

# **The influence of democratic legitimacy on outcomes in governance networks**

Erik Hans Klijn  
Jurian Edelenbos

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## **Abstract**

The literature on (governance) networks and network management in general focuses on the performance of these networks or the way networks are constructed or decision-making or collaborative processes in these networks unfold. Some authors assert that most of the new forms of governance networks have a distinct managerial bias (see, for instance, Pollitt's 2003 discussion of joint up government or Sullivan & Skelcher, 2002). This certainly is evident in the US literature, which, with some exception (see for instance: O Toole, 1997), pays little attention to the democratic character of networks, or to the possible tensions between governance networks and the traditional institutions of representative democracy.

As compared to the American literature, a greater level of attention is paid in the European literature to the tensions that exist between governance networks, institutions of representative democracy and the overarching need to involve stakeholders in decision making. There is however very little empirical work on the democratic nature of these networks although theoretical work on this is growing (Sorensen and Torfing, 2007).

This paper elaborates on the notion of democratic legitimacy and develops a framework for analyzing this phenomenon in governance networks. The paper distinguishes three dimensions of democratic legitimacy drawing upon different theories of democracy. These are accountability (tied to more representational theories of democracies), voice (tied to more participative theories of democracies) and due deliberation (tied to more deliberate theories of democracies). The paper operationalizes each form of democratic legitimacy and then looks how these various forms of democratic legitimacy influence the outcomes in governance networks. We test this with a survey done in the first half of 2010 among respondents in environmental projects/water management projects (n=220). Regression analyses with various forms of outcomes (process or content outcomes) and the forms of democratic legitimacy as independent variables show that democratic legitimacy in general has a significant positive effect on outcomes in governance networks and that more deliberate dimensions of democratic legitimacy have much stronger impact than for instance representational dimensions of democratic legitimacy. The paper also shows a fairly strong correlation between network management strategies and democratic legitimacy. The paper ends with a reflection on the findings for theories of governance networks and network management.

Prof. Dr E.H. Klijn, Department of Public Administration, Erasmus University, The Netherlands.  
Email: [klijn@fsw.eur.nl](mailto:klijn@fsw.eur.nl)

Prof. Dr J. Edelenbos, Department of Public Administration, Erasmus University, The Netherlands.  
Email: [edelenbos@fsw.eur.nl](mailto:edelenbos@fsw.eur.nl)

Department of Public Administration  
Erasmus University Rotterdam  
P.O. Box 1738  
3000 DR Rotterdam  
The Netherlands

## **1. Introduction: democratic legitimacy in governance networks**

Governance and governance networks are popular words in modern public administration research and public administration practice. In many policy documents, certainly in Europe one can find the word governance and even the word networks and the call for new ways to organize public services or decision-making processes. But there is also a growing number of articles and books that have the performance of networks, their complex interactions or the way they are managed as subject of research.

### *Network research in the USA and in Europe*

In that attention we can witness some significant differences between the US based literature on networks and governance and the literature that originates from Europe. Two differences are most striking and that is the way the concept network is conceptualized (and the focus of the research) and the second is the theme of democratic legitimacy. In the US the literature on networks is far more focused on service delivery and policy implementation as can be seen from the literature that deals with health care (Provan et al, 2009), education (Meier and O'Toole, 2007) or other sectors. And the concept network is used mostly (not always) for situations where various organizations are tightly knit together in organizing services. Not surprisingly we find also conceptualizations of structures of networks as centrally managed or not (Provan and Kenis, 2007). In the US literature the concept network is also strongly tied to social network analysis as research method (Provan et al, 2009) although also other methods are used.

