end of his study on planning in Aalborg offers 10 recommendations and Mouffe (1999), who developed the ‘agnostic approach’. She, together with others (Hillier 2003; Pløger 2004), pleads for a reorientation of policy and planning towards power and conflict to account for the conflict-ridden, historical and contingent character of policy and planning practices (see also McGuirk 2001). However, this approach is still rather vague about concrete recommendations (see, for example, Hillier 2003:43).

Part 2

Value-Conflicts in Practice

3 Conflicts about water: A case study of contest and power in Dutch rural policy*

Abstract

The Dutch countryside forms the scene for pressing problems of management and allocation of land and water. These problems underscore the need for comprehensive rural policies. For that purpose, area-based rural policy has been initiated. This new policy is part of a larger policy shift, labeled in literature as 'new rural governance'. Area-based rural policy co-ordinates the different interests of stakeholders and establishes consensus-based solutions. In this article we question this claim. We analyse the conflicts, rationalities and interests within a Dutch rural planning project. This project displays a power struggle in which actors try to (de)construct legitimacy. This observation contrasts sharply with the consensual rationality on which area-based policies are founded. Therefore, we conclude that a tension exists between 'what should be done' and 'what is actually done' in Dutch rural policy. Area-based policy does not guarantee the establishment of consensus among rural stakeholders. Therefore, Dutch area-based policies need to be contextualised to purposefully address spatial rural problems.

3.1 Introduction

Dutch rural areas are in transition. Many actors[1] claim space in the 'differentiated' countryside (Murdoch *et al.* 2003). Environmental, social and regulatory problems are closely interrelated, and bring about a process of rural transition. Four key problems of the rural transition are listed below[2]:

- Agriculture is coping with an ongoing profit squeeze[3], resulting in different farm strategies, such as scale enlargement and intensification on the one hand and extensification and diversification on the other. Furthermore, many farmers lack successors and many others emigrate.
- Specific land use and landscapes with their particular flora and fauna are disappearing (RIVM 2002).
- An increased public demand for recreation and nature in the countryside. More people spend their holidays and leisure time in the countryside, thus affecting the planning and development of rural areas in The Netherlands (Metz 2002). Moreover, public demand is supported by large-scale land use alteration projects, such as the creation of a network of nature reserves and the innovation of water management schemes.

* Published as: Boonstra, W.J. and J. Frouws, 2005. Conflicts about water: a case study about conflict and contest in Dutch rural policy, Journal of Rural Studies 21 (3) pp. 297-312

- An increased private demand for housing and land in the countryside. A process of counter urbanisation can be witnessed, in which abandoned farms are changed into new estates by well-to-do-citizens; land is more frequently used for hobby farming.

These rural development processes correspond with specific interests and social perspectives (Brouwer 1997). Scholars signal an increase and differentiation of perspectives about rural development and its social and material effects on the countryside (Mormont 1990; Cloke and Goodwin 1993; Marsden *et al.* 1993). Owing to the increasing amount and diversity of spatial claims in relation to the limited space available, the mutual interdependence between stakeholders intensifies. If rural transition processes are not consciously integrated, important social, economical and ecological functions of the countryside may be lost (Van der Ploeg *et al.* 2000).

The co-ordination of the rural transition takes place at a political-administrative level, which also can be characterised as a field in transition. At the end of the 20th century policymaking at this level changed gradually. This change is often labelled as a shift from government to governance (Rhodes 1996; Berger 2003), which can be understood as a blurring of boundaries between State, market and civil society (Leroy *et al.* 2001). It resulted in the institutionalisation of new rural policies on rural planning and development. These policies are designed to co-ordinate rural planning and development on a regional level and to democratise it through participation of regional stakeholders. They are based on a consensual approach, which aims at providing a rational solution to the benefit of all participants (VROM 1998). This consensual approach is promoted especially for planning and management of areas where rural issues are complex and where there are many divergent interests.

We question if 'new' rural policies fulfil the expectations of delivering consensus. The focus on consensus-building to deliver so-called win–win solutions, which are thought to be inherent features of new rural policy in The Netherlands, tends to cover up conflicts (Raco and Flint 2001; Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones 2002). The rhetoric of ideal consensus (Connelly and Richardson 2004) and interactivity[4] gives political decisions the appearance of being technical-rational (Boonstra 2004), democratic and based on the 'force of the better argument'. To offer a different view we argue that new rural policies are characterised by a tension between what should be done and what is actually done. To buttress this observation we recount the practices of a specific rural planning and development project in The Netherlands. This project aimed at solving spatial problems related to natural resource management, e.g. land conversion and water management. In contrast to the consensual rationality underlying Dutch rural policies – how things should be done – we will present political praxis as a product of power struggles, self-interest and conflicts (Flyvbjerg 1998a; Lachapelle *et al.* 2003).

It is not our purpose to discard new rural policy but to critically examine it. In so doing, we will raise the issue of contextualising rural policies. The outline of this article is as follows. First, the political field of rural planning and development in The Netherlands is described. Second, the theoretical framework used to conduct the research is explained. Third, the results of the research and analysis are presented, followed by conclusions.

3.2 From government to governance

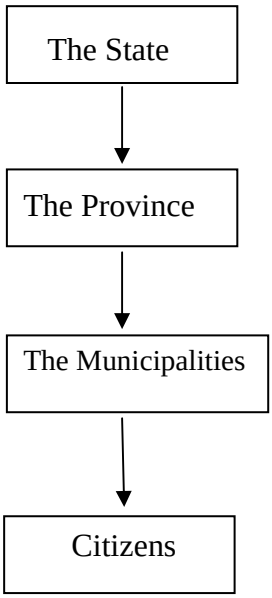
The shift from government to governance can be understood as a blurring of boundaries between and within public and private sectors and a move towards more participative democracy (Goodwin 1998; Bressers and Kuks 2001). This process originates in an increasing differentiation of social perspectives and a growing societal reluctance to trust conventional democratic systems. Governance is considered to restructure collective action and to re-establish an order based on social co-operation, mutual interest and accommodation (Stoker 1998). For that purpose new institutions and initiatives are created in which a range of diverse stakeholders are drawn in from various governmental and non-governmental organisations at different societal levels (Rhodes 1996: Hewitt de Alcantara 1998; Stoker 1998; Jessop 2003).

This has important consequences for rural planning and development (Murdoch and Abram 1998; Jones and Little 2000; Edwards *et al.* 2001; Little 2001; MacKinnon 2002; Berger 2003). Although literature discussing these consequences has mainly emerged from a British context, governance has also changed Dutch rural planning and development, but in a different way.

3.2.1 Dutch rural governance

Several institutions characteristic of new rural governance have been analysed in literature, such as partnership arrangements (Jones and Little 2000; Moore and Koontz 2003), non-elected local agencies (MacKinnon 2002) and European rural development programmes (Ray 1998). We want to complement this strand of research with the analysis of so-called area-based policy (ABP), which is part of new rural governance in The Netherlands.

Figure 3.1 The conventional Dutch policy network

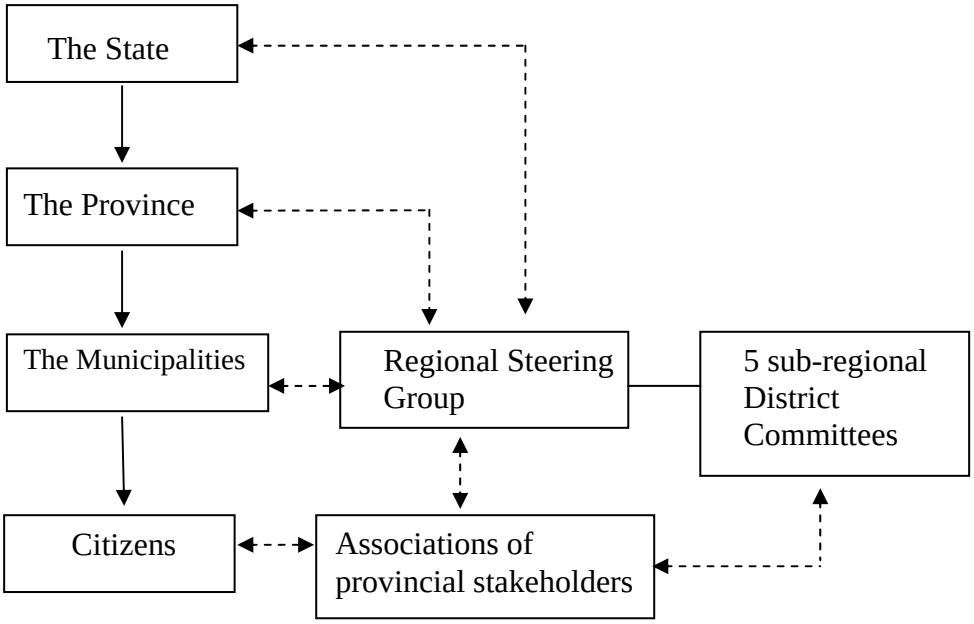


The Dutch State lacks a single comprehensive rural policy; different policy networks exist. The conventional policy network (see Figure 3.1) is made up of the State, Provinces and Municipalities. Two ministries, The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and

Food Quality (MANF) and the Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning and Environmental Conservation (MPHSPEC) design policies and allocate budgets to the Provinces, which in turn, direct their Municipalities. Separate policy administration sections exist, which are connected to land use functions such as nature, agriculture, housing and recreation. Because of this compartmentalisation these sectoral policies are not integrated. Instead plans overlap and contradict each other to a large extent. This is highly inefficient and stifles rural development[5]. As a result inhabitants became sceptical about their benefits and rural policies lost legitimacy at local level.

Therefore, a new policy network has been established at the end of the 1980s, which operates alongside the conventional policy network (see Figure 3.2). In 2001, State and Provinces signed an agreement on the implementation of rural policies, introducing a 'new governance model' for the countryside (Van Ark and Van der Brink 2002). Decentralisation, integrated regional policy development, interactive policymaking and participation of various rural stakeholders are crucial elements in this model (Ministerie van BZK 1999; Ministerie van BZK en VNG en IPO 2001; Ministerie van VROM 2001; RLG 2002; ROB 2002).

Fig. 3.2 The conventional Dutch policy network complemented with the ROM policy network.



ABP is a key component in this new governance model. It is considered to be an instrument capable of solving problems of regional natural resource management, which cannot be handled comprehensively by conventional rural policy. These problems have to be taken up integrally, a task which conventional rural policies are unable to perform due to their compartmentalisation. ABP integrates local and regional economic, ecological and social policies to solve specific local problems related to natural resource management and to generate legitimacy at local level through community involvement, mobilisation and empowerment (Frouws 2001). Formally, ABP is subordinate to the conventional national, provincial and regional spatial policies like the 'Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening' (National Planning Scheme),

'Streekplannen' (Provincial Planning Schemes) and 'Bestemmingsplannen' (Municipal Planning Schemes). Informally though, the goals of conventional policies are aligned with the outcomes of ABP, because the latter is the result of intense community-and expert involvement. Dutch new rural policy is an interplay of two entangled policy networks. This results in a complicated and multiform policy structure for rural planning and development. Consequently ABP exists in many shapes and forms, such as: Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieu Gebieden (Spatial Planning and Environment Areas), Waardevolle Cultuur Landschappen (Valuable Man-made Landscapes), Strategische Groen Projecten (Strategic Greening Projects), Reconstructiegebieden (Reconstruction Areas), Proeftuinen (Experiment Regions) and Nationale Landschappen (National Landscapes).

Despite this multiformity of ABP all these projects are designed conform a specific (political) rationality (Rose and Miller 1992). Boonstra (2004) argues on the basis of a cross-comparison of three Dutch rural planning projects that this rationality is suffering from an 'instrumental bias'. In line with her argument we pay attention to another aspect of this (political) rationality underlying the appeal of ABP. Its advocates attach particular importance to its consensus-building capacity (Frouws and van Tatenhove 2001; Hendriks and Tops 2001; Frouws and Leroy 2003). ABP is presented as a recipe, a procedure to be followed which will generate consensus among participants via 'an open, participative and non-coercive process, which delivers legitimacy, respect, authenticity and transparency' (Connelly and Richardson 2004:4).

However, this rationality and the corresponding mode of rural governance 'by procedure' create a dichotomy between what should be done and what actually is done. The focus on procedure creates a blind spot for the historically conditioned context and for the power struggles, self-interest and conflicts, inherent to natural resource management. With the use of a specific case study we make explicit the way in which rural area is governed and question the taken-for-granted character of governance 'by procedure'. This may contribute to an increased awareness of responsibility for the consequences and effects of this mode of governance.

In the next section, we explain how a procedural rationality is essentially normative, focussing on ideal situations (consensus), which makes it unsuitable to understand real practices (conflict). For this purpose, the analyses of Foucault, as opposed to Habermas' theory of communicative action, are described with the explicit use of arguments developed by Flyvbjerg (1998a, 1998b, 2001).

3.3 Consensus or conflict, Habermas and Foucault

Flyvbjerg (1998a, 1998b, 2001) as well as Ashenden and Owen (1999) describe how the writings of Foucault and Habermas stem from two different traditions.

> *'*[…] *Foucault works within a particularistic and contextualist tradition that focuses on conflict and has its roots with Aristotle via Machiavelli and Nietzsche. Habermas is the most prominent living exponent of a universalistic and theorising tradition that focuses on consensus and derives via Kant from Plato.'* (Flyvbjerg 2001:108)

Both Habermas and Foucault try to understand the use of power in order to enhance freedom, reason and democracy, but they do so in a very different way. According to

Habermas' theory of communicative action, a communicative rationality – being the unconstrained, unifying, consensus-bringing force of argumentative speech – is universally inherent to social life. In his understanding the human being becomes a homo democraticus, and the only form of power used is the 'force of the better argument'. Ademocracy will be ensured if requirements of a discourse ethics are followed, such as inclusion of all affected parties, respect for the autonomy of all participants in the debates, power neutrality and transparency of goals and intentions (Habermas 1984; Flyvbjerg 2001). In this discourse ethics, constitutions and legal institutions are important prerequisites for regulating power and conflicting interests of citizens.

Flyvbjerg (2001) and others (Leeuwis 1993; Pellizzoni 2001) argue that by focussing on ideal situations for controlling power and ensuring democratic principles, Habermas lacks a concrete understanding of power needed to construct his democratic society. This does not alter the fact that Habermas' effort is sincere and that he is concerned with limiting the negative effects of power upon democratic society[6]. Flyvbjerg endorses this objective, but he criticises the way in which Habermas uses his theory of communicative action as a universalistic, context-independent theory to analyse social practices. Flyvbjerg's main argument is that Habermas' theory is incapable to render the concrete understanding of power needed to move towards a democratic society. For this purpose Flyvbjerg turns to the 'power analytics' of Foucault.

In contrast to Habermas, Foucault asserts that nothing is universally inherent to social life. To avoid nihilism he takes the historically conditioned context as his point of departure. Foucault investigates concrete struggles over constitutions in a specific society, as he believes that only concrete knowledge can change social practices and interpretations. His studies of madness, criminality and sexuality have demonstrated that institutional systems provide no guarantee for freedom, equality or democracy. Making struggle and conflict apparent is for Foucault a method to enhance freedom and democracy.

> *'The law, institutions – policies and plans – vide no guarantee of freedom, equality or democracy.* […]. *Nor is freedom likely to be achieved by imposing abstract theoretical systems or 'correct' thinking. On the contrary, history has demonstrated – says Foucault – horrifying examples that it is precisely those social systems which have turned freedom into theoretical formulas and treated practice as social engineering, i.e., as an epistemically derived techne, that become most repressive.'* (Flyvbjerg 1998b:222/223)

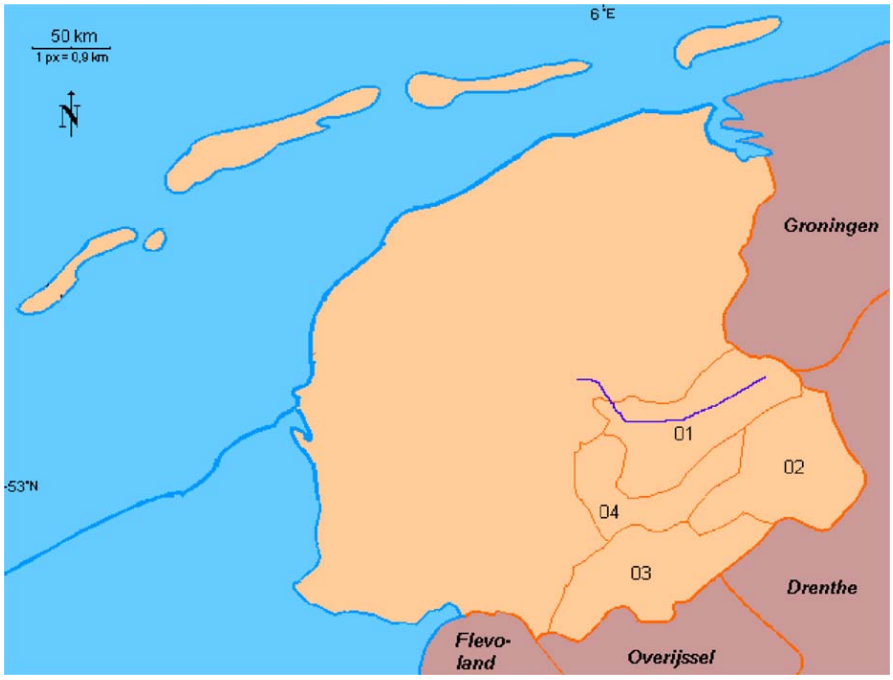
The rationality underlying Dutch rural governance is similar to the theory of communicative action of Habermas in its focus on ideal situations, consensus among participants in rural planning and development projects, and its emphasis on procedures. Rural policies focus on how it should be; a consensus between stakeholders in a multifunctional countryside. This rationality is translated into a technology of government (Rose and Miller 1992), i.e. specific ways of project-and financial management, which force regional stakeholders to act according to this rationality. Procedural rationality together with its technology of government will be

critically discussed in the following history of a Dutch rural planning project. We use a Foucauldian approach to contradict the consensual rhetoric of Dutch rural policy.

3.4 The history of a rural planning and development project

In this section, we describe the background of a regional rural planning project and the history of a committee within this project. The project is called ROM[7] project and is situated in the Province of Friesland, in the north of The Netherlands. The region targeted in the ROM project consists of four Municipalities: Weststellingwerf, Ooststellingwerf, Heerenveen and Opsterland (see Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 Municipalities in the ROM project: 01 Opsterland (with the brook Koningsdiep); 02 (Ooststellingwerf; 03 Weststellingwerf; 04 Heerenveen



3.4.1 South-east Friesland

This region is a typical livestock-based agricultural production area. Several important nature areas exist in the region, which make it interesting for recreational and residential use (see Table 3.1).

Three brooks can be found in the region: *Tjonger*, *Koningsdiep* and *Linde*. They flow towards the low areas in the middle of Friesland through a landscape of wind-borne sand deposits. The existing farms and the nature areas are highly dependent on the three brooks. Currently, they are managed to expel water, in order to ensure drainage of agricultural land. The brooks were straightened and deepened in a land consolidation scheme in 1959. The rationalisation of the brooks contrasts sharply with the goal of the ROM project to restore the natural hydrological situation within the brook basin. The brook-dales provide valuable opportunities to develop the nature qualities of the area. The conflicting interests of agriculture versus nature concerning water management needed to be resolved. This was one of the main reasons for the inception of ABP in South-east Friesland.

Table3.1 Land use of the Municipalities of the ROM project: 1996 and 2000 (Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek)

Regions	*Year*	*Total land/ha*	*Housing*	*Recreation*	*Agricultural use*	*Forests+ nature*	*Water*	*Other*
Ooststellingwerf	1996	22608	628	264	16696	4395	162	463
	2000	22608	693	261	16539	4468	170	477
Heerenveen	1996	14015	946	249	10452	1374	476	518
	2000	14015	1071	245	10187	1363	497	652
Opsterland	1996	22766	625	185	18221	2928	243	564
	2000	22766	675	202	18037	2956	261	635
Weststellingwerf	1996	22836	550	133	18853	2181	519	600
	2000	22836	572	147	18685	2191	620	621

3.4.2. The ROM project in South-east Friesland

In July 1992, regional, provincial and national stakeholders signed a preliminary agreement for pooling financial resources for the start of a rural planning project. The main goal was ‘to foster the socio-economic development, the liveability and the values of nature, environment and landscape in South-east Friesland’ (Stuurgroep Zuidoost Friesland 1999). The project was initiated by the Dutch State and the Province of Friesland and served as an instrument to convert 2000 ha in South-east Friesland from farmland into nature areas. Beforehand it was clear that this conversion could not be brought about without the cooperation of farmers. Therefore, ABP was used to include local stakeholders and to achieve consensus and broaden the support for the conversion.

The participants of the project are the associations of regional stakeholders (the Friesian Water Board, the Northern Farmers’ Union and the Friesian Environmental Federation) and municipal, provincial and national governments (see Figure 3.3 in the Appendix). They are organised together in a so-called Steering Group, which co-ordinates and controls the execution of the project for South-east Friesland. There are three main tasks for the Steering Group: to allocate 2000 hectares for new nature reservations[8]; to maintain the agricultural production capacity; and to recover the natural hydrological situation within the brook basin of the three brooks. These tasks require detailed knowledge of local ecological, agricultural and hydrological circumstances. The project is based on the idea of voluntary cooperation, i.e. that the inhabitants support the plans of the Steering Group. The inhabitants’ interests were represented by subregional committees, called ‘District Committees’ (DCs). In all of these five District Committees representatives of the different subregional stakeholder groups had a seat. These people embodied the knowledge and social contacts needed to fulfil the three ROM objectives. The purpose of the five DCs is to design an Area Development Plan (ADP) conform the ROM goals and with approval of the local stakeholder groups. After the ADP has been officially approved, it becomes possible to continue with a land consolidation scheme, financed from national budgets.

In this case study, we analyse the function of one DC, the DC Koningsdiep. It is composed of seven members: two representatives of the local farmers’ union, one representative of the local real estate owners, the Friesian Water Board, the local nature associations, and the professional nature conservation organisations owning

property in the area, and one civil servant of the municipality Opsterland. Alocal alderman of this municipality chairs the DC. Technical assistance is provided by civil servants of the Ministry of Agriculture or occasionally by a private bureau specialised in process management and engineering.

3.4.3 The District Committee Koningsdiep

In this section, we describe the development of the DC Koningsdiep from its inception to its failure to produce an ADP (see Table 3.2). First, we briefly introduce the participants and their interests.

Table 3.2 The chronology of the DC Koningsdiep (1998–2003)

1998	Start DC
1999	Development of a preliminary ADP
2000	Rounds of discussions are held with the different social groups in the region
January 2002	The preliminary ADP is made public.
Spring 2002	Rejection of the preliminary ADP by farmers.
Spring 2002	Development water management plan.
October 2002	Formal request for water level lowering of 20-cm submitted by the Farmers' Union.
18-11-02	Establishment of separate committee for designing a package deal.
9-12-02	The water management plan and finances are discussed.
17-12-02	First effort to construct a package deal by representatives of nature organisations and agriculture.
4-2-03	The package deal of the separate committee, which contained a water level lowering of 13 cm has been turned down by farmers in a meeting of the Farmers' Union.
10-2-03	Meeting of the DC, in which the package deal is not accepted. To come to a compromise a subgroup is formed of the representatives of agriculture and nature. Furthermore, a research will be carried out to investigate the effects of a 20-cm lowering on existing flora and fauna in the brook.
11-2-03	Aconcept compromise is developed. The nature representatives want to wait for the results of the research before they agree.
18-2-03	The nature representatives call off a field visit because they know from the research results that they cannot comply with the compromise.
10-3-03	DC meeting where the nature organisations and associations refuses to comply with the compromise. One other effort is made to solve drainage and water problems for some particular farms. The negotiation fails.
24-3-03	The last DC meeting in which the DC agrees to send a letter to the steering group, stating that currently it is not possible for them to design an ADP.

Within the DC Koningsdiep three coalitions exist. The first is made up of local landowners, i.e. the farmers organised in the local branch of the Farmers' Union, and the local estate owners. The farmers are very coherent concerning their perspectives on local rural development. Their main interest is the preservation of their production capacity. This makes them hesitant to sell land. They require a water system,

moreover, with a high water level in summer and a low one during winter. Their representatives report regularly about the ROM project in Farmers' Union meetings. In contrast, the local estate owners are a very diverse group consisting of large landowners, such as insurance companies and the nobility, but also smaller rural dwellers owning property. A lot of members of this group are hardly involved in the process. Their representative seems to make unilateral decisions. On every issue he aligns himself with the interests of the farmers. For both groups their main power resource is the title to land.

The second coalition is composed of the local nature associations and the professional nature organisations. The local nature associations are two associations, which are interested in nature development in their neighbourhood. They are very well organised and several of their members are professionally engaged with rural planning policies. Their representative keeps in close contact with her constituency. The professional nature organisations own property in the area. Their main concern is to ensure that hectares, which will be transformed from farmland to nature reserve, will be added to their property. In general, the interests of the local nature associations and the professional nature organisations are very similar. Both representatives have intense and regular contact with each other. Their power is mainly derived from the relatively large group of people they represent who are in favour of nature development.

The last coalition is comprised of the (semi)governmental organisations, such as the Province of Friesland, the Friesian Water Board and the municipality of Opsterland. Their main interest is to reach the objectives of the ROM project without going to great expense in terms of money and time. Their power is based on their ability to construct and administer policies and law. They are part of a policy network, which is engaged in many more issues besides the ROM project. Therefore, the representatives of these groups are closely aligned with each other, as well as with higher-level governmental organisations. We consider the private bureau that manages the negotiation process of the DC, as part of this coalition. Although it is not making policies, its main interest is also to meet the objectives of the ROM project at the lowest cost. Its power is based on the management of the process within the DC and it conducted research necessary to inform the DC of the effects of the proposed land reform and water management.

The following section is an account of the events between the inception of the DC, in 1998, and the end of the negotiations within the DC, in 2003. It will examine the power struggle between these three coalitions.

3.4.4. Inception of the DC in 1998

After the first meetings of the DC, most members were convinced that they would be able to co-operate and construct the ADP. The nature organisations immediately develop a plan for the allocation of farmland, which needed to be converted to nature reserve. The 500 ha (a number prescribed by the Steering Group) of farmland that needs to be transformed into nature reserve are allocated along the brook Koningsdiep. This plan is being discussed in meetings of the DC and after many detailed adjustments (by the farmers' and estates' representatives) most of the DC members

think that getting the plan accepted by local citizens is going to be easy. A Nature Representative describes these events as follows:

> *'Our plan actually served as the main input for the ADP. The goal of the plan was to allocate the lower level plots of the Koningsdiep brookdale as a nature reserve area. In this way we could compensate farmers for land, which wasn't of much use to them anyway. Thus a win–win situation was created. On the basis of this plan we had discussions about the consequences at plot level. Sometimes a farm was cut in half, which created an unworkable situation for the farmer. So we had to solve these things. The farmers' representatives supplied detailed information to this end. I thought that we were finished. We had to make a plan, because the region wanted clarity. We made it. They would be able to make some comments. We would make some adjustments, and the ADP would be a fact'.*

Also, part of the preliminary ADP is a new plan for water management of the brook Koningsdiep, which the regional Water Board is preparing. This plan aims at a recovery of the traditional hydrological system of the brookdale, which will provide a niche for unique species of flora and fauna. A consequence of this recovery is that the brook is going to meander again and that during winter the water level will rise considerably. The DC participants do not consider this a problem because all land along the brook is allocated, and will be purchased, as a future nature reserve.

3.4.5. Farmers' protest

In January 2002[9], the preliminary ADP and the water management plan are published, and in the spring of the same year several local meetings are held with stakeholder groups to uncover their views. In most cases the meetings pass off as usual, i.e. remarks and objections are ventilated, and the attending DC representative assures that all comments will be taken into account. However, the meeting with local farmers ends in a row. According to several DC representatives:

> *'The meeting with the farmers ended in chaos. A lot of farmers have the idea that with the preliminary ADP they are going to relive the past. That the brook will meander again and that their land will be flooded. Furthermore, there appeared to be some resentment towards the Water Board. In 1993 the Water Board computerised the floodgates, and according to the farmers the water level has risen from that time. This made them very angry and they demanded that something had to be done about the water management otherwise they wouldn't comply with the ADP'* (Representative of professional nature organisations).

> *'The farmers told us to put the plan in the dustbin, because it was taking them back to the 1950s. With this rhetoric they created a spectre of land being flooded all the time. A situation as it used to be before the reallocation of land in the 1950's. A lot of emotion and aggression came to the surface that night, and massive resistance developed'* (Process manager of the DC).

Water management is a key issue for farmers in the South-east of Friesland. In winter there is an abundance of water, while in summer there is a lack of it. Through water management the level of the brook can be lowered in winter, which makes it possible to cultivate the land early in the season. During summer the water level can be raised

to assure availability of water for arable and grazing land. Water management has a history. It is by no means a neutral issue. The reallocation of land in the 1950s resulted in more control of water levels. Employees of the Water Board operated the constructed floodgates manually. In practice they operated the floodgates according to the needs of the local farmers, flexibly applying the officially approved water levels. In 1993, the water levels were officially confirmed and the operation of the floodgates was computerised. In theory nothing changed because the computers maintained the official water level, just as before 1993. In practice though it meant that water levels rose in winter. A farmers' representative explains:

> *'We were promised in 1993 that the water level would stay the same, after the official confirmation. But it didn't, after a while we could see that drainage tubes, which are normally above water level, were now under water level. This struck a blow into our confidence in the Water Board. This distrust invoked the reactions during the local meetings'.*

After 1993, the farmers wanted compensation for the actual rise in water level. The Water Board was not prepared to give this compensation, however. It would be against the law to do so. If the farmers' wanted a lower water level they would have to issue a formal request. A Water Board official summarises:

> *'We could discuss this matter for a very long time, but the bottom line is that we don't agree. If the farmers want to lower the water level in the brook at all costs, they can issue an official request. It will become a formal procedure and we will see how far it will take us. The Water Board thinks that this approach will not be very successful'* [for the farmers] (Director of the Water Board).

To sum up, the resentment towards the Water Board and the dissatisfaction with the current situation of water management aroused during the meetings about the ADP and on its turn influenced the negotiation process within the DC. The turmoil in the meetings had two consequences. First, the Farmers' Union submits an official request on behalf of the farmers in the area, to lower the water level with 20 cm for about 30 ha along the brook. Second, the farmers' representatives in the DC link the outcome of this official trajectory to their participation in the DC. If their 20 cm claim is not granted, they will resign from the committee. From this moment onward the fate of the ADP is inextricably linked to the 20-cm claim. To some DC members this tying up of the claim with the ADP comes as a surprise, and some consider it blackmail.

> *'In a* [DC] *meeting I told the farmers' representatives that they changed the rules of the game. We made a plan, with their consent because they were present and made comments. Now we are almost ready and then they only want to continue if an adjustment is made concerning water management. They should have told us so from the beginning. At least we would know what we were up to.'* (Representative of professional nature organisations).

Obviously, this situation is conflictual and by no means power-neutral. As such it seems a far cry from the discourse ethics of Habermas or the consensus approach characteristic of Dutch rural policy, described earlier. The rules of ABP are not static. Perceptions on what these rules are and how ABP should be used differ considerably between the stakeholders. Furthermore, just as the rules of ABP become clear within

the interaction, also interests of stakeholders become clear. They cannot be considered as given a priori.

3.4.6. The package deal

Both the Province of Friesland and the Water Board indicate that a 20 cm water level lowering is judicially impossible. Beforehand it is clear that the official request of the Farmers' Union will not be granted. Consequently, this will result in the resignation of the farmers' representatives in the DC. Without the co-operation of the farmers, the purchase of land for future nature reservations will become tough. To get out of this impasse, a consensus about the water levels in the brook has to be reached informally before the judgement over the official request of the Farmers' Union is passed.

At a DC meeting in November 2002, a civil servant of the Province of Friesland is present to explain that a 20 cm water level lowering is judicially impossible. He indicates, however, that the Province will flexibly apply legislation, i.e. allow a minimal water level decrease, provided that the Farmers' representatives approve the ADP. This opens up the possibility of a package deal.

The private bureau managing the DC negotiations creates a separate committee, made up of other representatives of the local stakeholder groups to develop a package deal, which will serve to advise the DC. This separate committee comes up with a package deal in January 2003. It proposes a 5-cm lowering of the water level in the brook on a permanent basis. During the winter the water level will be lowered with an extra 8-cm to enable the farmers to continue their work. In return, the farmers will have to support the ADP and cancel their official water level lowering request.

To the dismay of several DC members, the farmers turn down the package deal at a meeting of the local branch of the Farmers' Union and stick to their 20 cm claim. According to the respondents, the reasons for their refusal stem from the farmers' general dissatisfaction with the goals of the ROM project and their distrust, moreover, *vis-à-vis* the Water Board. This dissatisfaction was fuelled due to budget cuts of MANF, which were announced just a few days before the meeting took place. They made the farmers believe that there was not enough money available to buy their land allocated as future nature reserve. In this context it made more sense to the farmers to strive for an improvement of their land, i.e. a water level lowering, because they might have to use the land for agricultural production several years if no money was made available.

> *'I was reserved to agree with the package deal. When you sign you are stuck to it, despite the fact that there is no money. Because we haven't accepted the package deal we are in the position to say that we don't want land to be allocated as long as there is no money available. If we had agreed, we couldn't talk like that.'* (Farmers' representative).

The coalition of local nature associations and professional nature organisations is not very eager to accept the package deal either. Their supporters voice a concern about the detrimental effects of the water level lowering on particular flora and fauna in the area. The package deal is doomed to fail.

3.4.7 Another try

The DC meeting in February 2003 ends in a complete deadlock. Farmers holding on to their 20-cm claim and with apparent lack of confidence in both the Water Board and MANF; nature conservationists discomforted with the foreseen ecological impact of the package deal; and the Water Board clinging to official procedures in case a compromise could not be reached. The DC decides to drop the package deal proposal of the separate committee and to devise its own compromise. As before, the farmers' – and nature representatives will develop this plan. Before agreeing with a new compromise, the nature representatives want to know the effects of a 20 cm water level decrease on the ecology in the brook, and whether possible detrimental effects can be prevented with help of technical adjustments. According to the research results and experts' opinions a water level lowering of 20-cm will have detrimental effects on the ecology of the brook. Consequently, the nature representatives decide to reject a new package deal if this is based on a 20 cm water level lowering. As a response, the farmers' representatives argue re-investigate the effects of a water level decrease.

