

Input and output legitimacy in interactive governance

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Abstract

This contribution discusses the effects of new experiments of citizen participation for democratic legitimacy. Following Scharf's distinction between input-oriented and output-oriented legitimacy, it is argued that both types of legitimacy pose different demands on citizen involvement. Using insights from the literature on deliberative democracy, two criteria are formulated to obtain both types of legitimacy. Input-oriented legitimacy derives from the extent to which the participative process meets the criterion of fairness, whereas a high level of competence is needed to achieve legitimacy on the output side. The question is to what extent these two criteria of fairness and competence can be realised simultaneously. It is argued that both criteria are rather conflictual, as a high level of fairness can only be achieved at the expense of the level of competence. Furthermore it is a rather naive ideal to strive for participative processes that completely live up to the principle of fairness. Therefore new forms of citizen participation should primarily focus on the criterion of competence. In this way citizen involvement may indeed contribute to achieve legitimacy on the output side.

1. Introduction

During the 1990's citizen participation was internationally brought back on the agenda of political science, as well as the administrative practice. Numerous experiments have taken place in which citizens and other stakeholders gained access to policy arenas to influence political decision-making in an early stage (see for example Schaap en Daems, 2003; Denters et al, 2003; Barnes, 1999; Lowndes, et al, 2001; Button and Mattson, 1999). In the Netherlands these experiments were usually labelled 'interactive governance', or 'interactive policy-making'. Advocates of interactive governance have more than once put forward the claim that interaction is a source of democratic legitimacy. In this

contribution this claim is being discussed. In our discussion Scharpf's distinction between input-oriented and output-oriented legitimacy will be used. According to Scharpf (1997; 1999) democratic legitimacy is a two-dimensional concept, which refers to both the inputs as well as the outputs of a political system. On the input side democratic legitimacy requires *mechanisms or procedures* to link political decisions with citizens' preferences. In modern democracies these mechanisms are reflected in representative institutions in which political decision-makers can be held accountable by the means of elections. On the other hand, Scharpf argues, democracy would be an 'empty ritual' if the democratic procedure was not able to produce effective outcomes, that is: 'achieving the goals that citizens collectively care about' (1997: 19).

In this contribution the following question will be answered: can interactive governance contribute to democratic legitimacy on the input side as well as the output side?

In the next section the concept of interactive governance is further outlined, as well as its supporting arguments. It will be argued that interactive governance is a form of deliberative democracy. Deliberation between several stakeholders may contribute to democratic legitimacy when two criteria are met. These criteria – fairness and competence – are examined in section 3. Both criteria refer to a specific type of legitimacy. In order to achieve input-oriented legitimacy the criterion of fairness should be satisfied, whereas a high level of *competence* is needed to achieve legitimacy on the output side. Furthermore it will be outlined that the principles of fairness and competence are rather conflictual, and cannot be obtained simultaneously. Therefore a trade-off must be made in which the principle of competence dominates at the expense of the criterion of fairness. In this way interactive governance is more likely to contribute to output-oriented legitimacy, rather than legitimacy on the input side.

2. The rise of interactive governance: in search for democratic legitimacy

The rise of interactive governance might be seen as a reaction to two social developments. First, the many experiments of citizen involvement can be placed in a revived interest in democratic reform. In the beginning of the

1990's the idea gained ground that a cleavage had grown between citizens and their government, resulting in apathy within the citizenry. Traditional representative institutions could not cope with social changes resulting from increased social pluriformity and ongoing processes of individualisation (see Klingemann and Fuchs, 1995). Therefore new institutional arrangements have been developed to solve this 'democratic deficit'.

Second, social developments have led to an increased complexity of social problems. Modern society would be dominated by various social networks in which complex interdependencies prevail between actors who had always functioned rather independently (see Castells, 1996). As a consequence a shift of balance took place in which the realms of government and society got blurred. The government had grown to be merely a party among all others (see Nelissen, 1992), and had grown to be dependent on the resources of economic and social actors. These developments have resulted in new ideas about policy-making in which hierarchical structures are replaced by rather horizontal modes of cooperation between governmental and social actors (see for example Kooiman, 1993). To improve the quality of the content of policy and because of the recourses the government needed those other parties were more involved in the policy-making.

However, the access to policy arenas was not limited only to collective parties like social and private organisations. More and more the idea gained ground that also individual citizens could contribute to improve the quality of policy-making in a complex society (see for example Quinlivan, 2001). Not only is the direct participation of citizens considered to be an effective tool for resolving public conflict (Dukes, 1996), but the involvement of citizens in policy-making could also prevent political decisions from resistance. Due to individualization citizens have become more critical towards their government (Norris, 1999). In order to lower this criticism, and to prevent decisions from resistance, administrators have become more willing to organize citizen participation in order to acquire the public support that is necessary to implement policy effectively (Ethridge, 1987; Cupps, 1977; Rosenbaum, 1978). All these forms of cooperative policy-making are captured in the term 'interactive governance'.