In the European literature networks are more used in relation to complex decision-making processes in infrastructure projects, policy sectors (like employment policy, health policy) etc (see Rhodes, 1997; Kickert et al, 1997; Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004; Sorensen and Torfing, 2007). Networks are seen as more or less interdependent sets of actors that are involved in policy making and decision-making about complex policy problems. There is also a wide range of literature that focus on governance networks as more interactive form of policy and decision-making to include citizens and other stakeholders (see Edelenbos, 2005; Marcussen and Torfing, 2007). Thus while the literature on networks in the US concentrates on networks with a relative high density that are involved in the implementation of policy the European literature on networks concentrates more on loosely coupled networks in which policy is made and processed. In Europe the concept network is also strongly tied to the concept governance while this relation in the US is less clear (see Klijn, 2008). This probably has to do with the fact that, roughly speaking, the European literature is more strongly influenced by political science oriented research on policy networks while the US literature is more strongly influenced by the inter-organizational perspective on networks (see for a discussion about these different traditions of network research: Klijn 2008)

It probably because of this difference in flavor of the US and European literature that the US literature has very little attention for the relationship of networks and democracies while this is a prominent subject in Europe (see Sorensen and Torfing, 2005; Klijn and Skelcher, 2007). The US literature has a strong occupation with efficiency (for an exception: O Toole, 1997). But the question how decision-making in governance networks are organized and how they meet democratic legitimacy is a very important question both in a normative sense as in an empirical sense.

*This paper: how does democratic legitimacy influences outcomes in governance processes*

This paper finds itself in the European tradition of networks. Not only because the authors are European but also because we look at complex decision-making processes rather than service implementation. The paper looks at how democratic legitimacy influences the outcomes achieved in governance networks. For that we first need to elaborate the concept democratic legitimacy and the forms it can take. Building on different democracy tradition we distinguish three forms of democratic legitimacy (accountability, voice and due deliberation) that comes from three different strands of literature on democracy (representational democracy, participation democracy and deliberate democracy). We then suggests various hypotheses about how these forms of democratic legitimacy might have influence on outcomes in governance networks (section 2). Section 3 deals with the methodology. To test our hypotheses we used material acquired by a web-based survey among respondents (220 respondents) involved in environmental/spatial projects where water storages or water safety was an important part of the policy problem. We operationalized the three forms of democratic legitimacy with separate items and looked how they related to outcomes and the level of trust in the network. Section 4 presents the main outcomes while in section 5 we offer some conclusions and reflections.

## **2. Governance networks and democracy**

Governance networks can roughly be defined as “more or less stable patterns of social relations between mutual dependent actors, which form around policy program and/or cluster of means and which are formed, maintained and changed through series of games” (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004, pp.69-70). Crucial to the emergence and existence of networks are dependency relations between actors (Hanf and Scharpf, 1978). The resource dependencies around policy problems or policy programs require actors to interact with one another and create more intensive and enduring interactions (Laumann and Knoke, 1987).

Governance networks manifest themselves in concrete policy interactions, which we call policy games, between actors. During these games, the actors attempt to influence policy issues, but they also re-interpret the available information and informal and formal rules that were generated earlier. In short, governance networks can be characterized by a high degree of complexity and dynamics (Agranoff and McGuire, 2003; Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004). That complexity mainly stems from the number of involved actors, the many different places (arena's) where decisions are being taken, and the number of perceptions and especially value conflicts which stem from these. It is not easy to achieve good outcomes in such complex interactions. From earlier research we know that especially the level of trust (Klijn et al, 2010b) and the number of employed network management strategies (Klijn et al 2010a also Meier and O'Toole, 2007; Provan et al, 2009) is very important to achieve good outcomes in networks.

But it is also clear that governance networks show different patterns of decision-making and accountability than is presented in traditional decision-making in which political actors decide on goals and then these goals are implemented. If various societal actors are involved in the formulation of policy goals, as is the case in governance networks, the primary of politics is challenged in one way or another (Klijn and Skelcher, 2007). If one takes the position that decision-making should originate from elected officeholders to require democratic legitimacy there is certainly tension between representational democracy and networks. We can however 'measure' democratic legitimacy of networks with different yardsticks. Only one of the measurements is the way in which elected bodies control the developments that take place within public private partnerships.