> *'I've tried to open up the discussion about the assumptions on which the model of the water management is based. I've made models of my own, and I know that if you adjust some variables for just a bit, it might generate totally different outcomes. Why can't we get a second opinion on this, because what they* [the Water Board and the ecological researcher] *present is only one way of looking at it.'* (Farmers' representative).

The nature representatives, in turn, assure the scientific quality of the research and request to discuss with the farmers' representatives local technical adjustments for specific farmers, who have problems with the higher water level. So instead of making specific technical adjustments for the nature reserve, it has to be done for particular farms.

> *'According to the research and to the opinions of our local experts, a 20-cm water level lowering would not be possible without harming the ecology of the brook. The alternative was to identify the farmers with flooding problems and to create solutions at farm level, to block off ditches and to install a small floodgate. The farmers' representatives didn't want to consider this option. They persisted on an integral water level lowering of 20 cm, which is not at all a necessary condition for optimal farming according to the experts. The soil in this area is dry enough to make optimal agricultural use of it'* (Ecological researcher).

The strategic role of knowledge stands out clearly from these statements. Which knowledge is presented as constituting the better argument, appears to be tied up with conflicting interests. During its final meetings, the internal conflict within the DC hardens. The farmers' representatives refuse to discuss technical adjustments at farm level; they stick to a 20 cm lowering for the whole area. In their turn, the nature representatives don't want to allow any water level decrease anymore. The DC cannot reach consensus if the farmers keep to their claim. As the DC has to make decisions on the basis of total consensus, it has become impossible to continue the finalisation of the ADP. Furthermore, due to budget measures of MANF, the farmers' representatives

are not willing to continue their participation in the DC. The DC reports these issues to the Steering Group and decides to stop its activities[10].

3.5 Analysis of context, perceptions and strategy

So far we have presented the course of events, which led to the stalemate between coalitions of rural stakeholders in the area around the brook Koningsdiep. We now further contextualise and analyse this conflict. We pay attention to the interplay between the conventional and the ROM policy network because this interplay causes important structural problems in ABP. Furthermore, we discuss the stakeholders' perceptions and strategies involved to further unravel the breakdown of the planning process

3.5.1 Policy context: budget measures

The interplay between the conventional and the ROM policy network was decisive for the dynamics of the social interaction in the DC. The budget measures imposed by the national government had direct consequences for the availability of funds reserved for buying out farmers. This hardened the farmers in persisting on an integral 20 cm water level decrease. According to some respondents the budget measures gave the farmers an opportunity to block the ROM project.

> *'To me the 20 cm claim came as a surprise. More and more I get the suspicion that there has been an overall dissatisfaction among the farmers, about having to turn in 500 hectares. They try to grasp every opportunity to block the process. First they tried it with the number of hectares to be allocated, then it is the 20 cm claim, and now it is because the minister of agriculture has announced budget measures. You get the feeling that although the farmers are co-operat-ing, under their skin they absolutely don't want to.'* (Representative of local nature association).

> *'When it was clear that the money was gone, the farmers didn't want to co-operate any longer. That certainly played an important role in the end. If it was a sensible choice remains to be seen in the future. If there will be no money in the long run then the farmers have made a good decision. If there will appear money again, the farmers are always needed for the negotiations.'* (Farmers' representative).

It was not the first time in the history of the DC that outside events influenced its internal cohesion. This was a reason for one DC member to explicitly problematise the connection between ABP and context.

> *'This project took too much time to bring it to a good end. So many things within and outside the project influenced the process. These kinds of projects should be undertaken in some kind of vacuum. You get an appointment; you work on it, and finish it. I know that this is a utopian thought. The project is embedded in all kinds of political, social, economical and cultural contexts, which all influence the process. Policies change, money depletes, persons come and go, old conflicts come into play, etc., etc. We had it all in this project.'* (Process manager of the DC).

According to this statement ABP can only be undertaken accordingly – how it should be – if context is ruled out. At the same time the respondent recognises that this idea is – utopian. She illustrates the paradox of ABP. On the one hand, ABP is regarded as a

multi-level and multi-actor policy instrument empowering citizens. On the other hand, it is based on an idea of governance 'by procedure' with centrally controlled budgets. To mediate the 'national' administrative constraints and knowledge resources and the 'local' tier of participation and knowledge production turns out as a major challenge for rural governance (see also Lowe and Murdoch 2003).

3.5.2 Perception and truth: what is a win-win situation or valuable nature?

The perception of a win–win situation differs considerably between the various stakeholders. They think differently about the issue at stake, i.e. the restoration of the brook, and what has to be done about it, i.e. in which way land can be converted.

> *'It is a beautiful challenge to turn the brook into a low-level brookdale nature reserve. This will be something, which is unique in The Netherlands. There has always been cut into nature and now we can create nature. That is a whole new development in land use.'* (Ecological researcher).

> *'The heart of the farmers will say that meandering of the brook is rubbish. Thirty years ago we straightened and canalised the brook and we had a land consolidation scheme, which improved this area tremendously as far as farm development was concerned. And now we have to turn back time, give up the developments we achieved over the years! But in order to think in such a way, you have to be a farmer and not a nature representative. Supporters of nature take their chances, and that's a right they have.'* (Farmers' representative).

> *'The context of the countryside is changing. The soil is lowering; while at the same time farming is being mechanised. Bigger machines are used and farmers want to start working their plots earlier. The soil is not able to cope with this any longer. Now the farmers demand a change in water management in order to continue farming in this way. The problem is that this way of farming is not compatible any longer with the ecology of the brook and the societal demands for nature.'* (Representative of the Water Board).

> *'Allocating the lowest land? That is no win–win situation. Coincidentally we came to an agreement on this point. In practice it proves to be very difficult for farmers to get an appropriate alternative plot of land. The package deal was a means for us to obtain compensation based on the surface level lowering before 1993. Again, I don't see the win in this either, we missed out in 1993 and now we want to get it back.'* (Farmers' representative).

Just as there were different perceptions between members of the DC Koningsdiep, there were also different 'truths'. One example stands out, the scientific research on the ecological situation of the brook in relation to a water level lowering. In this particular case, knowledge is used to legitimise social actions, i.e. as a resource in the struggle for 'cognitive legitimacy' (Cashore 2002). The scientific research on the effects of a water level lowering for the ecology in the brook has played an important role. Not so much because of its outcomes, as most respondents state in interviews that they knew beforehand what the study would 'reveal'. It was crucial because it gave the nature representatives a legitimate reason for not wanting to make a compromise based

on an overall water level lowering of 20 cm. The farmers' representatives questioned in their turn the validity of the research, and wanted a second opinion.

> *'Everybody knows that when the water level is lowered, you get a different kind of ecology. You don't need a scientific report to prove that. In my opinion, if you change the management of a nature reserve, it will have both negative and positive effects. It could be possible that one orchid species is disappearing, but maybe three other plant species will return. By only looking at the disappearing species, you create a negative viewpoint in which nothing is possible anymore.'* (Representative of local real estate owners).

The nature representatives and the ecological researcher considered the farmers' critique as a pursuit of private interests.

> *'I can understand why they* [the farmers and estate representatives] *wanted a second opinion. They think that with other research results, they could still reach an agreement based on an overall 20 cm water level lowering. I think, though, that the chances that a second opinion will show other results are nil.* […]. *Considering the effects of water level lowering on the ecology of the brook, one has to look at the vegetation, which is dependent on the groundwater level and the valuable species. Their argument is that also other, more common, nature can be just as desirable. Of course it can be argued that one should not only look at unique species and more to common species. Still, the law indicates the importance of rare species. Furthermore, precisely due to their viewpoint several species have disappeared in the past.'* (Ecological researcher).

Perceptions and the establishment of truth played a very influential role in the interactions between stake-holders, which can be seen from the negotiations on the package deal. The nature representatives, and the other main DC participants, perceive the farmers are stubborn because they were offered extra benefits, in order to create a win–win situation, but still refused to dismiss the 20 cm claim. The farmers in turn think that despite the negotiations they were never offered a win–win situation and that their arguments were not taken into account. As a result, achieving a compromise became impossible, even scientific research could not offer a 'better argument'.

3.5.3 Strategy: (de)constructing legitimacy

Owing to the flexible and bottom-up characteristics of co-operative forms of governance, the stakeholder groups involved cannot solely depend on their State-agreed institutional position or their political reputation for access to the policy network. Access is based on the legitimacy of an actor, and this legitimacy has to be affirmed and re-affirmed constantly during the process. The different stakeholder coalitions not only constructed their own legitimacy; they also deconstructed others' legitimacy. From the next interview abstracts it appears that the power struggle stretches beyond the problem of land conversion and water management. Identities and trust imbued in social relations are at stake, i.e. the (de)construction of legitimacy, both in the sense of credibility ('pragmatic legitimacy') and doing the right thing ('moral legitimacy') (Cashore 2002; Carolan and Bell 2003).

The farmers tried to appropriate the planning process by connecting it to several other issues of land use, such as water management. They were able to do so because they own the land, which is needed for the creation of a natural brookdale. Furthermore, they were able to bring forward the 20 cm claim as a unanimous group. Despite the growing heterogeneity of interests in the agricultural sector, the farmers' representatives kept the group together in this respect. This increased the legitimacy of the 20-cm claim. While the farmers' strategy was mainly to delay the process and to maintain unanimity within the group, the other coalitions wanted to accelerate the process. One way of doing this was by questioning the legitimacy of the farmers' 20 cm claim. In interviews respondents mentioned the growing heterogeneity of the agricultural sector and the private interests of farmers' representatives, which could affect the unanimity of their claim.

> *'A small group of farmers has land within the discussed area. An even smaller group has land next to the brook, and is affected by the water level. So the whole thing is about 10 farmers. Still, the whole agricultural sector in the area resists, while only a small number has considerable interest in a water level lowering. It might be possible that certain individuals are dominating the public opinion, while other opinions are not heard. I know that at least one of the farmers' representatives has land bordering the brook. He also had a lot of trouble with the brook flooding his land.'* (Local civil servant).

Another strategy to accelerate the process is trying to break the farmers' unanimity by dealing separately with individual farmers.

> *'The official procedures will bring the process to a final solution, and from that point we have to work. It is up to the farmers to join in or stay out. To my opinion it is an option to continue without the Farmers' Union. As a government, you are negotiating with individual farmers then.'* (Representative of nature organisations).

The coalition of nature associations and professional nature organisations needed to keep the process going. Therefore, they were willing to account for the claims of the farmers in the ADP. They had to, because the main goal for them was to make sure that the local farmers co-operated with the ADP. However, the first package deal was considered by their constituency to be too devastating for the flora and fauna of the area. They were content that the farmers were blamed, nevertheless, for discarding the first package deal.

> *'When the farmers did not accept the package deal proposal of the committee, we kept our mouth shut, although we also didn't want to consider the package deal. Now the farmers were considered as blocking off possible solutions, which was not totally correct, because if they wanted to accept the package deal, we would have made objections. We didn't say anything because nature organisations often are seen as the resisting, stubborn group. This time it was the other way around and we wanted to keep it that way.'* (Representative of local nature association).

On the other hand, the legitimacy of the nature representatives became an issue, according to some representatives, when the national budget measures were announced.

> *'We are not cheering a plan to restore the hydrological situation of the brook. I think that's money thrown away. But if the public wants to take 500 hectares out of agricultural production, they can do it with public money. But if they don't, we won't shed a tear. The nature organisation will shed a tear. They want to make artificial nature here, and the government has money to spend for their purpose. But if this money is not available anymore, the whole plan should be reconsidered. Also nature organisations should reconsider their position. They exist from these public finances. They are not producing, but they take advantage of the abundance of money, which is generated by others. Therefore they should listen more closely to the public opinion, and reconsider a water level lowering.'* (Representative of local real estate owners).

Of course, the nature representatives responded:

> *'People began to weigh up things against each other. We were accused of 'representing some animals and plants, which is of minor importance to the world. While they were struggling for their bread and butter'. It became ridiculous. We are not representing self-interest, but a public interest. I am not financially dependent on the outcomes of the process. That's also the reason why I think that we can make more objective claims.*

For the coalition of the State, the Province of Friesland and the Water Board, it is of crucial importance for their legitimacy to appear as neutral participants. In other words, they cannot side with any of the other participants' interests. The way to create this neutral appearance is by ruling out context and applying a procedural rationality when governing (Long and van der Ploeg 1989). Practically this means that to legitimise actions, they refer to legislation, which is conceived generally as an objective, value-free and neutral instrument. It is in this sense that legislative frameworks can be considered as governmental technologies (Rose and Miller 1992). By referring to procedures, conflicts and problems are to be solved. In doing so, they rely on their powers to alter legislation (obviously within the limits of the judicial framework). For example, when the possibility of a package deal was discussed in the DC, the Province, together with the Water Board created room for a water level lowering within the legislative framework. In case the negotiations for this deal would fail, they would fall back on legislation to settle the case. They 'put the official procedures to work', which would render a fair outcome all the parties have to comply with. In practice this means that the conflict is dealt with on a higher political level. The next citation demonstrates how the State tries to rule out context, i.e. the local emotions connected with water management.

> *'We have tried to solve the problem of the water management by creating a separate committee. We wanted to leave the local representatives out, in order to overcome the emotions. The committee reached a compromise. It was presented to the farmers concerned, and was turned down, not for its content but more because of emotions. These emotions have everything to do with the troubled relationship between the Water Board and the farmers.'* (Process manager of the DC).

State representatives also regulate the outcomes of ABP through financial management. Examples are the budget measures of MANF, but also the financial

management of the project, which is done by the Province. The next abstract illustrates the way project-design and financial management condition the internal process of the DC.

> *'At this moment we* [the Steering Group, see Figure 3.3 in the appendices] *have not yet decided what to do with the DC Koningsdiep. I presume that we just confirm the preliminary ADP and display it to the region. It has to go through the whole participation-procedure, in which inhabitants can criticise it.* […]. *A solution has to be reached fairly quickly. Half of the plots for nature development have already been purchased but nothing can be done with them until the ADP is officially approved. Also we lose out on financial means for rural planning if we don't continue the ROM project in time.'* (Representative of the Water Board, who is also a member of the Steering Group).

This analysis sheds a different light on governance considered as a redistribution of power from State-to local levels. Instead it appears that new rural governance rather has reconfigured power relations (Edwards *et al.* 2001). ABP still heavily relies on generic policies and a centrally governed finance structure. Although rural policy is becoming more decentralised, the State is still able to control the policy network through creating and adapting the conditions under which political actors act (Marinetto 2003). It forces stakeholders to conduct themselves according to the dominant rationality on which legislative frameworks and policy networks are based. This makes it very difficult to create or stimulate rural development that takes explicit account of the social and economic local context.

3.6 Conclusion

With the use of case study analysis, we investigated the consensus building capacities of new Dutch ABP. Applying a Foucauldian approach we illustrated the discrepancy between what should be done and what is actually done in Dutch ABP. The case study warns against naı̈ve expectations of ABP. It shows power struggles as key elements of rural planning and development practices. Within these power struggles actors' legitimacy is continuously at stake. Actors try to construct their own and destruct others' legitimacy, by making strategic use of resources such as social networks, knowledge, property, finances and legislation. This power play cannot be reconciled with the rationality, which attributes an inherent consensus building capacity to ABP. The analysis of the power dynamics within Dutch ABP demonstrates that particular set-up of institutional arrangements do not guarantee a consensus. Dutch ABP is not identical with redistribution of power, or a retreat of the State. Notwithstanding its efforts of deregulation and democratisation, the State is more than just one of the main participants in the power struggle (see also Marinetto 2003). It sets up and deploys ABP to solve a specific problem bounded by time and space. In doing so, it applies a rationality in which ABP is explicitly perceived as a procedure or technology. To rule out context by procedure is a strategy to maintain a neutral appearance, which is necessary to constitutes legitimacy. In contrast, local actors applied a more value-related rationality, putting the ABP in the local context. A consensus within the DC Koningsdiep required the adaptation of conventional policy, such as the water level policy and the financial policies of the ministry of agriculture. As such the interplay

between the conventional and ROM-project created a complex and uncertain context for the DC Koningsdiep, which constituted a rationale for non-compromise on account of its members. This shows the difficulty of connecting local with supra-local contexts.

Also, some theoretical and political conclusions can be drawn. The rationality characteristic of Dutch rural planning and development projects suffers from the same drawbacks as Habermas' theory of communicative action in its focus on ideal situations and its emphasis on procedures to reach these objectives. Like other case studies of area-based policies, this analysis shows that the communicative action of the homo democraticus never goes without the strategic acting of the homo politicus (Raco and Flint 2001). In order to understand social practice, a strategic analysis has to be grounded within particular contexts. This is exactly the value of Foucault's analysis of power and his use of case studies.

Apparently, the legitimacy of policy networks and the 'democratic deficit' of Dutch new rural policy are still problematic both for normative and for pragmatic reasons (Papadopoulos 2003). Making explicit the conflicting interests and power-based decisions of actors is a conditio sine qua non for any attempt at innovative social engineering, such as interactive dialogues or deliberative democracy (Stratford and Jakolski 2004), 'market places' (Bekkers *et al.* 2003), deliberative opinion polls (Fishkin 1995) or other devices to accommodate the shift from government to governance. Being aware of the normative dimension of rural planning and development creates room to offer a contextual solution to spatial problems in particular rural areas.

Notes

1 Such as environmental organisations, tourists, middle-class households moving into rural areas, commercial enterprises, farmers, Water Boards, estate owners and local, provincial and national authorities.

2 These are not exhaustive, but merely indicate what the rural transition is about.

3 Decreasing profits due to lowering commodity prices in combination with rising costs of production.

4 Owen *et al*. (2000) argue that interactive conflict resolution can be used to build social capital and minimise the use of high-cost approaches based on rights and power.

5 E.g, one of the incentives to start an ABP in the region we studied was to reduce and integrate the large amount of rural plans and policies. There were 28 plans operating. This made it increasingly difficult to know which development possibilities and which areas were still left open for use, and for what purpose. Therefore, these plans were integrated into one area-based policy project, the ROM project.

6 Habermas analysed these negative effects as the 'colonisation of the life world' (Habermas, 1984).

7 The abbreviation ROM stands for 'Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieu', meaning 'Spatial Planning and Environment'.

8 These hectares will be part of the *Ecologische Hoofdstructuur* the Ecological Main Structure), which is a network of connected nature reserves in The Netherlands.

9 It took the DC Koningsdiep 4 years before they could present a preliminary ADP. This might seem as a long time, but they had to reach consensus about several controversial issues. It is beyond the scope of this article to elaborate these conflicts.

10 However, in September 2003 the DC Koningsdiep starts again after intervention by the deputy of the province Friesland. The DC manages to agree on an ADP after several months, which is presented to the region two years later. Because this paper was finalised in the summer of 2003 it does not consider this restart.

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4 How to account for stakeholders' perceptions in Dutch rural policy*

4.1 Introduction

The Dutch countryside is changing rapidly. Many stakeholders claim space in the 'differentiated' countryside (Murdoch *et al.* 2003) and bring about a process of *rural transition.* A few examples of this rural transition can be found in the *Langbroekerwetering*, a part of the Province Utrecht and a case subject of the analysis in this paper. In the Langbroekerwetering middle-class households move into the area for recreational and residential purposes, farmers modernise and diversify their farms due to decreased commodity prices and increased production costs, there is implementation of large-scale land use alteration projects to develop a network of nature reservations and to 'naturalise' water management schemes. These processes transform not only the Langbroekerwetering but also the whole Dutch countryside to such an extent that characteristic land use and rural landscapes with particular flora and fauna are disappearing (RIVM 2002).

Policy makers and scientists consider this rural transition as a problem since a growing number of diverse stakeholders claim rural space. Dutch rural space is limited and the development of, for example agricultural, environmental or residential areas will have direct consequences for their compatibility with other rural activities. The mutual interdependence between stakeholders intensifies because the availability of rural space is decreasing while at the same time the stakeholders' demands are increasing and becoming more diverse.

Scholars in rural sociology argue that conventional Dutch rural policy fails to deal effectively with the co-ordination of this interdependence between stakeholders and to accommodate their conflicting claims. To be able to create effective local solutions would require an inclusive and participatory approach, which should take into account the views, perceptions and interests of the stakeholders involved (Barry *et al.* 1999; Nie 2003).

An example of such an approach is the rural planning project in the Langbroekerwetering started by the province of Utrecht in 2000. The project aims to address difficulties with conventional Dutch rural policies and tries to establish consensus amongst the stakeholders.

A scientific method able to take into account the views, perceptions and interests of stakeholders in participatory policy formation is Q-methodology. Q-methodology is

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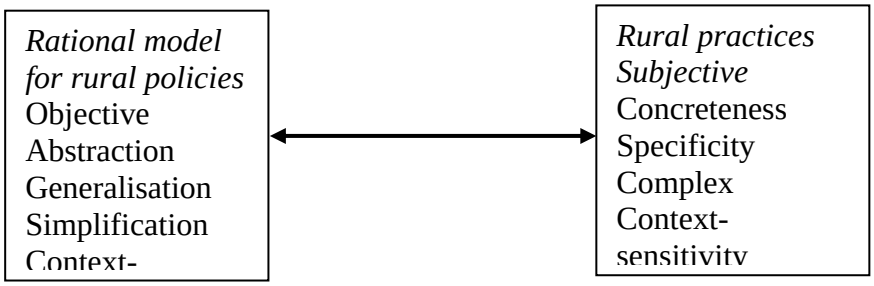
introduced to study subjective perceptions of actors using a quantitative measurement. Therefore, it claims to offer a middle ground between qualitative, interpretative methods on one hand and quantitative methods on the other hand. The question remains if perceptions are relevant for rural policy and how they can be studied with the use of Q-methodology.

This question will be explored in this paper. The paper describes the aforementioned processes that contribute to the changing Dutch rural countryside and why conventional Dutch rural policy fails to anticipate consequences of this rural transition. Furthermore, the paper describes why scholars have introduced Q-methodology. It also explains how Q-methodology is used in this research to identify different perceptions of stakeholders within the rural governance project 'Area-based Project Langbroekerwetering' (APL). The results of this research – a variety of perceptions on rural development of participants of the APL – will be presented. In what follows this paper discusses if the identified perceptions can be considered relevant and if this knowledge can be used to improve Dutch rural policy.

4.2 Rural policy

The traditional rational model of Dutch rural policy failed to accommodate conflicting claims and to solve social, economic and ecological problems associated with the changing function of Dutch rural areas. This model is based on several assumptions. First, 'that there is a tangible reality out there, which can be observed objectively' (Morçöl 2001:383). This observation forms the basis for policies that assume that actors behave rationally and that interests are material, concrete and static. There exists a direct relation between cause, effect, mean and objective (Bakker 2003). Second, policies should be effective, efficient, accountable and context-independent. These assumptions undermine the context-sensitivity of rural policy, because they abstract and simplify rural practices (see Figure 4.1). In this way, rural policy and practice are disconnected which amounts to 'wicked problems' (Lachappelle *et al.* 2003; Nie 2003) and 'stubborn or intractable policy controversies' (Schön and Rein 1994).

Figure 4.1 The mismatch between rural policy and practice



Therefore, Dutch rural policies are reorganised. New regional and local projects are introduced, in which a diverse range of stakeholders from various governmental and non-governmental organisations participate. It is an effort to stimulate more participative rural policy in order to deal with the increasing differentiation of social interests and the growing societal reluctance to trust conventional democratic systems.

4.3 The role for perception in rural sociology

Scholars in rural sociology have argued that this mismatch can be bridged, by taking into account the perceptions and interests of the stakeholders involved. '[Shared perceptions] provide the necessary conditions for successful collective action among agents with an interest in restructuring distributional relationships' (Blyth 1997:246). They argue that it is important for rural governance projects to include many different viewpoints within decision-making processes, because only a thorough understanding of the range of views of rural stakeholders can sustain democratic legitimacy on local and regional levels. This marks out an important assignment for rural sociology (Mormont 1990, Boonstra 2004).

From the 1990s onward scholars of rural sociology started to criticise descriptive, empiricist definitions of the rural countryside as space (Halfacree 1993; Jones 1995). These studies defined the countryside by parameters e.g. population density or percentage built-up area, to classify and measure. These studies also have been criticised for their assumption that social action is determined by physical environment. For these reasons scholars began to pay more attention to the role of perceptions in the (re) production of the rural. Influenced by social-constructivist studies (e.g. Berger and Luckmann 1966), they signal a differentiation of perceptions on rural development (Marsden *et al.* 1993; Brouwer 1997). The countryside is treated as a social construction (Halfacree 1993), which has concrete consequences for its physical layout (Mormont 1990). In an effort to understand and identify perceptions of the rural several authors applied discourse analysis. Discourse analysis offered both the theory and the methodology to study perceptions of actors. In these studies, discourse is defined as a rhetorical manifestation of a specific perception, belief or worldview, which gives meaning to the world in which people live (see Frouws 1996; De Jong 1999; Van der Ziel 2003).

From the above it is clear that discourse analysis is understood as an applied and specific form of an interpretative approach. An interpretative approach studies the content of actors' perceptions and their effects on social action. '[They] begin from the insight that to understand actions, practices and institutions, we need to grasp the relevant meanings, the beliefs and the preferences of the people involved' (Bevir and Rhodes in Finlayson *et al.* 2004, 130). Q-methodology is a means to study these perceptions and preferences in a systematic way.

4.4 Q-Methodology: Methodological middle ground

Despite the growing importance of interpretative approaches, such as discourse analysis, there remains much debate about the best way to study politics (Eakin 2000). Despite the growing recognition of interpretative approaches, mainstream social science is hesitant to abandon traditional scientific methods for they belief that

quantitative methods[1] best provide unbiased, objective scientific knowledge. Next to that: there is a general idea that qualitative knowledge is less suitable for policy guidance (see Amy, 1984 and Lawlor, 1996 cited in Durning 1999). To bridge interpretative approaches with more traditional quantitative methods Durning (1999) and others (Sell and Brown 1984; Dennis and Goldberg 1996) have proposed to search for a methodological middle ground. They have introduced Q-methodology, a context-sensitive methodology into traditional scientific research practice. Q-methodology promises to identify perceptions with quantitative procedures.

Q-methodology is an alternative to more conventional methods like opinion surveys because it emphasises the individual respondent's orientation and the structure of held values and beliefs (Woolley *et al.* 2000). Conventional survey methods require more involvement from the researcher in setting up the outline of the survey, i.e. the ideas and concepts with which respondents can agree or disagree, item by item (Woolley *et al.* 2000). Instead, Q-methodology is developed to identify stakeholders' perceptions 'without forcing a specific definition upon them' (Van Eeten 2001). For this reason it is claimed that Q-methodology is able to discover perceptions, which are truly held by stakeholders rather than to affirm or disaffirm predefined research categories. Furthermore, Q-methodology requires only a relatively small number of respondents. Q-methodology allows individual responses to be collated and correlated, which makes it possible to extract idealised perceptions from the data provided by the research respondents (Barry *et al.* 1999). Especially those issues that invoke a great amount of conflict and debate seem suitable for an interpretative analysis with Q-methodology.

4.5 Q-methodology in Langbroekerwetering

Within rural development one can witness a variety of perceptions and conflicts about the use of available space. Q-methodology has been used to display this variety of perceptions in the project of rural development in Langbroekerwetering. The area Langbroekerwetering is located South-east in the province of Utrecht, in the close vicinity of the city Utrecht. The area is a transition area of the river the *Rhine* towards the higher grounds of the *Utrechtse Heuvelrug*, and has three types of landscape: a river landscape, a man-made landscape and a cover-sand landscape. Most of the nature and landscape qualities are directly related to the cultivation history (DHV 2001). Agriculture activities are primarily livestock-based. The quality of the area is threatened because of diminishing nature- and landscape-values due to scale enlargement in agriculture and an increase of recreational activities and traffic density (Van den Bijtel 1998). Furthermore, due to the problems of profitability within agriculture there is need for a new regional economic activity. Other specific developments taking place are an increasing recreational use and the construction of residential areas, so-called 'new estates'.. These developments have been the main reasons for the province of Utrecht to start a rural planning project in 2000. The project aimed to establish consensus between stakeholders, to stimulate multiple land use and to democratise rural policymaking by including stakeholders. Different formal rural stakeholder groups were represented in a committee to develop a regional rural

development plan. After several public meetings this plan was published in 2001 (Plan van Aanpak 2001).

To be able to display the variety of perceptions in the Langbroekerwetering with Q-methodology, first some 60 statements about rural development were obtained from newspaper articles, literature, policy documents, minutes from stakeholder meetings and thirteen interviews. From this collection 20 statements (see tTable 4.1) were selected to cover the different perceptions. These statements were used as a questionnaire called Q-Sort: a list of twenty statements that respondents had to order from ' most-agree to most disagree'. The extremes of this continuum were coded +2 for 'most agree' and -2 for 'most disagree'. The respondents were not obliged to place the statements in a pyramidal distribution because this imposition is not required by the statistical technique and it does not influence the identification of the relevant perceptions. Instead respondents were asked to motivate explicitly their considerations every time they placed a particular statement. In this way they were encouraged to think about the relationships between the twenty statements (Barry *et al.* 1999). Forty-one stakeholders, farmers, environmentalists, policymakers, estate owners, members of Waterboards and local entrepreneurs, were interviewed, of which twenty-two completed ordered the twenty statements in a Q-sort.

The 22 Q-sorts were analysed using the PCQ software package[2]. This package calculates the correlations between the twenty-two valued sets of statements (22 Q-sorts). Calculated is how much each Q-sort differs compared with every other Q-sort in the research. The result is shown in a matrix of correlation coefficients among all the Q-sorts. These correlations are then centroid factor analysed, which means that the software package computes which factors are responsible for the correlation between the Q-sorts. Factors can be thought of as dimensions on which the different Q-sorts can be scored. In Q-methodology the factors indicate specific shared conceptions or representations of respondents. In this research five statically significant factors could be distinguished. Those were: the economic dimension (A), the environmental dimension (B), the agricultural dimension (C), the conservative dimension (D), and the regulatory dimension (E) (See Table 4.1). They correspond with the five perceptions, which will be presented in the remainder of this paper.

Finally, the quantitative factors were related to the qualitative information obtained from the interviews to identify the relevant perceptions. The next section is a short description of these five perceptions.

Table 4.1 Factor Q-Sort values for each statement

	No. Statement	*Perceptions*				
		A	B	C	D	E
1	The quality of the Langbroekerwetering is being threatened due to environmental degradation.	1	2	-2	2	-1
2	Land use functions should be separated as much as possible.	2	-2	1	-1	-2
3	The decrease in farms causes a decrease in the quality of the landscape of the Langbroekerwetering.	-2	1	1	1	-2
4	Economic- and nature development are balanced in the Langbroekerwetering.	0	1	-1	1	1
5	I am optimistic about the future of the Langbroekerwetering.	-1	-1	-1	2	0
6	There is space for more economical activities in the Langbroekerwetering, as long as it fits the landscape.	0	0	2	-2	-1
7	The recreational sector has developed in a good way in the Langbroekerwetering.	-1	0	0	-1	0
8	The previous 10 years nature has developed in a good way in the Langbroekerwetering.	1	-1	0	0	1
9	Housing has to be concentrated in the existing villages.	-1	2	0	2	1
10	Agriculture should specialise its production.	-1	-1	1	0	-2
11	Area-based policies are increasing the quality of rural development.	0	-1	-1	2	2
12	Local activities are decisive for the development of the Langbroekerwetering.	2	2	-2	-1	1
13	The adoption of technology will become highly important for rural development.	1	1	2	0	2
14	I trust the representatives of the rural stakeholders groups.	2	-1	-1	1	1
15	Economic competitiveness should be the point of departure for rural development in the Langbroekerwetering.	1	-2	-2	0	0
16	Involved rural stakeholder groups can best decide on the development of the Langbroekerwetering, without interference of the state.	0	-2	1	1	-2
17	Area development is especially an issue for professionals and specialists.	-2	0	-2	-2	1
18	Too much difference exists between rural practice and rural policies.	2	1	0	-2	-1
19	The different stakeholders have highly contrasting rationality concerning rural development.	-2	0	2	-1	0
20	Farmers in the Langbroekerwetering are loosing control over the development of the countryside.	-2	2	2	-2	-1

4.6 Perceptions on rural development in the Langbroekerwetering

Perception A: The economic dimension of rural development

'Forty percent of all the farmers in the area will quit farming. What will replace them? Only camper depots and hobby farmers will lead to an impoverishment of the area. The demolishing or renovation of farm buildings costs money. So there is need to develop new economical activity. I believe that companies working in the service

> *industry are able to generate this kind of economic activity, which would also fit the landscape'* (Estate owner).

People with this perception argue that the crisis in agriculture will result in a decrease in the number of farms in the area. They believe that it is a purely inevitable economical development. The agricultural land will be sold to farms, will be used for new economic activities, or will serve as building plots for newly developed estates. They fear that if new opportunities to use land will not be legalised the area will 'turn into a mess'. People with this perception argue that new rural actors, especially estate owners and service industry, can generate new economic activities in the area. For this reason they support legislation to break down farm buildings and rebuild houses on the same plot[3]. Furthermore, they argue for a separation of rural functions, instead of an interweaving of functions. Though they agree that the contemporary landscape is very much interwoven, in the future this interwoven landscape will cause difficulties for rural development. In an interwoven landscape there will always be non-optimal circumstances for either function. Furthermore, it will be very difficult to manage water efficiently in an interwoven landscape. Rural policies need to separate the different land use functions. This poses a problem because according the users of this perception little connection exists between rural policy and rural everyday practice.