Proponents of interactive governance argue that interaction between various actors is an important source of legitimacy. On the one hand the direct participation of citizens in political decision-making could be seen as a mechanism to link political decisions with citizens' preferences. On the other hand the involvement of citizens could generate better or more effective political outcomes. Using Scharpf's terminology; the introduction of interactive governance is to be seen as an attempt to improve legitimacy on the input side as well as the output side.

Interactive governance and input – oriented legitimacy

Legitimacy on the input side depends on *mechanisms* that translate the 'will of the people' into political decisions. If those mechanisms are judged by the people as 'democratic' or 'good', then there is input legitimacy. Examples of these mechanisms can be found in representative institutions, of which elections and party competition are considered to be most important (see Dahl, 1971; Powell, 2000). Elections are instruments - or mechanisms - of democracy to the degree that they give the people influence over policy-making (Powell, 2000: 3). However, advocates of public participation argue that electoral institutions are insufficient instruments of democracy, as they do not succeed in providing real opportunities for citizens to effectively influence policy-making (see Budge, 1996). Following social choice theorists like William Riker (1982), it is often argued that voting is ambiguous because electoral outcomes do not necessarily reflect 'the popular will', as they are merely artefacts of the procedures by which votes are counted (see Knight and Johnson, 1994). Furthermore, according to some social theorists, no single voting procedure succeeds in producing outcomes that completely represent the 'will of the people' (Riker, 1982; Powell, 2000). It is therefore proposed that deliberative democracy gives directions for democratic reform in which deliberation is the central *mechanism* to link political decisions with citizens' preferences. In this respect the introduction of interactive modes of governance is to be seen as an attempt to improve input legitimacy.

Advocates of interactive governance provide several arguments to support their claim that deliberation is an important source for input-oriented democratic legitimacy. First, and foremost, participative democrats argue that

representative institutions cannot live up to their expectations of democratic citizenship (Pateman, 1970; Barber, 1984; Budge, 1996). Deriving from a Rousseauian, or populist idea of democracy, these scholars look for changes in the structures of politics to widen citizen involvement in order to arrive at a democratic system which lives up to the Athenian ideal of direct democracy. For them, a 'strong democracy' refers to a political system of 'self government by citizens rather than representative government in the name of citizens' (Barber, 1984). Only in such a 'strong democracy' could the normative principles of sovereignty of the people and political equality prevail (see also Rosenbaum, 1978). In this light it is said that direct participation of citizens could lead to a cohesive society in which social exclusion is reduced (according to Barnes, 1999; 2002).

Furthermore advocates of direct public participation often state that when citizens are involved in a deliberative process between legislators and other citizens they will be engaged in a learning process, in which they can validate their own preferences by confronting their perceptions with those of others. (see Fishkin, 1991; Elster, 1998; Barnes, 1999; Button and Mattson, 1999). In this perspective, the engagement of citizens in a deliberative process could enhance an enlighten citizenry.

Interactive governance and legitimacy on the output side

As was outlined above, many arguments can be found in the literature sustaining the claim that interaction in policy-making can improve input-oriented legitimacy. Stemming from the literature on participative democracy and deliberative democracy, these arguments are mostly normative by nature. However, also more pragmatic reasons can be given to provide opportunities for citizens to participate in policy-making processes. These pragmatic, or instrumental arguments are directed to legitimacy on the output side. According to Scharpf legitimacy on the output side exists to the extent government performance is effective, that is, the extent to which the system

satisfies the basic functions of government.¹ However, Scharpf is not very clear in what these ‘basic functions of government’ exactly are.

According to Scharpf ‘satisfying the basic functions of government’ refers to extent that democratic procedures are able to effectively promote the common welfare of the constituency in question (1999: 6), as well as ‘achieving the goals citizens collectively care about’ (1997: 19). As a consequence, output-oriented legitimacy has both an ‘objective’ and a ‘subjective’ component.

The objective component refers to the extent that policy outcomes succeed in effectively solving social problems. In this light it is often stated in the literature that the direct participation of citizens and other stakeholders in the policy-making process produces better and ‘more intelligent’ outcomes (see Pröpper and Steenbeek, 1999; Kooiman, 1993; Barnes, 1999; Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker, 2001; Edelenbos and Monnikhof, 1998; 2001; Hendriks and Tops, 2001). This assumption is based on the idea that in the modern network society ‘no single actor, public or private, has all knowledge and information required to solve complex dynamic and diversified problems’ (Kooiman, 1993). By giving citizens and other stakeholders access to the policy arena, administrators can use their expertise and information, which is needed to solve complex social issues.