*Forms of democratic legitimacy: accountability, voice and due deliberation*

Various writers have emphasized that very different models of democracy exist which also stress different core elements of democracy. MacPherson (1977) sees four different models of democracy, in the history of political philosophy, that stress different core elements of democracy:

- the **utopian model** in which democracy is the will of the people expressed by them. Democracy is the best way to serve the common purpose (by means of participation of individuals in the government) and the best way to develop individuals. Rousseau with his general will of the people but also Jefferson are examples of this model
- the **protective model** in which democracy is mainly understood as a protection of citizens of their governments. Important are institutional features to protect the freedom of individuals and their freedom against the state. Individual votes in this liberal model are an effective expression of the citizens' wishes. James Mill and Jeremy Bentham are the most well known examples of this second model;
- **developmental model**, which stresses participation of citizens as both a good way to organize democracy but also as a way to develop citizens and actively enhance their freedom. John Stuart Mill is the most well known exponent of this model
- **competitive model** in which democracy is a mechanism of decision-making where political leaders compete to gain votes. One of the most prominent authors in this model is of course Schumpeter (1943) who criticized the classical model for holding unrealistic demands on participation and the way citizens are informed. His now famous definition of democracy is "That institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote (Schumpeter, 1943: 269)". This idea of competition is taken further later on by the pluralists (Dahl, 1956, Truman, 1956) who see democracy as a plurality of groups struggling to power and Downs (1956) who presents the image of democracy as a marketplace where voters act rational and choose a political leader and a program, and parties and leader try to maximize votes. Legitimacy in this model is connected to the procedure that is followed (the voting) and the fact that political office holders are accountable and can be sent away in the next election.

If we look at MacPherson's models we actually see two competing ideas, the idea that democracy is an arrangement to reach (efficient) decisions and protect individual freedom and the idea that democracy embodies normative ideas and rules about how we should organize our society. A society where people take part in decisions by active participation and develop themselves and the society by that. He calls the two competing models protective and developmental democracy, a thought that inspired many writers after him like Pateman (1970) and Held (2000).<sup>i</sup>

If we look at more recent models of deliberative democracy (see Dryzek, 2000; Hirst, 2000; Held, 2006) we see that these models add some characteristics especially the open debate among involved stakeholders about solutions (see also Fisher, 2003). The key to deliberative models of democracy is to quote Held: "the transformation of private preferences via a process of deliberation into positions that can withstand public scrutiny and test" (Held, 2006: 237). Essential to most forms of deliberative democracy is that preferences are not fixed, but can change in a debate. Or as Dryzek tells us: "The only condition for authentic deliberation is then the requirement that communication induce reflection upon preferences in non-coercive fashion (Dryzek, 2000: 2)". But then for this deliberation to be successful another kind of core characteristic of democracy is introduced which could be described as openness or at least has

to do with a number of rules and practices that all are connected to the process of discussion, information, plurality of values etc. Deliberative models of democracy stress that, besides the fact that officeholders are accountable and can be replaced (the core of the protective models of democracy) and that democracy is about participation in decisions being made (the core of the developmental models of democracy), democratic legitimacy can come from the characteristics of the process (openness, flow of information, etc) and is characterized by genuine deliberation and argumentation processes. This democracy is not about elected officeholders or by achieving as much voice as possible but about an argumentation process in which actors test arguments and achieve some sort of minimal consensus about solutions.

#### *Sources of democratic legitimacy*

If we look at various models of democracy and try to summarize their core and sources of legitimacy we could say that liberal and competitive models of democracy emphasize the accountability of elected officeholders to others. More idealistic models of democracy tend to emphasize the participation side of democracy: decisions are democratic if they have been achieved in processes of active citizens participation. Deliberative models of democracy add to this the importance of deliberation and the rules of open debate (see Dryzek, 2000). In a sense they are a radicalization of classical rules also emphasized by most models of democracy like fairness (see also Sorenson and Torfing, 2005). But they are on the other hand also more pragmatic (or at least part of the deliberative models are) in that they are more concerned in achieving practical outcomes that are relevant for the involved stakeholders (Dryzek, 2000; Held, 2006)

In sum we could say that democratic legitimacy could come from three sources that of course are related, but which receive different emphasis of different models (see also Skelcher and Sullivan, 2008):