Perception B: The environmental dimension of rural development

> *'The developments in the agricultural sector show that only the big farms are surviving. In theory this is not a problem for the environment, if only these farms weren't managed in such a uniform way. It becomes one homogenous lump. This is a bad development for nature and landscape because it destroys biodiversity. Agricultural diversity is needed to sustain specific habitats for different species. The existence of these particular species is bound up with the existence of a small-scale man-made landscape.'* (Ecological researcher)

The main concern for people with this perception is the regional environment. Despite the policy measures to increase nature and biodiversity in the area, they believe that more should be done. According to them it is not a solution to separate land use functions. On the contrary, they believe that interweaving of the different land use functions is a main feature of the area. This interwoven landscape results in specific flora and fauna, which would be lost in a 'separation scenario'. In this perception especially diverse small-scale ecological farms are thought to be suitable to maintain an interwoven landscape. People with this perception also fear that current rural policies result in a homogenous Dutch landscape. Mainly because regional policies are a compromise between the interests of different rural stakeholders, in which the environmental interests are not represented adequately. They also fear that the powerful lobby for new economical development of individuals with capital or the service industry will try to build in the Langbroekerwetering. In order to prevent this from happening, people with this view argue for strict government policies concerning land use, instead of a more 'free market' system. However, before the state can fulfil this role, as a director of rural planning, there need to be more ability to create local solutions and to deviate from conventional policy.

Perception C: The agricultural dimension of rural development

> *'Separating functions makes sure that we don't interfere with each others business. I would like to have six big modern farms around me. An interwoven landscape is a beautiful thing, but it will lock up agriculture. Existing modern farms will bleed to death if nothing happens'* (Farmer).

This perception reflects a strong concern on the future of modern agriculture in the area. It is believed that the environmental problems are effectively handled and can be considered as solved. People with this perception fear that an exclusive focus on environmental degradation will result in more restrictive policies concerning agricultural activities, and consequently more costs for farmers. Therefore they want to pay more attention to the development of a modern agriculture. There are too many restrictions, e.g. the development of new nature, the creation of new estates, etc, which prevent a modernisation. Separating land use functions can optimise the natural resource base for agriculture e.g. irrigation, drainage, plot size, etc. At the moment these aspects get too little attention within rural governance. The users of this perception have a gloomy perception on the future of the area for several reasons. Little connection exists between rural governance and practice. Area-based policies don't offer any solutions to rural problems.

Perception D: The conservative dimension of rural development

> *'There is no room left for new economical activities. The roads are already overburdened, and there needs to be land left for the modernisation of agriculture. Often those new economical enterprises are not tied to a particular place. They originate in the western part of The Netherlands[4], come here, enlarge, and then try to claim more space.'* (Estate owner).

This perception has some overlap with perception B. Both are very concerned with the environment of the Langbroekerwetering. Whereas perception B is very pessimistic about the future of the Langbroekerwetering and the possibilities of area-based policies for rural development, perception D is very optimistic about these issues. The users of this perception want to preserve the landscape in its present state. Therefore they feel that the negative effects of the development of the local economy and tourism, such as scale enlargement and intensification of businesses, should be stopped. Development of nature has been positive for the conservation of the landscape, especially through the development of new estates. The newcomers are ready to create or manage nature, because they are not economically dependent on the land. The disappearance of farming in the area is not considered as a problem. On the other hand, the area cannot do without any farming. Therefore agriculture needs more opportunities to modernise, because this will be an economically viable way to develop farms. The possibility of losing the specific landscape if too many opportunities are offered to new economical activity is a major concern for these people. They fear that new economical activities will claim land in the Langbroekerwetering and will detrimentally change the landscape.

Perception E: The regulative dimension of rural development

> *'One has to be alert that broadening doesn't lead to a mess. You don't want to have farm camping sites everywhere. It is important to have a certain generally applied vision or else you are not able to direct rural development. Everybody has ideals, but it's not possible to effectuate all of them.* […]. *As government you need to have control'* (Alderman).

This perception emphasises the importance of the state for the development of integrated land use functions. People with this view consider the interwoven landscape as an important goal of rural planning. Agriculture will be part of this interwoven landscape. The quality of the landscape is not decreased if there are fewer farms around. The question arises if the remaining farmers are financially capable of buying the land available, because this land can only be used for agricultural purposes as regulated in rural planning schemes. A possible solution to the bad financial situation of farms might be a broadening of farm activities. People with this perception do not believe that there is a future for a modernised agriculture in the area. They emphasise a strong role for the government within rural development, especially because rural land use is differentiating.

4.7 Reflection and conclusion

This paper focussed on the relevance of perceptions for rural policy and how they can be studied with the use of Q-methodology. Recent contributions of interpretative approaches indicate that a growing number of scholars attribute a constitutive role to actor's perceptions and ideas in social action. However, the field of rural sociology is still very much divided between researchers either using quantitative methods or using qualitative, and interpretative methods. Q-methodology is an attempt to come up with a methodological middle ground in order to transcend these differences between quantitative and interpretative approaches. Q-methodology uses a rigorous quantitative method but tries to take into account actor's subjective perceptions.

The question in this paper was if Q-methodology indeed provides a way to offer contextualised knowledge with quantitative methods? Q-methodology allowed for identification of five different perceptions, within the Langbroekerwetering in Utrecht, The Netherlands. These perceptions emphasised economic, environmental, agricultural, conservative and regulative dimensions of rural development. Q-methodology generated rich information and was able to structure qualitative information in coherent categories. Therefore, Q-methodology is useful as an instrument to identify and categorise perceptions.

But can this knowledge be used to explain social and political action? The usefulness of Q-methodology is limited in this respect, because it does not generate knowledge about the way people use perceptions or how perceptions are changed while used. In other words, the perceptions are not much contextualised; they remain in the end ideal-types. Of course, any scientific research abstracts social and political practices to some extent, but in this case the explanatory power of Q-methodology could be improved when it is complemented with ethnographic research such as in-depth semi-structured interviews or case studies in which specific users of a perception can be analysed in context. For this reason Q-methodology alone is not able to

transcend the difference between quantitative and qualitative, interpretative approaches. It needs to be combined with methods that focus on the context in which actors use perceptions. These methods, like discourse analysis, would allow researchers to investigate how and why certain perceptions are used, and how they become institutionalised.

Therefore, a next step concerning the findings in this paper would be to investigate how the five rural perceptions are used in specific settings in the Langbroekerwetering. Interpretative analysis along these lines, which focuses on context and specific cases, will be able to generate relevant practical knowledge necessary to bridge the current gap between rural policy and practice. Rural sociology needs to focus on the ways people routinely cope within their context. Q-methodology can be one very helpful tool in such an analysis.

Notes

1 Some authors argue that political practices are not positivist and that positivism is used as a straw man to favor interpretative policy analyses (Lynn 1999; Weimer 1999; Downing in Finlayson *et al.* 2004). However, this argument poses that positivist thinking is still used in political practices (see also Morçöl 2001).

2 Obtained from http://www.rz.unibw-muenchen.de/~p41bsmk/qmethod/ (accessed 12-8-04).

3 This legislation is called ‘red for red regulation’ and has been constructed to finance the demolition of farm buildings and to allow the construction of houses at the same plot.

4 The respondent refers to the agglomeration of cities (Amsterdam, Den Haag, Rotterdam) in the western part of The Netherlands.

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5 Koningsdiep: about Dutch rural policy, power and an environmental cooperative*

Abstract

In the 1970s and 1980s more scientific attention is focused on the failures of the conventional, rational policy model for rural development. Social and policy analyses suggest a deliberative policy, which takes into account the interpretations of stakeholders. These policies are believed to construct a shared interpretation, which stimulates a shared deliberation of interests, an integration of rural policy and the creation of regional support for national policies. This paper will argue that often deliberative policies are based on a naïve and idealistic distinction between autonomous rational action and action which is biased though strategic reasoning, power and/or emotion. To sustain this argument it will critically examine the assumptions of current deliberative theory and present an alternative based on a Foucauldian casuistic analysis. This alternative approach is demonstrated using a case study about rural planning and conflict in South-east Fryslân.

5.1 Introduction

> *'Power is not necessarily coercive. Even if a consensus on collective goals exists and the interests of 'leaders' and 'civilians' more or less coincide, there will always be the problem of the coordination of collective activities, which means that dependency and therefore power can never completely discarded.'* (Frouws 1993:19)

> *'Shut up about that environmental cooperative!'* (Farmer against Mr. Haisma during an information meeting)

In the 1970s and 80s more scientific attention is focused on the failure of rural policy and planning. Its conventional rational model is not functioning. Scientific analyses of the causes for this failure draw attention to the increasing differentiation of interests, a growing dependency between actors, the complexity of policies and the lack of support for policies. Several scholars in the field of rural sociology and political sciences argue that to improve rural policies, policymakers need to include different interpretations of stakeholders (Frouws 1996; Van der Ziel 2003; Boonstra 2004). Underlying this argument is the idea that actors will learn and appreciate each other's point of view if they are able to deliberate together about their interests and needs. In this way, deliberation will stimulate the development of a shared frame of reference, mutual understanding and trust, which are required for an improvement of rural policy

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and planning. Deliberation, communication and an inclusive participation of stakeholders are central concepts in this new form of policymaking, which is often referred to as ‘governance’.

At the start of the 1990s the Dutch government develops several projects for rural development and planning based on a deliberative, communicative and interactive approach. One purpose of these projects is to invite stakeholders, amongst others farmers, environmental groups, residents, to participate in regional and local policymaking. These projects are supposed to coordinate the various different values of participants; to integrate policies; and to create regional and local support for national policies. They focus on the creation of win-win situations, shared interpretations and trust. Policymakers as well as social and political scientists expected that these deliberative projects could democratise rural policy and planning.

This paper aims to demonstrate that this current policy rationale is based on an abstract ideal of enlightenment, which neglects the use of power in concrete policy practices. Because policies do not explicitly address the use of power, they acquire a neutral, objective and obvious character (Hofstee 1983; Frouws 1993). However, several studies have demonstrated that power is a crucial factor in the outcomes of political practices and rural development. Therefore, it seems more sensible and effective to realise how power works (Flyvbjerg 1998) and to assign the use of power a central role in both theory and practice of rural policymaking.

For this purpose it needs to be explained how power is conceptualised in deliberative theory. After this, a Foucauldian policy analysis is introduced, which defines power as a dualistic concept, i.e. it simultaneously produces and disciplines policy practices. Furthermore, it assumes that power is ubiquitous, which rules out an emancipation or liberation from power. This poses a significant challenge for deliberative theory and policy. It points out the need to develop context-sensitive rural policy and planning. To this end, a casuistic analysis is introduced, which can contribute to the development of context-sensitive policy. To illustrate the use of a casuistic analysis, a case study is presented which underlines the need for context-sensitive policies. It elucidates why farmers in Sout-east Fryslân react different on spatial claims in comparison to farmers in North-east Fryslân.

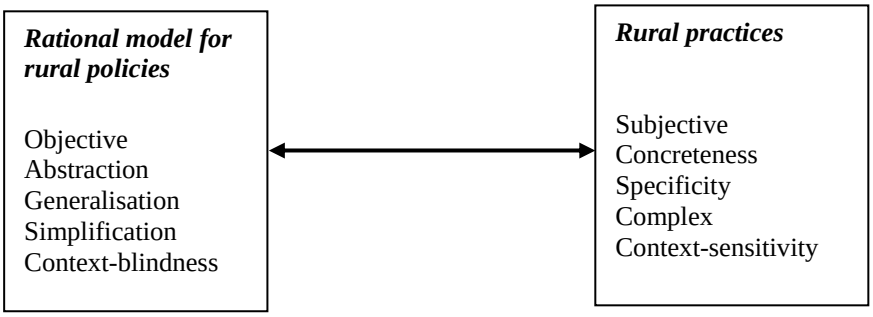
5.2 Deliberation as antidote to policy failure

Since the 1970s and 1980s there is increasing attention for policy failure as a consequence of the increasing complexity of modern society (Jessop 1999). Several researches point out that the conventional, rational model of rural policy and planning fails to meaningful address current rural problems (Boonstra 2004). It is based on several crucial assumptions. First, ‘that there is a tangible reality out there, which can be observed objectively’ (Morçöl 2001:83). Second, this observation forms the basis for policies that assume that actors behave rationally and that interests are materialistic, concrete and static. Third, within policy an planning a direct relation between cause, effect, mean and objective is expected. Together, these assumptions form the basis for policy intervention (Bakker 2003).

Unfortunately, they also abstract and simplify rural contexts, and contribute to a discrepancy exists between policies and practices (see Figure 5.1), which amounts to

'wicked problems' (Lachappelle *et al.* 2003; Nie 2003) and 'stubborn or intractable policy controversies' (Schön and Rein 1994).

Figure 5.1 The mismatch between rural policy and practice.



The mismatch between rural policy and practice render problematic the assumptions of the rational model. It indicates that the assumptions that actors behave rationally and that interests are materialistic and objective are not realistic. What is more, it is also preventing a contextual-sensitive application of rural policy. Instead it seems more realistic to assume that actors have different subjective perceptions of their context and consequently that their interests are also contextual and subjective. These perceptions lie at the basis of social action and originate in specific contexts, which means that they are dialectically connected. This argument implies that we can only know reality through subjective interpretation, i.e. that reality is socially contructed (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Hay 2002)[1]. This line of thought is labelled as social-constructivism and becomes very influential within social sciences.

In the 1980s, planning (Healey 2003), political science (Hajer and Wagenaar 2003; Finlayson *et al.* 2004) and rural sociology (Halfacree 1993; Frouws 1996) are influenced by social constructivism. Scientists in these fields begin to investigate how rural policy and planning are socially constructed. They signal differentiating perceptions with concrete consequences for the development of the countryside. The focus on discursive practices, interpretations and intersubjective communication also influence the field of political sociology and philosophy. Using studies of Arendt and Habermas, several scholars present and develop deliberative alternatives for rational conventional policymaking. This deliberative policymaking could be able to create room for more and different perceptions and stimulates a process of social learning (Van Stokkum 2003). Through a process of deliberation, different actors learn to understand each other's standpoints and create a shared perception, mutual understanding and trust. Factors that are indispensable for a successful policymaking.

During the 1990s many European governments start to experiment with deliberative policymaking. Currently, there exists a broad range of projects for rural policy and planning based on this approach (Boonstra 2004). These projects are legitimised with reference to their ability to coordinate divergent values of participants, to integrate different generic rural policies, to create local and regional support for national policies, to create win-win situations, a shared perception and trust. The trust in the conventional rational model for rural policy and planning is exchanged for trust in deliberation between different actors (Bakker 2003).

5.3 Deliberation and power

The positive effect of deliberation on policymaking is based on (the ideal of) the use of rational arguments in a public dialogue (Fishkin 1995; Benhabib 1996). A deliberation between actors establishes the basis for a consensus concerning 'what needs to be done'. The rational best solution will be achieved when this deliberative dialogue takes place conform the ideal democratic procedure. The 'force of the better argument' neutralises other irrational forms of power (Habermas 1984). It is expected that this procedure will stimulate the creation of a shared perception, which is the basis for a consensus. A rational public dialogue can only exist if actors are able to argue autonomous – without restriction or control of others – logic and rational.

This means that a communicative rationality can come into being without the exercise of power, which forms the basis for successful deliberation and public dialogue. Opposite to this deliberation are dialogues, which are characterised by use of power, rhetoric, irrationality and emotion[2]. Deliberative theory distinguishes between autonomous action, i.e. action based on rational consideration not restricted by others and social action, which is influenced by others (Hayward 1998). Implicated in this distinction is that actors are able to act independent of social context (Bevir 1999).

Critique has been aimed at the way in which deliberative theorists conceptualised the relation between power and deliberation. The ideal conditions for a rational dialogue are unrealistic. For this reason it is naïve to distinguish between autonomous, rational action and action which is inspired by power, rhetoric, irrationality and emotion[3] (Flyvbjerg 1998; Young 2001). Social-constructivist studies indicate that it is impossible for actors to act autonomous, i.e. acting independent of context. Case studies are used to show that power and rationality are inextricable connected within social practices. Rural development is always a matter of conflict and contest irrespective of the presence of deliberative and interactive policies (Boonstra and Frouws 2005). For this reason the trust in the benefits of rational deliberation between actors to solve policy failures is facile (O'Neill 2002).

If this criticism is accepted there is need for an alternative for the analysis and development of policies, which can be a trustworthy solution for policy failures. At any rate this alternative should account for the contextual interconnection between power and social practices. Such an alternative will be described in the next sections.

5.4 A theoretical alternative

Foucault analysed power in historical case studies on criminality, sexuality and insanity. In his analyses he defines power as a relational concept, which is tied up with society and which form is dependent on time and place. (Foucault 1976 [2000a]; 1980 [2000c]; 1979 [2000d]). Furthermore, he argues that power is dualistic; it simultaneously disciplines and produces social practices.

Often, i.e. in deliberative theory, only the disciplinary workings of power are considered. Power is conceptualised as a force, used to influence actions of others. However, as Foucault showed, power is not only disciplining, it also enables social action. Consequently, power is part of every action. It further means that actors cannot withdraw or 'free' themselves from the effects of power. Power is ubiquitous.

Foucault analysed the use of power in policies in his studies on governmentality (Foucault 1978 [2000b]). Recently, these analyses are applied in the field of 'governance' (Barry *et al.* 1996; Dean 1999). These studies analyse how neo-liberal policies discipline and produce social action. The development of interactive policy projects creates more opportunities for self-governance of participants. This is considered the productive power of policies because it enables possibilities for self-governance for participants. At the same time, governments discipline self-governance through the use of financial and procedural policy instruments. In this way, interactive policy projects discipline social action because they restrict the possibilities for action of participants. It is important to realise that participants also exercise power. Besides governments, they also produce and discipline policies. Therefore, policies can be considered as a synchronous constitution and restriction of potential trajectories for social action[4]. What these restrictions are and how they should function are at stake in power struggles and conflicts (Frouws 1993; Boonstra and van der Brink 2005).

Critics of Foucault find his definition not practical. If his definition is accepted it means that every action is an exercise of power. Social action is not possible without the exercise of power. But if power is ubiquitous it means that any hope on liberation or autonomy of social actors is in vain. In its turn it becomes meaningless to formulate policies, which aim to empower people. How it is possible to become independent of the exercise of power, if power and social action presuppose each other? (Taylor 1984; Allen 2003)

These authors are right to the extent that Foucault's definition of power excludes the perspective of an autonomous position for actors. However, Foucault's definition still leaves room for agency and consequently also empowerment, which is able to mitigate the exercise of power (Bevir 1999):

> *'Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are 'free'. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of conduct, several ways of reacting and modes of behaviour are available.'* (Foucault 1982 [2000e]:342)

> '[…], *I'm very careful to get a grip on the actual mechanisms of the exercise of power; I do this because those who are enmeshed, involved in these power relations can, in their actions, their resistance, their rebellion, escape them, transform them, in a word, cease being submissive.'* (Foucault 1979 [2000d]:294)

It means that according to a Foucauldian analysis the development of interactive policy is possible, but will always be necessarily local and historical (Allen 2003).

5.5 Casuistic analysis: an alternative approach to policymaking

Inspired by this alternative conceptualisation of power, several authors argue that policymaking could also be developed through a casuistic analysis (Jonsen and Toulmin 1988; Flybjerg 1998; Thacher 2004). They aim to develop policies through a comparison of cases of concrete policy practices. Such an approach would be an alternative for policymaking on basis of abstract ideals or procedures. However, it is possible to use such a comparison to criticise the exercise of power. A casuistic analysis tries to answer normative questions such as: which capacities for self-

direction are good for society in general and which capacities for self-direction are good for allowing individuals to lead their own life? (Menke 2003). The answers to such questions can be formulated through a 'moral taxonomy' (Jonsen and Toulmin 1988) of cases, which are characterised by a similar problem[5].

In this respect, the casuistic analysis provides a more realistic alternative to deal with policy failure compared to deliberative theory. A casuistic analysis as basis for policymaking is able to contextualise rural policy. In the next section a case about the establishment of the Koningsdiep Environmental Cooperative, in South-east Fryslân, The Netherlands, illustrates the casuistic approach. This case shows the dualistic effects of power and also shows why farmers in South-east Fryslân reacted differently towards spatial claims compared to farmers in North-east Fryslân.[6]

5.6 The environmental cooperative Koningsdiep

Dutch farmers are to an increasing extent confronted with national policy objectives. Obvious examples of such objectives are the Ecological Main Structure (EMS) and environmental policies, which try to reduce the emission and deposition of ammonia on farms. The implementation of both has caused considerable social upheaval in the 1990s in Fryslân, especially in the regions of Gaasterland (south-west), North- and South-east Fryslân. In every of these regions farmers have reacted to these claims in their own specific way. For several regions these reactions have been analysed extensively (De Bruin and Van der Ploeg 1990; De Bruin 1993; Van der Ploeg 1999).

The resistance of farmers against the ammonia policy was the incentive for farmers in North-east Fryslân to found two environmental cooperatives: the *Vereniging Eastermar Lânsdouwe* (VEL) and the *Vereniging Agrarisch Natuur en Landschapsbeheer Achtkarspelen* (VANLA). Farmers in South-east Fryslân reacted in a complete different way[7]. This difference is illustrated using a case study about the foundation of an environmental cooperative in the Koningsdiep brookdale. The plan for this environmental cooperative came from Mr. Haisma, who at that time owned a dairy farm, situated in the Koningsdiep brookdale, in South-east Fryslân.

In 1992 the ROM[8] project got started in South-east Fryslân. ROM projects are one of the first generation of projects based upon a deliberative approach (Frouws and Leroy 1993). They were initiated in regions, which faced several contradicting spatial claims and which were characterised by interweaved land-use functions. The ROM project South-east Fryslân was developed to allocate hectares to be used for the development of the EMS. Right from the start it became clear that most of the EMS hectares were going to be positioned in the brookdales of the Tjonger, Koningsdiep and Linde. Somewhere in 1996 farmers living in the brookdale Koningsdiep were confronted with the allocation of EMS. The reaction of Mr. Haisma was not defensive in contrast to the reactions of other farmers.

> *'My aim was to work in the interest of nature. In that way you yourself can develop something. Try to initiate something, instead of single-mindedly dig trenches and recourse to agitation. We, as farmers, do not have the time to wait. The government and nature organisations do have that time. That's why it is important to clarify things quickly. One way of doing that is by doing it yourself'* [9]

Inspired by the establishment of the environmental cooperatives in North-east Fryslân, he developed the idea to create an environmental cooperative in the Koningsdiep brookdale. The initiation of the ROM project was a fitting motive for this idea.

The dualistic effect of power in this case is clear. Mr. Haisma found himself confronted with action of others, in this case the Dutch government, which restricted his options. The land of his farm was allocated to be converted in the future to the EMS. However, in any case he was not a spineless person at the mercy of power. Through the initiative for the Koningsdiep Environmental Cooperative he tried to create future opportunities for development of his own and other farms in the brookdale. More background information is needed to understand why Mr. Haisma thought that this initiative could be successful.

The Koningsdiep brookdale was subject of a land consolidation project in 1959. The brook was canalised and the bordering land was consolidated. The brook gained primarily an agricultural function, which means that abundant water is transported out from the brookdale as quick as possible. In the subsequent years several modern dairy farms developed along the brook. Despite this agricultural modernisation several valuable nature areas along the brook still exist, such as the *Wijnjeterperschar* and the forests of *Bakkeveen*. Thus, two valuable and high-quality land use functions can be found in the brookdale in close vicinity: agriculture and nature.

According to Mr. Haisma these two functions should be related to each other, to make sure that they are both sustained. Additionally, such a relation also pays off financially because buying up farms and replacing them elsewhere is very costly. An environmental cooperative would be a suitable institution to stimulate a relation between agriculture and nature and in that way sustain them both. It could support a sustainable agricultural production in the brookdale. Agricultural production is combined with nature management[10]. The main purpose of the initiative was that Mr. Haisma wanted to evade any expropriation of farmland.

> *'When the plans for the allocation of EMS in the brookdale started to become concrete, I tried to be a step ahead of the nature organisations and the government. If we organised an environmental cooperative, which would be supported by most of the farmers here, we would be able to evade any expropriation of farmland. The goal would be to turn the negative* [the EMS allocation] *into the positive'.*

It would mean that farmers needed to work differently, for which they would be financially compensated.

> *'We as farmers need to work towards more sustainable agricultural production, which balances inputs and outputs, but also offers an economic alternative. Sustainable agriculture is economically viable, conscious of on-farm mineral flows, liveable and manages nature.'*

Haisma affirmed that it is essential that farming remains economically viable. Farmers needed to be able to earn a normal standard income and farmers should be able to earn a normal market price for their farm if they decided to sell.

> *'Look here, I am definitely not a nature-loving, new-age hippie. One needs to earn an income from farming and currently that's not possible with only ten cows. Those times are gone and will not return. However, I do believe that it is possible to*

produce more sustainable. For environmental purposes, but also because it can earn you more money. That's a logical and economical story[11]*.'*

He described the goal of the new environmental cooperative as follows:

'Offering a viable perspective for both agriculture (farms should be able to develop and be sold for a normal market price) and the environment, liveability, welfare, recreation and tourism in the brookdale through interrelating nature and agriculture via the environmental cooperative.'

In 1997 he discussed this idea with three other like-minded farmers with farms in the brookdale. Together they put some initial thoughts on paper and decided to inform the local branch of the Farming Union.

'*We wanted per se to develop our idea further together with the Farming Union. If we did not do that we would not get a broad support from the local farmers. It would have only made people raise their eyebrows. My whole farm was allocated as future nature reserve. If I would do it alone, they would think that it was purely motivated by self-interest.'*

The local branch of the Farming Union reacted reticent on the proposal. The board did not want to help organise or support Haisma's initiative. The four farmers realised that it would become a difficult task to motivate other farmers for the foundation of the Koningsdiep Environmental Cooperative. To convince the farmers, they invited a founding member of the VEL/VANLA environmental cooperative from North-east Fryslân to give a presentation for members of the local branch of the Farming Union. Some time later they also organised a discussion evening for these local farmers, in which they posed statements on agricultural – and nature development. The result of both meetings was negative. Haisma concludes:

'The local branch of the Farming Union is too conservative. Not daring enough. These are men who only want to milk 1000 cows, the rest doesn't interest them. […]*. If we had developed this plan we would have had enough time until 2018 to buy up some farms and to swap some land amongst ourselves. Also, we would have been a logical group for the European Union to communicate with. That would have given us a really strong position.'*

The discussion between the four farmers and the majority of the Farming Union members shows that despite good intentions, a public dialogue does not necessarily lead to a shared perception. Of course one could argue that this dialogue did not proceed according to 'ideal democratic procedures'. But this is exactly the point, these procedures do not exist in reality. Dialogues are always part of social struggles, which feature power. For this reason it is of eminent importance to realise how power works instead of trying to neutralise it via a procedural rationality. In the above case the social struggle is obvious because the board of the local branch of the Farming Union and some members tried to prevent Haisma from developing his plan[12]. However, such a power relation never only restricts, it also enables social action. This becomes clear when we consider Haisma's strategy after the negative results from the two meetings. It is interesting to notice that Haisma radically changed his strategy. His farm was still allocated as future nature reserve so he had to do something.

'We sold the farm when the price for land was high. We could get [price will not be disclosed for privacy reasons] *per hectare. We were lucky with that. I owned the farm together with my brother. We divided the place when we drove to the notary. He got 40 hectares and the new stable, I got 50 hectares with the old stable.'*

Currently, the dairy farm of the Haisma is located in the so-called 'white area' between *Bakkeveen* and *Haulerwijk*. Haisma clarified his actions as follows:

'Your are not talking here with somebody who can only think with melancholy about a missed chance. We had to get on with our farm. We have a successor so we need to develop our farm further. We grow steadily. We do not intensify the production but enlarge our farm through buying more hectares. I think that it is better to strive for 8000 litre milk per cow per year than for 10000. When the animals stay healthy, they will last longer and that is more economical in the long run, compared to intensifying the production. But these are difficult decisions, because you hear so many different stories. These youngsters only want bigger and more. I see that with my son too. However, I believe that one also needs pace and order for a well-balanced farm. But, maybe these thoughts come with my age and upbringing.'

Also others have ideas about what caused the initiative to dissolve. A few of them show how context is decisive for the outcomes of social action. More specific, it shows why farmers in South-east Fryslân reacted differently to national policies than farmers in North-east Fryslân.

A few respondents believe that the lack of more possibilities to realise EMS via nature management done by farmers caused the initiative to dissolve. In 1993 a deal was made between the Province of Fryslân and the Farming Union about the number of hectares, which could be allocated as EMS. This number was going to be decreased from 5500 to 2000. Part of the deal was that these 2000 hectares EMS could only be labelled as nature reserves, i.e. that they could not be realised through nature management by farmers. Furthermore, in South-east Fryslân there are only a few possibilities to realise EMS within already existing nature reserves. The consequence is that the 2000 hectares needed for the EMS could not be used for agricultural production.

Other respondents point to the specific historical development of farming in South-east Fryslân. Several land consolidation projects were set up in the 1950s to modernise farming. As a result farmers in the region developed big and modern farms including a specific rationale on 'how to farm'.

'[…]. *I expect that most farmers want to be bought out from here* [the brookdale] *and will use the money to start somewhere else.* […] *I notice that in Opsterland the modernisation of farming continues. People still work on this line. A small group of farmers might opt to broaden their farm production, but that will remain a small group. This area does not have the type of farmers who want this. I suppose that farming will continue to modernise in the 'white areas', but with fewer farmers.'* (Former member of the board of the Farming Union)

According to a different respondent a possible explanation for the dissolution of the initiative is that it was predominantly a one-man action and for that reason did not result in a broad support.

> *'Haisma indeed was busy with the construction of an environmental cooperative, but the majority of the farmers here did not want it. At that time I was one of the boardmembers of the local branch of the Farming Union. We did not support his action. As a Union you cannot support something only one farmer wants. The mentality here is different, I suppose. People are worried about the water level in the brook and the activities of the waterboard. I also wonder what would have been the benefits of the initiative. As an individual farmer you can also manage nature, so what is the surplus value of a cooperative? I notice that a lot of these cooperatives* […] *are loosing most of their time with chasing money. The idea of such cooperatives does not attract people here. We also have less wooden banks here* [compared to North-east Fryslân] *probably. No, the water level* [in the Koningsdiep brook] *that is the bottleneck. That is what keeps farmers busy. For the rest, I admire what the farmers in North-east Fryslân accomplish.'* (Former boardmember of local branch of the Farming Union).

This analysis of the context of agriculture and countryside around the *Koningsdiep* brookdale clarifies why Haisma's initiative did not succeed and why farmers in South-east Fryslân act in a specific way.

5.7 Conclusion

Three conclusions can be drawn on basis of this case study. First, the case shows that a public dialogue does not necessarily lead to a shared perception. The differences between perceptions of Haisma and the members of the board of the local branch of the Farming Union, on agricultural development, speak for themselves. It means that at least in this case power cannot be neutralised via a deliberative dialogue, but that practices of rural policy will always involve some kind of social conflict.

Second, the effort of Haisma indicates that these power struggles have a 'double bind'. On the one hand, Haisma is confronted with social action of others, which restrict his possibilities for the development of an environmental cooperative. It all starts when his farm is allocated as future nature reserve by the government. After that, he also does not receive any support from the local branch of the Farming Union. On the other hand, these social practices also create new possibilities for Haisma. Although the plan for the environmental cooperative dissolves, his other strategy is particularly successful. He sells his farm to start farming only a few kilometres away in the 'white area'.

Third, the case shows how context and power are decisive for the dynamic of social practices of rural development. The context of South-east Fryslân is a totally different one compared to North-east Fryslân, although they look very similar at first sight.

The land use history in South-east Fryslân is different in some crucial aspects. To be able to understand the case it is important to know that some intensive land consolidation schemes have been executed in this region. Furthermore, the possibilities for nature management done by farmers were minimal due to a provincial deal between the Province of Fryslân and Farming Union in 1993 on the number of EMS

hectares. Also, the EMS hectares could not be allocated on already existing nature reserves. The conversion of agricultural land into nature reserves became inevitable.
This paper shows that a casuistic analysis can help to contextualise policymaking. As such it forms a necessary addition to deliberative policy arrangements

Notes

1 This does not mean that objective reality does not exist: 'Objective reality outside subjective consciousness does of course exist but cannot be known.' (Zijderveld 2000:25)

2 For example, when Habermas (1984) differentiates between communicative and strategic rationality.

3 *'In particular, while participants may be formally 'equal', dialogue takes place against the background of large asymmetries of social, institutional and economic power. It is not just the internal workings of deliberative institutions that matters here, but the context in which they operate. Deliberative institutions are open to being used strategically.'* (O'Neill 2002:250)

4 '[…] *A set of rules* […] *sets the limits within which I can think, deliberate about ends and act, but it does not prescribe the specific content of any thought or any particular action* […].*'* (Allen 2003:189/190). Consider also the concepts 'room for manoeuvre' (Feenberg 1998) and 'recodification' (Benvenutti en Frouws 1998; Foucault 2000c).

5 Casuistic analysis is also used in law (jurisprudence) and medical ethics (doctor-patient relationships) (Thacher 2004).

6 'If one asks why landscapes develop in a particular way, during a certain period, one needs to take into account the relations of power of that time' (Hofstee 1983: 217)

7 The foundation of the environmental cooperative, *The Gagelvenne*, in 1997 in the municipality Oosterwolde did not generate much support from other farmers in South-east Fryslân.

8 The abbreviation ROM stands for *Ruimtelijke* (spatial) *Ordening* (planning) *Milieu* (Environment).

9 The information and citations of Mr. Haisma are derived from a number of personal notations of Mr. Haisma, which he clarified during a conversation in 2003.

10 Mr. Haisma argues that in certain areas nature and agriculture do need to be separated, when it is impossible to combine nature management with economical viable agricultural production.

11 With this remark Mr. Haisma means to say that through market liberalisation and decreased provision of subsidies via the European Union it becomes more irrational to develop agricultural production only through scale enlargement and intensification.

12 See also the second quote at the beginning of this paper.

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6 Controlled decontrolling: Involution and democratisation in Dutch rural planning*

Abstract

The debate between proponents of collaborative planning theory and their critics on the dynamics of power made clear that a discrepancy between norms and practices of democratic planning exists. According to the norm of democratic planning all participants should have equal opportunities to realise objectives, while practice has shown that power is unequally divided between people. This outcome incites the important dilemma of how normative aspirations of deliberative planning can be reconciled with actual planning practices. In this paper we focus on how planning based on deliberative democratic ideals cope with the discrepancy between norm and practice, and discuss how power is mediated through planning institutions. We apply our concept of power in two case studies on conflicts over Dutch rural land use to illustrate the consequences of institutional transformation of planning for the exercise of power.

