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Deliberative group dynamics: power, status and affect in interactive policy making

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English

Many proponents of interactive policy making view citizen consultations as a 'rational deliberation between equals'. Power, authority, rhetoric and emotions are considered to be obstructive factors. In this article it is argued that interactive policy settings are characterised by status and authority hierarchies and affect dynamics. First, two types of deliberative bodies are introduced: citizen forums and stakeholder committees. Next, eight possible power and emotion dynamics are distinguished, including problems maintaining facilitative authority, trust-building work of experts, occurrence of charisma, persisting fear and distrust, hope turning into disappointment, and increasing mutual recognition. The last sections examine in which respects these dynamics occur in the two types of deliberative organisation.

Français

De nombreux partisans de décisions politiques interactives considèrent les consultations des citoyens comme des délibérations rationnelles entre égaux. Le pouvoir, l'autorité, la rhétorique et les émotions sont considérés comme des facteurs obstructionnistes. Cet article soutient que le contexte de politique interactive se caractérise par des hiérarchies de statuts et d'autorité qui en affectent la dynamique. Tout d'abord, on présente deux types d'organismes délibérants: les forums de citoyens et les comités de parties prenantes. Ensuite, on distingue huit dynamiques possibles de pouvoir et d'émotions. On cite les problèmes rencontrés dans le maintien de l'autorité facilitatrice, les efforts des experts pour construire un climat de confiance, l'occurrence de charisme, la persistance de la crainte et de la méfiance, la transformation de l'espoir en déception, la reconnaissance mutuelle grandissante. Les derniers paragraphes examinent à quels égards ces dynamiques se rencontrent dans les deux types d'organisations délibérantes.

Español

Muchos defensores de la interactiva elaboración de la política a seguir ven las consultas a ciudadanos como una "deliberación racional entre iguales". El poder, la autoridad, la retórica y las emociones se consideran como factores obstructivos. En este artículo se argumenta que los marcos de la política interactiva se caracterizan por sus estatus y jerarquías de autoridad y afecta a las dinámicas. Primero, se introducen dos tipos de cuerpos de deliberación: foros de ciudadanos y comités participativos. Luego, se distinguen ocho posibles poderes y emociones dinámicas, incluyendo los problemas que mantienen autoridad favorecida, trabajo de construcción fiduciario de expertos, suceso de carisma, persistente temor y desconfianza, esperanzas que acaban en decepciones, y un aumento de reconocimiento mutuo. En las últimas secciones se examina en qué respeto ocurren estas dinámicas en los dos tipos de organizaciones deliberativas.

Key words: deliberation • interactive policy making • participation • power and emotion dynamics

Introduction

Contemporary literature on interactive policy making is often characterised by a methodological and apolitical jargon dominated by procedural requirements, strategic methods and models. The purpose of this article is to focus on the more informal aspects of interactive policy making – communication with participants, (latent) power and status processes, relevant emotions and (frustrated) expectations of the participants.

Interactive policy making refers to a 'family' of non-codified discursive political practices, containing many variants and movements. According to exponents of deliberative democracy, interactive policy making should ideally meet the demands of a dialogue unimpeded by power, as set forth by Habermas and other political philosophers (Elster, 1998). Dialogue is characterised in terms of an open discussion that functions as an ideal procedure leading to rational decision making. It is assumed that the reciprocal exchange of arguments tends to eliminate irrational and self-regarding preferences. Power, authority, emotions and rhetorical statements are generally viewed as obstructive, hindering the formation of rational agreements.

The presuppositions of equality and rationality that are dominant in theories of deliberative democracy (Cohen, 1997; Saward, 2001) divert the attention away from the informal, rowdy and turbulent forms of political communication in 'messy' interactive projects. Emotions such as anger and fear do continue to resurface, while the identity of participants is often placed under pressure. Dominant speakers drift to the foreground and are perceived as being charismatic or attractive. Group discussions therefore can be specified as informal hierarchies of status with corresponding rhetorical and emotional forms of communication.[1]

This article builds on some topics and questions raised by Simon Thompson and Paul Hoggett in a previous article in this journal (Thompson and Hoggett, 2001). Although their analysis is directed at citizen juries – which are different in form and content from the interactive projects described in this article – the emotional patterns and leadership styles they describe generally also emerge in the deliberative bodies that are discussed in this article. They argue convincingly that emotions and leadership cannot be excluded from public deliberation and point out that it is more fruitful to understand these 'non-rational' group dynamics in order to improve the organisational setting and to develop realistic expectations.[2]

In this article I will sketch the contours of a theoretical model that classifies power, authority, status and affect dynamics.[3] The diverging insights brought together are primarily taken from organisational, micro-sociological and socio-psychological studies. At the same time I refer to many findings of empirical studies and evaluations of Dutch interactive projects, including my own research findings.[4] The main conclusions are based on secondary literature. Below, I will first focus on two types of deliberative organisations: citizen forums and stakeholder committees respectively. Next I will construct a theoretical frame of eight separate power and emotion dynamics. In the last section I will deal with the question of how these eight dynamics occur during interactive projects. Which forms and contours do these dynamics have in citizen forums and stakeholder committees?

Two types of deliberative bodies

All deliberative bodies seem to vary in their ambition, scope and concrete aims. There are considerable differences in set-up, the involved actors and the results. Deliberative meetings have multi-faceted purposes, and have an inherently open-ended nature. They may produce conflict or, conversely, common ground. The projects depend on apparent coincidences: an active resident organisation or someone who does pioneering work being present, coalitions with key figures, engagement and communicative abilities of the authorities involved. In fact there is no fixed pattern in which deliberative projects develop. Participants are often taken by surprise, for instance when funds are not forthcoming or councillors resign.

Common to all interactive projects is the deliberative component: the participants are encouraged to discuss and challenge the information provided and consider each other's views before making a final decision or recommendation for action. Deliberation is often described as a collective conversation among a group of co-equals aiming at reaching some joint view on some issues of common concern (Elster, 1998).