- **Accountability;** In this first source the formal accountability of office holders (is it clear who is accountable) and the procedures to hold them accountable (voting to get them in but even more important to get them out of position, and various rules that protect citizens) are stressed.
- **Voice;** In this source of legitimacy it is not the passive influence that is important but the positive active way in which citizens can participate in concrete decisions and the processes in which they are achieved. In this source of legitimacy the way citizens are really involved is stressed.
- **Due deliberation;** This source of democratic legitimacy is strongly connected to the way the interaction and deliberation process is organized. Democratic legitimacy in this view arises out of good deliberation process, guaranteed by clear and fair procedures and agreement between actors where they share knowledge and explore possible solutions and exchange value judgements.

#### *The relation between democratic legitimacy and governance networks: some assumptions*

Now the question is of course how the presence of certain democratic legitimacy in networks will affect the outcomes of these networks. We already noticed that governance networks involve often quite difficult decision-making with many actors. A high level of trust between actors in the governance network is also good for achieving outcomes as research by Klijn et al (Klijn et al, 2010b) shows..

But networks are also more horizontally coordinated policy structures because of the interdependencies between the actors. So to achieve good outcomes it is important that various actors that have resources or are necessary to achieve outcomes are involved in the decision-making process.

So we may expect that democratic legitimacy in terms of voice and due deliberation that both stress that democratic legitimacy can originate from the involvement of stakeholders or from the deliberation process, have more positive influence than democratic legitimacy in terms of accountability. That would also match the observation of various authors that there is tension between representational democracy as a more vertical form of accountability and governance networks where we would witness more horizontal forms of accountability (see Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000; Edelenbos 2005; Sorensen and Torfing, 2005). On the other hand it is often stressed that the involvement of politicians is important in the way governance networks operate (Sorensen and Torfing, 2005; 2007), although recent research can not confirm this (Edelenbos and Klijn, 2006; Edelenbos et al, 2010).

We may certainly expect voice and especially due deliberation to be positively correlated to trust in the network. We do not expect any positive relation between accountability and trust. This leads us to the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 1: Accountability is not related to network performance*

*Hypothesis 2: Voice is positively related to network performance*

*Hypothesis 3: Due deliberation is positively related to network performance*

*Hypothesis 4: Accountability is not related to trust in networks.*

*Hypothesis 5: Voice is positively related to trust in the networks.*

*Hypothesis 6: Due deliberation is positively related to trust*

### **3. Research methods and data**

For this paper we use data from a web-based survey (Apr. – May 2010) among actors involved in complex water projects in the Netherlands. Besides water management, the projects did include other environmental functions, such as the building of houses and the development of recreational areas.

#### *Respondents and data*

An exhaustive list of people participating in such spatial projects does not exist. Nevertheless, we were able to obtain 874 e-mail addresses of people from our target group, by utilizing the mailing list of 'Living with Water'. This is a knowledge network where practitioners involved in this subject are part of, and that is directed at developing and the sharing knowledge about water management in various areas in the Netherlands. About 200 organizations collaborate in this program, including municipalities, water boards, building contractors and project management organizations. Our respondents thus represent the different organizational backgrounds actors have in networks around complex projects. At the same time, they represent the different positions people have within a water project: our respondents include managers, closely involved participants and even some bystanders. The respondents in our survey form therefore a good sample of the different actors involved in complex projects concerning water management in the Netherlands. A total of 272 questionnaires (31.1%) were returned. After conducting a missing value analysis, 221 respondents were included in the statistical analysis.

The respondents of our survey have on average been involved in complex projects for twelve years. This shows that the respondents are quite experienced in dealing with network governance processes. However, the standard deviation is really high (8,50), which means that large differences exist in the number of years respondents have been involved in complex projects. The majority of our respondents (72,3 percent) are the most active actors in the project, including 35,2 percent who are managing the project and 38,0 percent who participates actively. The other quarter of our respondents consists of people who think along in certain parts of the project (18,5 percent) and bystanders (8,3 percent).