6.1 Introduction

Power is an important theme in current debates about democratic planning (Flyvbjerg 1998; Fischler 2000; Saarikoski 2002; Stein and Harper 2003). In recent years, planning scholars discussed extensively on how power influences outcomes of planning practices. Collaborative Planning Theory (CPT) in particular gained much prominence. It originated as a critique on the instrumental rationality underlying planning practices in the 1970s and 1980s (Alexander 2001). CPT underlines the importance of consensus-building between stakeholders within planning practices. Critics of CPT argue that through this focus on consensus building, CPT neglects power, conflicts and the contexts of planning practices. Proponents of CPT respond that CPT should never be regarded as a practical planning guide and they agree that the possibility of reaching consensus in planning practices is highly dependent of specific contexts and power relations (Innes 2004). According to Healey (2003) CPT is useful as a normative tool to criticise unequal power relations.

This debate offers two related insights. First, that a discrepancy between the norms, based on a deliberative democratic ideal, and the practices of planning exists (Neblo 2005). Planning based on inclusive public deliberation between equal citizens using rational argumentation is normatively preferable because it equalises relations of power between people. However, such deliberative planning is often a far cry from actual planning practices in which power is unequally divided between participants.

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Second, it raises awareness of the social dimension of power in planning. The debate shows how power is a ubiquitous network of social relations, which cannot be set-aside (Van Ark 2005). These insights incite the important dilemma of how normative aspirations of deliberative planning can be reconciled in planning practices. Mediating the difference between norm and practice can be considered a *raison d'être* of planning.

This paper discusses how planning based on deliberative democratic ideals cope with the discrepancy between norm and practice, using two case studies on conflicts over Dutch rural land use. Dutch (rural) planning is interesting because it traditionally institutionalised consensus-building as a way of solving spatial conflicts (Hendriks and Toonen 2001). Currently, Dutch (rural) planning is struggling to retain its consensus-building capacity in a situation with on the one hand a growing interdependence between people and policies, and on the other hand a growing differentiation between people's values concerning land use. A comparison between the two case studies clarifies how Dutch rural planning institutionally transformed in this paradoxical context. This notion is important for the theory and practice of planning, because it shows how institutions mediate the discrepancy between norms and practices of deliberative planning and what the consequences are for the exercise of power in planning.

In the first part of this paper we outline the debate between proponents of CPT and their critics concerning the possibilities for consensus-building in planning practices and discuss how the exercise of power is mediated through institutions. In the second part we apply our concept of power to analyse how the recent institutional transformation of Dutch rural planning changed the exercise of power. In the third part, we present our conclusions and draw out the consequences of our analysis for planning theory and practice.

6.2 Planning and power in democratic societies

Apologists of deliberative democratic ideals argue that inclusive public deliberation of equal citizens by means of rational arguments forms the core of legitimate political decision-making and self-government (Bohman 1998). Conventional solutions for democratic government are typically forms of aggregation of individual interests or preferences by electoral mechanisms such as voting. These practices have been criticised by deliberative democrats because they stimulate strategic behaviour rather than a shared agreement through public reasoning and presume that people are not able to attain a truly shared consensus (Knight and Johnson 1994). Furthermore, aggregation of individual interests might also have negative consequences in spatial planning practices where all stakeholders have an intense interest, and where a positive decision for one of them could be very harmful to the other (Larsson and Elander 2001). The deliberative democratic ideal has gained prominence in planning theory and practice through CPT. CPT aims to replace instrumental rationality with communicative rationality through a process of intersubjective rational deliberation and argumentation (Healy 1990), which is able to generate new consensual systems of meaning and equalise power relations between stakeholders.

However, as several authors made clear, a profound discrepancy between the norms and practices of deliberative democracy exists, which needs to be considered (Flyvbjerg 1998; Larsson and Elander 2001). CPT is criticised for an idealistic belief in the possibility of constructing consensus between stakeholders within planning practices. The critics argue that the focus on consensus-building neglects power, conflicts and the contexts of planning practices. Using case studies, they show how planning practices often end up in conflict, despite rational deliberation. They stipulate that actors will not suspend the use of power in a process of consensus-building using intersubjective rational deliberation (Phelps and Tewdwr-Jones 2000). Moreover, they conclude that the faith CPT places in rational deliberation as a procedure to ameliorate unequal power relations is idealistic (Hillier 2003; Connely and Richardson 2004) and universalistic, i.e. it abstracts planning from context (Flyvbjerg 2004). Instead, they propose to explicate conflicts to emancipate actors (Hillier 2003).

Proponents of CPT reply that they do not presume that power can be neutralised. In fact, their case studies emphasise how communication and deliberation are distorted by power. The use of CPT with its emphasis on consensus-building helps to critically evaluate planning practices (Healey 2003). As such, CPT should never be regarded as a practical planning guide, but rather as a normative tool to help build societal and institutional capacity through which participants can control their own processes (Innes 2004). This well-rehearsed debate shows that, despite their different approaches, most authors understand power as a network of social relations, which produces social practice. Furthermore, it shows that a discrepancy between norms and practices in planning exists, which both approaches aim to dissolve. This discrepancy is typical for societies with planning systems based on deliberative democratic ideals and has become more urgent due to a process of value differentiation combined with a growing interpersonal interdependence, which makes planning conflicts more obstinate and difficult to resolve.

Institutions are able to restrict abuse of power, while simultaneously empowering people to realise their objectives. They *discipline* as well as *enable* human action. This argument has been put forward famously by Foucault on the basis of his historical studies on criminality, sexuality and madness. He rejected a negative repressive definition of power and defined power as a contextual ubiquitous relational concept; 'a productive network that runs through the whole social body' (Foucault 2000a:120), which means that actors can only come into being or define themselves in relation to a particular network of power. In this way power is productive, because it produces society. It also implicates that individuals cannot become autonomous, i.e. stand outside social context. The advantage of this definition is that it raises awareness of the ways in which power not only disciplines but also produces social identities, institutions, norms, etc. In other words, how power not only constrains but also enables social action. As Allen (1999:57) makes clear this definition of power 'offers a crucial insight into the interplay between constraint and enablement'.[1]

It follows that institutionalisation provides a key understanding for the way power is exercised in democratic societies (Tait 2002; March and Low 2004). Institutionalisation is the process by which shared ways of acting become objectified and routinised, which obscures their essential social constructed nature (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Institutionalisation is an important imperative for social action,

because it facilitates people's ability to routinely deal with otherwise complex conflicts and dilemmas and as such establishes a reproduction and continuation of society (Giddens 1984). Institutions mediate time and again the difference between norms (power equality) and practices (power inequality). This means that when a discrepancy is becoming more apparent, institutional arrangements have not been able to provide a satisfactory mode for resolving the difference between norms and practices.

This frequent incapacity of planning institutions to resolve the difference between norms and practices is considered a typical feature of societies with extensive deliberative democratic practices. Modern democratic societies are institutionally pluralistic and humanly individualistic (Zijderveld 2000). This makes planning conflicts harder to solve because processes of social differentiation make social institutions more pluralistic and increasingly abstract, while people are becoming more individualistic and self-conscious (Bohman 1998). This contributes to a 'de-institutionalising impetus' (Zijderveld 2000), which increases the obstinacy of planning conflicts. Institutionalised modes of resolution for planning conflicts no longer posses undisputed legitimacy and trust. Instead, trust and legitimacy have to be actively constructed continuously. The next section focuses on the way in which Dutch rural planning has been coping with this growing obstinacy of planning conflicts.

6.3 Institutional transformation of Dutch rural planning: Two case studies

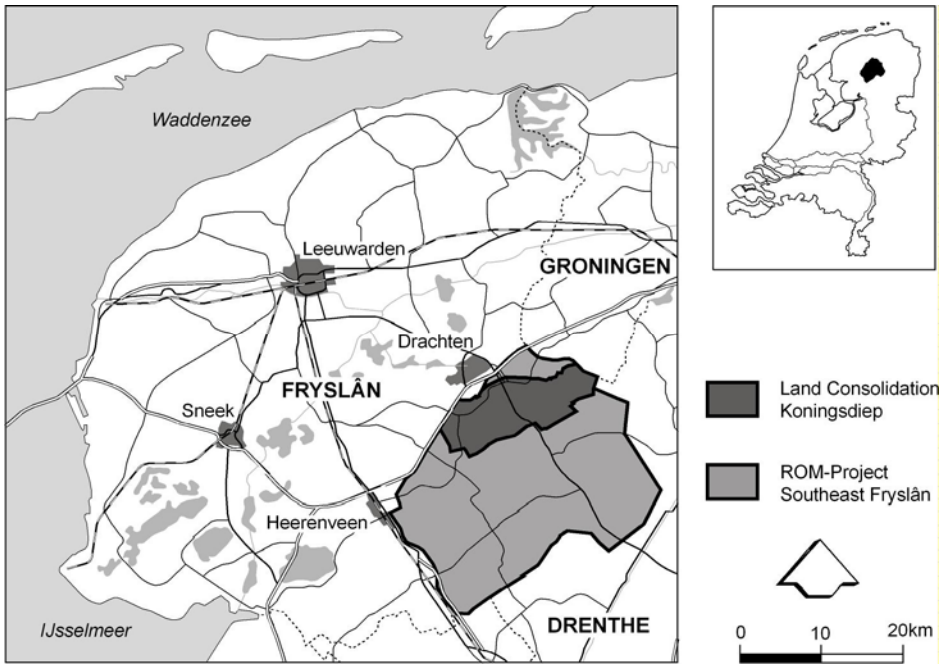
The development of Dutch rural planning is especially relevant in this case for several reasons. First of all, the Dutch rural landscape changed drastically in the past decades, physically as well as socially. Initially, a process of modernisation of agriculture mainly induced these changes. However, from the 1970s onwards, urban driven land use, environmental regulation and the preservation of nature and landscape also influenced rural development. At the same time, the economic feasibility and the social status of traditional agriculture decreased. As a consequence, new actors appeared in rural planning, giving voice to new values regarding rural land use. Until then, conventional planning in rural areas implied setting socially accepted public goals for agricultural, environmental and natural values of the landscape. Policy and planning were considered to be instruments to both physically and socially change rural regions according to these public goals (Hendriks and Tops 2000). It was believed that careful planning could de-politicise, i.e. that it could end or prevent social conflict. Accordingly, planning institutionalised a hierarchical consensual mode of dealing with conflicts to secure national public goals and to prevent the disintegration of Dutch society (Lijphart 1997; Zijderveld 2000; Hendriks and Toonen 2001).[2]

Second, with the growing importance of non-agricultural rural land uses, rural planning also changed. Dutch rural society became too complex and too dynamic to allow conventional planning to be effective. The consensual mode of planning democratised; consensus between different values now had to be struck on lower socio-political levels and between more stakeholders. As a consequence new forms of rural planning were developed and used. This new rural planning acknowledged that individuals have self-governing capacities and that rural stakeholders are

interdependent. Furthermore, the role of government in controlling spatial developments changed into a less autonomous and less absolute one. This resulted in different forms of collaboration between governments and private actors. Deliberation and consultation circuits of policy and planning opened up to include all kinds of other stakeholder groups. The participation of these stakeholders would enable the tailoring of regional and local solutions for national problems and was meant to increase support for generic planning. At the start of the 1990s regional rural development projects became important instruments for the regional integration of different forms of land use and different stakeholders' values. They also aimed to stimulate collective action through stakeholder participation and deliberation. Typical for this period was the construction of 'area-based policy' (Boonstra and Frouws 2005), which was considered a device to integrate different forms of rural land use.

This institutional transformation is considered in detail in the following section, which contains two case studies on conflicts over rural land use in a Dutch region, the South-east of the province of Fryslân, in the north of the Netherlands (Figure 6.1). The first case concerns an agricultural land consolidation project at the end of the 1950s. The second describes the struggle between agriculture and nature, focusing on environmental regulations, in the middle of the 1990s. Both cases take the power relations between farmers and government as focal point.

Figure 6.1 The province of Fryslân with the land consolidation project Koningsdiep and the ROM-project South-east Fryslân



Case 1: The Land Consolidation Project Koningsdiep

The south-east of Fryslân is a slope of the higher grounds in the neighbouring province of Drenthe. The subsoil exists mainly from glacial clay topped off with sand deposits from affluent water. This process created a landscape that consists of brook valleys (with the Koningsdiep being one of the brooks) which run in a south-west direction.

Furthermore, peat deposits developed here, varying from low moor peat in the eastern part to fen peat in the western part. People settled on the higher sand ridges on the sides of the brooks. They used the lower lands close to the brooks as hay land. It could not be used more intensively due to frequent flooding of the brooks in autumn and winter and a water shortage in summer. During the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries companies started to extract the peat for fuel. These were large-scale ventures, which caused a large group of peat workers to migrate into the region, many of which settled down. They lived as small-scale farmers on cultivated heather areas or on the lower grounds. The South-east of Fryslân was considered a poor area during the 19th century because of a population increase and the low employment opportunities outside agriculture. At that time the area was characterised by a large number of small peasants who worked part-time mostly as agricultural labourers. This situation continued into the 20th century. For this reason the Dutch government declared South-east Fryslân as a 'development area' in the 1950s and allocated budget for the implementation of special development policies. The government expected that a land consolidation project together with regional industrialisation could solve both the 'employment problem' and the 'peasant problem'. The land consolidation would stimulate farmers to increase, mechanise and rationalise their farms. This would increase agricultural production and, consequently, result in higher incomes for farmers. The farmers who stopped farming were to find new jobs in regional industry.

Usually the preparation and implementation of a land consolidation project took many years, sometimes more than twenty years in total. The procedures were legally based. In the 1950s the Land Consolidation Act provided a firm framework for measures such as the reallocation of land, the construction and improvement of roads and watercourses, soil melioration, the improvement of the farm layout, and landscape preservation. Land consolidation was combined with agricultural and social extension to stimulate farmers to make optimal use of the new opportunities. Tasks and responsibilities were divided between authorities on the national and regional level, but the dominant actors were the Rural Engineering Service of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Central Land Consolidation Commission. This Central Commission had to adopt draft project plans before the province in which the project was executed could approve them. It mainly consisted of representatives of several ministries and of the farmer unions. In this respect land consolidation can be considered as a deliberative democratic arrangement *avant la lettre*. The Rural Engineering Service, the director of which was secretary of the Central Commission, was responsible for plan preparation. It had a staff of technical engineers in all provinces to do the job. After the provincial government had approved a plan, a final decision had to be taken by the landowners in the project area. To that end, a public balloting meeting was organised. An undemocratic rule, however, was that absentees were regarded as 'yes'-voters. Land consolidation was by far the most important instrument of the national government's policy to modernise agriculture and lower food production costs. In the 1950s the land consolidation program increased from 17.000 to 30.000 hectares a year in average.

The land consolidation project Koningsdiep, encompassing an area of more than 11.000 hectares, was one of the largest single projects ever.[3] Plan preparation started in 1952 when the municipality of Opsterland (one of the two municipalities in the area)

applied for land consolidation with the Minister of Agriculture. In the following years technical engineers of the Rural Engineering Service in the province of Fryslân investigated the farm structure, the quality of soils, the infrastructure, etc. Then they drafted a land consolidation plan, which was ready at the beginning of 1958. In newspaper articles they and representatives of the local and regional authorities stressed that regional stakeholders collectively and individually needed to become active in the land consolidation, because they were 'responsible for their own (and their children's) future and risk lagging behind progressive areas if they do not establish the devised improvements'. At that time, however, it became obvious that among landowners there was a lot of resistance in the region against the project. In March 1958 a meeting was organised between representatives of the Rural Engineering Service, the farmers' unions and the municipalities to discuss the time schedule and technicalities of the upcoming land consolidation. Those present emphasised that the participation of regional farmers and inhabitants in the preparation of the land consolidation plan needed full attention. They proposed to install a 'Commission for Regional Development Koningsdiep' (CRDK), which should be composed of representatives of all the involved regional stakeholder groups. The task of this commission should be to prepare the regional inhabitants for land consolidation. In the words of the deputy director-engineer of the Rural Engineering Service in the province of Fryslân:

> *'It is of importance that the whole region, that all the inhabitants together will make a choice concerning their future, including industrialisation and the [agricultural] drain off. All of you will have to decide what needs to be done. It is essential that every regional inhabitant understands what is at stake and decides how we need to operate* […]. *What we need to do is to arrive at a harmonious whole, via deliberation.* […] *The choice, which the region as a whole has to make, becomes clear: should one use the available land to give everybody maybe half a hectare, or should we use that land to establish economically sound farms?'*

Another participant thought that the CRDK was able to stimulate 'a more rational attitude' and a 'collective conversation'. He stressed that the community needed to be involved in the land consolidation 'to design their own future'. Nevertheless, the CRDK was not installed until April 1959 as a response to growing turmoil in the region. From April until October 1959 the CRDK met four times. In this period, its members were informed by engineers of the Rural Engineering Service about the objectives and procedures of the project. The reason for this was to make sure that the CRDK should inform the population in 'the right way' at public meetings. In October the land consolidation plan was officially published and presented in two public meetings. Also the CRDK organised not less than eight public meetings to inform the inhabitants about the land consolidation. On the outcomes of these meetings several CRDK members concluded that there was 'a lot of distrust and incomprehension' among the inhabitants and that there was a 'wrong atmosphere' at these meetings. Furthermore, articles appeared in the local newspapers containing 'negative' and 'incorrect' information, and, most alarming of all, opponents of the land consolidation project had organised themselves in a so-called Committee of Resistance. The

members of this Committee aimed at supporting the rights of landowners and tenants in the area. Their arguments can be summarised as follows:

- The costs of land consolidation will turn out higher than prospected. The difference will be recouped from the individual landowners;
- Landowners who rent out land will not be able to increase the rent with the costs of the land consolidation;
- With the land consolidation landowners will have to pay for infrastructure that should be financed by the national government;
- With the land consolidation the peasants will be pushed out in favour of bigger farms.

As an alternative, they proposed to implement a plan only targeting the water management of the Koningsdiep in order to improve agricultural production circumstances by decreasing the risk of flooding and reduce costs for individual landowners.

The objections and agitations of the Committee of Resistance were a stimulus for the CRDK to intensify its extension activities. Engineers of the Rural Engineering Service advised to start a public discussion about the land consolidation, to inform individual farmers, to organise living-room conversations and to invite people from other already finalised land consolidation projects to talk about the benefits. They asked the members of the CRDK to voice 'the right opinion' at every occasion, by sending letters to newspapers, engaging in debates at public meetings, etc. They were supported by a group of 60 proponents who in December wrote a letter to every individual landowner, contradicting the arguments of the Committee of Resistance. Furthermore, the CRDK decided to openly confront the Committee during public debates. The Committee responded by organising four information meetings. At all of these meetings proponents of the land consolidation argued against the Committee of Resistance. The CRDK also organised several excursions for inhabitants to successful land consolidation projects. In the meantime a fierce discussion was held between the adversaries in the local newspapers. In an effort to reach a final compromise, the farmers' unions and the union of tenants and mortgage farmers published a statement in which they promised to co-operate concerning a raise of the rent on land. It was not of much avail. Although the Committee of Resistance for a moment considered stopping its actions, it publicly stated to maintain its objections against the land consolidation project.

The plan was put to the vote at December 23, 1959. Of a total of 2680 landowners qualified to vote, 1684 of them (59%, representing 5814 hectares) voted in favour, while the other 1176 (41%, representing 5224 hectares) voted against the project. This positive result marked the start of the implementation of the land consolidation plan, which eventually took more than ten years. Of the group that voted in favour of the project, only 215 actually showed up at voting day. The remaining 1469 of the 'yes'-voters were not present at the ballot, but were legally counted as voters in favour of the land consolidation plan.

The land consolidation project Koningsdiep was carried out and had an important impact on farm development in South-east Fryslân. Over the last half of the 20th century part of the farmers in this region transformed their small-scale, low-intensity

farms in large-scale, intensive holdings (Table 1 and 2). Currently, the area is well known because it hosts some of the largest dairy farms in the Netherlands. It will be clear from the second case study, that agricultural modernisation fitted uneasily with values concerning nature and landscape, which gradually came to the fore during the same years.

Table 6,1 Number and size of farms in the land consolidation project Koningsdiep 1959 (Bouma 1963).

Total	*Groups A + B*				*Groups*	
	Size				C	D
	1-10 ha.	10-15 ha.	15-20 ha.	≥ 20 ha.		
961	435	119	68	102	144	88

A: Farmers
B: Farmers with a part-time job (for less than half of the available working hours)
C: Non-farmers with a farm (less than half of the available working hours is used for farming)
D: Retired farmers and non-farmers owning a farm but living from their interests

Table 6.2. Number and size of farms in the municipality of Opsterland 1980-2003 (Centraal Bureau Statistiek 2006)

Year	Total	Total ha.	1-10 ha.	10-15 ha.	15-20 ha.	20-30 ha.	30-50 ha.	50-100 ha.	≥100 ha.
1980	742	1472675	171	79	112	182	125	27	1
1990	615	1471899	181	37	43	107	147	56	6
2000	487	1507762	158	26	23	66	135	76	11
2003	448	1474935	120	26	24	47	116	88	15

Case 2: The spatial-environmental project South-east Fryslân

At the beginning of the 1990s rural planning was considered as complex. Planning policies and regulations overlapped and contradicted to a large extent. Also it was difficult to involve efficiently the many diverse stakeholders, e.g. policymakers, farmers, nature conservationists, entrepreneurs, rural dwellers, etc. To integrate the different rural planning policies and to stimulate a broad *inclusive* development of the Dutch countryside several projects were developed, which could be termed as area-based policies. These projects were organised on a regional basis and aimed to bring together all the relevant stakeholders. Among the first area-based policy projects were the so-called ROM-projects, with ROM being an abbreviation for *Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieu*, which means 'spatial development and environment'.

A ROM-project was started in South-east Fryslân (Figure 6.1) for several reasons. Over the preceding decades South-east Fryslân had developed towards a livestock-based agricultural production area. Despite the modernisation of agriculture several important nature areas still existed, which made the area attractive for recreational use. The area around the brook Koningsdiep was characterised by large modern farms,

which had been developed after the land consolidation project in the 1960s. The area was characterised by an interweaving landscape of valuable nature and modern agriculture. In the late 1980s the area was targeted in several national planning schemes[4] which all aimed to strengthen one particular dimension of the Dutch countryside, e.g. the development of sustainable agriculture, the preservation of cultural heritage, the conservation of nature, and the stimulation of recreational use. The ROM-project was meant to integrate all the different planning schemes and to implement them via a bottom-up procedure in which regional stakeholders would be able to participate. Just as 40 years before, this project was the scene for a power struggle. However, this power struggle was fought differently.[5]

From May 1991 until July 1992 the prospected participants discussed the set-up of the project. The participants were the associations of regional stakeholders (the Friesian Water Board, the Northern Farmers' Union and the Friesian Environmental Federation) and municipal, provincial and national governments. They had to be organised together in a so-called Steering Group, to co-ordinate and control the execution of the ROM-project South-east Fryslân. There were three main tasks for the Steering Group: to allocate 2000 hectares of land for the National Ecological Network, land that had to be converted from agriculture into nature reserves; to maintain the agricultural production capacity; and to recover the natural hydrological situation in the basin of the three brooks.

At first the farmers in South-east Fryslân, represented by the farmers' union, were reluctant to cooperate. They obviously did not want to turn in 2000 hectares of land (450 hectares in the area around the brook Koningsdiep). Nevertheless, despite its reluctance the farmers' union finally agreed to join the Steering Group on two conditions. They demanded a regional adaptation of the generic national ammonia (from manure) policy and they wanted to maintain their current regional production capacity. The farmers argued that an area-based implementation of the national ammonia policy was essential to be able to maintain the regional agricultural production capacity. The national legislation indicated that the ammonia levels on individual farms depended on both the emission of ammonia (from stables) and the deposition of ammonia on so-called acid-sensitive nature areas (trees, bushes, shrubbery) in the vicinity of the farm. If a farm was located close to such areas, it could not enlarge or intensify its production without violating the law, because this would automatically raise the ammonia levels beyond the critical juridical measures. Due to the typical landscape in South-east Fryslân – meadows enclosed by wooden banks (Van der Ploeg 2003: 132-136) – many farms were located in the vicinity of acid-sensitive nature areas. As a result, the ammonia policy restricted about 1000 farmers, of a total of 1300, to modernise their farm. The farmers felt they were relatively disadvantaged by this policy:

> *'The way how the ammonia policy measures damage of ammonia to the bushes is not well grounded. Besides, farmers close to nature areas are restricted disproportionately. The reduction* [of the ammonia emission] *via a different style of farming is fairer, because it would apply to all farmers.'* (Spokesperson of the farmers' union)

In the following years the farmers' union tried to change the generic ammonia policy using the ROM-project as leverage. One way of doing this was by questioning the scientific facts on which the ammonia policy was based. We will analyse this more closely, because it signals a fundamental shift in the institutionalised way in which planning conflicts used to be resolved. First, we will present the struggle over the specific set-up of the generic ammonia policy and how the ROM participants tried to change it. Second, we will look at the ways in which knowledge was used to discredit the generic ammonia policy.

The farmers' union participated on the condition that the ammonia problem in South-east Fryslân would be solved via legislation based on the ammonia emission instead of ammonia deposition. They proposed a regional average emission-standard of 52,5 kg. NH3 per hectare per year, which would be applied to all farmers in the region in order to reduce the negative environmental effects of ammonia. Over a period of six years the farmers' union together with the other ROM participants tried to convince the national government to accept their proposal.[6] On several occasions the ROM participants negotiated with the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment. But on every occasion the Ministry rejected the proposal, because it could not be harmonised with the generic ammonia policy. The Ministry was not willing to either adapt the generic ammonia policy to fit the Friesian proposal or to attribute South-east Fryslân an exceptional status.

Only after an advice of an independent commission of 'wise men', installed by both the Ministry and the Province of Fryslân, an agreement was reached in February 1996. The 'wise men' proposed to use a covenant instead of a juridical solution to reach an agreement, because the former would give a moral binding between the different participants, while the latter could easily result in alienation between government and region. The covenant should include that the formal deposition-standards of the generic ammonia policy were considered to be unfit for South-east Fryslân. Instead the proposed regional emission-ceiling of 52,5 kg. NH3 per hectare per year should be applied. To comply with this norm, farmers should be allowed to take various individual measures, such as fewer animals per hectare, emission-low fertilisation, emission-low stables, coverage of manure-deposits, etc. In return the nature areas in South-east Fryslân should not be assigned as acid-sensitive. In that way the generic ammonia policy should no longer be applicable and, as a consequence, the farmers should cooperate in the ROM-project, including the allocation and development of 2000 hectares of nature reserves. That was the deal to be made.

In the following years, however, the Ministry and the ROM participants kept on struggling over the specific content of the covenant. The farmers' union was confronted with a fragmented constituency. Several farmers welcomed the covenant, while others (intensive farmers and farmers not in the vicinity of acid-sensitive nature areas) considered it an obstacle. To comply with the demands of its constituency the farmers' union wanted a covenant about a reduction of the ammonia emission on a regional level instead of a farm level. They legitimised these new demands by stating that the 52,5 kg. NH3 per year had been almost accomplished if one took a regional mean as measure unit. The Ministry, however, insisted that it wanted to tailor emission standards per individual farm. Eventually, they reached an agreement on a regional average ammonia emission in the year 2000 of 52,5 kg. NH3 per hectare. If this

average emission was exceeded special measures would be taken against individual farms with a too high ammonia emission. Furthermore, special legislation would be developed for the group of intensive farms, in the form of an 'Ammonia Reduction Plan'. If these farmers would take measures to reduce the ammonia emission, they would be allowed to use half of the ammonia emission reduction to expand their farm.

In the subsequent months the authorities translated this agreement into legislation. During these next months, however, it became evident that the combination of a covenant, which annulled the status of acid-sensitive nature areas, did not juridical fit with an Ammonia Reduction Plan, because such a plan requires the assignment of acid-sensitive nature areas in order to make it work. The ROM-partners decided in a meeting in October 1997 that they would lobby the national parliament to have them adjust the generic ammonia policy in such a way that the Friesian proposal would be juridical possible. Furthermore, in February 1998, the Ministry wanted to construct a new law for South-east Fryslân in order to create a judicial possibility for the covenant to work on an experimental basis.

During these years of struggle there was a fierce discussion about the pros and cons of the model used in generic ammonia policy to measure the negative effects of ammonia, the effects of ammonia in general and the effectiveness of the ammonia policy.[7] The opponents, i.e. the farmers, contested the scientific arguments on which the policy was grounded. The struggle shows that access to (scientific) knowledge was no longer exclusively preserved for authorities. In this case, the farmers' union deliberately issued a research on the environmentally negative effects of ammonia. In this report (Hanekamp 1995), the researchers came to the conclusion that the negative effects of ammonia were dependent on the specifics of the soil. In relation to this conclusion they considered the scientific assumptions of the Dutch manure policy to be very weak. The report concluded that the methods for the calculation of ammonia emission were derived from a general model, which did not take into account the specific place, soil, wind direction and the capacity for nitrification or de-nitrification of the soil. As a result of this report, scientists from the Ministry, research institutes and universities together with several members of parliament met in a round-table discussion in April 1996. One of the conclusions of this meeting was that the generic ammonia policy needed to change, which happened after the elections for parliament later that year.

In the autumn of 1998 the new national government that came to power after the elections decided with the support of parliament that policies aiming at ammonia reduction should use generic emission standards as much as possible, instead of deposition standards. The ROM Steering Group concluded that these new policy plans diminished the need for a separate experiment-law as proposed by the Ministry. The farmers' union in particular was weary of continuing with the lobby for such a law. In an internal memo they labelled this as a 'mission impossible'. The farmers' union convinced the other ROM-partners to give up the demand for an experiment-law and instead settle with the new generic policies, which would be operative at the end of 1999. In July 1999 the ROM-covenant was eventually signed.

6.4 Controlled decontrolling

A comparison of these two cases of Dutch spatial planning in the 1950s and the 1990s illustrates how solving planning conflicts democratically has become increasingly complex. Values concerning rural land use have diversified since the 1950s. The land consolidation project Koningsdiep was set up with one primary objective: to rationalise and modernise rural land use. A diverse, small-scale, labour-intensive landscape was transformed into an efficient agricultural production landscape. Furthermore a social change was targeted. Planning in this period was based on a strong belief in the 'malleability of society' (Andela 2000), a metaphor illustrating the conviction that the government was able to change all aspects of physical layout and human conduct (Faludi and Van der Valk 1994; Hajer and Zonneveld 2000). Planning authorities had exclusive access to policy-making, and technical engineers dominated the discussions within the CRDK. They were very explicit about the rational way in which farmers should develop their farms and urged the members of the CRDK to 'voice the right opinion'.

Compare this with the 1990s where the main objective of the ROM-project was a regional integration of different economical and environmental land-use functions, e.g. agriculture, nature preservation, housing, recreation and water management. Furthermore, the 'right opinion' was not as undisputed as it was in 1959. It is also interesting to see that the ideals on which planning was based used to be explicit about human conduct, e.g. the most rational way to farm, but grew much more implicit over the years, rather aiming at changing the condition of natural resources, as with the ammonia emissions. Furthermore, authorities lost their monopoly of knowledge production. The attempt of the farmers' union in the 1990s to challenge the national ammonia policy with scientific research forms a clear illustration of this point. All these changes are strongly related with the (paradoxical) institutional transformation of Dutch rural planning. On the one hand, the democratisation process based on an inclusive consensus-building approach was strengthened. On the other hand, planning became more complicated and extensive. This process of *controlled decontrolling*[8] will be explained with references to the cases.

Consensus-building and stakeholder participation was an important objective of the land consolidation project Koningsdiep. It was one of the first projects in which authorities realised that regional support was a necessary condition for success. This was a reason to include local leaders in the CRDK and to engage them in extension activities. Local inhabitants were informed on a large scale and in a relatively early stage, which created opportunities for them to influence the project. Despite its dominant top-down approach, the project inhabited already some features of a deliberative democratic ideal. One result of this was the open, antagonistic power struggle between the CRDK and the Committee of Resistance preceding the vote. Consensus-building and participation grew in importance over the years, especially as a means to exercise power, as the second case shows. Here, the farmers' union threatened with non-participation if their demands were not taken into account.

Participation can be used as a means of power because the government needs an inclusive participation of stakeholders in order to exercise power on their account, i.e. it is a necessary condition for the legitimacy of planning policies. However, this

empowerment resulting from inclusive participation was matched with the development of a whole new body of regulations designed for new land use projects. How these regulations restrict and control participation is illustrated in the second case. Due to their involvement in the ROM-project local and regional participants were obliged to go by its procedures, i.e. the legislation and regulations involved. These had become more complicated and made policy adaptation to fit local contexts a long, difficult and uncertain trajectory. Taken together, the case studies show how Dutch rural planning was 'decontrolled', enabling individuals involved in the planning process to put forward their particular values, and 'controlled' via an increasing legislative complexity of planning policies which restricted this empowerment.[9] The democratisation of Dutch rural planning is tied within a complication of regulation (Vuijsje and Wouters 1999). As such, the development of Dutch rural planning exemplifies a process called 'involution' (Geertz 1963; Van der Ploeg 2003). Involution is the advancing condensation, interweaving, refinement and complication of institutions. Involution features prominently in arguments against the so-called 'viscous state' in which processes of public decision-making develop laboriously, slowly and the finalisation of a plan is always circuitous (Hendriks and Toonen 2001). We want to stress that viscosity develops as an effect of democratisation. Through processes of democratisation people have become more independent and able to resist or impede plans. When it comes to conflict resolution, planners cannot solely rely on their 'institutionally anchored legitimacy' (Frissen 2001:61).[10]

This institutional transformation or 'controlled decontrolling' has several consequences for the exercise of power in planning practices. The debate on power between CPT and their critics made clear that the exercise of power is mediated by institutions, which structure possible fields of action, i.e. they create 'room for manoeuvre' (Tait 2002). The cases illustrate that planning institutions based on a deliberative democratic ideal have grown more implicit concerning values and objectives of planning, hereby leaving more room for stakeholders to define and sustain their values using an alleged scientific way of arguing. At the same time, planning institutions have become more explicit concerning the means and procedures, which discipline social action in planning practices. Consequently, the content of power struggles has shifted from values, traditions and beliefs towards interests, procedures and rules. The power to influence and shape the regulatory dimension of planning institutions has become decisive for the outcomes of planning practices. Based on this observation we argue that power no longer resides exclusively in the engineers of the Rural Engineering Service (or other planning authorities). The seat of power is falling empty (Foucault 1976 [2000a] and 1978 [2000b]) and democratic societies aim to keep it empty. Conflicts in Dutch rural planning are not so much struggles for or against power but rather attempts to preclude others from occupying that empty seat of power by means of regulation.