According to Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright (2003), deliberative policy making can be usefully grouped in two general categories: first reforms that attempt a more general restructuring of democratic decision making, without relevant preceding conflicts. Second, reforms that primarily address failures of specific administrative and regulatory agencies; they attempt to remedy policies by deploying citizen participation as a tool to enhance effectiveness. Below I will build on this distinction and introduce two types of deliberative bodies. The main features of these types are derived from Dutch interactive practices. The first I will term 'citizen forums', the second, 'stakeholder committees'.

Both types of deliberation differ in terms of size, methods and goals. Citizen forums are open to everybody and aim to stimulate participation. Citizens are supposed to play an active role, to cooperate and to develop a coherent (future) vision or plan for a district or city. Authorities have a facilitating role; civil servants should assist citizens. Compared with citizen forums, stakeholder committees are smaller and have a more quasi-public and covert nature. Deliberation is reserved for the relevant involved parties. The participants of stakeholder committees are recruited by the organising team (members of an engaged consultancy firm or civil servants). In many respects these committees resemble neo-corporatist consultations, but they provide opportunities for non-organised citizens to participate. Moreover, the informal and ad hoc form of policy making deviates from corporatism. In contrast, in citizen forums the decision to participate in discourse activities lies with individual members themselves.

Neither type is as representative or inclusive as a citizens' jury (Smith and Wales, 2000). In these experiments a small subset of citizens is selected randomly to represent all citizens. Ned Crosby, the founder of citizens' juries, recommends selection through a quota system including demographics such as age, gender, education and race (Crosby, 1995). Selection methods such as contacting arbitrarily chosen citizens by phone – employed in the larger deliberative polls – may help to

minimise non-response and strengthen inclusiveness. In that way these projects systematically try to include every voice and perspective (Fishkin, 1995).

Stakeholder committees do not aim to represent the interests of all parties, although supervisors and civil servants watch over the interests of third parties. In citizen forums the principle of self-selection may lead to the exclusion of certain types of knowledge and experience. On the other hand, self-selection ensures that interested and civic-minded citizens show up. The participants are free to bring in options and plans themselves, whereas citizens' juries and deliberative polling formats are far more rule bound ('this issue will be discussed in this way').

These deliberative types cannot be regarded as experiments in direct democracy. They are not combined with voting procedures. In fact, these projects are top-down initiatives from local authorities or councils. The final decision-making authority remains in the hands of local administrators or councillors. This is not to say that the end results of long-term interactive projects can be easily disregarded or put aside. That would arouse distrust and reduce the legitimacy of local politics. The two types are discussed in more detail below, covering Dutch interactive practices.

Citizen forums

Many citizen forums are implemented by the Institute for Public and Politics (IPP). The IPP projects are often called 'stadsgesprekken' (urban debates) in which 'stadsvisies' (town visions) are developed (Akkerman, 2001; Monnikhof and Edelenbos, 2001). The IPP forums aim to start a learning process: participants are not simply spokespersons representing the interests of their group, but try to correct and reconsider different points of views. The forums are often presented as big and festive public meetings that are announced in local newspapers. Attendance is open to everyone, and anyone may take part in developing and discussing future plans. The forums attract on average 80 to 120 people. Sometimes 400 citizens show up at the start conference. Normally the IPP tries to reduce that number by portraying the coming meetings, including workshops and ateliers, as burdensome. The discussion and plan formation is conducted in smaller 'break out' groups. The project ends with the presentation of a written document that contains the most relevant 'decision points' – in fact a list of various and often opposing visions and plans.

These forums – which have some similarities with deliberative projects in the US described by Button and Mattson (1999) and Ryfe (2002) – allow citizens and groups to self-select themselves. Although this method attracts motivated citizens, self-selection is problematic because it tends to work in favour of a 'participation elite', a group of highly educated regular participants (Akkerman, 2001; van Stokkom, 2003). Alongside this elite, many curious citizens attend who have relatively little knowledge about zoning schemes and other expert issues but want to get informed. Citizen forums are focused on the strategic development of future plans or a general restructuring of city policies, not on specific, possibly negative, details of such plans as these may be harder to gauge initially. That makes the discussions relatively free of obligations and less strained than discussions about

concrete persistent problems. Planning issues are generally approached as a commonly held problem, which allows collective exploring and visioning. Hence there is ample room for understanding the viewpoints of others and stimulating creative proposals.

Stakeholder committees

Dutch stakeholder committees are employed in the context of concrete urban renewal projects, such as the restructuring of a park or square, the restructuring of a shopping area or an entertainment district or the redesign of a particular road. To these committees – often called 'kwaliteitskringen' (quality circles) – open-minded citizens are invited, persons who are not narrowly preoccupied with interest groups. The organisers favour trustworthy and safe conversation partners who speak the same language as local administrators and officers. In fact a mix of people with different interests – community, business, health, conservation and education – is recruited.

A committee contains approximately 10 to 15 persons. Often these projects are closed with a covenant, containing the obligations for the partners (Tops et al, 1996, 1999; Tops, 1999). As regards status and form these committees resemble the advisory boards and citizen advisory groups in Britain, the US and Canada (Petts, 1999; Beierle and Konisky, 2000; Barnes, 2003).

Although there is not unrestricted access to these organisations, the committees have a deliberative nature: participants have to offer 'public reasons' for their views and are expected to participate over a long haul in jointly exploring and reassessing solutions to local problems. The parties are expected to refrain from opportunistically pressing their interests even when power allows them to do so. The underlying idea is that common ground unfolds as parties listen to and argue about each other's proposals (see Hoekema et al, 1998; Tops, 1999).