### *Complexity of the projects*

The complexity of the projects and networks of actors around the project is shown in some of the descriptive statistics in table 1. On average about 3 planning activities are combined in the project. However, the standard deviation of 1,5 is quite high here, indicating that in some projects considerably more planning activities are combined than in others. In 92,1 percent of the project 5 or more actors are involved in the project; in 30,1 percent even 20 actors or more are participating. In the networks of participants around the projects, people experience a high degree of dependency on other actors. There are also some differences of opinion between the actors encountered in those networks. Furthermore, unexpected events occur regularly in the networks. Thus, we can indeed conclude that the projects respondents participated in and the networks around those projects are complex in nature.

**Table 1: Characteristics of the projects our respondents (N=221) participated in**

Number of different activities	Mean = 2,84 (sd: 1,5)	Includes water storage, houses, business terrain, environmental development, commercial development, infrastructure (rail and public highways)
Project includes:		
Water storage	95,4 %	
Construction of houses	52,1%	
Experienced dependency	M = 3,95 (sd: 0,90)	5 point Likert scale
Level of conflict	M = 2,93 (sd: 1,09)	5 point Likert scale
Unexpected events	M = 3,37 (sd: 0,91)	5 point Likert scale

In this paper we look at four crucial variables: the outcomes of governance networks, the level of democratic legitimacy as measured in three categories (accountability, voice and due deliberation) and the level of trust in the network.

### *Network performance*

We measured network performance by 12 items that measure achieved outcomes. We build on earlier work we did in this field (see (Edelenbos et al, 2010; Klijn et al, 2010b). A distinction has been made between content outcomes (the innovative character of the project, cost efficiency, etc) and process outcomes (managerial effort, support of the stakeholders involved), a distinction also made by other governance network scholars (see, e.g. Skelcher et al., 2005). This distinction allows including traditional ‘hard’ performance criteria in the analysis, as well as a wide variety of other performance criteria, including stakeholder involvement and democratic anchorage (Klijn and Skelcher, 2007; Sorensen and Torfing, 2007). The items related to democratic anchorage were explicitly aimed at outputs (thus compare the last item of the process items for instance) to distinguish them from the democratic legitimacy items which were aimed to measure involvement during the process. The items are presented in the table below (for more information see Klijn et al, 2010a)

**Table 2: Measurement of network performance**

<b>Content outcomes</b>	<b>Items</b>
1. innovative character	Do you think that innovative ideas are developed during the project
2. integral nature of solution	Do you think that different environmental functions have been connected sufficiently?
3. involvement of actors (content)	Do you think that in general the involved actors have delivered a recognizable contribution to the development of the results?
4. effectiveness solutions	Do you think that the solutions that have been developed really deal with the problems at hand?
5. effectiveness in the future	Do you think that the developed solutions are durable solutions for the future?
6. Relation costs and benefits	Do you think that - in general - the benefits exceed the costs of the cooperation process?
<b>Process outcomes</b>	<b>Items</b>
1. level of management	Do you think that the involved actors have contributed substantively to the management of the project?
2. conflict resolution	Do you think that conflicts and differences of opinion have been solved adequately during the project?
3. deadlocks	Did you witness any disturbing deadlocks during the project?
4. productive use of differences	Do you think that the involved actors have made use of the existing different perspectives and insights (among the actors) in an adequate way with regard to solutions and problems in the project?
5. contact frequency	Do you think that the involved actors had frequently contact with each other during the project?
6. support	Do you think that the results from the project will get the support of the involved actors?

For the variable outcomes used in our analysis we summated the 12 items and divided them by 12 to achieve a more general measurement of the network performance for each respondent on a Likert scale. The Cronbach's Alpha is 0,840. The mean of the scores for network performance is 3,64 (SD = 0,47).

### *Democratic legitimacy*

To measure the three different types of democratic legitimacy we developed two items for the accountability form (already tested in earlier research see Edelenbos et al, 2010) and three new ones for voice and due deliberation. The three items for voice are an indication of involvement of the stakeholders (the first two items) and the availability of information as condition for voice. The items for due deliberation are addressing transparency of the process, the possibilities for debate and the argumentation in the process. Table 3 provides the items, their Cronbachs, mean scores and standard deviation. Only the Cronbach of due deliberation is a bit low but given the low number of items still acceptable.