6.5 Conclusion

The relation between power and democracy is an important issue in planning theory and practice. The well-known debate between proponents of CPT and their critics underlined the frequent discrepancy between the norms and practices of deliberative

democratic planning. Sharing power is a primary objective of planning in democratic societies, but results of empirical studies indicate that practices of planning are often unable to live up to this norm. Understanding power as a ubiquitous network of social relations entails that power cannot be neutralised in planning. The outcomes of this debate raise the dilemma of how norms of deliberative planning can be harmonised with real-life planning practices. This dilemma lies at the roots of planning and cannot be solved permanently. To be sure, this does not mean that nothing can be done or that 'anything goes' (Forester 2004). Planning systems cope differently with the discrepancy between norm and practice.

In this paper we focussed on how institutions mediate between norm and practice and how they set limits for social action. For this purpose, we used two case studies to analyse the long-term institutional transformation of Dutch rural planning. Historically, Dutch rural planning institutionalised a strong orientation towards consensus-building. This received a stimulus in the 1950s when planning projects tried to incorporate local people in decision-making. The case study on the land consolidation project Koningsdiep shows that a deliberation over costs and benefits of the proposed project took place. However, this deliberation was restricted due to the hegemony of government officials and technical engineers over the definition of ends (agricultural modernisation and regional industrialisation) and means (policy and plan-making). As a result the bargaining position of participants and adversaries (the Committee of Resistance) was marginal, and in the case of the latter restricted to non-participation.

Between the 1950s and the 1990s many things changed. Values concerning rural land use differentiated between stakeholders and due to a democratisation process more people were able to participate in rural planning. This meant that the conventional top-down consensus-building became discredited. The traditional monopoly of government on the production of knowledge was contested, which enabled others to also legitimately produce knowledge. Furthermore, the democratisation of planning was meant to be inclusive. Planners were obliged to incorporate the values of different stakeholders. These two changes complicated consensus-building because planning institutions no longer had the authority and disciplining capacity and now needed to facilitate people's diverse values which had become more diverse.

Our analysis shows that the institutions in planning changed in two interrelated ways. Planning decontrolled by giving up its monopoly on knowledge production and value definition. This unmistakably strengthened the position and agency of regional stakeholders, a process that we consider as one of growing democratisation[11]. However, this process of democratisation was controlled with the growing complexity of planning itself. In other words, the authorities maintained their grip on the means of planning, i.e. the procedures and regulations by which planning takes place. The controlled decontrolling in planning has important consequences for the exercise of power. Power is mediated through institutions, i.e. routinised forms of social action. Institutionalisation processes influence to a considerable extent the way power can be used, because it mediates power relations between actors and, in this way, structures their possible fields of action. Human behaviour is disciplined in an indirect way, i.e. via the complication of planning policies and regulations. Values are loosing their

disciplining power to a considerable extent in deliberative democracies, which allows stakeholders to define and sustain their subjective values more forcefully. Institutions have grown implicit regarding values, but have become more explicit concerning means and procedures for planning. This development has shifted the content of power struggles over values, traditions and beliefs towards struggles over interests, procedures and rules. The power to modify and use seemingly neutral regulations and legislation has become decisive for the dynamics of power in planning. Power struggles in deliberative planning are not about overthrowing holders of power but rather about subverting and redressing the institutionalised relations of power.

Notes

1 Despite his lucid concept of the 'double bind of power' Foucault (2000b:336) fails to give an account on how these two dimensions of power function in society simultaneously. In his early work he showed that the way in which we understand ourselves, our own identity, is historically and culturally specific and contingent. We are products of power relations. In his later work he focused on how power 'works', i.e. how we necessarily invoke power relations when we act.

2 This consensual tradition originated in the time of the Dutch Republic (1588-1795) which political system was based on a spreading and sharing of power in a highly decentralised federation. Political decisions always required long and intensive accommodation and compromise (in Dutch: schikken en plooien). The traditional plurality and dissensus required consensus-building institutions (Hendriks and Toonen 2001; Mels 2005).

3 The case of the land consolidation project Koningsdiep is reconstructed through the use of literature (Bouma 1961; Bouma and Nijboer 1963), documentation from the TRESOAR archive in the city of Leeuwarden, and from articles in the local newspapers *Friese Koerier* and *Drachtster Courant.*

4 The Nature Policy Plan (*Natuurbeleidsplan*), the Fourth Memorandum on Spatial Planning (*Vierde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening*), the Structure Scheme on Green Spaces (*Structuurschema Groene Ruimte*), the Nature and Environment Policy Plan (*Natuur- en Milieubeleidsplan*) and the Nature Protection Act (*Natuurbeschermingswet*).

5 The information on this struggle is derived from interviews with the main participants, newspaper articles from *De Leeuwarder Courant*, *Het Friesch Dagblad*, *Het Agrarisch Dagblad*, *Intermediar* and project documentation..

6 We leave here aside the internal struggle between the farmers' union and the other ROM participants over this issue.

7 This was done through papers and columns in newspapers. Compare the next titles: 'Ammonia, a blessing for ozone' (*Leeuwarder Courant*, May 24, 1993) and 'Ammonia from manure ís an environmental problem' (*Leeuwarder Courant*, March 26, 1994).

8 This term is derived from Elias' civilisation theory and previously used by Mastenbroek (1999) to analyse the sociogenesis of negotiation.

9 Recently, legal scientists have tried to measure the development and growth of Dutch regulation quantitatively. Since 1980 regulation has grown with 700 laws a year, which amounts to an average growth of 2,7% per year (De Jong and Herweijer 2004). It is striking that the Ministry of Agriculture, despite its relatively small size, produces much regulation in comparison with other ministries (Brenninkmeijer, 2004).

10 This process is of course not exclusively Dutch. See, for other examples: Rose and Miller (1992); Stoker (1998); Edwards *et al.* (2001); and Marinetto (2003).

11 Whether or not an inclusive participation of stakeholders really contributes to democratisation and in what way is a highly debated question, that focuses, e.g. on the range of stakeholders that is

included, and their representativeness in relation to elected bodies in a representative democracy, including the possibly slackening democratic potential of these bodies. Young (2001) has insightfully outlined the different ideal-typical positions in this debate.

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7 Policies in the polder: How institutions mediate between norms and practices of rural governance*

Abstract

Matching rural policy and practice has become increasingly difficult. Despite a shift from government to governance, a void is often perceived to exist between policy and practice. This article discusses two hypotheses on the emergence of such a void. The first argues that the void is a result of a process of value differentiation. The second explains the void as a result of a process of de-politicisation. This article examines whether these hypotheses hold true for Dutch rural policy. The analysis shows that though both hypotheses are true to a limited extent, neither succeeds in explaining the changes in Dutch (rural) policy on its own. Instead, it is argued that both are needed for a comprehensive analysis.

7.1 Introduction

Recently, attention to institutional changes from government to governance in rural studies has increased (Goodwin 1998; Marsden and Murdoch 1998; Marsden 1999; Frouws and Leroy 2003). Strikingly, most contributions are sceptical about the ability of governance arrangements to improve democratic decision-making (Jones and Little 2000; Edwards *et al.* 2001; MacKinnon 2002, Herbert-Cheshire 2003; Boonstra and Frouws 2005). In spite of the democratisation processes associated with governance, many perceive a void between policy and practice.

Different authors try to understand this paradoxical situation and offer divergent explanations. Some authors allocate the cause, origin and solution of the void primarily in the institutional transformation of civil society (Etzioni 1993; Putnam 1993; 2000; Fukayama 1995). In this article Putnam's work (1993; 2000) will be used representing this approach. He argues that a process of value differentiation decreases people's involvement in institutions of civil society, which results in low levels of mutual trust. Following Hay (2004), such an analysis is referred to as a *demand-side* explanation, because it primarily looks at the changing attitudes of people towards policy.

Putnam's analysis is criticised for neglecting the influence of state and ideology on the functioning of democracies (Berman 1997; Szreter 2002). Hay argues that 'democratic policies get the levels of political participation they deserve' (2004:501). He offers a *supply-side* explanation, focusing on the institutional development of the state and suggests that the normalisation and institutionalisation of a neoliberal economic paradigm has depoliticised policy making.

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This article investigates to what extent these hypotheses are true for Dutch rural policy. Currently, Dutch policy is confronted with a decline in civic trust (Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau [SCP] 2005). People are becoming politically disengaged, which results in low levels of participation in policymaking. It is generally acknowledged that this perceived void between policy and practice is a major problem for Dutch politics (Hajer 2003). It is becoming harder for Dutch policymakers to support their decisions with public approval, which problematises democratic policymaking (Lijphart 1997; De Beus 2003). It also problematises democratic policymaking in Dutch *rural* policy and threatens to ruin important qualities of the Dutch countryside (Raad voor het Landelijke Gebied [RLG] 2004).

This article analyses how processes of value differentiation and the institutionalisation of governance arrangements manifest themselves in social practice. This information can be used to judge whether a void indeed exists and whether it can be attributed to either a process of value differentiation (demand-side analysis) or to a process of de-politicisation (supply-side analysis). For this purpose the results of a case study on the rural policy project in the region of the Langbroekerwetering are analysed.

The analysis points out that both a supply-side and demand-side analysis fail to capture the current problems of Dutch rural politics. They both pay univocal attention to the downside of recent social and political changes and do not account for the ways in which people also re-engage in Dutch rural policy. The case study shows that the constituencies of conventional rural stakeholder groups are fragmenting due to a process of value differentiation, which problematises the typical way in which the Dutch build consensus through stakeholder participation based on interest representation.

However, the case study also shows how new forms of civic engagement are emerging and how individuals and groups try to obtain and acquire political influence by using new initiatives. The remainder of the article presents three examples to illustrate how farmers engage with politics without relying on their conventional representatives. These examples can be understood as efforts towards re-institutionalisation or re-politicisation. But before going into details, it is necessary to get a fuller understanding of the current characteristics of Dutch (rural) politics, which forms the basis for the generally accepted perception of a void between policy and practice.

7.2 Disengagement in Dutch rural politics

According to several commentators (De Rooy and Van der Velde 2005) the 2002 parliamentary elections and the rise and fall of Fortuyn brought to light the void between Dutch policy and the Dutch citizens. Fortuyn[1]was the leader of the party ‘List Pim Fortuyn’, (LPF) which took part in the 2002 elections. He was assassinated nine days before the 2002 Dutch parliamentary elections. Fortuyn made his aim to be elected president very explicit. He was deeply critical of immigration and crime policies and the general condition of the public services. In his media performances and writings he successfully portrayed mainstream politicians as part of a ruling elite that had lost touch with common people. In this election the ruling parties (the Liberal,

Socialist and Pragmatic-democratic party) lost considerable numbers of votes to Fortuyn's LPF and the Christian-Democratic party. This voter turnout indicated that a large part of Dutch society had lost faith in the ruling political parties. Later, commentators would describe Fortuyn as a catalyst of the latent public discontent in conventional policymaking (Pennings and Keman 2003; Van der Brug 2003).

Despite a change in government and political reforms, the void remained intact after the elections in May 2002 and January 2003 (Van Praag 2003). This became obvious when the European Constitution was rejected during the national referendum in June 2005. Dutch politics now found itself in a strange paradox. Despite more opportunities from the 1960s onwards to democratise political decision-making, people distrust politics to an increasing extent and they are sceptical about the benefits of political participation (SCP 2005).

Civic disengagement poses a serious threat for democratic policies. When policymakers lack public support their policies become dysfunctional and ineffective. People default on their obligations to the government because they feel that the government does not take their problems into account. In case of a deliberative democracy, civic disengagement poses a threat because political outcomes become biased in favour of specific groups of people; those with the means and resources to engage with deliberative policymaking successfully (Sanders 1997).

7.3 Origins of the void

A void between policy and citizens is perceived not only in The Netherlands, but also in the USA and the UK. Analysts from both other countries offer different explanations of the origins of this void and, consequently, offer different remedies for it. The first is a demand-side explanation, which locates the cause and solution of the void in civil society (Etzioni 1993; Putnam 1993; 2000; Fukayama 1995). In short, it argues that the demands of citizens towards policy have become individualised because of the de-institutionalisation of civil society. The most influential proponent of this view is Putnam, who studied the historical development of democracy in Italy and the USA (Putnam 1993; 2001). His analysis suggests that the social networks and norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness, which together constitute social capital, facilitate a proper functioning of democratic governance. In the case of the USA, Putnam argues that the social capital of civil society has been eroding since the 1960s. This trend is most visible in the declining membership rates of voluntary associations such as Boys Scouts and bowling leagues. Putnam considers this development problematic, as the membership of such associations socialises people into norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness. If people are not socialised in these values they are not able to co-operate with each other and the state. Consequently, a decline of social capital is supposed to lead to civic disengagement and political apathy, which undermines good democratic governance. Putnam sees the solution to this problem in a recovery of shared values through the strengthening of voluntary associations in civil society (Putnam 1993; 2001).

Putnam is criticised for mixing up symptom and cause. Critics state that the fact that people stopped bowling in leagues did not change their attitude towards policy and government (Szreter 2002). Several authors argue that this conflation is due to

Putnam's neglect of the influence of the state and state ideology in the origin of the void. Instead, these authors offer a supply-side explanation suggesting that a neoliberal mode of governance has depoliticised democratic policymaking (Burnham 2001; Pellikaan *et al.* 2003; Hay 2004). In this view, the origin of the void lies primarily in the policies the state supplies to its citizens. For example, Jones (2002) argues that neoliberalism has reduced policymaking to managing the economy, which has minimised the space for political deliberation and created an impression that political choice does not exist. According to these authors, civic disengagement is a logic correlate of a neoliberal mode of governance (Hay 2004), because politics is a reciprocal matter. If the state chooses to let people fend for themselves, then why would people respect their obligations to the state? (Szreter 2002). In other words, government has an important impact on citizens' attitudes towards the state. The supply-side explanation suggests that governments could improve political participation by reassuming political responsibility which, under the current circumstances, has been relegated to the market economy. Although aspects of both analyses apply in the Dutch context, none of them fully captures the origins and cause of current problems in Dutch rural policy. They pay univocal attention to either civil society or the state. The distinction between the state and civil society is not helpful in the Dutch context because the two domains have become partly integrated: it is difficult to see where the civil becomes the political and vice versa (Foley and Edwards 1996). The next section shows how, in the Dutch context, institutional changes in both civil society and the state are closely interlinked.

7.4 Pillars, policies and values

For most of the twentieth century Dutch policy was organised around sub-national cultures, which were secular (Socialist and Liberal) or confessional (Catholic and Protestant). These sub-national cultures established their own basic institutions for politics, education, health, media, welfare and sports. This system is called *verzuiling*, which means pillarisation or columnisation. The different sub-national institutions were organised 'perpendicularly, intersecting the various horizontal socio-economic classes' (Zijderveld 2000:147). These so-called pillars (*zuilen*) were ruled from the top down by men from upper or upper-middle class families (Zijderveld 2000). The ruling elite of each group constructed a consensus across the different sub-national cultures, without reducing the distinctiveness of the different cultures. The norm was that constituencies of the different groups accepted the decisions of their leaders. People who were born and raised in the institutions of their culture identified themselves in the first place with the values of their sub-national culture. A generally accepted argument is that consensual politics was essential to secure national economic success and to prevent the disintegration of Dutch society (Lijphart 1997; Hendriks and Tops 2000).

However, in the 1960s and 1970s this system of social organisation of Dutch policy lost much of its efficiency. During these years a joint process of value differentiation and de-politicisation, called *ontzuiling* (de-pillarisation),[2] has set in, lasting until today. Value differentiation weakened the relation between people and their traditional institutions (Zijderveld 2000). This meant an increase in electoral volatility. People

based their vote on their political preferences instead of their social-cultural position (Van der Brug 2003). This changed the functioning of representative democracy, because it became more problematic to rely on the authority of representatives concerning policy choices. Constituencies no longer felt normatively obliged to accept agreements made by their representatives (Frouws 1993; Hooghe and Houtman 2003) which, in turn, forced policymakers and political representatives to actively ensure their own public legitimacy. For these reasons it became more difficult to govern society according to the traditional system of top-down consensual politics.

To retain the state's regulative capacity, Dutch policy started to change during the second half of the twentieth century.[3] The response to the growing heterogeneity of values and concomitant de-pillarisation was a decentralisation and broadening of consensual politics. Through the institutionalisation of democratic initiatives, such as interactive and deliberative policymaking (Hajer and Wagenaar 2003), policy and planning opened up to include all kinds of other stakeholders and interest groups. The participation of these stakeholders was supposed to tailor regional and local solutions for general problems and was meant to increase support for generic policymaking. Consensus between different interests now had to be struck at lower socio-political scales and between more stakeholders. This new mode of policy promised to involve stakeholders, taking account of their interests and acknowledging their competence and abilities to co-operate in planning practices (Boonstra and Frouws 2005).

However, this policy change also involved a shift of political responsibility from the state to the markets (economisation) and the courts (juridification). This shift was defended as the logical answer to globalised economic markets and an overburdened welfare state. Neoliberalism, which transferred responsibility for public issues from the state to individuals and companies, became a popular response to these governmental problems (De Beus 2003; Burnham 2001; Hay 2004). Despite these changes Dutch policy remained fairly consensual (Pellikaan *et al*. 2003). The economic recession of the 1970s convinced the governing elites of trade unions, employers' organisations and government to remain committed to consensual politics, which became internationally known as the 'polder model' (Jones 2002). The polder model was held responsible for the quick economic recovery and the situation of full employment during the 1990s. Its success dramatically faded during the elections of 2002 and 2003 and the referendum over the EU Constitution in 2005.

7.5 Changes in Dutch rural policies

The trends of value differentiation and de-politicisation can also be witnessed in the development of the countryside and rural policies. The functions and perceptions of the Dutch countryside have considerably differentiated since the 1960s, resulting from the process of de-pillarisation. Currently, the countryside is not only valued for its agricultural productive capacity but also for its environmental qualities, possibilities for recreation and other leisure activities (Dutch Institute for Public Opinion and Market Research [NIPO] 2001). In the agricultural sector values also diversified and farm production broadened and deepened (Van der Ploeg, *et al*. 2000).

Rural policies had to adapt to this rural differentiation process (See also Marsden *et al*. (1993) and Kitchen (2000), who describe a similar process for the UK) in order to

retain legitimacy. This became clear at the end of the 1980s and 1990s, when several large-scale generic policy projects, such as the environmental regulation of manure from farming and the establishment of the *Ecologische Hoofd Structuur*[4] (the National Ecological Network), were implemented. It was common practice to reach a consensus over implementation with the representatives of the different, organised interest groups on a national and provincial level. However, the public at local levels did not accept these consensuses any longer. The support base of the traditional representatives weakened due to their fragmented constituency, which problematised consensus building and consequently the implementation of rural policy in general.

Furthermore, many social groups living in the Dutch countryside faced socioeconomic problems during the 1980s and early 1990s (Jones 2002). Farmers' profits have been squeezed between increasing costs and declining commodity prices (Van der Ploeg *et al.* 2000) and rural communities have faced the withdrawal of social services from villages (Vinkers and De Hoog 2000). See Mak (1996) for a literary account of these processes. In these circumstances a profound void became manifest[5], which created problems for the efficiency and legitimacy of democratic policymaking but also gave rise to physical and spatial problems. The political disengagement of rural citizens threatens to ruin important qualities of the Dutch countryside. Essential features of the countryside, for example, land and water management, but also the successful integration of agriculture, recreation, housing and other land-use functions require co-operation between people (RLG 2004). The integration of land-use functions is especially important due to the demographical and geographical characteristics of The Netherlands, a relatively small country with a high population density.

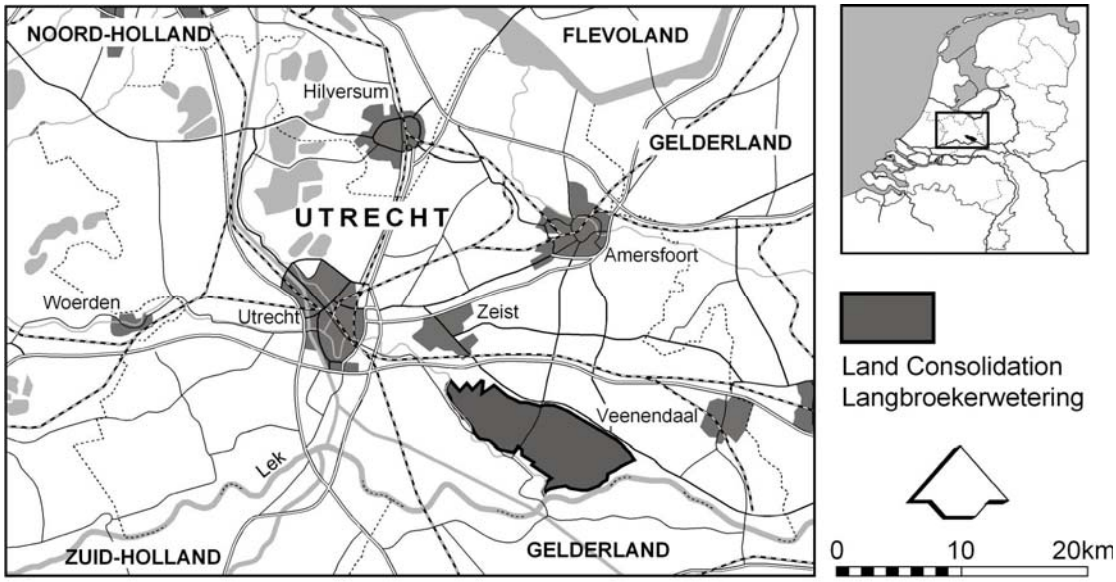
In order to take account of this differentiation of values, rural policy decentralised to stimulate participation at local levels. Several regional and local rural projects started in the beginning of the 1990s under the collective noun, *area-based policy*. These projects mirrored the typical system of consensual policies, but at a lower level. As it was believed that citizens would more easily accept a consensus reached on such a lower level, small committees, including traditional interest groups, were established at local and regional levels. Despite these growing opportunities for participation, however, several case studies on new rural policies such as the area-based policy indicate that the results match poorly the specificity of rural regions (Boonstra and Frouws 2005).

The ways in which processes of value differentiation and de-politicisation are manifested in the social practice of Dutch rural policy is analysed here, using the results of a case study on the values and attitudes of stakeholders in a land-use planning project in the *Langbroekerwetering* (LBW) region. The results indicate that the conventional organisation of participatory forums of stakeholders according to *interests* does not fully capture the diversity of *values* held by stakeholders. This mismatch results in a de-politicisation of conventional policy forums but, unlike the conclusions of a supply-side analysis, this does not mean that people in general are disengaging from rural policies. In the remainder of this article a few examples of political action are presented, indicating how rural stakeholders, in this case farmers, re-engage with rural politics. They show how a process of de-politicisation also bears forth a process of re-politicisation.

7.6 Langbroekerwetering

The Langbroekerwetering is located in the south-east, of the province of Utrecht, close to Utrecht city (see Figure 1). The area is situated between the river Rhine and the higher grounds of the *Utrechtse Heuvelrug*, and has three types of landscape: riverine, a clay landscape and a hill landscape. Agricultural activities are primarily livestock based. The value of nature and the landscape values of the area are threatened due to a scaling up of agriculture and an increase of recreational activities and traffic density (Van den Bijtel 1998). Furthermore, due to the problems of agricultural profitability, a need for new regional economic activities exists. Other developments are increasing recreational use and the construction of new country estates to supply the (urban) demand for residence in the countryside. The various claims of environmentalists, farmers, entrepreneurs, estate owners and (urban) tourists make it hard to decide on the allocationand use of land and water.

Figure 7.1 Location of the Land Consolidation Project Langbroekerwetering



This was the main reason why the province of Utrecht and the municipalities in the area started a land consolidation project in 2000. The main objective was to decide on the allocation of land and water by including the main regional stakeholders, that is, the farmers, estate owners, environmental organisations, recreational entrepreneurs, the water board, municipalities and the Province of Utrecht. Due to the lack of space and the diversity of claims, an integration of land use, that is, multi-purpose land use (*meervoudig landgebruik*) was preferred. These regional stakeholders were represented in a district committee (DC) to develop a regional rural development plan in which a strategy for land allocation was formulated. After several public meetings this plan was published in 2001 (Stuurgroep Langbroekerwetering 2001).

This case study considers to what extent the values of stakeholders were represented in the DC. Furthermore, it analyses in what alternative ways stakeholders tried to participate in decision-making in the project. For these purposes an equal selection of the stakeholders involved was interviewed about their values concerning rural policy.

A total of 20 interviews was analysed using Q-methodology (Barry and Proops 1999; Durning 1999; Woolley and McGinnis 2000; Dryzek 2005). For a fuller account of the content of the attitudes and Q-methodology see Boonstra (2006). Another 21 interviews were done to investigate how these values corresponded to attitudes in Dutch rural policy and development.

7.7 Value orientations towards rural policy and development

Through Q-methodology five different value orientations towards the development of the LBW were discerned. These were interpreted using qualitative information from the interviews. In the following section these value orientations are briefly described as portraits which are ideal-typical representations. This means that they are presented with a conceptual clarity which they lack in social reality (Swedberg 2005).

Portrait A: New economical activity
The crisis in agriculture will result in a decrease in the number of farms in the area. This economical development is inevitable. The agricultural land that is released will be used for new economic activities, or will serve as building plots for new country estates. New economical activities have to be legalised, otherwise the whole area will turn into a mess. The 'red for red' regulation[6] can give space to start new activities. The interwoven landscape of the LBW does not allow for the optimal use of land and water. That's why I think rural policy should strive harder to separate land-use functions. The government should not interfere too much with rural development. Its main task is to facilitate the land market and to provide juridical security. At this moment little connection between rural policy and rural everyday practice exists because policymakers, and especially civil servants, do not have enough knowledge of practices.

Portrait B: Interwoven landscape
Despite policy measures to increase nature and biodiversity in the area, the regional environment has not improved so much. Policy measures should pay more attention to the conservation and creation of nature. However, it is not an option to separate land use functions. Rather, they should be integrated by making farming more sustainable. Currently, no real choices are made in rural policy. The result is a compromise between the interests of different rural stakeholders, which creates a homogenous Dutch landscape. A free market system is detrimental for the qualities of the LBW. It will only stimulate new economical developments and therefore new buildings, and traffic density. Therefore, the government should take up the role as a director of rural development much stronger. However, the government should allow more possibilities for creating local solutions and possibilities for deviating from conventional policy.

Portrait C: Agricultural modernisation
All attention for the LBW is an exclusive focus on environmental degradation. This results in more restrictive policies concerning agricultural activities, and consequently more costs for the farmer. Policymakers seem to forget that farming has made the LBW as beautiful as it is now. That's the reason why policies should pay more attention to the development of modern agriculture. At this moment there are too many restrictions, which block agricultural development, i.e. the creation of new nature and

new estates, etc. It would be better if land use functions are more separated to allow for agricultural optimisation of the natural resource base e.g. irrigation, drainage, plot size, etc. But currently these issues get little attention from politicians.

Portrait D: Keep things the way they are
It is important to keep things as they are now. The landscape is beautiful now. I believe that the new Area-based policy is a good instrument to integrate the different land-use functions. The effects of new economical activities and increasing tourism are detrimental to the landscape quality. These developments should be restricted as much as possible. The further development of nature is very good. The existing and new estates could very well take up this task because they're not economically dependent of the land. Farming will remain important to keep the landscape as it is and therefore there need to be enough opportunities to modernise the farm. However, a broadening of farm production is a bad development because it will mess up the countryside.

Portrait E: Regulated broadening of agriculture
The most important aspect of the LBW is its interwoven landscape. It should be the main goal of rural policy to conserve that. But this quality is being threatened by the financial crisis in the agricultural sector. As a consequence, the remaining farmers are financially incapable of buying land which becomes available as a result of farmers leaving agriculture. So what needs to be done with this land? At this moment it can only be used for agricultural purposes, as is regulated in rural planning schemes. Therefore, legally allowing multiple activities on farms is a fitting solution for this region. Such multiple activities can help farmers to finance the purchase of available land. However, one has to be take care that multiple activities don't lead to chaos. You don't want to have farm camping sites everywhere. It is important to have a vision or else you will not be able to direct rural development. Everybody has ideas, but it's not possible to implement all of them. Therefore the government needs to have control.

7.8 Fragmented value orientations

These portraits illustrate the value differentiation between rural stakeholders in the LBW, which is considerably different from a distinction based on the different interests of the stakeholder groups represented in the DC, that is, farmers, country estate owners, environmentalists, recreation representatives and government. These differences are visible in Table 1, which shows which rural stakeholders feel attracted to which portrait.

Table 7.1 The division of the respondents over the portraits (N=20)

	Policymakers	*Farmers*	*Environment-alists*	*Recreation entrepreneurs*	*Estate owners*
Portrait A	2	1	1		2
Portrait B	1		3		
Portrait C		3			
Portrait D	1		2		1
Portrait E	1	1		1	

The table shows that the different stakeholder groups are considerably fragmented in their value orientation. The fragmentation of the representatives' constituencies undermines the success of consensual politics. The consensus achieved in policy projects might turn out to be ineffective in practice, because people may not feel constrained by agreements made between representatives in the project and might default on them. This problem was brought up in the interviews, when respondents commented on the difficult position of the farmers' representative and the estate owners' representative in the DC and on the relevance of a consensus achieved in the DC. The statements below illustrate these opinions:

> *'Farmers here are sensitive to interference from outside.* […] *That's why I find myself in a difficult position. On the one hand, I have to keep on talking with the DC because if we are not part of it we loose opportunities to influence decision-making. On the other hand, when I have to go back to my constituency with plans I sometimes meet incomprehension.* […]. *Of course it is always difficult to represent farmers in difficult times. It is hard to bring bad news.'* (Farmers' representative).

> […]*' nowadays you often see that representatives function well on a policy level, but loose their face when they have to confront their constituency.'* (Agricultural consultant).

The conventional consensus politics is still intact on a policy level despite the fragmentation of constituencies in Dutch rural policy. This indicates that the traditional Dutch organisation of participatory rural policy is 'path dependent' (Pierson 2000) and cognitively 'locked in' (Blyth 2001) the idea that consensus between stakeholders' interests is needed for good rural policy. According to several respondents, the cognitive lock of constructing a interest-based consensus between stakeholders has a negative effect on the robustness and clarity in the direction of rural policy.

> *'I believe rural policy lacks a clear direction because of these middle-of-the-road consensuses. That's the tragedy of the Dutch countryside and rural policy. There is no direction, which entails the danger that everything slips from our hands.'* (Agricultural consultant).

Other critical comments are that consensuses are often based on very general ideas. This makes sense, because the abstract outcomes might have the flexibility to accommodate a highly differentiated rural society. However, the downside is that they are hard to put into practice.

> *'The whole project* [LBW] *is too much about images. For example, broadening agriculture, camping at the farm… Everybody seems to agree on these issues, but do*

> *they know what they are talking about? Can a farmer have 50 campsites at his farm? Everybody starts to protest if you want that, despite that a farmer needs to have this scale in order to make it profitable.* […] *Everybody can agree on images but once you start to make things concrete… It is essential to offer people real opportunities instead of talks; otherwise rural policy remains a half-done job.'* (Employee of the Farm Union)

The above statement illustrates the typical difference between the normative and the empirical in Dutch rural policy. On the one hand, outcomes of policy negotiation processes have become more general and abstract, sometimes even vague, while on the other hand values have differentiated considerably. This 'void' between the normative and empirical is a structural characteristic in modern democracies (Young 2001; Neblo 2005). It is mediated time and again by institutions in an effort to dissolve it. As this paper shows Dutch rural policy has tried to fill this void through an institutionalisation of consensusbuilding between interests of different stakeholders.

To a certain extent both the demand-side analysis and supply-side analysis are able to provide an explanation for the malfunction of institutionalisation of interest-based consensuses. The results of the Q-methodology supported Putnam's analysis that values have been differentiating. Similarly, the reflections concerning the functioning of the DC in the LBW project are in line with Hay's analysis that current policy does not offer the appropriate institutions to engage people in policymaking. However, this is not the whole story.

Both a demand- and supply-side analysis pay exclusive attention to the downside of recent social and political changes. These analyses ignore ways in which civil society and the state respectively are re-institutionalising and re-politicising. This is due to their focus on either the domain of civil society or the state. An analysis of the political domain as meeting ground between civil society and state is able to pay attention to ways in which people also re-engage with each other and the state. The remainder of the paper will highlight three examples to show that whenever a void between normative and empirical surges up, i.e. when the available institutions fail to mediate this difference, new attempts at resolution and institutionalisation develop (Cohen and Eyal Ben-Ari 1993).

7.9 Re-engagement in Dutch rural policy

The next examples provide an indication of engagement in Dutch rural policy without the conventional representative institutions. The people in the examples are all farmers. It needs to be stressed that these examples are not inclusive; they merely give an indication of the changing attitudes.

Self-representation (as an inevitability[7]): Mr. and Mrs. Jansen

Mr. and Mrs. Jansen were informed that part of their land was allocated as future nature reserve. As usual they were assured that they were not obliged to leave the land and that if they choose to sell it, they would receive complete financial compensation.

> *'They always say that you will get financial compensation and that ownership is juridical protected. But imagine that you have a nice garden in front of your house. You enjoy working and relaxing in it. One day, an official comes to inform you that*

they will need the garden to put up an electricity pole. 'But you don't have to worry, you'll get financial compensation'. Of course you would think: 'come on, sir, money is not the issue here'. You see, that impact is really underestimated.' (Mr. Jansen).

Mr. and Mrs. Jansen proposed to allocate another piece of their land, which was low in agricultural production and therefore better suitable for nature development.

'Jan has asked them so many times to come and have a look at the alternative plot. But they keep on saying that they want it there. We say: come and have a look at the situation, there are much more opportunities. You can have your part and we are able to continue with our farm. But they never consider it. There is no possibility for discussion.' (Mrs. Jansen)

'They never really listen, except when you go to court.' (Mr. Jansen).

Eventually. Mr. and Mrs. Jansen went to court with the aim to oppose the environmental claim. The court decided that the Province acted accordingly, i.e. followed the legal procedures, so there was not a reason to reconsider the environmental claim. The whole affair was not satisfactorily for Mr. and Mrs. Jansen, which is illustrated with the next quotes.