Compared with citizen forums the participants have more professional competence, in particular knowledge and insight into the failings of previous policies. Policy talk tends to dominate these practices. In some ways, stakeholder committees tackle old conflicts with new methods, adding local 'experts' in an informal setting. The authorities hope to reach legitimate outcomes for these conflicts, many of them having a persistent or urgent nature (such as locating a suitable site for waste disposal).

Stakeholder committees represent a middle ground between 'private' negotiations and 'public' citizen forums, involving cooperative stakeholders who are willing to come to an agreement. Stakeholder encounters do not depend on fixed, split-the-difference bargaining. Nevertheless, the well-informed citizens and representatives who participate are often experienced at being in the opposition and usually do not hesitate to express their interests. Nevertheless, stakeholder committees do recruit representatives who are interested in learning and maybe altering their point of view. Taking an adversarial stance is discouraged.[5]

So far two types of interactive policy making have been distinguished. While citizen forums are designed to discuss future urban planning, stakeholder committees are designed to deliver co-productive resolutions for specific policy problems. Each

Table 1: Two types of deliberative bodies; some characteristics

	Citizen forums	Stakeholder committees
Characteristics		
Urgency	+/–	++
Confrontations	–	+
Strategic acting	+/–	+
Publicity	+ +	+/–
Inclusion	+/–	– –

of them is contingent on different presuppositions and premises that always converge and intersect in practice. Table 1 illustrates the most important differences between the two. The plus and minus signs indicate the assumed importance of each characteristic.

The modelled stakeholder committees and citizen forums are ideal types. Many deliberative bodies may not fall squarely into either type, but instead embrace a feature-mix of both types. Nevertheless, the typology is a useful device that allows analysis of the differences among interactive meetings.

Both kinds of deliberative organisations have their own characteristic power and emotion dynamics, which I will discuss in the final section of the article. First I want to identify and classify eight relevant group patterns and dynamics.

Relevant power dynamics

In fact it is very difficult to separate power dynamics from emotion dynamics when looking at groups – both are interconnected. The relationship between affect patterns and power hierarchies has been studied at length in task-group research. Although the interaction in task groups – temporary groups consisting of unknown persons – is relatively uncomplicated compared with long-term deliberative group meetings, some basic patterns seem to recur in these meetings. Ridgeway (1994) points out that task groups have an informal hierarchy, which determines the patterns of prestige, dominance and influence in the group and creates performance expectations – the expected contributions from group members to the discussion. Higher status members, in terms of knowledge and ability as well as in terms of external status factors (race, gender, occupation and so on), are expected to produce more valuable contributions than members with a lower status. The emotions that are experienced during the debate are conditional on these status relations.[6]

Ridgeway points out that after heated debates or persisting conflicts and during the episodes of status struggle that follow, rivalling (subgroup) bonds are forged. Certain affective characteristics are ascribed to particular individuals ('she is uncooperative' or 'he is insensitive'). A polarised atmosphere develops, in which members develop either sympathy or antipathy for each other. However, this negative socio-emotional behaviour is generally quickly corrected and defused, often by group leaders and others with strong interests in the basic principles and goals of the project. In this way 'emotion work' is done (Hochschild, 1983): realigning the emotions to the prevailing agreements and project ideals.

Shelly (1994; Shelly and Webster, 1997) mentions the possibility that emotion work is carried out by informal socio-emotional leaders who drift to the surface of every large discussion group. These persons are considered to be 'nice', 'relaxed' or 'involved'. Participants are generally attracted to them. Shelly distinguishes three status hierarchies, respectively based on positional status (group leaders or representatives), competence status and 'liking'. A participant can take on different positions in the respective hierarchies. In that way someone can have a high position, a project manager for instance, but at the same time be disliked. So the hierarchies can be incongruous: for instance, the distributions of competence and likeableness do not overlap. Thus a shortage of competence can in part be compensated by socio-emotional qualities. In other words, the power and prestige differences within the group can be reduced.

Although a complicated issue, it can be assumed that incongruity does play a role in interactive projects. For instance, experts may demonstrate a low emotional involvement in the project or committed participants, irrespective of their actual contribution to the discussion, are valued for their attempts in keeping the group together. But there are cases in which formal, expert and 'liking' positions merge, for instance when the project manager is said not only to be competent but also likeable.

The status hierarchies of formal position, expertise and socio-emotional authority that Shelly found to be present in task-groups can also be recognised in deliberative projects. The following sections describe the parameters of three dynamics closely related to these hierarchies. I will concentrate respectively on the facilitating authority by project managers or moderators, the need for experts to gain trust and the possible occurrence of charismatic authority. In addition to this, another dynamic deserves attention: how participants deal with strategic power.

Strategic use of power

Deliberation aims to keep strategic power outside the parameters of the proceedings. After all, it is working towards mutual understanding that is considered to be the main mechanism of communication. Participants will not quickly revert to explicit strategic use of power, for example by threatening legal action – that would put them out of action. Nor can they overtly display authoritative knowledge. Not only would this lead to irritation, rigid discussions and a formalisation between the parties, it could paradoxically also bring about a loss of status. After all, in a democratic setting one ought to satisfy the demands of open and unrestrained behaviour (see Mastenbroek, 1998). Nevertheless, representatives from local authorities, business or other parties with vested interests are in many respects forced to defend the interests of their organisation, which may give them a reputation of 'being uncooperative'.

In addition, latent forms of strategic power will always play a part in the proceedings. Implicit use of strategic power often expresses itself as rhetoric. For instance, exaggerating one's expertise or knowledge and putting pressure on opponents are inherent linguistic strategies. The power these elicit often surfaces surreptitiously, for instance in avoiding answering questions, demanding to see

proof for certain assertions, lengthy interrogations, etc (Weigand, 2001). However, the explicit strategic repertoire of negotiation – simulating power you haven't got; not complying with the opposition's requests; concealing one's true purposes; hiding behind associates or external support – is kept outside the debate because it undermines the principles of deliberation (Mastenbroek, 1998).