Table 3: items for democratic legitimacy

accountability	Cronbach: 0.81; , average: 3,56; sd: 0.858
1.	Political institutions (city council, province council) are always good informed about process and progress of the project
2.	Political institutions (city council, province council) are actively involved in this project
voice	Cronbach: 0.71; mean: 3,61; sd: 0,516
1.	There are many different stakeholders involved in the project
2.	The process is well accessible for stakeholders
3.	The information about this projects is well organized
Due deliberation	Cronbach: 0.67; mean: 3,76; sd: 0,626
1.	The decision-making around this project is characterized by a large amount of transparency (insight in the decisions that have been taken)
2.	The process around this project did know many possibilities for debate and discussion
3.	About this project there was a careful and in terms of content good argumentation

### *Trust between network actors*

To measure trust within the network, we used five dimensions derived from business literature (see Sako,1998; Nooteboom, 2002, Klijn et al., 2010b for more information on these dimensions). The five point Likert items are shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Measurement of trust**

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Item</i>
1. Agreement trust	The parties in this project generally live up to the agreements made with each other
2. Benefit of the doubt	The parties in this project give one another the benefit of the doubt
3. Reliability	The parties in this project keep in mind the intentions of the other parties
4. Absence of opportunistic behaviour	Parties do not use the contributions of other actors for their own advantage
5. Goodwill trust	Parties in this project can assume that the intentions of the other parties are good in principle

The mean score on trust is 3,53 (SD = 0,57) on a five point Likert scale, indicating a moderate degree of trust between the actors in the networks. The Cronbach's alpha of the five items was 0,77.

### *Management strategies*

The use of network management strategies is measured using 12 five point Likert items (totally disagree – totally agree). These items are a shortened version of a 16-item pilot scale we developed in previous research (see Klijn et al., 2010a for more information).

**Table 5: Measurement of management strategies**

1. The relevant public groups are involved via the organized forms of negotiation and discussion platforms
2. The relevant private groups are involved via the organized forms of negotiation and discussion platforms
3. The relevant civil action groups are involved via the organized forms of negotiation and discussion

platforms

4. In this project, it has been attempted as much as possible to make different opinions visible and included within the decision making
5. In the collection of information, the emphasis in this project has been upon the development and establishment of common points of departure and information needs
6. There is satisfactory attention in this project on involving external parties who can bring new ideas and solutions
7. The project leaders consult those implementing the project and include them in their decisions. It can be said that decision making occurs collectively
8. The project leaders in this project consider the relationships between parties and persons, what they are based upon, how they have developed and are developing
9. By deadlocks and problems in the project, the management seeks to bring the opposing interests closer together.
10. In the project, explicit agreements are made about the organizational form of cooperation (project groups, steering groups etc.)
11. In the agreements on this project, room has been consciously built in for deviating from the plan, if this is of advantage.
12. The withdrawal of parties from the project has been made possible to protect their interests if necessary.

Every item is scored by the respondents on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). To construct the new variable 'management strategies' we first dichotomize these items, by which the scores 1 till 3 received the new score of 0 and the scores 4 (agree) and 5 (strongly agree) received a score of 1. Subsequently, we summated the scores, resulting in a score per respondent on the number of management strategies which are used in the project. The Cronbach's Alpha of the scale was 0,817.

### *Control variables*

As control variables we used size of the network (measured by a 5 scale category: less than 4 actors, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20 or more) and the issue complexity of the project which we operationalized as the number of different environmental functions

## Empirical results: the impact of forms of democratic legitimacy

To analyze the relations between our main variables we first did a correlation analysis of all the variables included in our hypotheses. The results are shown in table 6.