'Too little is used from the local level. To be sure, not much has been initiated from the local level. That's pretty sad and I feel bad about that. We, as farmers, as inhabitants from the Langbroekerwetering, have to come up with things ourselves. Come up with a view of what we want with this region. Where we want to go. There needs to be a finish line with this whole thing [the project Langbroekerwetering]. *What can we bring in ourselves? How can we put ourselves in? This is happening too little. I would really like to see that happening and I am busy with it too. But, you become discouraged pretty quick because there are just a very few people who want to cooperate and put in energy and time.'* (Mr. Jansen).

'In agriculture we miss someone who can express a feeling, who can function as an initiator. As farmers we need to make clear what we have to sell. At this moment we are too much occupied with defending what we've got. There are too few initiatives from the sector, which can give some counter-pressure to the claims of nature and tourism. People withdraw on their farms for various reasons and also lack the time to develop new things.' (Mr. Jansen)

Despite Mr. and Mrs. Jansen's active engagement in rural policy, they would prefer to do it more informally and above all together with others. It is interestingly to note how the above statements seems to correspond with the argument of Szeter (2002) that individuals in a depoliticised society show a 'yearning' for social connection with their governments and each other. The next example is of a farmer who does not voice such a yearning and who consciously chooses to engage in policymaking individually and informally.

Self-representation (as a desired option): Pieterse

Pieterse has the largest farm in the LBW region and is considered as a highly skilled farmer by his colleagues. He tries to leave his farm in the LBW to continue somewhere else, where there are fewer restrictions on farm development.

'You always need to remain positive and consider your possibilities. This farm is located on sandsoil, which means that we face restrictions concerning the amount of minerals we can apply. That's the reason why we started with other activities besides dairy farming, such as making cheese and breeding fish. Currently, we noticed that also these extra activities couldn't grow anymore. That's the reason why we decided to look for another location to continue farming.'

Pieterse's plan is to finance his move with money he is able to receive when part of his farm is used for future housing. To realise this plan he has to negotiate a lot with policymakers. As the next statement shows he actively engages on his own account with rural policy and policymakers and is anything but disengaged.

'If I relate to my experiences with policymakers within these negotiations, I can only say that there is relatively little distance. You can talk with everybody. I believe that a lot of farmers feel that there is a distance because of the complicated regulations and because they don't know how to effectively approach policymakers. If you want to establish contact you first need to write a letter and you need to take the initiative yourself. Many farmers are still not used doing these things.'

Pieterse is representing himself because he believes that the traditional Farm Union cannot represent his interests comprehensively.

'Take a look at agriculture. There are so many different farmers which all have their own specific view. In the DC there is only one representative for all these farmers. It is impossible for him to represent all these diverse interests. Of course, he can represent a big picture, but not how I want to manage my farm. That's why I think that farmers as individuals need to engage with politics more.'

Despite Pieterse's scepticism of doing things together with other farmers there are examples of new farmer organisations, also in the LBW. The last example highlights one of them, the Farmer Cooperative *Terecht Anders*.

Joint representation: Terecht Anders

A new cooperative is another way in which farmers engage in rural policy(Wiskerke *et al.* 2003)[8]. In the LBW region one organisation exists, which could be labelled as a new farmer cooperative. It is called *Terecht Anders*, which means *Rightly Different*. It is a platform for farmers in the LBW who want to work together to invite citizens at their farms, to inform them about farming in the LBW region but also to arrange recreational activities and to sell regional farm products.

One of the founders is Mr. de Vries. He lives on a traditional farm with 20 dairy cows, fruit trees and horses. He sells farm products at his house. His next plan is to start a regional information centre and a labyrinth of maize. According to him Terecht Anders helps represent the interests of farmers that diversify their farm activities.

'They [Farm Union] *think that these* [diversification] *activities are just marginal. It might also complicate farmer representation because it creates a kind of contradiction. They still don't want to support alternatives for agricultural modernisation. They're afraid that the Province will say: "Well, why do you want to enlarge your farm, you can do perfectly fine with its current size, just broaden your farm production". They absolutely don't want that to happen.'*

For the farmers in *Terecht Anders* it is essential to have a representative organisation, especially because they are dependent on subsidies.

> *'Our problem is: how do we sell landscape, fresh air or a nice looking stable? I think that for these things we will always be dependent on subsidies.'*

But representation is also difficult because diversification activities often do not fit in policy categories. Often it is not clear where, i.e. at which government department, farmers can represent their concerns. Frequently rural policy only targets well-defined, conventional rural activities.

> *'I wanted to build a new shed so the civil servant asked what it is for. I said what do you think? He replied: cows, sheep or chickens… But I wanted to use it for a regional information centre. They don't know how to deal with it. The cooperation deals with culture, agriculture, art, and nature. It is often difficult to know in which way policy relates to us.'*

The farmers in *Terecht Anders* are dependent on favourable policies to start their activities and to make them profitable. Still, the relation with policies and policymakers remains ambiguous.

> *'On the one hand they restrict you in your development. On the other hand, you also need them for support because they control the money. For us it is important to remain visible to these people. So, I'll try to get into contact anytime.'*

7.9 Conclusion

This article investigated to what extent the void in Dutch rural policy could be attributed to a process of value differentiation originating in civil society or a process of de-politicisation originating in the state. Both these arguments presuppose a clear distinction between civil society and the state, which is why each, on their own, does not offer a comprehensive account of the current condition of Dutch rural policy. This article suggests that although civil society is de-institutionalising and the state is de-politicising, there are also attempts towards re-institutionalisation and re-politicisation in Dutch rural policy.

Dutch rural policy and development has changed in a paradoxical way. Due to a process of value differentiation the constituencies of the sub-national cultures of the pillarisation disintegrated. This has increased electoral volatility, which meant that policymakers have actively had to ensure public legitimacy. These were the reasons for democratising policymaking and institutionalising new governance initiatives, such as deliberative and interactive policymaking. Simultaneously, in reaction to the economic recession of the 1970s and 1980s, policy began to transfer political responsibility from the state to private institutions and individuals.

The project LBW has been studied to understand how these processes manifest themselves in practice. Data from Q-methodology suggests that the values of constituencies of rural stakeholder groups are differentiated to a considerable degree. Information from semi-structured interviews confirms that value differentiation problematises the functioning of the system of representative democracy. Despite changes in Dutch rural policy (*de-pillarisation*), the idea of constructing consensus between representatives of rural interests remains the core of Dutch rural policy. But

these consensual policies become vague and abstract in order to accommodate the different values in rural society. Based on these findings, the perceived void in Dutch rural policy is not so much between policymakers and rural inhabitants but rather between normative and empirical considerations of rural policy. The recent turmoil in Dutch (rural) policy has shown that people feel that conventional representative institutions do not represent their values. In other words, these institutions are failing to mediate the void between normative and empirical democracy. As a result, Dutch rural policy is changing, but not in line with the analysis of Putnam and Hay.

The central argument in this article is that despite these negative trends there are also new ways in which people are engaging in Dutch rural policy. The three examples of farmers' engagement offered here draw attention to the ways in which rural policy re-institutionalises and re-politicises. This is not to say that traditional consensus-building can simply be substituted by these new ways in which people engage in Dutch rural policy. Such an argument would be just as one-sided as a demand-side or supply-side analysis. Instead, balanced analyses of the transformation of Dutch rural policy and development are needed. These can give information about the positive and negative effects of the transformation and identify key problems for rural policymaking.

This article identifies two key dilemmas.[9] The first is that Dutch rural policy needs to accommodate people's different values. An exclusive focus on the initiatives of deliberative policymaking will not suffice, because these will privilege specific groups of people (Sanders 1997; Shucksmith 2000; Young 2001). For this reason a well-functioning representative democracy is essential to incorporate the values and views of people who are not able to participate effectively in newly introduced deliberative democracy initiatives. This requires that representatives of rural stakeholders know the diverse values of their constituency and are able to aggregate these values into meaningful ideas on the development of the countryside: for example, what the final goals of rural policy should be and the best way to realise them. Secondly, the analysis in this article showed in particular that interest-based consensual politics, is malfunctioning. Therefore, the system of representative democracy needs to change. It needs to develop new ways in which (new) stakeholders can represent their values within conventional representative democracy.

Notes

1 For more information on Fortuyn and the 2002 parliamentary elections see Pellikaan *et al.* (2003) and articles in newspapers such as The Economist of 2,9 and 15 May 2002.

2 The process of de-pillarisation could be understood as a Dutch variant of the modernisation process (Zijderveld 2000).

3 This policy change is not only Dutch. International literature often frames it in binary terms, for example, from government to governance (Goodwin 1998;Stoker 1998; Bressers and Kuks 2001) and from instrumental planning to collaborative planning (Booher and Innes 2002; Healey 2003; Innes 2004).

4 This is a network of connected nature reserves in The Netherlands, with a total of 730,00 ha. Through the conversion of agricultural land into nature reserves, already existing nature reserves are to be linked together in an ecological network to be completed in 2018.

5 For example, Frouws (1993) has insightfully described how a void originated between leaders of the Dutch Farm Union and their constituency during neo-corporatist bargaining between the Farm Union, The Ministry of Agriculture and The Product Boards over the redistribution of environmental costs.

6 'Red for red' legislation allows owners to break down farm buildings and build houses with the same number of square metres on the same plot.

7 The names used in this article are pseudonyms. Unlike the self-representation) of Mr. Pieterse, Mr. and Mrs. Jansen consider self-representation a necessary evil. If they could choose they would prefer to engage in rural policies by cooperating with other farmers. However, at present they think that a sufficient cooperation is not possible.

8 Some other examples of new ways of re-institutionalisation in Dutch rural policy are: the recently established Ruraal Parlement (Rural Parliament), initiatives of rural women (Bock *et al.* 2004) and efforts to establish new Farm Unions (Joosse 2004).

9 These questions and dilemmas are not exclusively Dutch. In the UK the transformation of rural policies has been analysed by a large number of rural sociologists (for example, Goodwin 1998; Shucksmith 2000; Jones and Little 2000; Edwards *et al.* 2001; MacKinnon 2002; Woods 2003). Woods, in particular, has argued that new rural movements represent a change in conventional rural policy of representing rural interests (Woods 2003). I am grateful to a reviewer of *Sociologia Ruralis* for pointing this out to me.

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8 Deliberation and dung: The limits and possibilities of deliberative democracy in context [*]

Abstract

Technology studies and political science share a common interest in the exercise of power in modern societies. The former explains how technology is ultimately a political devise, which (re)produces power relations. The latter increases awareness of the exercise of power in shaping social preferences, rationality and truth. However, recently both disciplines have been criticised for a lack of normative responsibility, which is needed for a critical analysis of the abuse of power. Several authors suggest constructing such a framework on basis of ideals of deliberative democracy. Using a comparison of strengths and weaknesses of the analyses of Foucault and Habermas, we argue that it is essential to use case studies to inform and possibly adapt norms based on ideals of deliberative democracy. We intend to contribute to this aim by an empirical analysis of the outcomes of deliberative democratic processes on the implementation of ammonia regulation in East Fryslân. This comparison explores what the limits and opportunities are of deliberative democracy in context.

Keywords: technology studies; political science; deliberative democracy; dairy farming; The Netherlands, East Fryslân

8.1 Introduction

Several publications in the field of technology studies and political science touch on common ground. Both disciplines share an interest in the exercise of power. An increasing number of social-constructivist studies on technological development make clear that it does not by definition cause social and economic progress. Instead technology is designed to bring about specific purposes. Technologies are inscribed with people's perceptions and expectations about social conduct and their environment (Akrich 1992; Latour 1992), which embodies norms and values concerning the autonomy of end-users (Brey, undated). Technology design constitutes power relations, which makes it political. Power is delegated to nonhuman techniques, which underdetermine social action (Feenberg 1994). It sets limits in which social action is possible, but it does not prescribe the specific content of any thought or particular action (Allen 2003).

The exercise of power is also a central concern in political science. The discipline aims to elucidate and criticise power relations in policymaking. The controversy on the faces of power (Hayward 1998), made clear that relations of power should not only be

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understood as concrete visible practices, such as decision-making (Dahl 1958) or agenda-setting (Bachrach and Baratz 1962), but are also involved in the invisible, indirect shaping of social preferences (Lukes 1974), rationality (Flyvbjerg 1998) and even truth (Foucault 1988).

Political science and technological studies struggle with a similar dilemma. Recent contributions in technology studies argue that social-constructivist technology studies suffer from a normative deficit (Keulartz *et al*. 2004). The politicisation of technology leaves no neutral conceptions for the examination of the social impact of benefits or harms of technological development. For this reason many social-constructivists refrain from judging the normative and political implications of a particular technological development (Hamlett 2003), or alternatively, pay exclusive attention to the negative consequences (Sørensen 2004).

Hay (2004) contends that postmodern contributions in political science have increased our awareness of the mundane and invisible working of power, i.e. how power shapes social preferences, rationality or truth. But this awareness comes at a price. It made postmodern scientists sceptical towards claims of objectivity and truth, and made them reluctant to indicate how power relations can be changed because their recommendations will again constitute power relations. Hence, they are committed to a 'vow of political silence' (Hay 2004:246), which unfortunately reproduces the status quo. In this way, political science looses its capacity to identify and challenge unequal relations of power.

It is striking to note the similarity not only regarding the problems at hand, but also between solutions proposed to overcome the 'normative deficit' of technology studies and the 'vow of silence' of political science. Both Hamlett (2003) and Sørensen (2004) argue that technology studies need to develop a normative framework in order to remain critical and to differentiate between negative and positive consequences of technologies. In this respect, Hamlett (2003:124) suggests to use deliberative democracy as an ideal-typical framework to address normative and political concerns of technology development. Similarly, several political scientists argue that ideals of deliberative democracy can be used to limit abuse of power and equalise power relations (Gutmann and Thompson 1996; Bohman 1998).

The construction of a normative framework using the ideal of deliberative democracy is a major challenge for the development of technology studies and political science. This paper aims to contribute to this objective through an investigation of the conditions that are conductive for the realisation of deliberative democratic ideals by analysing the (unintended) outcomes of political-institutional and technological designs in context. This analysis is useful to inform the normative debate with situational knowledge on the limits and possibilities of policy and technology development based on a deliberative democratic ideal (Bohman 1996). For this purpose we use two case studies on the regulation of ammonia emission on dairy farms in East Fryslân, The Netherlands.

Before we present these case studies we need to elaborate on the normative deficit of technology studies and political science through a discussion of Foucault's 'power analytics', which we contrast with the 'theory of communicative action' of Habermas.[1] This opposition shows that normative debates on deliberative democratic ideals require the check of empirical social science. We end this paper with a discussion on the

consequences of our analysis for the possibilities of deliberative democratic policymaking in the Dutch countryside

8.2 The normative deficit of Foucault

Power is a central theme in both technology studies and political science. Technology studies have demonstrated convincingly that technology is socially constructed (Pinch and Bijker 1987). Studies about the social contexts in which technology is designed, used and redesigned (Latour and Woolgar 1979), disenchanted the image of technology as a neutral force for a public benefit. They also discredited the image of technology as an unambiguous blueprint, determining social practice. Instead, these studies show that technology underdetermines social practices. Its design, or code (Van der Ploeg 1991; Feenberg 1998), prescribes the use of technology. Thus, it constitutes power relations between designers, artefacts and users; it is a means for ruling (Espeland 1993). However, actors use technologies in multiple ways. The code of technology is subject to multiple interpretations, which leaves room for change and agency. The disenchantment of technology paved the way for technology studies focussing on the ways in which technology is politicised (Pfaffenberger 1992).
In political science the debate on 'the faces of power' increased awareness on how power is exercised in modern societies. Theorists of the first face understand power as decision-making, related to observable human actions (Dahl 1957). The second face includes agenda-setting prior to the decision-making as the exercise of power (Bachrach and Baratz 1962). Finally, the third face draws attention to the way power shapes social preferences. Here the exercise of power has largely become invisible and exists in all kinds of everyday social practices (Lukes 1974).

Foucault was one of the first philosophers who was sensitive both to the technical and political nature of power relations in modern democracies (Feenberg 1991; Gerrie 2003). Throughout his work Foucault uses concepts as 'technology', 'technique', 'system', 'apparatus' in relation to the exercise of modern power. These concepts refer to the devices - 'technologies of government' (Foucault 1978 [2000]) - people use to institutionalise, systematise and routinise social interactions. In short, the means by which people govern others as well as themselves. Examples of these technologies are: 'forms of notation, ways of collecting, representing, storing and transporting information, forms of architecture and the division of space, kinds of quantitative and qualitative calculation, types of training and so on' (Dean 1999:212). Foucault's works have been used to explain neo-liberal governance as a governmental technology. Rose and Miller (1992) for example point out that financial and economic controls enable neo-liberal governments to govern 'at a distance' (Kickert 1997:742), by framing the social context in which individuals act, simultaneously allowing these individuals to control their own lives.

Foucault is criticised because he refrains from any normative judgement or evaluation, and remains silent when it comes to pointing out *how* to change power (Fraser 1989, McCarthy 1990; Taylor 1984). Paraphrasing Keulartz *et al.* (2004) this could be called the 'normative deficit of Foucault'. The resulting impasse or 'moral–political paralysis' (Stein and Harper 2003) is not helpful because it gives no moral or normative grounds from which to solve social problems legitimately. Recently,

deliberative democracy gained prominence as a normative core for legitimate political decision-making and self-government (Bohman 1998). Some authors argue that deliberative democratic ideals can also be used as an ethical framework for technology studies (Rowe and Frewer 2000; Hamlett 2003). The essence of deliberative democracy is an inclusive decision-making by means of rational arguments (Dryzek 1990) of which Habermas offers the most famous account.

8.3 Principles or context: Habermas or Foucault

Habermas is very critical towards the 'power analytics' of Foucault. He posits that Foucault's analyses lucidly expose the mundane strategic and agonistic exercise of power', but that he denies himself the ability to criticise or change this situation, because Foucault is unable to elucidate how power could be exercised in a way to make it impartial, justified and legitimate (Habermas 1984). Habermas himself is very explicit in his specification of normative ground rules and procedures to limit strategic power, and guarantee freedom and equality. In his Theory of Communicative Action (Habermas 1984), he formulates procedures for intersubjective communication, which helps to produce an 'ideal speech situation' in which 'the force of the better argument' generates fair and just outcomes. These procedures function as a standard of reference, which can be used as a test for the democratic level of intersubjective communication between stakeholders. In other words, these procedures regulate the exercise of power in the interest of all concerned, rather than only in the interest of the powerful (Healey 2004). The attempt to explicate the moral relevance of technology studies (Winner 1993; Hamlett 2003) and to ethically justify the normative criteria of political science (Hay 2004) is understandable in the light of Habermas' criticisms of Foucault.

However, such an attempt is not without problems, which becomes clear when we consider the criticisms levelled against Habermas, which are for a large part obtained from Foucauldian analyses. Habermas is criticised for his univocal focus on integration, homogeneity and consensus within democratic debates. Habermas puts faith in a common consensus, able to transcend any social difference or conflict of interest (Wrobel 1999), which means that he believes that the interests and perceptions of stakeholders involved are commensurable through an ideal speech situation, which derives a shared understanding and communicative rationality. Critics argue that Habermas discounts any social difference originating in culture or tradition. He presupposes stakeholders to be 'a homogenised meta-community of like-minded rational agents, whose views and supporting reasoning are interchangeable and convergent' (Healey 2004:17). This consensual view is difficult to reconcile with the diversity and incommensurability of values which is characteristic of current policymaking and democratic debate (Espeland and Stevens 1998). According to some (e.g. Flyvbjerg 2001) this makes Habermas' theory less useful for handling disintegration, heterogeneity and deep conflict.[2]

In contrast, Foucault's analyses may be normatively weak but they are strong in dealing with conflict, difference and contingency (Rorty 1989). They elucidate how and why things can be different, relating it to concrete cases. The confrontation with difference and conflict forces us to reconsider preconceived perceptions and rationalities and offers an opportunity to learn (Healey 2004). Considering the

strengths and weaknesses of both Habermas and Foucault, various authors have argued to complement the two philosophers (Conway 1999; Wrobel 1999; Allen 2000; Healey 2004) rather than to oppose them (Hoy and McCarthy 1994; Ashenden and Owen 1999; Flyvbjerg 2001).

In which way contributes the Habermas-Foucault debate to the construction of a normative framework for technology studies and political science? Amongst others, Winner (1993), Radder (1996) and Hamlett (2003) argue for the construction and adaptation of non-local norms, which could normatively ground technology studies. Also within political science, Gutmann and Thompson (1996) and Rowe and Frewer (2000) have constructed a list of conditions, which need to be met to sustain an impartial and fair political process. These attempts make extensive use of deliberative democratic theory, which has its roots for an important part in Habermas' discourse ethics.

Bohman (1996) argues that ideals of deliberative democracy need a constant check of empirical studies focussing on its feasibility. These studies are able to provide situational knowledge about the ways in which deliberative institutions hamper or enable problem-solving capacities of democratic societies. Based on the previous confrontation between Foucault and Habermas, we argue that for such a purpose, insights of both philosophers can be used complementary. However, not much has been written yet on how to achieve this. In the following we aim to bridge this gap by investigating how situational knowledge can inform a normative framework based on deliberative democratic ideals.

8.4 Cases for learning

In general, two approaches exist to discuss normative issues. The first refers to principles, rules or general ideas, which serve 'as axioms from which particular moral judgements are deduced as theorems' (Jonsen and Toulmin 1988:23). In the second approach the relation between general rules and specific cases is more practical informed. General moral rules are 'serving as maxims which can be fully understood only in terms of the paradigmatic cases that define their meaning and force' (Jonsen and Toulmin 1988:23). Habermas' procedures for intersubjective communication fit the first approach perfectly. Utilising Foucault's analyses we understand that such an approach suffers from an inability to take account of difference, contingency and specificity. At the same time, a Foucauldian approach to policymaking would be equally flawed because it is not able to offer any normative direction.

We believe that this second approach is able to integrate the strengths of both philosophers. It is based on the tradition of casuistry as outlined by Jonsen and Toulmin (1988) and applied by others in e.g. philosophy (Rawls 1971), political science (Cohen and Sabel 1997), planning (Beatley 1994; Flyvbjerg 1998; Thacher 2004), and law (Sunstein 1994). The central idea of this approach is that concrete practical cases can serve as guides for a 'situational ethics' (Flyvbjerg 1991; 1998; 2001). These cases can be used to define and inform abstract normative principles such as outlined in deliberative democratic theory. For this purpose, Jonsen and Toulmin (1988:14) argue to construct a 'moral taxonomy': 'a detailed and methodological map of morally significant likenesses and differences between cases'. This paper compares

two case studies of rural governance projects that were used to implement technology and policy aimed at controlling the ammonia emission on dairy farms in East Fryslân to discuss the limitations and possibilities of deliberative democratic arrangements.

8.5 Measuring ammonia

Manure from Dutch farms as an environmental problem appeared for the first time on the political agenda in 1971. Due to the expansion of intensive farming, a surplus of manure was applied to fertilise agricultural land, which caused environmental harm. Ammonia can damage the environment when extra ammonia, for example in fertilisers or in fodder concentrates, is imported in the nitrogen cycle and is not used by plants. This surplus leaches to the groundwater and is taken up by other plant species, which are able to absorb large amounts of nitrogen. These plants out-compete ammonia-sensitive plant species. The result is environmental degradation due to a loss of biodiversity (Erisman 2000). Agriculture is considered to be one of the main importers of ammonia in the nitrogen cycle. Environmental regulation has been developed to limit the ammonia emission from farms.

In February 1987 a new ammonia regulation was developed with the objective to prevent an increase of the deposition of ammonia, caused by the establishment and enlargement of farms, on so-called 'ammonia-sensitive elements', e.g. trees, bushes or shrubbery. Farms located within 500 metres of these ammonia-sensitive elements were obliged to apply for an 'environmental license' if they wanted to construct a new barn or extend an already existing one. These licenses could only be obtained if the sum of the total ammonia deposition in a municipality was lower than 1,300 mol/year/hectare (for construction of a new farm) or 2,000 mol/year/hectare (for extension of existing farm). In 1991 this regulation changed the area from 500 metres to 3 km, and it related the ammonia emission of individual farms to its deposition on ammonia-sensitive elements. If a farm was located in the vicinity of ammonia-sensitive elements, expansion was not allowed, because it would violate its ammonia level. An intensification or enlargement of these farms automatically raised the ammonia levels beyond the critical juridical measures.

The technique used to measure the emission per farm and its deposition on ammonia-sensitive elements, was a so-called 'distance-table', which measured the ammonia deposition as a derivative of the distance between the farm and the ammonia-sensitive element. The distance-table was based on an average Dutch situation. Therefore it did not consider any particularities of rural areas, such as amongst others soil quality, wind direction and landscape. The case studies in this paper show how the ammonia regulation, with its distance-table, functioned as a technology of government, simultaneously enabling and restricting particular farm development.

8.6 The Wouden: East Fryslân

The *Wouden* (translation Woods) is a distinct region in the province of Fryslân, in The Netherlands. It is a characteristic landscape of meadows enclosed by wooden banks (Van der Ploeg 2003, 132-136). Due to this unique landscape many farms in the Wouden are located in the vicinity of acid-sensitive elements. Consequently, many

farmers in the Wouden were unable to expand their farm. Therefore they felt disadvantaged by the national ammonia regulation in comparison with other Dutch regions.

8.6.1 South-east Fryslân

Agriculture in South-east Fryslân expanded much during the 1960s and 1970s. Through several intensive land-consolidation projects small-scale peasant farms transformed into large-scale modern dairy farms (see tables). At the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s this growth slowed down due to policies, which aimed to restrict agricultural production, e.g. the milkquotum system and environmental regulation.

Table 8.1 Size agricultural area and number of farms in Fryslân in 2004, South-east Fryslân and North-east Fryslân (obtained from Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek).

	Agricultural area	*Number of farms*
Fryslân	22869294 are	6420
SE Fryslân	5396154 are	1527
NE Fryslân	3090142 are	1053

Table 8.2 Total GVE* and GVE per hectare in Fryslân in 2004, South-east Fryslân and North-east Fryslân (obtained from Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek).

	Total GVE	*0 – 1 GVE/ha*	*1 - 2 GVE/ha*	*2 - 2,5 GVE/ha*	*2,5 - 3 GVE/ha*	*3 - 4 GVE/ha*	*≥ 4 GVE/ha*
Fryslân	533088	3446	106	1812	1194	238	53
SE Fryslân	129743	20	431	338	50	13	14
NE Fryslân	66709	23	293	131	16	2	8

* GVE stands for *Groot Vee Eenheid*, which means ‘cattle-unit’. One GVE equals the total amount of phosphor production of one full-grown cow. With this entity the phosphor production of different animal species can be compared with each other.

The ammonia policy restricted about 1000 farmers of a total of 1300, to modernise their farm. At that time, enlargement of scale was considered a crucial strategy for farm development, needed to anticipate the combination of increasing costs and decreasing profits. In the years following the introduction of ammonia regulation, farmers tried to change the regulation in different ways. They demanded a regional adaptation of the generic national ammonia policy and strived to maintain their current regional production capacity.

One occasion, which offered an opportunity to put forward this claim, was the start of a rural governance project in 1991. One of the objectives of this so-called 'ROM project' (abbreviation ROM stands for *Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieu* [Spatial Development and Environment]) was to allocate 2000 hectares - then farm land - needed to become part of the 'EHS'[3] (Boonstra and Frouws 2005). It is easy to understand that the farmers in South-east Fryslân were very reluctant to comply with this objective. However, their representatives in the Farm Union saw participation in the ROM project as an opportunity to change the ammonia policy.

Table 8.3 Total number of farms with cattle and number of farms per cattle unit in Fryslân, South-east Fryslân and North-east Fryslân, in 2004 (obtained from Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek).

	Number of cattle farms	*1 – 25 animals*	*25 – 50 animals*	*50 – 75 animals*	*75 – 100 animals*	*100 – 150 animals*	*150 – 200 animals*	*200 ≥ animals*
Fryslân	4360	611	299	452	635	1259	627	477
SE Fryslân	1116	163	76	97	159	322	161	138
NE Fryslân	689	144	69	80	86	162	89	59

As stated earlier, at that time in South-east Fryslân farm development was considered to be the expansion of farm production. For this reason the Farm Union persisted that the availability of land was a crucial factor for farm development and that the 2000 hectares proposed as future EHS could not be missed. They stated that they would only participate in the ROM project on the condition that the agricultural production capacity remained unchanged. In practice this meant that they wanted restrictive effects of the ammonia policy on the agricultural production capacity to be abandoned, otherwise they would not even consider letting go of land for nature production.

> *'The farmers made quite clear that they only wanted to cooperate if the agricultural production capacity in South-east Fryslân remained the same. This meant that the ammonia policy had to change. This was the connection, which started to exist. A connection between on the one hand the EHS and on the other the ammonia policy. Since then they have always been one and the same issue.'* (Civil servant of Province of Fryslân)

In 1993 the Farm Union and the Province of Fryslân agreed on a change in the ammonia policy, specifically for South-east Fryslân. The Province of Fryslân negotiated an exceptional status regarding ammonia policy for South-east Fryslân at the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment. This negotiation proved to be a very tough for two reasons. First, it appeared that the generic ammonia policy legislatively did not allow any exceptions. After numerous intensive negotiations it became clear that the Ministry was not prepared to either adapt the generic ammonia

policy to fit the Friesian proposal or to attribute South-east Fryslân an exceptional status. Second, every time the Ministry, Province and Farm Union were able to strike a deal, the struggle again fuelled, due to different groups of farmers who did not comply with the suggested solution. It appeared that the Farm Union's constituency was highly fragmented and heterogeneous.

In the end, after 6 years of negotiation, the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment decided to grant South-east Fryslân an experiment law to enable a covenant. However, the Farm Union decided that the need for a separate experiment law did no longer exist, due to the policy plans of the newly elected government, which stated that policies aiming at ammonia reduction should use generic emission standards as much as possible, instead of deposition standards which would cancel the status of acid-sensitive elements. Furthermore, by now the agricultural land market had changed substantially. The demand for land dropped, whilst the supply grew, meaning that consolidation of regional production capacity was not an issue anymore. For these reasons the Farm Union officially agreed in 1999 to co-operate in the ROM project.

8.6.2 North-east Fryslân

North-east Fryslân has never been part of large-scale land-consolidation projects which explains why the landscape of small parcelled farm land divided by hedges and belts of alder trees remained well preserved (see previous tables). However, with the identification of these hedges and belts as acid-sensitive elements, farming became severely restricted in this region too.

This restriction created an incentive for the farmers in North-east Fryslân to start up the environmental cooperatives VEL (*Vereniging Eastermar's Lânsdouwe*) and VANLA (*Vereniging Agrarisch Natuur en Landschapsbeheer Achtkarspelen*) in 1992. Within one year about 85% of the local farmers had joined the cooperatives (De Rooij 2005). In 1992 VEL consisted of 65 members with 1600 ha and VANLA of 144 members with 3550 ha farmland. Instead of following the new rules and regulations aiming to reduce the environmental impact of farming on an *individual* basis, these cooperatives wanted to reach a *collective* agreement with the government. In exchange for realising the environmental objectives of national policy on the regional level, the cooperatives wanted to decide themselves how to achieve these objectives. In their view, the issued rules and regulations to reduce the ammonia deposition were perceived as contra-dictionary and ineffective (Stuiver and Wiskerke 2005). Besides the already discussed distance table (see Section 8.5) the government demanded that manure should be applied using slit injection.[4] Slit injections required the acquisition of new and heavy machinery that were difficult to handle in the small-scale fields and would damage the soil structure of the lower lying land.

In the early nineties VEL and VANLA managed to agree with the government about the management of ammonia deposition. In exchange for exemptions from regulations regarding acid sensitive elements and more specifically slit injection, the cooperatives promised to increase their effort of preserving nature and landscape and to reduce nitrogen losses by alternative ways. The exemption was valid for four years during which the cooperative members experimented with various measures of nitrogen loss reduction and continuously documented and monitored the farms'

nutrient in- and outputs. In doing so, the cooperatives restored among others a total of 240 km of alder belts and hedges. Together with other environmental cooperatives in Fryslân a plan for landscape management was designed that covered the whole of the Frisian Woodlands.

This agreement was strengthened in 1995 when the environmental cooperatives were officially recognised as 'governance experiment'.

> *'The Ministry considers our 'plan of action' as the first 'governance experiment' that they want to support.* […] *It is an attempt to construct a new relation between the government and farmers, in which the government gives more space to farmers to solve their own problems within the farm and within the area. The environmental cooperative takes responsibility to solve these problems.'*(Farmer cited in Wiskerke *et al*. 2003:18).

The recognition meant that the cooperatives were supposed to develop their own plans regarding nature, landscape management, environmental protection but also water management and recreation. Farmers together with relevant public authorities and various stakeholder organizations cooperated and designed an action plan. This action plan formed the basis for an agreement between the cooperative and the government on specific rules and ammonia outputs on a regional level. The cooperative in turn warranted their members' compliance, checked and sanctioned non- or under-compliance (Roep *et al.* 2003). At the end of the nineties, however, the policy of the government changed and exemptions of generic regulations were not prolonged.

Despite the termination of the experimental status the cooperatives did not disintegrate. In 1998, after many months of negotiations the farmers of VEL and VANLA finally reached a new agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture that allowed them to continue their experiments within the framework of a research project, the so-called 'Nutrient Management Project'. The project had a broader aim than environmental protection alone and investigated the interdependence between farming systems and their environment. In the research 60 farmers (with about 2800 ha) cooperated with scientists of Wageningen University in order to develop new sustainable farming practices, departing from the farmers' needs and their knowledge of the local ecosystem and farming. (Stuiver and Wiskerke 2005).

Recently the cooperatives of VEL and VANLA were united in a new regional cooperative called Northern Frisian Woodlands. By joining forces they hope to agree with the government about the delivery of so-called green services (Roep *et al.* 2003). The introduction of payments for public services including environmental protection and animal welfare is one of the new ingredients discussed in the framework of the CAP 2007-2013 (Bock 2006). After the unification of the VEL and VANLA, the members of the new cooperative developed a common set of values that are considered basic elements of their mode of behaviour as farmers, as local community, as collective but also as reliable partner for others. It also includes a firm statement of claiming and accepting the responsibility for maintaining nature, landscape and environment in 'their' region (Noardlike Fryske Wâlden 2005).