Project managers maintaining control

Managers hired to run a project usually have a considerable influence on the boundaries, composition and agenda of the project. During the early meetings they will tend to display their knowledge of the issues under discussion. They have a good chance of gaining authority right from the beginning, at least when the preconditions are clear and the rules fair; after all, they stress democratic procedures and encourage participants to contribute actively (Tyler, 1997). But there are factors that can reduce their influence. First their conduct may have shortcomings: for instance when they are seen as too interfering or too passive. Second, complicating factors such as multiple management levels, uncooperative local authorities, and 'inopportune' laws and regulations may emerge. Due to this it may be difficult to adhere to the basic premises set out at the start. Uncertainty may creep into the proceedings, undermining the authority of the facilitators. Furthermore, the role of project managers, especially when taken on by a civil servant, is often complicated by a double loyalty: do they have to conform to the authorities or to the participating citizens? This conflict of interests may also lessen their influence. Finally, civil servants who take on the role of project manager often tend to hem in the discussion process, trying to prevent the process from derailing and the council losing face. In many cases inflexible project managers who fall back on their position of authority – authority derived from rules or regulations – will disappoint. They will lose their grip on the continual tug of war over procedures and competence issues that seem to occur in any democratic organisation.

Experts gaining trust

Participants who are confronted with experts such as legal advisers, technical experts and planners are initially sceptical and cautious. Experts affiliated to vested interests will, during the initial phases of the project, experience a 'fiduciary disadvantage' and will have to gain trust. In the democratic context of interactive policy making they will try to take on a helpful role, by volunteering specific information (for instance offering studies or reports). Experts cannot afford to fall back on positional authority ("I know"; "Our advice ought to be followed"). It is more likely that they use questions and comments to formulate convincing answers and thereby increase their authority. When experts do meet strong opposition, especially from their colleagues, and keep on running into trouble, they frequently escape into abstract and incomprehensible jargon (Amy, 1987; Warren, 1996).

Often experts exert a considerable influence on the course of the discussion, especially when sufficient contest is lacking or when coalitions of like-minded

experts arise. Many experts tend to assert themselves through all kinds of subtle power strategies, for example by hiding behind researchers or politicians. As a rule civil servant experts have little sympathy for the involvement of non-experts and consider 'wild' innovative plans as a threat to the bureaucratic status quo. 'Traditional' civil servants are far less committed to the interactive project than to their own work and career. By and large they keep to the well-trodden path of procedures, steer towards conventional political goals and have little interest in significant change. Whenever change is encouraged, this is often incremental and within the boundaries of the status quo.

Occurrence of charisma

During informal and ad hoc projects – as opposed to bureaucratic institutions – participants' personal skills and qualities will play a larger role. Deliberative projects have a flexible structure and little regulation and take place in informal social contexts in which participants are expected to explore chances and opportunities. The goals of the project are often ambiguous or roughly formulated and there is a need to reorient oneself. This context allows personal forms of trust to flourish and provides space for new, creative visions to come to the fore. It is also a context in which charismatic attitudes may evolve.[7]

Identification with charismatic persons is primarily based on their attractiveness. Participants identify with their style, the manner in which they speak, their warmth or with something they wish to emulate. These socio-emotional leaders are perceived as socially apt and always being 'around'.[8] They also have the ability to articulate clearly why the group should take on innovating viewpoints. Charismatic people offer inspiration, raise expectations and suggest that success is within reach. Using idiosyncratic character traits such as non-conformism or creative language lends credibility and viability to their ideas. The competence of a charismatic person therefore relies on an ability to assess which ideas are attractive at a particular point and which ideas have a chance of success, rather than on the ability to exploit specific or unique knowledge (Shamir et al, 1993; Conger and Kanungo, 1998).

It is difficult to predict who will turn out to be charismatic players during deliberative meetings. Sometimes planners, design professionals, artists or local entrepreneurs tend to establish themselves as attractive and inspired minds with which one can identify.

Relevant emotion dynamics

In this section I will outline the more prominent emotion dynamics that occur during interactive projects. The two most recurrent basic emotions subjected to analyses in literature dealing with negotiation are anger and fear. The frequency with which anger and fear crop up during group discussions justifies this attention to some extent. But it also means that inadvertently other emotions, such as hope and disappointment, which are no less relevant, are ignored.

Research into the emotion dynamics of negotiation is concerned mainly with

describing a number of stages, such as opening moves, positioning, problem solving and endgame (see Pruitt and Rubin, 1986; Morris and Keltner, 2000). Some of these studies offer valuable insights into the relationship between affects and informal power, and in particular how negative emotions like anger and contempt influence this relationship. Yet when it comes to studying deliberative projects this approach proves to be less successful as these projects consist of several successive meetings spread out over a longer period of time. The stages intersect and cross each other as alternating participants contribute to the debate.

The patterns of emotion linked to long-term projects can 'harden' into attitudes based on intellectual (secondary) emotions such as distrust, hope or satisfaction.[9] Within this extenuated, often collectively experienced pattern of emotions, radical changes may occur that alter the course of the interactive project. During the course of the project participants may lend a different meaning to their collective efforts and experience the atmosphere of the discussion differently. Some may deem the process a failure, giving the upper hand to emotions of aversion or disappointment.

The following categorisation is based on four long-term emotion dynamics.[10] The first two are anticipatory emotional patterns, where expectations are based on preceding events and developments: on the one hand, hope and on the other, fear/distrust (often expressed in a 'not in my backyard' language). These dynamics occur, for example, when citizens expect that a breakthrough in tackling a problem is possible, or on the contrary when they feel that authorities once again make unacceptable decisions. Another dynamic is related to anger/indignation, together with its more long-term affect variants, in particular rancour, often accompanied by comparisons with reference groups. The last dynamic consists of enjoyment and – its concrete version – satisfaction, emotions which for example are felt when creative input is rewarding and promising. This group dynamic arouses emotional energy and often coincides with a process of mutual recognition (Collins, 2004).