The ‘subjective’ component of output legitimacy refers to the extent that citizens are satisfied with the content of government policy. This is likely to be the case if people reach their own goals and recognize their preferences in political decisions (Potman, 1989; Hoekema e.a., 1998). It is argued that interactive processes will bring the content of policy more into line with the preferences of citizens and that this will contribute to a positive judgement of these citizens about the content of the policy (see for example Edelenbos and Monnikhof, 2001).

¹ In the literature usually a distinction is made between legitimacy and state effectiveness, or state performance (see Lipset, 1958) Yet in practice there is a connection between effectiveness and legitimacy, as the performance of government makes a significant contribution to its legitimacy (Beetham, 1991).

Interactive government on both the input- and the output side

Although Scharpf's distinction between 'input-oriented' and 'output-oriented' legitimacy helps us to shed more light on the concept of democratic legitimacy, it should be emphasised here that both types of legitimacy are extremely interrelated. Output legitimacy derives from the effectiveness of government policy. However, effectiveness has only a meaning in relation to the preferences of citizens. In order to create effective outcomes procedures or mechanisms are therefore needed to track down these preferences and to translate them into political decisions.

As was mentioned above, interactive procedures may help to link preferences of citizens to political decisions. Administrators and politicians can use the insights and information provided by citizens in order to improve the effectiveness of the policy decisions. The more this information is used, the higher the chance that the goals of these citizens are reached, and hence the higher the chance that outcomes will be effective. In this light, Tops (1999, pp.210-211) argues that a good interactive procedure is necessary to be successful in terms of the content of the policy, but that the quality of this procedure is not sufficient in itself for success. In other words: input legitimacy is needed to know what the preferences of people are, but this is not a guarantee for legitimacy on the output side.

3. Fairness and competence

In the previous section it was argued that the rise of interactive governance could be viewed as a reaction to two social developments. Firstly, interactive governance is a direction of democratic reform that could 'cure' the democratic deficit through the direct participation of citizens in political decision-making. Secondly, in the complex modern society knowledge of social issues is too dispersed to be solved by one single actor. Interactive governance could therefore be viewed as a form of network-steering. The first view emphasises legitimacy on the input side, whereas the latter focuses on output-oriented legitimacy. The question is, however, in what way processes of interactive governance should be organised in order to make a contribution to

legitimacy on both the input- and output side. An answer to this question may be found in the literature on deliberative democracy.

Habermas' ideal speech situation

The visions of deliberative democrats are broadly inspired by Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action (1970; 1981). The core idea of this theory holds that no objective reality exists, but that reality is socially constructed through shared perceptions and definitions about what is 'real'. In other words: people collectively create a reality of their own in a communicative process in which people confront their arguments with those of others. In order to create an 'ideal speech situation' Habermas argues that communicative action should be oriented toward intersubjective understanding. This is what Habermas calls 'communicative rationality', which refers to the extent which communicative action is characterised by the reflective understanding of competent actors. Furthermore, the ideal speech situation should be free from strategic behaviour and domination through the exercise of power. This means that all actors should be *equally* and fully *capable* of making arguments.

Habermas's concept of the ideal speech situation has had a tremendous influence on the literature on deliberative democracy (see for example Dryzek, 1990; 2000; Webler, 1995; Barnes, 2002; Akkerman, 2002). Deliberative democracy refers to a specific form of public participation consisting of *fair* procedures in which *competent* political and public actors engage in reasoned arguments for the purpose of collective decision-making.

To be *fair*, deliberative procedures should provide equal opportunities for all relevant stakeholders to participate in the deliberative process, as well as equal opportunities to influence the outcomes of these processes (Webler, 1995; Knight and Johnson, 1994, Blaug, 1996). Furthermore, deliberative processes should produce successful outcomes. Therefore a certain level of *competence* is required, which refers to 'the ability to use language to create understanding and agreement' (Habermas, 1970). Deliberation between stakeholders in the policy-making process is often seen as an important source of legitimacy to the extent that such a process satisfies the criteria of fairness and competence.

As was outlined above, the rise of interactive governance may be seen as a search for more legitimacy on the input, as well as on the output side. Furthermore, processes of interactive governance entail deliberation between political and private actors, and may therefore be seen as a form of deliberative democracy. Therefore processes of interactive policy-making can be viewed legitimate to the extent these processes meet the criteria of fairness and competence. In the next section the question is answered in what way both criteria may enhance legitimacy.

Fairness and input-oriented legitimacy

In section 2 it was outlined why proponents of interactive governance often state that the direct participation of citizens and other stakeholders in policy-making may enhance legitimacy on the input side. According to these scholars interactive policy-making is to be seen as a mechanism to link citizens' preferences with the content of public policy. Furthermore interaction in policy-making could reduce social exclusion.