> *'The members of the Association Northern Frisian Woodlands are conscious of the fact that our place in this beautiful landscape implies a specific responsibility. We need to farm in a responsible and sustainable manner (kreas buorkje). Because of*

> *our historic and current experiences we are, more than anybody else, able to do so time and again in the right, practical way.'* (Value three from Noardlike Fryske Wâlden 2005)

This value set functions as the basis of a common mission and vision and is built on a long history of shared experiences as farmers and as local community. But it is also proof of the strong sense of belonging to the place and each other, of regional and shared identity, of trust and readiness to cooperate and to resolve conflict. The value set underlines this feeling of community and ability not to avoid but to confront and solve conflicts. The value set is a written document and its existence is no proof that everything will work out well but demonstrates the coherence and synergy between people, technology and their environment

8.7 Comparison

The struggles in East Fryslân over the ammonia policy are typical struggles over legislation, which frames the possibilities for agricultural production. In both North-east and South-east Fryslân farmers tried to expand these possibilities through closing a political deal. Still, how they managed to do so differed considerably between the two regions.

In South-east Fryslân the farming community was represented by the Farm Union, who tried to achieve a reformulation of the ammonia law for the region in exchange for farmers' co-operation in the ROM policy project. This proved to be extremely difficult for two reasons. Firstly, it appeared to be legislatively impossible to allow any exception on a regional basis. Secondly, the Farm Union was not able to discipline their constituency. After each agreement, different subgroups of farmers demanded an exception. The negotiation took a very long time. In the meantime the ammonia policy had changed with more emphasis on emission instead of deposition. The economical situation of farmers had changed radically as well. Land was not scarce anymore, which made the initial claim of farmers - consolidation of agricultural production level – irrelevant, because farms were able to expand anyhow. In addition, many farmers were tired of waiting any longer as the long-term insecurity over the final outline of policies made it difficult for them to plan farm development. In the end farmers and government reached an agreement with relative ease and without much impact for rural and farm development in the region.

In North-east Fryslân groups of farmers united in two environmental cooperatives and applied for self regulation and self governance. In exchange for exemptions from generic policy regulations, both cooperatives promised to deliver the desired policy output and to make sure that all their members would comply to the specific rules and outputs agreed upon in a contract between cooperatives and government. Different from the farmers in South-east Fryslân these farmers accepted the policy objectives and acknowledged the necessity of environmental protection and nature care. They negotiated only about the generic manner in which the government intended to implement the policy all over the country and thus also in this specific region. The terms of negotiation differed thus considerably between South-east and North-east Fryslân. In exchange for more flexibility in implementation, the cooperatives warranted their members' compliance – something they proofed to be able to. In this

respect, North-east Fryslân differed again considerably from South-east Fryslân. Both cooperatives managed to organize themselves so effectively that members accepted the principle of internal inspection and sanctioning. In return the cooperatives supported and trained their members in the daily management of agri-environment measures, and took care of the distribution of the payments resulting from the collective agri-environment contracts. In doing so they evidently convinced their members that participating in the cooperatives was worthwhile and that the board of the cooperatives was indeed trustworthy. The many problems that the cooperatives have overcome since their start in 1992 are mainly a result of changes in the political arena and concomitant need to continuously renegotiate with the government. With the changes in the political climate regarding environmental policy, but also the idea of self-governance, the cooperative needed to continuously realign their project politically, to look for new supporters and new arguments in order to defend their room for self regulation (Stuiver and Wiskerke 2005). They managed to do so by including various local stakeholders in their network: farmers of course but also citizens, tourist entrepreneurs, nature organizations and local public authorities. By proactively contacting stakeholder with potentially different viewpoints and interests, they managed to build up trust and to reconcile conflicting interests about issues such as agriculture, nature conservation, tourism, housing and transport. But North-east Fryslân had also strong and effective contact beyond the region, with, for instance, scientists of Wageningen University, who played an important mediating role in negotiation with the government.

The cases of North-east and South-east Fryslân demonstrate how technological designs in combination with policy schemes are deliberated in context. In North-east Fryslân farmers managed to alter the disciplining power of technological designs and policy schemes. Acknowledging the legitimacy of the policy objectives created the possibility of arriving at a compromise concerning implementation regulation. Over the years they successfully demonstrated to the relevant public institutions that they were able to do what they promised to do, to fulfil the agreed upon objectives and to make sure that all cooperative members did their share. At the same time the success of the collectives convinced the members that they – as a collective organised in the cooperative - were able to negotiate effectively with the government. Both aspects increased their legitimacy and authority towards government and public institutions, regional stakeholders and among themselves. During the years the collective became stronger through its further integration in the regional community. The dependency on the national government for what regards their official status and formal authority remains a weak spot, as it is the government, in the end, that can decide to dissolve agreements and not to prolong their still exceptional status.

In South-east Fryslân this deliberation was completely different, mainly because farmers here were much more divided and individually oriented. This was the reason why agreements were frequently reconsidered. This created distrust between government and Farm Union but also between the Farm Union and different groups of farmers. Furthermore, the social network in which farmers in South-east and North-East Fryslân were engaged shows some crucial differences. The network of the former can be labelled as conventional. It is a network made up of relations between farmers, Farm Union and government. The network of the latter is unconventional because the

Farm Union does not play an important role here. Instead farmers cooperate using a new cooperative, which ties in with citizens, recreational entrepreneurs, tourists and the university.

Based on this comparison we argue that the outcomes of deliberation in context are crucially dependent on the specific composition and interrelation of social networks between people, technology and their environment (see also Roep 2000). Furthermore, the efficacy of these social networks depends on their enabling capacity both internally and externally. Internally they need to be able to maintain cohesion expressed in shared values. Externally they need to be able to (re)negotiate the legitimacy of these specific values against a social-technical regime (Rip 1995; Geels 2002).

8.8 Conclusion

In this paper we discussed how technology studies and political science have a common interest in the functioning of power in modern society. Social-constructivist studies in both fields have underlined the enabling and restricting power of technology and policy. We illustrated this theoretical insight with the work of Foucault. A summary of critique shows that his studies suffer from a normative deficit. Foucault fails to offer us any normative guidelines, which are needed to criticise and improve unequal power relations.

Habermas, in particular, is very critical of Foucault's analysis. He is explicit in his formulation of normative directions for a deliberative democratic development of society. In his Theory of Communicative Action he defines a series of procedures, which should be followed in order to achieve consensus in a fair and rational way. Several authors have proposed to inform technology studies (e.g. Hamlett 2003) and political science (e.g. Gutmann and Thompson 1996) in a similar way.

However, in their turn, these studies are criticised for their finite view on integration, homogeneity and consensus, which is difficult to reconcile with the diversity and incommensurability of values. Habermasian studies have problems in handling social conflict and heterogeneity, in contrast to Foucauldian studies. The Foucault-Habermas debate suggests that a normative framework needs to be informed by situational or contextual particularities. The development of a normative framework requires empirical tests on the hindrances or abilities of deliberative democratic arrangements.

In the remainder of the paper we used two case studies, on rural policy in The Netherlands, to illustrate how situational knowledge can contribute to the development of a normative framework. The two cases in East Fryslân highlight how technology and policy schemes used for ammonia regulation functioned irrespective of context. Both the distance table and slit injection structured farm development. The resulting deliberation and power struggle in North- and South-east Fryslân between farmers and government had completely different outcomes. In the North it stimulated the organisation of two environmental cooperatives, which since then have been very important for regional farm development. In the South, farmers followed a different strategy. Their aim was to strain and delay the implementation of this regulation via different means. The result was a persisting power conflict. It follows that the specific dynamic of power struggles and deliberation, is a matter of context. An important

contextual factor that explains this difference is the composition of the social network between people, technology and environment, which has been produced and reproduced over time.

If outcomes of deliberative processes are essentially context-dependent it makes no sense to (re)define normative ideals of deliberative democracy in a purely theoretical way. The important effect of context not only needs to be considered but can also be used to understand where to start and which opportunities to use for establishing promising deliberative arrangements.

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Notes

1 In this paper we use both authors ideal-typically in the sense that they will be presented with a conceptual clarity that they lack in reality. In fact, it is interesting to note that Foucault and Habermas resemble strongly Young's ideal-types of activists and deliberative democrats in our analysis (Young, 2001).

2 Habermas is criticised here for his ideal-typical procedures, which would be out of touch with social reality (Flyvbjerg 2001). However, Habermas has always realised that his procedures are ideal-typical. He especially pays attention to cases of distorted communication, where these procedures were violated. As such, the procedures should be used as a normative test for democratic debate and not as a blueprint for social and political development (Healey 2004).

3 EHS stands for *Ecologische Hoofd Structuur* (National Ecological Network), which is a network of connected nature reserves in The Netherlands, with a total of 730,000 ha. Through the conversion of agricultural land into nature reserve, already existing nature reserves are linked into an ecological network to be finished in 2018.

4 With slit injection the manure is directly injected into the soil using disk application equipment connected to a manure tank.

Part 3

Discussion and Conclusion

9 Accomodating the ideal to the real

9.1 Introduction

> *'We know of no scientifically ascertainable ideals. To be sure, that makes our efforts more arduous than those of the past, since we are expected to create our ideals from within our breast in the very age of subjectivist culture; but we must not and cannot promise a fool's paradise and an easy road to it, neither in thought nor in action'* (Weber 1922: xxxiii [1978])

This final chapter exists of a summary and discussion of the results derived from the case studies presented in part two. It starts with an explanation of the problem background and the research questions it gave rise to.

Chapter 1 introduced the research object of this dissertation - value-conflicts concerning rural land use - and explained why these are difficult to resolve. According to various sociological analyses, the origin of this difficulty is compound (Frouws 1996; Van der Ploeg *et al.* 2000; Wilson 2001; Slee 2005). First, since the 1960s and 1970s values over rural land use have been subject to processes of differentiation and pluralisation (Nooij 1993). To be specific, the value of agricultural modernisation lost its dominant position in rural policy and planning (Wilson and Rigg 2003). Ultimate values, which can be prioritised at all costs, do not exist. Second, the institutions used to mediate value-conflicts lost legitimacy and trust, because they are no longer unanimously and collectively shared within modern societies. Taken together, these processes problematise value-conflict resolution, because values are, in essence, incommensurable.

It is most intriguing to notice that despite these difficulties, respectively value-differentiation and de-institutionalisation, value-conflicts are being solved in practice, anyway. It irrevocably throws up the question if institutions remain able to solve value-conflicts, nevertheless? Furthermore, if the answer to this question is positive, what does that mean for the above analysis? Does it still stand? Questions such as these have provided the basis for the general research question in this dissertation:

If values are incommensurable, how can we explain that value-conflicts on rural land use are nevertheless being solved in practice?

The introduction explains that value-conflicts are resolved in practice, despite problems of value incommensurability, through institutional mediation. People are able to cope with problems of value incommensurability through a routinisation and objectivation of certain modes for value-conflict resolution. It means that people are socialised in institutions, i.e. certain patterns of acting, thinking and feeling (Zijderveld 2000), which allow them to cope with value-conflicts and value incommensurability. Therefore, institutionalisation does not so much *resolve*, but rather *mediates* value-

conflicts. The term mediation is more appropriate, in this respect, because it does not entail a commensuration of values. It rather indicates efforts in which different values are realised together. The assumption that institutions mediate value-conflicts leads to the first sub-question:

Which mode of value-conflict mediation is used in practice. What does this mean for the articulation of values concerning rural land use?

Weber (1864-1920) was one of the first sociologists who analysed different modes for value-conflict mediation. He argued that in modern societies a substantial-rational mode is gradually substituted for a functional-rational mode for value-conflict mediation. He called this substitution *rationalisation*. The theory of Weber is used in various ways to investigate the consequences of rationalisation processes for collective action. Cohen and Ben-Ari (1993) argue that problems of value incommensurability can surge up when institutionalised modes for value-conflict mediation fail to mediate these conflicts. Also Zijderveld (2000) posits that democratic societies often experience problems of value incommensurability because its institutions are becoming more pluralistic and abstract while people are becoming more individualistic and self-conscious. These two processes taken together contribute to a *de-institutionalising impetus*, which brings to light a tension between ideal and practice, i.e. how we want value-conflicts to be mediated and how they are actually mediated. According to basic democratic norms all values need to be accounted for, to ensure that people are free to act according to particular values, without the use of force or power misuse. In practice these democratic norms are translated functional-rationally into conventional solutions consisting typically of an aggregation of individual values by electoral mechanisms such as voting.

These negative effects of rationalisation and modernisation have incited efforts to identify democratic mediation of value-conflicts using substantial-rationality. The most known and developed effort consists of ideas on deliberative democracy. Habermas (1929) can be considered as the founding father of theories of deliberative democracy. His work is rooted in a Platonist tradition and argues that value-conflicts can be mediated with reference to general normative procedures based on rational deliberation. These procedures guarantee an inclusive participation and decisionmaking on the basis of rational arguments (Habermas 1984). Deliberation in this fashion offers a shared normative framework, which allows for democratic mediation of value-conflicts. According to Habermas, it is able to neutralising power (ab)use because it is only possible to mediate conflicts using rational arguments.

Particularly, Foucault (1926-1984) criticised these deliberative democratic ideas. He worked in an Aristotelian tradition and underlined that values are context-specific. Any effort to mediate them, using a normative framework based on the idea of a universal objective rationality, inevitably creates power relations. According to Foucault, power is an indissoluble part of social relations (Foucault 1976 [2000a]). It is even indispensable because it enables social action. It is for this reason that Foucault says that it is dangerous to think that power can be neutralised with rational argumentation. It is dangerous because the reference to rationality obfuscates the relations of power being played out. Consequently, the difference between ideal and practice can therefore never be solved, but needs to be continuously addressed.

Analyses of power relations at work can offer the tools to resist or change them. This well-rehearsed confrontation between Habermas and Foucault is used to formulate the two remaining sub-questions:

In what sense does the normative ideal of value-conflict resolution differ from the empirical reality of value-conflict mediation?

Which power relations are produced within value-conflict mediation of rural land use?

The Dutch countryside and Dutch Rural Planning Policy (RPP) form a suitable context to study the above-mentioned questions for several reasons. Dutch RPP continuously had to cope with value-conflicts because of social, geographical and demographical factors (Israel 1995; RLG 1999). As a result it has institutionalised a consensual mode for value-conflict mediation (Hendriks and Toonen 2001). Recently, several rural sociologists have argued that this consensual mode for value-conflict mediation is failing to live up to its objectives (Leeuwis 2003; Boonstra 2004). It is often not able to tack successfully between the particular values in rural regions and general values, reflected in national policy. On the one hand, because conventional institutions are no longer unanimously and collectively shared, on the other hand, because values over rural land use have differentiated.

9.2 Controlled decontrolling

Sub-question 1:

Which mode of value-conflict mediation is used in practice? What does this mean for the articulation of values concerning rural land use?

Based on the comparative case study in Chapter 6 this dissertation argues that Dutch RPP has institutionalised a mode for value-conflict mediation, which can be understood as *controlled decontrolling*. Chapter 6 compares two conflicts over rural land use in South-east Fryslân in the 1950s and 1990s, to consider in detail this institutional transformation. The comparison shows how RPP had to adapt institutionally to a situation in which it needed to account for not only more stakeholders but also more different stakeholder values.

The Koningsdiep Land Consolidation Project in the 1950s already featured an extensive process of deliberation, which was believed to contribute to a shared consensus on the means and objectives. Despite these deliberative procedures the authorities had a dominant position in the production of means and objectives of the project. During the second half of the 20th century this position became untenable and the arena of RPP opened up to include more stakeholders and tried to account for more different values.

The events in the ROM project in the 1990s show how with participation and consensus-building relations of power are (re)produced between stakeholders. Stakeholders in RPP attained considerable influence over the definition of means and ends of RPP because possibilities for participation improved. However, this empowerment was matched with the gradual development and extension of regulation and legislation concerning new land use projects. The case study on the ROM project

illustrates how stakeholders are obliged to follow the appropriate procedures due to participation and inclusion of stakeholders. As a consequence, the power struggles, inherent in conflicts over rural land use, exist for an important part out of resisting, changing or ignoring regulation.

Controlled decontrolling refers to the process whereby Dutch RPP institutionally democratised, or 'decontrolled', which enabled stakeholder groups involved in RPP to put forward their particular values. At first sight this seems to contradict the analyis of the negative effects of rationalisation and modernisation (Weber 1922 [1978]). However, a closer analysis of the institutional development of Dutch RPP shows that this space for expression of more substantial values does not contribute much to a substantial-rational mode for solving value-conflicts. Despite that Dutch RPP created more space for participation this space was simultaneously tied up in a complication of regulation, which in its turn disciplined participation. This controlling tendency is explained in Chapter 6 as involution: the advancing condensation, interweaving, refinement and complication of institutions (Geertz 1963; Vuijsje and Wouters 1999; Van der Ploeg 2003), which hamper successful and sustainable RPP (Agrawal 2001).

The two processes of decontrolling and controlling reinforce each other. Through processes of democratisation people have become more independent and able to resist or impede plans. This means that when it comes to conflict mediation, institutions cannot solely rely on a substantial-rational mode for value-conflict mediation based on undisputed trust and legitimacy, because this institutional trust is no longer shared socially.

Substantive-rational values (e.g. how should the countryside look and which rural activities should take place) embedded in norms and ethics became less commonly shared which made them frequently incommensurable, making the mediation of value-conflicts obstinate. As a consequence, they were more often mediated using functional-rational values (e.g. effectiveness, efficiency, accountability) embedded in legislative rules and procedures. It meant that *how* different values of rural land-use should be mediated became clearer than *which values* of rural land-use should be strived for. Functional values became more evident at the expense of substantial values, which grew more abstract and vague (Zijderveld 2000).

Institutional transformation, through controlled decontrolling, is a particularly attractive way of mediating value-conflicts in a context characterised by value differentiation. As stated earlier, a result of such a context is that previously undisputed institutional modes involving tradition, charisma, informal knowledge and judgement have become less accepted formally. Institutional legitimacy constantly needs to be reassured, which is done through regulation and legislation offering a seemingly neutral and rational legitimacy and authority for value-conflict mediation.

Controlled decontrolling has important consequences for the articulation of values in Dutch RPP. Chapter 4 explains, using a case study on land use planning in the Langbroekerwetering, how values are articulated and accounted for within controlled decontrolling RPP. Conflicts over rural land-use are typically presented as conflicts over interests, which are concrete and static. Reformulating values into interests makes values commensurable and makes value-conflicts, in principle, resolvable. Commensuration is closely connected with a process of commoditisation (Van der

Ploeg 1990), because interests are often made commensurable with reference to a financial standard.

Unfortunately, the presentation of conflicts over rural land use as conflicts over interests goes at the expense of their moral and value-rational dimension and amounts to a context-insensitivity of RPP. They abstract and simplify the social practices of value-conflicts. Chapter 4 accounts for this normative dimension of conflicts over rural land use through an analysis of the value-orientation concerning rural land use of participants, involved in the Project Langbroekerwetering.

Based on this analysis Chapter 5 suggests that conventional interest groups are differentiating internally concerning the values they hold in relation to rural land use. In this chapter the diversifying value-orientations of farmers in South-east Fryslân are illustrated, with an initiative of a farmer who lives along the Koningsdiep brook in South-east Fryslân and tried to establish an environmental cooperative. The general point of this example is that value-diversification is not accounted for institutionally, and therefore problematises value-conflict mediation. Within RPP the traditional interest groups are per definition represented and include environmental organizations, farmers, water boards, estate owners and local, provincial and national authorities. However, these groups lose an important part of their legitimacy because they can no longer rely on a stable and homogenous constituency. There is a growing group of stakeholders, which are not accounted for in value-conflict mediation.

However, to argue that an institutional transformation such as controlled decontrolling always contributes to an inability to take account of substantial values would be equally foolish. Such inability crucially depends on the context in which value-conflicts emerge. The irreducible effect of context on the success or failure of value-conflict mediation and value articulation in Dutch RPP is illustrated in Chapter 8, which compares how farmers in North- and South-east Fryslân deal with ammonia regulation and nature policy aiming to substitute farmland for nature areas. In both regions farmers tried to mitigate these measures. However, they operated in different ways based on different value-orientations. This comparison is interesting because it shows how different contexts result in completely different outcomes of policy and planning.

Farmers in South-east Fryslân, represented by the Farm Union, were internally divided concerning the objectives of the ammonia policies. They cooperated in the ROM project mainly to achieve a reformulation of the ammonia law and to maintain their production capacity, in exchange for their cooperation with the nature policy. During intensive negotiation in- and outside the ROM project, this reformulation proved to be a mission impossible. First, it became clear that the ammonia regulation did not allow much space for regional exceptions. Several juridical solutions were developed, but each time they were dismissed legally. Second, each of these juridical solutions gave rise to discord between different groups of farmers. It appeared that dairy, chicken, and pig farmers held very different values concerning rural land use and development. The Farm Union proved incapable of disciplining its constituency. The different sub-groups continued to demand exceptions after each agreement reached between the Farm Union and other ROM participants. Third, in the years after the first preliminary agreement, the economical situation of farmers changed drastically. Many more farmers stopped farming and more land became available. This

oversupply of land delegitimised the initial claim of the farmers, maintenance of production capacity. Also, continuing farmers grew tired of the insecurity over the final policy outline and wanted to reach an agreement about the ammonia regulation and the finalisation of the EHS. For these reasons the farmers and other ROM participants were able to reach an agreement relatively easy, but with not much impact on regional farm development.

Farmers in North-east Fryslân organised themselves in a regional environmental cooperative to negotiate more room to apply the ammonia regulation. Different from farmers in South-east Fryslân these farmers did support the objectives of the ammonia regulation and nature policy. Still, they also aimed to attain an exceptional status in order to mitigate the negative effects of the distance table and slit injection. Both means had very negative effects on the particular landscape in North-east Fryslân, which is characterised by small parcels enclosed by wooden banks. Farmers wanted to maintain this landscape. The environmental cooperative turned out to be a crucial leverage for this purpose. Through this organisation farmers successfully negotiated an exceptional status with the government and they were able to ensure that their members complied with the specific rules agreed upon within the negotiation. The network of the cooperative is unconventional because it involves citizens, recreational entrepreneurs, tourists but also scientists from the Wageningen University.

This comparison between the different strategies of farmers in South- and North-east Fryslân shows that successful articulation of values is essentially dependent on the specific composition and interrelation of social networks between people, policies and their environment. The efficacy of these networks depends on their enabling and restricting capacity both internally and externally. Internally they need to maintain cohesion between their members, expressed in shared values. Externally they need to be able to negotiate the legitimacy of these specific values within a process of controlled decontrolling of Dutch RPP.

9.3 Interests and values, win-win or tragic choice?

Sub-question 2:

In what sense does the normative ideal of value-conflict resolution differ from the empirical reality of value-conflict mediation?

An important premise of Dutch RPP is the ideal of multiple land use. This can be realised on the condition that values of different stakeholders are articulated as interests. Interests, contrary to values, can be made compatible and resolved. Value-conflicts mediated in this way are legitimate if they are the result of rational, participative, non-coercive, deliberative processes.

The case study in Chapter 3 on decisionmaking in the Koningsdiep DC highlights that value-conflicts in context frequently differ from this ideal. They are always part of different cultural-historical, social and economic settings. This became particularly clear when the Koningsdiep DC eventually finalised its Area Development Plan. After its publication several farmers decided to not cooperate, and their representatives in the DC threatened to resign, which would decrease the legitimacy of the DC. The reluctance of farmers to cooperate had multiple origins. First of all, it was a result of an old, unresolved conflict over water management of the Koningsdiep brook. In 1993

the Waterboard computerised the floodgates. According to farmers living along the brook, this had caused the water level to rise from that time onwards. The Waterboard assured that the water levels did not rise, and that the computers just maintained the official water level. This contradiction between farmers in the Koningsdiep brookdale and the Waterboard was followed by a series of negotiations, in which both failed to reach a mutual agreement concerning the (putative) water level rise. This old conflict re-emerged when the Area Development Plan of the DC was presented in January 2002. Second, the farmers were dissatisfied because the Ministry of Agriculture decided to freeze the budget reserved for purchasing the farmland which needed to be changed into nature reserves. The rejection of the Area Development Plan hardened positions. The opinions about the continuation of the DC and the plan differed so intensively between the participants, that the DC decided to preliminary stop its activities.

The case study shows how policy and planning processes always have a history, which is decisive for its outcome and the mediation of value-conflicts. It also shows that particular procedures cannot be a guarantee for the creation of a shared consensus between stakeholders. Values are articulated within social interaction in context and cannot be considered a priori, as objective interests. The inability to account for the dynamics and context-specificity of value-conflicts appears to be a blind spot in current RPP. In controlled decontrolling there is often univocal attention to idealised consensuses and the procedures to obtain these. In this way, RPP acquires and maintains a neutral, but abstract, appearance and does not account for substantial values and value-conflicts, which downplays the normative dimension of RPP.

Chapter 7 argues that the discrepancy between the ideal and the real contributes to a feeling of a void between policy and practice. This chapter tests two conventional explanations regarding the origins of the void on their applicability in a Dutch case of desicionmaking on rural land use. It argues that the void cannot be solely attributed to either a process of value-differentiation originating in civil society (Putnam 1993; 2000) or de-politicisation originating in the state (Hay 2004). These explanations pay exclusive attention to the downside of recent social and political changes. They ignore ways in which civil society and the state respectively are re-institutionalising and re-politicising, due to their univocal attention to either the domain of civil society or the state. Three examples from the case study on the Project Langbroekerwetering are used to illustrate ways in which people re-engage with each other and the state. The remainder of Chapter 7 highlights three examples of political attitudes to show that whenever a void between ideal and real modes for value-conflict mediation surges up, i.e. when the available institutions fail to mediate this difference, new attempts at mediation and institutionalisation develop.

9.4 Productive power

Sub-question 3:

Which power relations are produced within value-conflict mediation of rural land use?

Chapter 5 emphasises the limiting and productive dimensions of power relations in value-conflicts over rural land use. These differences are illustrated in an internal value-conflict within a local branch of the Farm Union in South-East Fryslân. This power struggle shows how a farmer along the Koningsdiep brook, deals with actions of others, which simultaneously limit and create possibilities to develop his farm.

This conceptualisation of power relations is taken up again in Chapter 6, which argues that power relations are becoming more obfuscated in value-conflict mediation due to a process of democratisation and fragmentation of commonly held values. This is particularly the case in policy arrangements which are based on a deliberative democratic ideal, i.e. Area-based policy (see Chapter 3). These arrangements have grown more implicit concerning values and objectives, hereby leaving more room for stakeholders to articulate (scientifically) their particular values. These values need to be legitimised using (communicative) rational argumentation. With its reference to rationality, deliberative democratic arrangements obfuscate how power relations are constructed within a commensuration of values (Espeland and Stevens 1998). On their turn, these power relations construct specific social-material networks, which structure possible fields of action (see also Chapter 8).

Simultaneously institutions for value-conflict mediation have grown more explicit concerning the means and procedures in relation to rural land use. Consequently, the normative and substantial-rational content of value-conflicts is being translated functional-rationally as interests, means, procedures and rules. This leaves more space for participants to articulate values. But, it also means that the struggle for power has shifted from a struggle over values, tradition and faith to a struggle over interests, procedures and rules. The power to modify and use seemingly neutral regulation and legislation has become decisive for the outcomes in policy and planning. For these reasons value-conflicts in Dutch RPP are struggles over the constitution and use of RPP. They are about redressing and subverting policy and planning which is executed through institutionalised relations of power.

9.5 Value-conflict mediation in theory and practice

> *'A recognition of incommensurability is necessary to keep alive the sense of tragedy.* [...] *in the presence of tragedy there is a large incentive to create social arrangements so that people don't have to face that prospect'* (Sunstein 1997:859).

This chapter is closed with a short reflection on the meaning of the research results and conclusions for the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. The theory of Weber, in which he states that institutionalised modes mediate value-conflicts, is applied in the case studies to analyse the mediation of value-conflicts in practice. The concepts of rationalisation and institutionalisation are used to label value-conflict mediation in Dutch RPP as controlled decontrolling (see paragraph 9.2).

Controlled decontrolling features a combination of contradicting processes, in which substantial-rational values are translated into functional-rational interests. This conversion is essential for value-conflict mediation because it renders incommensurable values commensurable and creates the possibility for consensus.

The theory of Communicative Action of Habermas (1984) is an important effort aimed to mediate value-conflicts substantive-rationally. Habermas realises that a functional-rational conversion of substantial values carries the danger that conflicts are being mediated using power (ab)use and strategic action, instead of democratic and rational deliberation. For this reason, he defines procedures to realise a communicative rationality. According to Habermas, incommensurable values can become collectively shared within democratic and rational deliberation. Deliberation in such a fashion would neutralize power (ab)use and limit value differentiation. His theory sustains the idea that shared values and consensus can be reached, if only deliberation and negotiation processes follow the right procedures (see Chapter 3 for an outline of these procedures).

Foucault is sceptical about the practical value of Habermas' theory for value-conflict mediation. He argues that power relations are always at play in value-conflict mediation, also when this occurs in a Habermasian fashion with an emphasis on rational deliberation and shared consensus. According to Foucault such rational democratic processes obfuscate the inherent workings of power, which are necessarily always part of social action (Foucault 1976 [2000a]). Power (ab)use and power relations cannot be neutralized but are always incorporated in social action. They not only limit social action, but also produce social preferences, behaviour and rationality. Using Foucault's insights in practical cases of value-conflict mediation shows that tragic choices are always imbued in value-conflict mediation. It raises awareness of how power relations in social-material networks work towards a specific outcome, thereby limiting other alternative outcomes (see Chapter 6 and Chapter 8).

These three theoretical outlines have incited the analysis of value-conflict mediation in practice, as presented in this dissertation. The case studies show that value-conflicts cannot be mediated power-neutrally, through a commensuration of values within procedures or projects. On the contrary, power relations and tragic choices are part and parcel of value-conflict mediation. This does not mean that all efforts of value-conflict mediation are doomed to fail. The very recognition that tragic choices cannot be avoided opens up possibilities to discuss which values should be prioritised in RPP. Such a discussion can give legitimate reasons for not considering certain values. The importance of prioritizing values brings us back to Habermas' argument that deliberation is imperative for a construction of a normative framework, needed to prioritise. However, using Foucault, it is also clear that discussions over values need to remain firmly based in specific contexts and necessarily involves tragic choices.

Outlining an approach for the construction of a normative framework based on these insights opens up new directions for future research in rural sociology and planning studies[1]. Such research can take off where this dissertation ends: with the recognition of value incommensurability and tragic choices in value-conflicts over rural land use in practice.

Note

1 Several authors have made a start with such an approach. The main idea is that concrete practical cases can serve as guides for a situational ethics (Flyvbjerg 1991; 1998; 2001; Thacher 2006). These cases can serve to define and inform normative principles and can contribute to a 'moral taxonomy': 'a detailed and methodological map of morally significant likenesses and differences between cases' (Jonsen and Toulmin 1988: 14). Factors, which need to be taken into account, are the institutional and social-material context of value-conflicts. Such knowledge is imperative for a sound analysis of the situation at hand and essential for a democratic coordination of value-conflicts. A good illustration of how situational knowledge and experience can be used systematically is the ToolBox for Integrated Water Resources Management developed by the Global Water Partnership (http://gwpforum.netmasters05.netmasters.nl/en/index.html). The Toolbox is a web-based database, which consists of hundreds of different international cases of water management. It is freely accessible and meant for policymakers and practitioners to use for policy- or project design for sustainable water management. Its aim is to draw together knowledge and experience obtained from actual cases. Another already existing example, which uses situational knowledge systematically, is jurisprudence, where legal cases are important means for the development and maintenance of the legal systems (Verheugt *et al.* 1994; Thacher 2004).

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Samenvatting

> *'We know of no scientifically ascertainable ideals. To be sure, that makes our efforts more arduous than those of the past, since we are expected to create our ideals from within our breast in the very age of subjectivist culture; but we must not and cannot promise a fool's paradise and an easy road to it, neither in thought nor in action'* (Weber 1922: xxxiii [1978])

Probleemstelling en onderzoeksvragen

In deze samenvatting worden kort de resultaten en conclusies van deze dissertatie besproken. Eerst worden de probleemstelling en daaruit vloeiende onderzoeksvragen uitgelegd. In de daaropvolgende paragrafen wordt per onderzoeksvraag de antwoorden uit het tweede deel samengevat.

Hoofdstuk 1 introduceert het onderwerp van deze dissertatie -waardenconflicten in ruraal landgebruik- en verklaard waarom deze moeilijk zijn op te lossen. Ten eerste, zijn sinds de jaren 60 en 70 waarden t.a.v. ruraal landgebruik onderhevig aan een sterke diversificatie en pluralisering. Er is niet langer meer sprake van één dominante waarde, zoals dat lange tijd gold voor 'landbouwmodernisatie'. Ten tweede, verliezen instituties, die gewoonlijk deze waardenconflicten oplossen, aan capaciteit omdat ze niet meer collectief worden gedeeld. Dit bemoeilijkt het oplossen van waardenconflicten. Want, zoals deze dissertatie duidelijk maakt, zijn instituties essentieel voor de oplossing van waardenincommensurabiliteit, omdat waarden per definitie incommensurabel zijn. Waardenincommensurabiliteit betekent dat verschillende intrinsieke waarden zo verschillend zijn dat ze niet tegelijkertijd kunnen worden gerealiseerd (Chang 1997; Griffin 1997) of gereduceerd tot één gemeenschappelijke (meet)standaard of waarde (Espeland en Stevens 1998). Commensuratie daarentegen, houdt in dat waarden tot uitdrukking komen, of worden gemeten, a.d.h.v. één gemeenschppelijke (meet)standaard of waarde (Espeland en Stevens 1998).

Het intrigerende is dat, ondanks respectievelijk waardendifferentiatie en de-institutionalisering, waardenconflicten toch worden opgelost in de praktijk. Dit roept onvermijdelijk de vraag op of instituties dan tóch nog steeds in staat zijn om waardenconflicten succesvol te mediëren? En als het antwoord op deze vraag positief is, klopt dan bovenstaande analyse wel? Deze vragen vormen de basis voor de algemene onderzoeksvraag:

Als waarden incommensurabel zijn, hoe kan dan verklaard worden dat conflicten over ruraal landgebruik niettemin worden opgelost in praktijk?