It is assumed that some of the features of these four emotion groups are already present at the outset of the deliberation. Many participants are motivated by negative emotions, whether these are from the anger/indignation group or the fear/distrust group. Similarly, in another context participants may nurture hope and positive expectations. If the process develops along positive lines anger, fear and other inhibiting emotions may be overcome during the course of the project. Incomprehension and cynicism give way to openness and trust. There is also a chance that both groups of negative emotions persist and frustrate the debate at subsequent meetings. If experiences in due course do not correspond to the originally high expectations, optimism and hope will wither into disappointment. Complicated projects and lengthy, exhausting deliberations often fail to meet these high expectations. Finally, parties can – often after a period of conflict in which viewpoints are necessarily revised – find some middle ground, leading to recognition and even identification. The atmosphere of the debate becomes one of satisfaction and a feeling of accomplishment. The above categorisation is further elaborated in the four group dynamics set out below.

Initial anger and indignation

The beginning of a negotiation is often accompanied by bias, stereotyping, anger and indignation, ushered into the arena due to dissatisfaction with a failing public policy, or preceding incidents or conflicts. The emotions involved fortify existing views and undermine the susceptibility to other ideas. When convictions are based on already strong value judgements, participants will often bring hostility and cynicism into the forum. The emotion dynamic of indignation may lead to flagrant accusations, effectively silencing other participants. Indignation can also play a latent if more persistent role, for example when parties believe that their viewpoints are not taken seriously (van Stokkom, 2002). Anger and indignation may also develop in the course of the deliberation process. In particular, unfair decisions and sudden changes to the procedures quickly arouse anger (Tyler, 1997; Harlos and Pinder, 2000). Anger is caused by many factors: the violation of codes of conduct or indifference, but also factors such as asking too much of participants or experts transgressing their own field of competence (Adler et al, 1998).

Persistent fear and distrust

Fear, insecurity and suspicion are inhibiting emotions that obstruct open debate. Just like anger, fear can come into play even before the actual debate has started, particularly when problems and conflicts preceded the interactive project. Participants may tend to avoid risk-taking behaviour and take no initiative; they may also overemphasise threatening proposals and protect their own viewpoints (the Nimby-syndrome). Others simply fear confrontation, impeding further exploration and hampering listening to and learning from the experiences of others. Unfamiliarity with dominant players such as local politicians or developers may play a role. Fear can be associated with many different factors: the confrontation with aggressive or powerful opponents, or the expectation that the outcome of the negotiations will bring disadvantages. It is remarkable how tenacious feelings of fear can be. Repeated encounters with managers who are perceived as being unfair or unjust can lead to chronic stress and insecurity (Adler et al, 1998; Harlos and Pinder, 2000).[11]

Hope turning into disappointment

Deliberative projects often create high expectations that significantly exceed the possibilities achievable within local policies. Partaking in the decision-making process puts participants under the impression that they will also be included in other decisions, and that participation will expand to include a broader spectrum of decisions (Yukl, 1981). Many participants gradually come to believe that administrators fail to appreciate the value of their input and have established false hopes.[12] Communication also tends to be a one-way street. Deliberative meetings can at times reinforce feelings of distrust against the authorities, particularly when participants have been deluded into believing that they will be part of the decision-

making process, or when administrators do not take the outcome at the end of the process seriously.

Another problem – characteristic of organisations reliant on voluntary input – is the phenomenon of over-promising. By persuading people to invest time and effort in a project, organisers create the suggestion that big things are about to happen. But the truth of the matter is that the majority of interactive projects end up in an uphill struggle resulting in difficult compromises from which the original aspects of the proposals have been chipped away. Often the reasons to reform are barely recognisable. A lengthy process can also be frustrating: the expectation of quick and tangible results has dwindled away.

Increasing mutual recognition

Viewpoints can change during the course of the debate: participants can start to reconsider their own concerns, discover new ones or focus their attention on shared experiences. They appreciate hitherto unrecognised values and new shared patterns of meaning may emerge (Hajer, 2003, 2005). Rapprochement or mutual recognition is by no means an easy process; it can be the hard-earned outcome of a power struggle prior to or during deliberative meetings. The realisation of impending loss or unfeasibility of one's own proposals will shift aspects of identity into new areas and modify them. It leads to self-analysis and to shifting interests and activities, for example searching for new activities, different contacts and sympathisers (Maier, 2001). This shift of identity is accompanied by an at times painful process of rejection of hitherto valued attitudes, goals or norms and a reassessment based on new problem contexts.

Power and emotion dynamics in two types of deliberative bodies

The eight dynamics so far distinguished are ideal typical constructions. The distinguishing features of each dynamic are classified and magnified, so that the mutual differences become more obvious. In reality, concrete projects are characterised by combinations of certain features of the eight dymamics.

The two deliberative bodies that were described earlier – citizen forums and stakeholder committees – display distinctive power and emotion dynamics. Based on secondary literature and my own research findings, I will now single out several relevant differences.

Citizen forums

Dutch citizen forums do not seem to suffer from preliminary conditions characterised by negative emotional patterns. The projects are not burdened with outcomes of previous political disputes. The outset is optimistic and the participants

in the initial stages are more or less committed. Conflicts, tensions and frustrations do not surface at this point but tend to develop during the course of the process.

There seem to be two prominent group dynamics at work during citizen forums. First, experts gaining trust, especially politicians who play a helpful role by clarifying plans and future scenario options. And second, hope turning into disappointment, when it becomes clear that many proposals prove to be unattainable or the local administration does not comply with them. Often these dynamics are incompatible.