**Table 6: Correlations between the main variables**

		voice	Due process	Accountability	Network performance	trust	Network management
Voice	Pearson Correlation	1	,605**	,406**	,530**	,233**	,517**
	(2-tailed)		,000	,000	,000	,001	,000
	N	205	205	205	205	205	191
Due deliberation	Pearson Correlation	,605**	1	,308**	,638**	,395**	,570**
	(2-tailed)	,000		,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	205	206	205	206	206	191
Accountability	Pearson Correlation	,406**	,308**	1	,287**	,065	,402**
	(2-tailed)	,000	,000		,000	,353	,000
	N	205	205	206	206	206	191
Network Performance	Pearson Correlation	,530**	,638**	,287**	1	,589**	,547**
	(2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000		,000	,000
	N	205	206	206	208	208	192
trust	Pearson Correlation	,233**	,395**	,065	,589**	1	,396**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	,000	,353	,000		,000
	N	205	206	206	208	212	196
Number Network Management strategies	Pearson Correlation	,517**	,570**	,402**	,547**	,396**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	
	N	191	191	191	192	196	197

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table shows that the main variables have a fairly strong and positive relation to each other. The three forms of democratic legitimacy show positive correlation but the relation between due deliberation and voice is much stronger, confirming our expectation. We see relation between trust and voice and due deliberation but not between trust and accountability which confirms our first hypothesis. Network performance is positively related to all three forms of democratic legitimacy in the table but the relation with accountability is clearly the least strongly. The number of network management is a strong variable that correlate with all the other variables and that confirms earlier research we did (Klijn et al, 2010a, 2010b).

### *The impact of democratic legitimacy on outcomes*

The most important question is of course whether the three forms of democratic legitimacy make any differences for network performance. To test this more in depth we performed a regression analysis with network performance as dependent variable and the three forms of

democratic legitimacy as independent variable. We included the two earlier mentioned control variables: size of the network and issue complexity. The results are presented in table 7.

**Table 7. Results with OLS regression with network performance as dependent variable (N= 196)<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1,814	,162		11,173	,000
Voice	,059	,017	,249	3,525	,001
Due deliberation	,113	,015	,489	7,335	,000
accountability	,020	,030	,040	,682	,496
Size of the network	-,051	,018	-,159	-2,863	,005
Issue complexity	,041	,016	,140	2,589	,010

a. Dependent Variable: network performance Predictors: (Constant), network size, due deliberation, issue complexity, accountability, voice (adjusted R square: 0.4).

We see only significant relations between due deliberation and voice and network performance which confirms the first three hypotheses we made earlier. The relation of due deliberation with network performance is stronger than the relation of voice with network performance. We also see that the control variable size matters to performance. If the network is larger there is a lower performance (but the B is much lower than that of voice and due deliberation).

We also performed the same regression with the content items only to look if the inclusion of some of the democratic anchorage items in the process items biased the analysis. But when we look at that regression we find a similar pattern: accountability is not significant (0.745) while voice (0.032) and due process (0.000) are significant (explained variance: 0.377).

#### *Democratic legitimacy and trust: the strength of due deliberation*

We also want to know what the impact is of the various forms of democratic legitimacy on the level of trust in the network. We saw that in the correlation table 6 that due deliberation and voice were significant but the regression analysis shows that only due deliberation is significantly related to trust. The overall explained variance of this model (0.13) is not very high and much lower than the previous regression with network performance as dependent variable. This means we can accept hypothesis 4 and 6 but have to reject hypothesis 5 (voice has positive impact on trust). Thus trust does not seem to be improved by including more stakeholders but is enhanced by good argumentation processes and transparency. Since voice does have significant impact on network performance we can conclude that this influence goes directly to performance and does not have an indirect effect on performance by means of enhancing trust. This is probably the explanation why due deliberation does have a greater impact on performance since contrary to voice it does have this indirect effect on network performance via trust.