In de inleiding wordt uitgelegd dat waardenconflicten in de praktijk worden opgelost door tussenkomst van instituties. Een institutie is gedefinieerd als een bepaald patroon

van handelen, denken en voelen. Mensen worden gesocialiseerd om volgens deze patronen te handelen in waardenconflicten. Dit houdt in dat bepaalde manieren van waardenconflictresolutie routiniseren en objectiveren. Hierdoor blijft het probleem van waarden incommensurabiliteit verborgen en kunnen mensen toch tot een 'oplossing' van het conflict komen. Dit betekent dat waardenconflicten niet worden opgelost doordat er een nieuwe allesomvattende waarde ontstaat. De incommensurabiliteit tussen waarden blijft bestaan, alleen wordt getracht verschillende waarden tegelijkertijd te realiseren. Derhalve is het beter te spreken van mediëring dan van oplossing van waarden conflicten. De term 'mediëring' is geschikter omdat het niet veronderstelt dat men toewerkt naar een nieuwe allesomvattende waarde. De assumptie dat instituties waardenconflicten mediëren leidt tot de eerst subvraag.

Welke manier van waardenconflict mediëring wordt gebruikt in de praktijk? Wat betekent dit voor de articulatie van waarden t.a.v. ruraal landgebruik?

Weber (1864-1920) was één van de eerste sociologen die verschillende manieren van waardenconflict mediëring heeft geanalyseerd. Hij onderscheidde een substantieel- en een functioneel-rationele manier, en stelde dat in moderne samenlevingen substantieel-rationele mediëring langzamerhand wordt vervangen door functioneel-rationele waardenconflict mediëring (Weber 1922 [1978]). Volgens Weber is deze substitutie hét kenmerk van de rationalisatie van samenlevingen. Verschillende sociologen hebben deze theorie gebruikt om aan te tonen dat rationalisering specifieke problemen met zich meebrengt voor collectief handelen. Cohen en Ben-Ari (1993) stellen dat waardenincommensurabiliteit de kop opsteekt wanneer geïnstitutionaliseerde manieren van waardenconflict mediëring ontoereikend zijn. Ook Zijderveld (2000) stelt dat in democratische samenlevingen geregeld problemen van incommensurabiliteit voorkomen, omdat instituties abstracter en voor velerlei uitleg vatbaar worden en tegelijkertijd mensen individualistischer en zelfbewuster. Deze combinatie veroorzaakt een trend van de-institutionalisering. Het vergroot het spanningsveld tussen ideaal en praktijk; hoe men wil dat waardenconflicten worden opgelost en hoe ze daadwerkelijk worden opgelost. Volgens democratische norm wil men dat met alle waarden rekening wordt gehouden. In praktijk lost men dit functioneel-rationeel op, zoals met een aggregatie van (subjectieve) waarden, in bijvoorbeeld verkiezingen.

Deze negatieve effecten van rationalisering en modernisering hebben aangezet tot pogingen om waardenconflicten democratischer te mediëren met substantieel-rationele oplossingen. Hierin zijn ideeën over deliberatieve democratie tot op heden toonaangevend gebleken. Habermas (1929) kan worden beschouwd als de grondlegger van ideeën t.a.v. deliberatieve democratie. Zijn werk komt voort uit een Platonistische traditie en stelt dat waardenconflicten gemedieerd kunnen worden met behulp van specifieke procedures. Deze procedures garanderen dat iedereen mogelijkheid heeft om deel te nemen aan de deliberatie, mits men zich bedient van rationele argumenten (Habermas 1984). Deliberatie leidt op den duur tot een gedeeld normatief kader waarmee men waardenconflicten kan mediëren. Het voordeel van deze methode is, volgens Habermas, dat machtsgebruik en -misbruik worden geneutraliseerd, omdat het alleen maar mogelijk is om conflicten op te lossen middels rationele argumentatie.
Deliberatieve democratische ideeën zijn met name door Foucault (1926-1984) geproblematiseerd. Foucault werkte in een Artistoteliaanse traditie en benadrukte dat

waarden contextspecifiek zijn. Mediëring gebaseerd op een normatief raamwerk dat een universele objectieve rationaliteit veronderstelt, creëert onvermijdelijk zelf machtsrelaties. Volgens Foucault is macht een onlosmakelijk onderdeel van sociale relaties (Foucault 1976 [2000a]). Het is zelfs onmisbaar omdat het sociaal handelen mogelijk maakt. Om deze reden stelt Foucault dat het gevaarlijk is om te denken dat macht kan worden geneutraliseerd met rationele argumenten. Het is gevaarlijk omdat met referentie aan rationaliteit wordt verhuld dat er wel degelijk sprake is van machtsrelaties. Om deze reden stelt Foucault dat het verschil tussen ideaal en praktijk niet kan worden opgelost, maar dat dit verschil onafgebroken moet worden geanalyseerd. Een analyse kan laten zien hoe machtsrelaties functioneren en geeft hiermee de mogelijkheid om ze te veranderen of te weerstaan. Deze tegenstelling tussen Habermas en Foucault vormt de basis voor de laatste twee subvragen:

Hoe verschilt het normatieve ideaal van waardenconflict resolutie van de empirische realiteit van waardenconflict mediëring?

Welke machtsrelaties komen tot stand bij mediëring van waardenconflicten over ruraal landgebruik?

Het Nederlandse platteland en het plattelandsbeleid zijn bij uitstek geschikt voor de studie van bovengenoemde vragen. Vanwege sociale, geografische en demografische factoren, zijn heterogene waarden en waardenconflicten altijd een kenmerk geweest van het Nederlandse platteland (Israel 1995; RLG 1999). Als gevolg heeft het Nederlandse (plattelands)beleid zich sterk consensusgericht geïnstitutionaliseerd (Hendriks en Toonen 2001). Verschillende ruraal sociologen hebben recentelijk aangetoond dat deze consensusgerichte manier van waardenconflict mediëring begint te haperen. Het blijkt telkens weer uitermate moeilijk om specifieke waarden in rurale regio's en algemene waarden uit nationaal beleid succesvol op elkaar af te stemmen (Leeuwis 1995; Bock 2002; Boonstra 2004). Enerzijds, omdat instituties niet meer de legitimiteit en vertrouwen genieten zoals voorheen, anderzijds omdat het waarden t.a.v. plattelandsgebruik onderhevig zijn aan een proces van differentiatie.

Gecontroleerde decontrolering

Subvraag 1:

Welke manier van waardenconflict mediëring wordt gebruikt in de praktijk? Wat betekent dit voor de articulatie van waarden t.a.v. ruraal landgebruik?

Gebaseerd op de vergelijkende case studie uit hoofdstuk 6, stelt deze dissertatie dat de waardenconflict mediëring die gebruikt wordt in de praktijk van het Nederlands plattelandsbeleid, kan worden begrepen als *gecontroleerde decontrolering*. Hoofdstuk 6 vergelijkt twee waardenconflicten, uit de jaren vijftig en negentig van de vorige eeuw, met als doel deze institutionele transformatie in detail te bestuderen. Met de vergelijking wordt geanalyseerd hoe het Nederlandse plattelandsbeleid institutioneel transformeerde in een situatie met meer belanghebbenden, en meer uiteenlopende waarden.

In het ruilverkavelingproject Koningsdiep, in de jaren vijftig, was sprake van een uitgebreid deliberatieproces. Belanghebbenden moesten overeenstemming bereiken

over het doel en de middelen van het ruilverkavelingproject. Weliswaar bezette de overheid in dit proces een dominante positie wat betreft agendasetting en toelating van belangenhebbenden. Deze dominante positie werd gedurende de jaren zestig en zeventig onhoudbaar, met gevolg dat het Nederlandse plattelandsbeleid verbreedde. Nieuwe belanghebbenden werden toegelaten tot besluitvorming en men probeerde meerdere waarden in beleid tot uitdrukking te laten komen.

De gebeurtenissen in het ROM project gedurende de jaren negentig laten zien hoe met participatie en het bereiken van consensus machtsrelaties tussen belanghebbenden tot uitdrukking komen. Doordat de mogelijkheden voor participatie vergroot zijn kunnen deelnemers aanzienlijke invloed uitoefenden t.a.v. definiëring van doel en middelen van het project. Echter, participatie is onderhevig aan een fijnmazig geheel aan regels en wetten binnen plattelandsbeleid. De case studie over het ROM project illustreert hoe participatie van belanghebbenden zich afspeelt binnen specifieke procedures en regels. Een gevolg van deze trend is dat de machtsstrijd tussen belanghebbenden voor een belangrijk deel bestaat uit het onderschrijven, aanvechten, buigen of negeren van beleid.

Gecontroleerde decontrolering verwijst dus naar het proces waarin het Nederlandse plattelandsbeleid institutioneel democratiseerde, ofwel decontroleerde. Het stelde belangenhebbenden in staat hun specifieke waarden krachtiger te articuleren. Op het eerste gezicht lijkt deze trend haaks te staan op de analyse van de negatieve effecten van rationalisering en modernisering (Weber 1922 [1978]). Er ontstaat immers méér ruimte voor de articulatie van substantiële waarden. Echter, de analyse in hoofdstuk 6 laat zien dat de toegenomen mogelijkheid om specifieke substantiële waarden naar voren te brengen in plattelandsbeleid, niet bijdraagt aan een substantieelrationele manier van waardenconflict mediëring. Ondanks dat het Nederlandse plattelandsbeleid decontroleerde, was het tegelijkertijd ingewikkeld in een web van regels. Deze trend tot controlering kan, in navolging van o.a. Geertz (1963), Vuijsje en Wouters (1999) en Van der Ploeg (2003), worden begrepen als involutie. Involutie is een toenemende verdichting, verweving, verfijning en complicatie van instituties, wat op zichzelf een belangrijke belemmering vormt voor duurzaam (plattelands)beleid (Agrawal 2001).

Institutionele transformatie, in de vorm van gecontroleerde decontrolering is een uiterst aantrekkelijke manier van waardenconflict mediëring in een context met een grote verscheidenheid aan waardenorientaties. Een gevolg van deze verscheidenheid is namelijk dat eerder onbetwiste geïnstitutionaliseerde handelswijzen niet langer als vanzelfsprekend worden beschouwd, maar dat hun legitimiteit telkens opnieuw moet worden bevestigd. Deze legitimiteit wordt onderbouwd met functioneel-rationele waarden, tot uiting komend in beleid. Beleidsregels en -wetten bieden hiermee een schijnbaar neutrale en rationele autoriteit aan institutionaliseerde waardenconflict mediëring. Dit betekend dat de processen van decontrolering en controlering elkaar hebben versterkt. Door democratisering zijn mensen onafhankelijker geworden, beter in staat specifieke waarden te articuleren en op die manier beleidvorming en -uitvoering te beïnvloeden. Een belangrijk gevolg hiervan is dat een substantieel-rationele waardenconflict mediëring niet volstaat. Legitimiteit en vertrouwen die instituties voorheen genoten, wordt niet langer meer collectief gedeeld. Hierdoor beschikken instituties niet meer over hun disciplinerende werking. Om waarden incommensurabiliteit het hoofd te bieden ontwikkelt zich een functioneel-rationele

manier van waardenconflict mediëring. Waardenconflicten worden niet langer substantieel-rationeel gemedieerd a.d.h.v. waarden ingebed in normen en ethiek, bijvoorbeeld hoe het platteland er uit zou moeten zien, of hoe mensen zich zouden moeten gedragen. Ze worden daarentegen functioneel-rationeel gemedieerd a.d.h.v. waarden ingebed in regels en procedures zoals effectiviteit, efficiëntie en rekenschap. Hierdoor is het in veel gevallen duidelijker *hoe* waardenconflicten moeten worden gemedieerd dan *welke* waarden zouden moeten worden geprioriteerd.

Gecontroleerde decontrolering heeft, zoals gezegd, belangrijke gevolgen voor de articulatie van waarden in het Nederlandse plattelandsbeleid. In hoofdstuk 4 wordt uiteengezet hoe binnen een proces van gecontroleerde decontrolering waarden worden gearticuleerd. De conclusie luidt dat conflicten over ruraal landgebruik meestal worden gepresenteerd als conflicten over concrete en onveranderlijke belangen. Deze reformulering van waarden in belangen is een belangrijk onderdeel van waardenconflicten mediëring, omdat het waarden commensurabel maakt. Hiermee zijn waardenconflicten in principe op te lossen met referentie aan een algemene meetstandaard, zoals geld.

De presentatie en reformulering van conflicten over ruraal landgebruik als belangenconflicten ondermijnt de substantieel-rationele en morele dimensie van deze conflicten, wat op zijn beurt de contextongevoeligheid van plattelandsbeleid versterkt. Het abstraheert en simplificeert de sociale praktijken die een rol spelen in waardenconflicten. Hoofdstuk 4 duidt deze normatieve dimensie van conflicten over ruraal landgebruik m.b.v. een analyse van de waardenorientaties t.a.v. ruraal landgebruik bij participanten van het Project Langbroekerwetering.

Gebaseerd op deze analyse wordt er in hoofdstuk 5 gesuggereerd dat de conventionele belangengroepen op het platteland te maken hebben met een intern differentiatieproces t.a.v. de waarden die men voorstaat in relatie tot ruraal landgebruik. Dit differentiatieproces wordt geïllustreerd voor de boerenvakbond in Zuidoost Fryslân met de poging van een boer, wonend aan het Koningsdiep, om een milieucoöperatie op te starten. Het algemene punt is dat deze waardendifferentiatie nog geen institutionele vertaling heeft gekregen binnen het Nederlandse plattelandsbeleid wat waardenconflict mediëring bemoeilijkt. Binnen het huidige plattelandsbeleid zijn de traditionele belangengroepen zoals milieuorganisaties, boerenvakbonden, waterschappen, landgoedeigenaren en lokale, provinciale en nationale overheden vrijwel per definitie vertegenwoordigt. Echter, deze belangengroepen verliezen een belangrijk deel van hun legitimatie doordat ze niet meer terug kunnen vallen op een stabiele en homogene achterban. Als gevolg bestaat er een groeiende groep van belanghebbenden die niet worden gerepresenteerd in het huidige plattelandsbeleid.

Echter, dat substantiële waarden altijd worden gesmoord in gecontroleerde decontrolering, is evenmin waar. Of er al dan niet sprake is van de articulatie van substantiële waarden is in essentie afhankelijk van de contexten waarin waardenconflicten zich voltrekken. De niet aflatende invloed van context op respectievelijk succes of falen van waardenarticulatie in plattelandsbeleid komt in hoofdstuk 8 ter sprake. Daarin staat de vergelijking centraal tussen hoe boeren in Noordoost - en Zuidoost Fryslân in hebben gespeeld op belemmeringen veroorzaakt door ammoniak- en natuurbeleid. In beide regio’s hebben boeren geprobeerd deze

belemmerende werking weg te nemen of te verminderen. De vergelijking is interessant omdat het maakt duidelijk hoe verschillende contexten compleet verschillende beleidsuitkomsten laten zien. Deze case laat zien hoe de groepen boeren zeer verschillend te werk zijn gegaan en zich daarbij hebben gebaseerd op sterk uiteenlopende waardenorientaties.

De boeren in Zuidoost Fryslân werden gerepresenteerd door de boerenvakbond en waren sterk verdeeld over het ammoniak- en natuurbeleid. Deelname in het ROM project was gericht op een reformulering van het ammoniakbeleid en behoud van productiecapaciteit, in ruil voor medewerking aan de invulling van de EHS. Na intensieve onderhandelingen, binnen en buiten het ROM project, bleek het onmogelijk om een speciale reformulering voor Zuidoost Fryslân te realiseren. Ten eerste, werd duidelijk dat het nationale ammoniakbeleid weinig ruimte liet voor regionale uitzonderingen. Er waren verschillende complexe juridische oplossingen uitgedacht die keer op keer niet bleken te kunnen. Ten tweede, ontstond er naar aanleiding van de verschillende voorgestelde oplossingen binnen de boerenvakbond onenigheid over de te volgen koers. De voorstellen maakten duidelijk hoezeer waarden van verschillende melkvee-, varkens- en kippenhouders uiteen liepen. Het lukte de vakbond niet de verschillende groepen boeren binnen haar achterban op één lijn te krijgen. Dit had tot gevolg dat na elk bereikt akkoord tussen de boerenvakbond en de andere ROM partners, de verschillende groepen boeren uitzonderingen voor hun specifieke situatie bleven eisen. Ten derde, was in de jaren na het intentieakkoord de economische situatie voor veel boeren ook nog eens drastisch veranderd. Er stopten veel meer boeren met hun bedrijf dan men aanvankelijk had aangenomen. Een bijkomend gevolg was dat er meer land beschikbaar kwam, zodat er tegen het einde van de jaren negentig een landoverschot bestond, i.p.v. een tekort. De aanvankelijke eis van de boeren, behoud van productiecapaciteit, was hiermee niet meer relevant. Daarnaast wilden veel boeren dat er snel een beslissing werd genomen over de ammoniak situatie en de landbouwgrond die moest worden gebruikt voor natuurontwikkeling. Vanwege jarenlange onzekerheid hierover werden boeren belemmerd in de ontwikkeling van hun bedrijven. Mede door deze factoren werd er in 1999 relatief makkelijk en snel een definitief akkoord getekend tussen de boeren en de andere ROM partners.

De boeren in Noordoost Fryslân, daarentegen, organiseerden zichzelf binnen een nieuw opgerichte milieucoöperatie om zo ook een regiospecifieke invulling van het ammoniakbeleid te bedingen bij de overheid. In tegenstelling tot de boeren in Zuidoost Fryslân onderschreven deze boeren relatief eensgezind het ammoniak- en natuurbeleid. Het probleem hier gold de middelen die voor dit doel werden ingezet, namelijk afstandstabel en de mestinjectie. Beiden waren moeilijk in te passen in het typische coulissenlandschap van Noordoost Fryslân. Daarom pleitte de milieucoöperatie voor een uitzonderingspositie om zo het karakteristieke landschap te behouden. De milieucoöperatie speelde een centrale rol in het realiseren van dit streven. Het stelde de boeren in staat om succesvol een uitzonderingspositie te bepleiten bij de overheid en daarbij hun achterban te disciplineren. Het netwerk van de milieucoöperatie kan onconventioneel worden genoemd omdat het bestaat uit burgers, recreatieve ondernemers, toeristen en wetenschappers van de Wageningen Universiteit.

De vergelijking tussen de onderhandelingsstrategieën van boeren in Zuidoost en Noordoost Fryslân laat zien dat articulatie van substantiële waarden afhankelijk is van

de specifieke samenstelling van sociale netwerken tussen mensen, beleid en context. De effectiviteit van deze netwerken is op zijn beurt afhankelijk van de mogelijkhedenscheppende en beperkende netwerkcapaciteit, zowel intern als extern. Intern is cohesie tussen de leden noodzakelijk, die tot uiting komt in gedeelde waarden. Extern moet het netwerk in staat zijn om de legitimiteit van deze waarden te verdedigen binnen een proces van gecontroleerde decontrolering in het Nederlands plattelandsbeleid.

Belangen en waarden, win-win of tragische keuze?

Subvraag 2:

Hoe verschilt het normatieve ideaal van waardenconflict resolutie van de empirische realiteit van waardenconflict mediëring?

Een belangrijk uitgangspunt van het Nederlandse plattelandsbeleid is het ideaal van meervoudig landgebruik. Een voorwaarde om meervoudig landgebruik te kunnen realiseren is dat verschillende waarden t.a.v. ruraal landgebruik kunnen worden gearticuleerd als belangen. Een kenmerk van belangen is namelijk dat ze commensurabel kunnen worden gemaakt. Hiermee is het mogelijk om belangenconflicten op te lossen in een onderhandelingsproces en meervoudig landgebruik te realiseren. De bereikte consensus is legitiem als dit proces op een democratische wijze verloopt.

De case studie in hoofdstuk 3 over besluitvorming in de gebiedscommissie Koningsdiep onderstreept dat waardenconflicten in context dikwijls op belangrijke punten verschillen van dit ideaal. Deze conflicten zijn per definitie onderdeel van verschillende cultuurhistorische, sociale en economische contexten. Dit werd met name duidelijk toen de gebiedscommissie Koningsdiep uiteindelijk een Ontwikkelingsplan had gerealiseerd. Toen bleek dat een groot aantal individuele boeren niet mee wilde werken. Het gevolg was dat de vertegenwoordigers van de boeren dreigden hun deelname aan de gebiedscommissie op te zeggen, wat de legitimiteit van de te nemen beslissingen in de commissie sterk zou verminderen. De weerstand bij de boeren kende verschillende oorzaken. Eén oorzaak was het onderhandelingsresultaat over de stand van de waterpeilen in het Koningsdiep begin jaren negentig. In 1993 is het Waterschap begonnen met de automatisering van de sluizen in het Koningsdiep. Volgens boeren met land grenzend aan de beek is hiermee het waterpeil gestegen. Het Waterschap heeft altijd gezegd dat dit niet het geval is geweest en dat met de automatisering het reguliere peilbesluit werd gehanteerd. Deze tegenspraak is aanleiding geweest voor een serie gesprekken tussen boeren en Waterschap, die desondanks niet hebben geleid tot een consensus over de (vermeende) waterpeilstijging. Dit oude conflict manifesteerde zich opnieuw in januari 2002, tijdens de presentatie van het Ontwikkelingsplan van de gebiedscommissie Koningsdiep. Een tweede oorzaak voor de ontevredenheid van de boeren over het plan gold de bevriezing van de financiering bestemd voor schadeloosstelling van boeren, met land aangemerkt voor ontwikkeling van de EHS. De afwijzing van het Ontwikkelingsplan zette de verhoudingen binnen de GBC op scherp. De

meningsverschillen over de voortgang van het Ontwikkelingsplan liepen zo hoog op dat de commissie haar werk tijdelijk moest stopzetten.

Deze case studie laat zien dat beleidsprocessen een geschiedenis hebben die bepalend kan zijn voor het verloop en voor het al of niet succesvol mediëren van waardenconflicten. Het laat ook zien dat waarden gearticuleerd worden, en veranderen, in sociale interactie en om deze reden niet a-priori kunnen worden veronderstelt. Het onvermogen om rekening te houden met de dynamiek en contextspecificiteit van waardenconflicten en -articulatie lijkt een blinde vlek in het Nederlandse plattelandsbeleid. Gecontroleerde decontrolering van plattelandsbeleid is vaak eenzijdig gericht op het bereiken van consensus en de ontwikkeling van procedures hiervoor. Op deze manier verkrijgt en behoudt plattelandsbeleid in Nederland een neutraal en abstract karakter wat ten koste gaat van haar normatieve lading.

In hoofdstuk 7 staat het argument centraal dat deze tegenstelling tussen ideaal en praktijk bijdraagt aan de maatschappelijk gevoelde kloof tussen beleid en praktijk. In dit hoofdstuk worden twee conventionele verklaringen over de oorsprong van deze kloof getoetst op hun toepasbaarheid in het Nederlandse plattelandsbeleid. Het hoofdstuk beschrijft dat het ontstaan van de kloof niet enkel kan worden begrepen als een gevolg van een proces van waarden-differentiatie in de *civil society* (Putnam 1993 2000) en evenmin als een de-politisering van de overheid (Hay 2004). Beide verklaringen benadrukken eenzijdig de schaduwzijde van recente sociale en politieke veranderingen. Ze negeren processen van re-institutionalisering en re-politisering. In het hoofdstuk worden drie voorbeelden uit de case studie over het Langbroekerwetering Project gebruikt om te illustreren hoe mensen op nieuwe manieren interacteren met elkaar en de overheid, ondanks de breed gevoelde kloof tussen beleid en praktijk.

Productieve macht

Subvraag 3:

Welke machtsrelaties komen tot stand bij mediëring van waardenconflicten over ruraal landgebruik?

In hoofdstuk 5 komen de beperkende en mogelijkheden scheppende dimensies van machtsrelaties in waardenconflicten aan de orde. De verschillen tussen deze dimensies wordt geïllustreerd met een intern waardenconflict in de lokale afdeling van de boerenvakbond in Zuidoost Fryslân. Dit conflict laat zien hoe een boer aan het Koningsdiep, acties van anderen anticipeert die hem beperken, maar ook aanzetten tot uiteenlopende acties met als doel de ontwikkeling van zijn bedrijf.

De conceptualisatie van machtsrelaties in plattelandsbeleid komt tevens naar voren in hoofdstuk 6. Hierin wordt uiteengezet hoe machtsrelaties steeds meer worden ‘verhuld’ in waardenconflict mediëring. Deze verhulling is een gevolg van de gelijktijdige werking van een democratiseringsproces en een fragmentatie van gemeenschappelijke waarden. Huidige democratiseringsprocessen zijn sterk gebaseerd op een deliberatief-democratisch ideaal, waar bij voorbaat geen normatief standpunt wordt ingenomen. Deze standpunten zouden naar voren moeten komen in de

deliberatie tussen deelnemers. De ruimte voor participanten om hun eigen specifieke waarden hierin te definiëren en uit te dragen neemt hiermee toe. Echter, met de referentie aan een communicatieve rationaliteit wordt verhuld hoe deliberatie disciplinerend werkt en resulteert in een commensuratie van waarden. Machtsrelaties en -uitoefening manifesteren zich middels institutionele arrangementen in plattelandsbeleid, zoals gebiedsgerichte projecten, die de mogelijke handelingsruimtes structureren.

In deze institutionele arrangementen van plattelandsbeleid in Nederland komen steeds meer de middelen en procedures, t.a.v. het gebruik en ontwikkeling van het platteland, centraal te staan. De normatieve en substantieel-rationele inhoud van waardenconflicten wordt hierbij functioneel-rationeel vertaald in belangen, middelen, procedures en regels. Waarbij er meer vrijheid bestaat voor deelnemers aan plattelandsbeleid om zelf waarden te definiëren en te verdedigen. Een gevolg van democratiserings- en commensuratieprocessen is dat de machtsstrijd zich heeft verplaatst van een strijd over waarden, traditie en geloof naar een strijd over (economische) belangen, procedures en regels. De macht om schijnbare neutrale regulering en beleid aan te passen is hierin van doorslaggevende betekenis geworden voor de uitkomsten van waardenconflicten over ruraal landgebruik. Om deze redenen zijn waardenconflicten over ruraal landgebruik aan te merken als een strijd over de constitutie en het gebruik van plattelandsbeleid. Ze gaan over het ontlopen en bewerken van plattelandsbeleid, wat zich voltrekt middels geïnstitutionaliseerde machtsrelaties.

Waardenconflict mediëring in theorie and praktijk

> *'A recognition of incommensurability is necessary to keep alive the sense of tragedy.* [...] *in the presence of tragedy there is a large incentive to create social arrangements so that people don't have to face that prospect'* (Sunstein 1997:859).

Ter afsluiting van deze samenvatting volgt een korte reflectie op de onderzoeksresultaten en de conclusies m.b.t. het theoretische raamwerk, dat is uiteengezet in de eerste twee hoofdstukken. De theorie van Weber dat geïnstitutionaliseerde handelswijzen waardenconflicten mediëren is gebruikt in de case studies om de manier van waardenconflict mediëring in praktijk te analyseren. Met de rationaliserings- en institutionaliseringsbegrippen van Weber is waardenconflict mediëring in plattelandsbeleid in Nederland, gekenmerkt als een gecontroleerde decontrolering. Hierbij is sprake van een combinatie van tegengestelde processen waarbij substantieel-rationele waarden functioneel-rationeel worden vertaald als belangen. Dit is essentieel voor waardenconflict mediëring, omdat met deze vertaling waarden commensurabel worden gemaakt, en de mogelijkheid van consensus ontstaat.

De theorie over communicatief handelen van Habermas is een belangrijke inspanning om te komen tot substantieel-rationele mediëring van waardenconflicten. Habermas is zich ervan bewust dat een functioneel-rationele vertaling van substantiële waarden het gevaar met zich meebrengt dat conflicten worden gemedieerd d.m.v. machts(mis)bruik en strategisch handelen i.p.v. een democratische en rationele deliberatie. Om deze reden definieert hij procedures die zouden moeten leiden tot een communicatieve rationaliteit. Met behulp van een communicatieve rationaliteit worden

(incommensurabele) waarden collectief gedeeld. Zo is het mogelijk macht(mis)bruik te neutraliseren en te komen tot gedeelde waarden. Een belangrijke voorwaarde voor het articuleren van gedeelde waarden is dat de juiste procedures en regels voor deliberatie in acht moeten worden genomen (zie hoofdstuk 3 voor een uiteenzetting van deze procedures).

Foucault is sceptisch over de praktische waarde van Habermas' theorie voor waardenconflict mediëring. Hij stelt dat machtsrelaties altijd onderdeel uitmaken van waardenconflict mediëring, ook als deze verloopt volgens Habermasiaanse procedures met de nadruk op rationele deliberatie en het bereiken van consensus. Volgens Foucault verhult namelijk deliberatieve waardenconflict mediëring bestaande machtsrelaties en is het om deze reden 'gevaarlijk'. Machtsgebruik en –relaties zijn niet te neutraliseren maar maken altijd onderdeel uit van sociaal handelen. Ze beperken niet alleen sociaal handelen, maar produceren ook sociale voorkeuren, gedrag, waarheid en rationaliteit. Deze Foucauldiaanse inzichten maken duidelijk dat tragische keuzes onlosmakelijk onderdeel zijn van waardenconflict mediëring. Ze verduidelijken tevens hoe machtsrelaties in sociaalmateriële netwerken toewerken naar een bepaald uitkomst en daarbij andere alternatieve uitkomsten uitsluiten (zie hoofdstuk 6 en 8).

Deze drie theoretische uitgangspunten hebben aanzet gegeven tot de analyse van waardenconflicten mediëring in praktijk, zoals die is gepresenteerd in deze dissertatie. De case studies laten zien dat waardenconflicten niet altijd kunnen worden gemedieerd door waarden commensurabel te maken met procedures of projecten. Integendeel, de cases maken duidelijk dat machtsrelaties en tragische keuzes onvermijdelijk onderdeel zijn van waardenconflict mediëring. Dit betekent niet dat alle pogingen tot waardeconflict mediëring gedoemd zijn te mislukken. Juist de erkenning dat tragische keuzes onvermijdelijk zijn opent mogelijkheden voor een discussie over een prioritering van waarden in plattelandsontwikkeling en -beleid. Zo'n discussie verschaft een legitieme reden om specifiek ruraal landgebruik wel of niet toe te staan. Het belang van de prioritering van waarden t.a.v. ruraal landgebruik onderstreept het argument van Habermas dat een discussie over waarden imperatief is voor de constructie van een normatief kader. Tegelijkertijd is ook duidelijk geworden, met de bespreking van Foucault, dat deze discussies over waarden noodzakelijkerwijs geworteld moeten zijn in specifieke contexten en onafwendbare tragische keuzes met zich mee brengen.

Het ontwikkelen van een benadering voor de constructie van een normatief raamwerk op grond van deze overwegingen opent een nieuwe onderzoeksagenda voor rurale sociologie en planologie[1]. Onderzoek in dat kader kan beginnen waar deze dissertatie eindigt: met de erkenning dat waarden incommensurabiliteit en de daarmee samenhangende tragische keuzes onlosmakelijk verbonden zijn met conflicten over ruraal landgebruik.

Notes

1 Verschillende auteurs hebben pogingen gedaan om een benadering te ontwikkelen die gebaseerd is op deze ideeën. Het centrale idee is dat concrete cases kunnen dienen als leidraad voor een zogenaamde ‘gesitueerde ethiek’ (Flyvbjerg 1991; 1998; 2001). Deze cases worden gebruikt om normatieve principes te definiëren en te ontwikkelen, en kunnen op deze manier bijdragen aan een ‘morele taxonomie’: ‘a detailed and methodological map of morally significant likenesses and differences between cases’ (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988:14). Factoren die hierin moeten worden meegewogen zijn de institutionele en sociaalmateriële context van waardenconflicten. Kennis hierover is een voorwaarde voor een goede analyse van de gegeven situatie en essentieel voor een democratische mediëring van waardenconflicten. Een duidelijke illustratie van hoe gesitueerde kennis en ervaring op een systematische manier kunnen worden gebruikt is de *ToolBox for Integrated Water Resources Management* ontwikkelt door de Global Water Partnership (http://gwpforum.netmasters05.netmasters .nl/en/index.html). De Toolbox is een database die kan worden gebruikt via het internet. Het bevat honderden verschillende internationale cases over watermanagement. Het is vrij toegankelijk en bedoeld om beleidsmakers en watergebruikers te helpen bij het ontwikkelen van projecten voor duurzaam watermanagement. Het doel van de Toolbox is om kennis en ervaring over praktijkvoorbeelden op elkaar te betrekken en toegankelijk te maken. Een ander, voor de hand liggend, voorbeeld waarbij gesitueerde kennis systematisch wordt gebruikt is jurisprudentie. Hierin worden reeds behandelde rechtszaken gebruikt voor de ontwikkeling en aanpassing van rechtssystemen (Verheugt 1994; Thacher 2004).

Curriculum Vitae

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Wiebren Johannes Boonstra was born on the 28th of November 1976 in Donkerbroek. In 1995 he completed his secondary school at the Revius Lyceum in Doorn. In the same year he started the study Rural Development Studies, at the Agricultural University Wageningen. For his minor thesis he worked half a year, in 1998, for the German Technical Cooperation in Malawi, Africa, studying the impact of fisheries in Lake Chilwa on the provision of basic needs at village-level in Mpiranjala. This research resulted in a thesis called *Fishing against poverty*. For his major thesis he worked half a year, in 1999/2000, on several farms around Wagga Wagga, Australia, to study the effect of neo-liberal trade policies on the local variation in farming styles. This resulted in a thesis titled *Farming for the future, a matter of guts and books: a study on agrarian development and farming strategies in Australia* and a published paper. In 2000 he graduated as a rural sociologist. After his study he worked for five months as a researcher at the Centre for Entrepreneurship at the Nyenrode University in Breukelen. From 2001 until 2006 he worked as a PhD student at the Rural Sociology Group at the Wageningen University. Besides this dissertation, his PhD research resulted in publications in scientific journals and books, and in contributions at (inter)national congresses. Furthermore he has held several lectures and seminars at the Wageningen University and the Swedish Agricultural University. Since September 2006 he is employed as researcher at the department of Rural Development and Agroecology at the Swedish Agricultural University

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