Experts – planners, civic engineers, ecologists – play a strong supportive role: they are expected to deliver helpful and impartial input. Their contribution is highly valued by the lay participants. They are expressing their views in front of an audience that usually has no difficulty in leaving discussions to experts. Of course there are resisting voices, but in the observed IPP projects the moderator and some committed participants usually suppress adversarial behaviour. In that sense, 'emotion work' regularly smoothes out conflicts. The language of 'together' and 'everybody's interest' dominates.

Citizens are motivated to gain information to understand different perspectives and to learn about future plans and options. This learning motive is often much more important than political motivation to change policies or to realise advantageous options (see also Conover et al, 2002). Despite many attempts to block hierarchical discursive relations between officials and citizens, a dynamic of deference sets in. Button and Mattson, in their evaluation of some deliberative projects in the US, exemplify this: "Although citizens had prepared themselves for a 'give and take conversation', the principal dynamic that set in was a question–answer response in which citizens posed questions and 'answers' came from the representatives" (Button and Mattson, 1999: 627). This is also true of the Dutch IPP projects. The educative deliberation framework relegates citizens to a deferential and sometimes passive role. When political learning is the focus, citizens become pupils rather than participants. Thompson and Hoggett argue that this encourages dependency: "A group whose emotional culture is highly dependent will pay attention to individuals exuding calm authority and freedom from doubt, but it will have no time for questioning voices...." (Thompson and Hoggett, 2001: 356). In the Dutch IPP cases these findings certainly seem to be correct for deliberative projects in rural districts; in the bigger cities participants are far more willing to oppose experts and politicians.

Citizen forums, leaving scope for exploration in an atmosphere of respect, allow for a greater likelihood of informal leadership to evolve. In the projects studied, charismatic attributes are found among some deliberative habitués, ex-councillors and moral entrepreneurs – people who know how the influencing game must be played. They get a playroom that is rarely forthcoming in the context of professional politics, criticise the municipality in a friendly, ironic way and point at unexpected opportunities. These informal leaders enjoy support, partly because there is a need for inspiring and innovative points of view. Reform-orientated councillors then get the chance to create a profile for themselves and present alternative visions.

Exploration of new options generates opportunities for mutual recognition. In some IPP projects a collective enthusiasm arose, especially in the countryside when attractive planning visions seemed to surpass the achievements of rival districts. Hajer (2003, 2005) points out that collective identification arises when organisers

dare to experiment with new settings and stagings (videos, exhibitions), and invite heterodox experts (artists, scholars of local history) who can break through the conventional 'policy talk'. In such cases the performative dimension of policy deliberation counts: deliberation is not merely about giving better arguments, it also is a performative act ultimately creating a new public after a sequence of different stagings. Thus authentic story lines and a 'project identity' may evolve: the participants agree which future developments are allowed and which parts of the town must be conserved. The various participants endorse for different reasons the emerging story line about the local future. Each interest group sees enough good aspects to promote the whole plan.

When the educative frame dominates, the deliberation process as such is experienced as intrinsically satisfying. Nevertheless, in many respects the same process may evoke disappointment, especially in the case of participants who view the forum as an opportunity to influence local policies. When, for example, plans – for attractive new housing estates, the construction of a watery area – turn out to be unachievable, deliberation may develop in a disappointing way. Again, Button and Mattson (1999) raise some points that are also of importance in Dutch projects. They argue that face-to-face interactions with politicians and officials foster heightened expectations that significantly outpace what is possible, both within the limited context of citizen forums and within representative politics. Participants who want results and solutions often set themselves up for feeling disenchanted with the political process and become more cynical.

Fung and Wright point at a related problem. Citizens may find the reality of participation increasingly burdensome and less rewarding than they had imagined. After some months of time-consuming, deliberative decision making, the returns may diminish. "They may begin in a burst of popular enthusiasm and good will but then succumb to forces that prevent these auspicious beginnings from taking root and growing into stable forms of sustained participation" (Fung and Wright, 2003: 37).

In the Dutch IPP projects this disappointment may be explained by three factors. First, the sheer size of these projects evokes many difficulties. Running many parallel workshops does lead to coordination problems and a cluttered process. In one IPP project there were seven ateliers running simultaneously, some containing 40 people. Besides this, the diversity of topics that come under review proves unmanageable, and the list of priorities is far too long. The process managers get out of control and are in danger of losing credibility. Subsequently, frustration and indignation start to creep into the usually relaxed atmosphere of the deliberative forum. In many cases, project managers do not succeed in curbing the ambitions of participants. "A high level of ambition works as a boomerang: the manageability of the process decreases in inverse proportions" (Koppenjan, 2001: 171).

Another troubling point is that in the end stages – when the list of decisions is being prepared – participants have less opportunity to contribute to the discussions. The leading players (councillors, administrators, public work officers) take over the process. Many participants have the impression that the end products of the project are not ultimately part of the formal policy-making process and will not initiate political change. In other cases the lack of commitment and openness of local officials create scepticism (Wille, 2001). When it becomes clear that the

suggestions of the group will only play a minor role, several participants point to the futility of the process. They become visibly upset and start arguing for a more confrontational form of dialogue in which politicians could be criticised for falling short of citizens' desires for reform. Obviously there are opposing expectations at work here: whereas citizens hope that the local authorities will adopt their plans and proposals, politicians hope to enlarge the public support for their long-term policies. These divergent expectations sow the seeds of subsequent project failures.

Finally, in some projects the mental approach of administrators and officers is not appropriate for carrying out an interactive process. Many administrators show a reluctance to engage in interactive policy making. Their support and commitment is unsatisfactory and they feel they have to run the gauntlet (Dimmendaal and de Kroon, 1999).