**Table 8 results of OLS regression analysis with trust as dependent variable (N=196)<sup>a</sup>**

Mdel	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		

1	(Constant)	2,299	,272		8,450	,000
	voice	,005	,028	,016	,183	,855
	Due deliberation	,121	,026	,397	4,696	,000
	accountability	-,043	,050	-,063	-,854	,394
	Size of network	-,003	,030	-,008	-,118	,906
	Issue complexity	,006	,026	,014	,209	,835

a. Dependent Variable: trust (adjusted R square: 0.13)

### *And network management*

If we look at the impact of network management we see that each of the forms of democratic legitimacy is positively influenced by our variable number of strategies which measures the variety of network management strategies employed (see regressions in appendix). This means that empirically speaking democratic legitimacy in every way as measured as political involvement, as stakeholder involvement and as good deliberation process is fostered and improved by good network management. This is interesting because there are several authors that complain that there is too much attention for efficiency and management in the network literature (see Skelcher et al, 2005). Now this may be true, and certainly hold to an important extent for the US literature on networks, but our findings seem to point that intensive and varied network management is also good for democratic legitimacy. We come back to this point in the conclusion.

## **6. Conclusions and reflections**

Governance networks should be effective (and efficient) to solve the problems where they are constructed for or where they emerge around. But it is also important that they show democratic legitimacy. We distinguished various forms of democratic legitimacy. We made a distinction between accountability, which stresses the involvement of political elected bodies in governance processes in networks, voice, that stress the involvement of various stakeholders and due deliberation, that stresses the quality of the argumentation process. We assumed that the two last forms would have more beneficial effects on network performance than accountability and this turned out to be the case.

Our analysis, based on a web based survey among people involved in complex governance process in environmental projects, shows that indeed accountability has no significant effect on network performance while both voice and due process do have a significant effect. Due process however shows a stronger relation with network performance. This is probably because it is more closely related to the negotiated character of governance networks.

Only due deliberation had significant impact on trust. This confirms earlier research we did that trust and stakeholder involvement seem to be two separate characteristics of governance processes in networks that have separate influence on network performance but are not related to each other. Thus one can involve more stakeholders and thus enhance the voice dimension of democratic legitimacy but trust as facilitating factor for network performance still have to be achieved.

And that has to be achieved by active and intensive network management which also enhances all the three forms of democratic legitimacy. As we already observed this seems to

point that the contradiction that is made between some of the literature between managerial orientation of the one hand and democratic orientation on the other hand does not exist. But we should probably be a bit careful with this conclusion. This research is done in Europe, to be more precisely in The Netherlands where a consensual political and administrative culture exists in which it is fairly 'normal' to bargain and thus management and politics are maybe more strongly connected. And the research is done in a field, environmental decision-making, which are typically decision-making processes about difficult value problems and involve value conflicts between actors. Thus managerial actions also is aimed at achieving interesting solutions for the involved actors and bringing actors together. In that situation it is not surprising that managerial actions contribute to the democratic legitimacy forms as due deliberation and voice.

It may be that in networks which are more aimed at solely implementing public services that are tendered in an earlier phase, as is the case in many US networks, the managerial orientation is much stronger than the democratic orientation. This really requires more international comparative research with the same theoretical framework and empirical instruments. And that is something public administration scholars should certainly be working on the next decade.

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## Appendix

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	7,931	,413		19,204
	Size of the network	,313	,081	,239	3,843
	Issue complexity	-,017	,075	-,014	-,230
	Number of network management strategies	,313	,039	,493	8,049

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7,931	,413		19,204	,000
	Size of the network	,313	,081	,239	3,843	,000
	Issue complexity	-,017	,075	-,014	-,230	,818
	Number of network management strategies	,313	,039	,493	8,049	,000

a. Dependent Variable: voicenew

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7,853	,428		18,353	,000
	Size of the network	,111	,084	,082	1,313	,191
	Issue complexity	-,069	,078	-,054	-,883	,378
	Number of network management strategies	,371	,040	,563	9,213	,000

a. Dependent Variable: dueprocess

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2,279	,216		10,528	,000
	Size of the network	,053	,043	,086	1,253	,212
	Issue complexity	,070	,039	,121	1,787	,076
	Number of network management strategies	,118	,020	,391	5,811	,000

a. Dependent Variable: accountability

<sup>i</sup> Held tells that his models are inspired by the work of MacPhersen and he also uses the words protective and developmental democracy although he uses the ideas in a different way (see Held, 2006: 6)