Stakeholder committees

The set-up of a stakeholder committee is usually an attempt to tackle old conflicts with new methods, in many cases in order to overcome the feeling of discontent. The Dutch 'quality circles' are confronted with a lot of pressure to find solutions. The problem at stake is considered important or even threatening for some of the participating parties. For those reasons emotions of fear/distrust as well as anger/indignation can take on large proportions; the preliminary conditions of the project are often determined by these negative emotions and they can prevail for a long time (Hendriks, 1998; Tops et al, 1996; Tops, 1999). For instance, in the beginning stages spontaneous coalitions of farmers and environmentalists may develop to oppose new building policies.

Because the variety of Dutch stakeholder committees is very large, it is difficult to single out specific group trends and dynamics that manifest themselves strongly. Nevertheless, two main trends are discernible. First, strategic action is difficult to eliminate from these kinds of deliberative organisations. Many participants hold on to their opinions and interests because the outcome of the negotiation can have far-reaching consequences. The deliberation climate is businesslike and quasi-professional: authentic searching for future solutions ('dreaming') and amateur discussion delays are not accepted. Experts (planners, developers) play a more assertive and less helpful role. There is more pressure to achieve success and attain a workable compromise; sometimes project managers even discourage new or more reliable information, when this could threaten an emergent consensus between the main players. Some participants, like entrepreneurs, environmentalists or farmers, do not hesitate to go on lobbying with councillors during the process. The moderators do not appreciate the raw and meaty discussions they raise, but cannot really prevent them.

In the observed stakeholder committees, representatives of interest organisations (such as café owners and shopkeepers) have more influence than individual citizens. These representatives often have mobilisation strategies at their disposal. Sometimes they are unresponsive to local needs and priorities, and insensitive to emergent concerns. This causes tensions and invites adversarial styles. For that reason

moderators often try to discourage locally organised adversarial participants right from the beginning.[13]

A second group dynamic is somewhat in conflict with these bargaining aspects: the small size of the group and the informal relationships between the members encourage the development of personal trust. Whereas in citizen forums the distance between the organising team (facilitator, administrators and civil servants) and the citizenry remains great, the members of the relatively small stakeholder groups get to know each other very well.

Although there is less space for developing a shared sense of local belonging or envisioning a shared community, the meetings provide a setting for discovering personal backgrounds and informal trust building. Of course it is advantageous to recruit constructive people like community workers and police officers; they often function as liaison officers between several interests and actors, and gain an independent and trustworthy status within the group. The views of these experts prove to be very influential on the formation of opinion within the committees. In addition, some key figures from the local political arena have a decisive impact in these deliberative bodies. Constructive councillors who function as a kind of ombudsman and operate in local networks often initiate and foster stakeholder committees (Tops and Zouridis, 2002). Nevertheless, the strict scheme of the committees, the limited opportunity to experiment with ideas and the dominance of policy talk hamper the development of charismatic authority.

Compared with citizen forums the project managers and participants have a more realistic estimation of the chances and opportunities from the start. As a result, possible disappointments arising during the course of the projects are less conceivable. This is not to say that 'quality circles' succeed in keeping disappointment at bay. In due course some projects were increasingly functioning as a complaints office, attracting discontentment. As is the case in citizen forums, lack of clear conditions and points of departure endanger the continuation of the project. And of course the committees are plagued by the 'everlasting' conflicts about the precise status and function of the organisation in question.

Another problem is the exclusive nature of the committees. The first meetings often have chaotic proceedings and many squabbles about who may and who may not participate. There are sometimes non-invited residents who want to express the interests of the not-represented residents. Some parties, such as shopkeepers and the police, withhold their participation because of supposed obstructive attitudes or lack of deliberative discipline, or simply because it is assumed that for them there is nothing at stake. Neglecting or bypassing relevant players may break up the process later on, when these people raise objections or start counteractions.

Finally, there are regularly conflicts with councillors and administrators over the implementation of the plans. Often the committee participants feel that they are not treated as equal conversation partners and that their contributions are not taken seriously. The problem is that councillors and administrators often think they can take a detached role and give less attention to these projects. The committees are not particularly the showpieces of city politics.

The preceding findings and interpretations draw together a number of assumptions. Although there are many diverging trends and patterns, some

Table 2: Power and emotion dynamics in two types of deliberative bodies

	Citizen forums	Deliberative body
Power dynamics		
Strategic use of power	– –	+
Project managers maintaining control	–	+
Experts gaining trust	+	+/–
Occurrence of charisma	+	–
Emotion dynamics		
Initial anger and indignation	–	++
Persistent fear and distrust	–	+
Hope turning into disappointment	+	–
Increasing mutual recognition	+/–	+

generalisations are possible, as shown in Table 2. The plus and minus signs indicate the assumed intensity with which these dynamics can occur.

This framework signifies a considerable reduction in the real power and emotion dynamics and patterns that occur. The reality of deliberative policy making is far more complex than is suggested. For instance, stakeholder committees differ from each other, depending partly on conditions at the start and the manner in which decision making has been regulated. Furthermore, the complexity of relations within the group, and the number of participants, parties, subgroups and shifting coalitions have not been taken into account.

Conclusion

This article has glossed over questions of how the distinct group dynamics interact and whether and how separate aspects of power such as charisma and facilitating authority interact. This being said, there are dynamics, such as the emergence of disappointment and satisfaction, which cannot manifest themselves simultaneously, at least not as dynamics determining the whole atmosphere of the project. Sometimes deliberative projects will take on an either/or character: either many members will become disappointed, or there will arise mutual recognition. Actually the article has focused only on a series of dynamics that are conceptually easy to demarcate and that regularly occur in communication processes.

The typology outlined has a predominantly interpretative use. It attempts to provide insights into the informal group dynamics taking place behind the formal process of 'rational argumentation among equal parties'. Nevertheless, the model can provide points of departure for learning experiences: it provides insight into how authority and emotions can serve as tools in establishing a constructive atmosphere of collaboration and in avoiding counterproductive effects.

In particular two 'lessons' might be mentioned. First, to prevent disappointment project managers should clearly indicate at the outset what is within reach. They must not hold out false hopes and attribute more influence to citizens than they really have. Next to that, successful participation is highly related to the commitment

of administrators and civil servants to the participatory process. Commitment signals to participants that they have the necessary political support to affect policy (see also Beierle et al, 2000). Second, the strong learning motive and curiosity of participants in citizen forums presents an opportunity to develop 'rites of transition' in which creative experts such as writers and moviemakers can play a leading role. A 'postmodern' citizenry seems to be receptive to attractive and distinctive narratives that fulfil a desire for belonging. Participants like to go through probing performances and symbolic events that generate new story lines (Hajer, 2005).

This emphasises again that deliberative processes do not exactly live up to the ideals of equality and rationality. Behind the seemingly rational dialogue between 'equal participants' we find an interplay of power and emotion dynamics that can aid or impede deliberation. Inspiring contributions by informal spokespersons can gain approval and adumbrate a consensus; in other cases assertive contributions are perceived as tiresome and undermining authority.

During deliberative meetings authoritative persons will, intentionally or not, drift to the foreground. They will, for instance, play a role in curbing feelings of insecurity, providing an interesting perspective or generating collaboration. In the course of the process new dominant spokespersons may emerge spontaneously; they might turn against the shortcomings of the project manager or against local politicians. Or inspiring spokespersons step into the foreground on account of their attractive ideas. In the course of the deliberation, then, 'leaders' are made, rejected and replaced, in part as a consequence of persisting emotion dynamics (Thompson and Hoggett, 2001).

Next to power and authority, emotions form a main and inevitable aspect of communication, including in those settings in which the deliberation appears to be running along in a calm and orderly fashion. Emotions are always present, whether or not they are recognised or welcome, and can either facilitate or hinder the deliberation. Emotions are helpful in tracking down the intentions of other speakers and impart vitality to the opinions of the participants, but they can also result in tenacious stereotyping or intimidation. Therefore it would be naïve and risky to welcome any emotion indiscriminately to the discussion.

Notes

[1] In organisational sciences these issues are attracting increasing attention (see Fineman, 1993 and 1999). Studies dedicated to the 'rationality of the emotions' (Elster, 1999) are booming. Emotions are increasingly seen as 'reasons for action'. They disclose desires, interests and expectations, offering information about motives and choices and hence can be used to support and enforce rational decision making.

[2] In my view some conclusions of Thompson and Hoggett (2001) fail to convince due to their reliance on the psychoanalytical jargon of Bion.

[3] Usually two separate kinds of affects are distinguished: emotions and moods. Emotions are aimed at a specific object (enjoying something/being frightened of somebody or something), are intense and usually short-lived, while moods have causes that are less

clear and are more persistent (Frijda, 1993). Emotions facilitate the reorientation of behaviour after a disruption or provocation. They reorganise behaviour in restless situations. Alongside emotions and moods one can distinguish sentiments that – like attitudes – convey a relatively stable affective appreciation. Sentiments contain affective experiences and memories, and future expectations, which sustain stable and consistent evaluations. Unlike sentiments, the emotions are usually accompanied by physical touches, from which they derive their vivacity and intensity.

[4] These findings include projects of the Institute for Public and Politics, an organisation that promotes political participation on national scale ('stadsgesprekken' and 'stadsvisie') and projects of Polyground, a smaller consultation organisation that addresses security and quality of life issues in inner cities ('kwaliteitskringen').

[5] Negotiation has a strong adversary style and context. Striving for mutual understanding is often viewed as a tactical instrument; there are strong incentives to 'appear disinterested' (see Elster, 1998; Mastenbroek, 1998).

[6] Critics of interactive policy making repeatedly cite these problems. According to Sanders (1997) – who refers to jury research – many participants think that high-status members have better ideas and give more direction to the group, irrespective of their input. Perceiving hierarchies within the group gives these people a feeling of alienation and powerlessness (see also Young, 2000).

[7] For situational contexts in which charisma may emerge see Bryson (1992).

[8] For these characteristics of charismatic persons see New Leadership studies (Bryson, 1992; Shamir et al, 1993; Hartog, 1997; Conger and Kanungo, 1998). These researchers claim that charismatic leadership is a 'normal' phenomenon in transitional stages and criticise Max Weber's assertion that charisma is an exceptional attitude particular to gifted leaders. Weber describes charisma as an 'irrational' gift from God, exempt from formalities and organisational arrangements. Charisma, according to Weber, is of an anti-economical nature and at loggerheads with all methodological forms of acting (Weber, 1968).

[9] There is little agreement among emotion theorists which emotions are primary and which are secondary, and what the relationship is between the two. The first category usually includes anger, fear, grief and joy, while secondary emotions are seen as being of a more intellectual nature (for instance, hope and indignation). According to Kemper (1987), primary emotions have a distinct biological origin (and as a result are ontogenetically perceptible at an early stage), while secondary emotions are predominantly socially constructed (but through their link to the primary emotions they keep in contact with the neuro/physiological 'soil').

[10] Processes of emotional change are categorised by, among others, Ortony et al (1988) and Ben Ze'ev (2000). These authors have made ingenious classifications of (composite) emotions, including anticipation and attribution aspects.

[11] Fear tends to paralyse whereas (a mild form of) anxiety stimulates people to discover new solutions. Anxiety activates alertness and is conceived as a surveillance system (Marcus, 2002).

[12] Hope is sometimes classified as an 'intellectual emotion' encouraging reflection. It is an emotion because hope can manifest itself in unsuspected or unusual ways, and is difficult to channel or control. We cannot choose to be hopeful, in the way we can pick out an optimistic scenario. Nevertheless, hope is not a short-term reaction paired with physiological change (Ortony et al, 1988; Averill, 1996).

[13] For questions and tensions around adversarial styles see the Epilogue of Fung and Wright (2003).

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