In order to produce these desired effects, interactive policy processes should satisfy the criterion of fairness, which means that all stakeholders should have an equal chance 'to be heard'. This means that interactive processes should be organised in such a manner that citizens not only have an equal chance to gain access to the interactive process, but also that opportunities to exercise influence are distributed equally among all participants.

This does not mean, however, that all participants should equally succeed in translating their preferences into collective decisions. In a fair debate participants deliberate on an equal basis, that is, power positions should not determine whether an argument is considered to be valuable (see among others Dryzek, 1990; 2000). Fairness does not mean that bad arguments should prevail over good arguments. In this sense it is inevitable that certain participants exercise more influence than others. From the perspective of fairness this should not be considered a problem, as long as the best argument prevails. In this way a fair debate might lead to enlighten understanding among the participants, and hence create more equality, as equality also means that citizens should have an equal and adequate opportunity to validate their own

preferences, even if this means discovering that their preferences are not in their own interests.

It would be rather naive to believe that every stakeholder is willing and able to put his valuable time and energy in participating in policy-making. Most stakeholders are therefore only willing to participate in processes considering their personal interests (Fiorina, 1999). Next to this in practice it is sometimes not possible to invite every stakeholder, because the amount of participants would be too large. For these reasons the principle of fairness is to be translated in the notion of representativeness. An interactive process is considered to be fair if the group of participants is representative to the total population of stakeholders. If this is not the case, sectoral interests are likely to dominate the policy-making process at the expense of the interests of the underrepresented. Therefore the principle of fairness should not be violated. Only then interactive policy-making is likely to enhance input-oriented legitimacy.

Competence and legitimacy on the output side

The second criterion for an 'ideal' interactive process is competence, which is the ability to use language to create understanding and agreement. In terms of interactive policy-making this principle refers to the extent that participants in interactive policy-processes are able to generate effective policy-outcomes, were (all) stakeholders agree upon. Therefore the notion of competence is linked to the instrumental arguments sustaining the rise of interactive policy-making, which focus on legitimacy on the output side. If interactive processes want to produce better policy-outcomes, the principle of competence should not be violated. This requires that people enter into a discourse with an attitude oriented toward reaching understanding. People must be committed to reflecting on their personal beliefs, values preferences, and interests, they must be open to alternative definitions of reality, and they must listen to other people's arguments with an open mind (Webler, 1995). Furthermore the principle of competence requires the interactive process is organised in such a manner that participants can cooperate as effectively as possible. Therefore rules must be formulated to structure and coordinate the

interactions between the different actors (see Barnes, 1996; 2002; Denters and Klok, 2003). According to Driessen c.s. (1996) structuring the communication process should be the core aspect of managing interactive policy-making. This means that interactions between several stakeholders should be guided as efficiently as possible. Therefore Driessen c.s. (1996) propose to select the participants very carefully. According to them only those stakeholders who are indispensable for a successful policy implementation should be selected to participate. These might be stakeholders that are involved because they have a specific knowledge about the topic which is at stake, for example an architect in an interactive process dealing with the restructuring of an area. A second group with specific knowledge could be citizens, for example because they live in the area where an interactive process is about. As noticed earlier in this paper citizens are also involved to prevent them from active resistance, and this may be considered indispensable in the process. If the preferences of these people, who are considered to be indispensable, are taken into account in the final policy, the chance increases that stakeholders will recognize their arguments and might reach their goals (Potman, 1989, Hoekema e.a. 1998). This might reduce resistance and create support for the policy. In other words output legitimacy will be the result.

Fairness and competence: an unresolved dilemma

The two principles of an ideal interactive process seem to be rather conflictual. The notion of fairness states that all stakeholders should have an equal chance to influence the outcome of the interactive process, whereas the principle of competence holds that that only those actors should be involved who may make a significant contribution to the policy process, or who may frustrate the process if they are not involved.

Furthermore, a fair interactive process requires that the group of participants is representative to the total population of stakeholders. This may result in large deliberative forums in which many actors with conflicting preferences participate. The presence of so many conflicting preferences may make it impossible to come to an agreement between the participants. For this reason it may be preferred to formulate policy within small groups, in which it is easier to reach consensus or come to an agreement. In others words: the principle of

competence requires the participation of well skilled actors within small groups. For this reason an unresolved dilemma exists between the principles of fairness and competence (see also Blaug, 1996; Berveling, 1998).

4. A trade-off: fairness or competence?

If there is a dilemma between fairness and competence, the question raises how this dilemma can be resolved. Remarkably enough, few attempts have been made to provide an answer to this question (for an exception see Webler, 1995). Until now most scholars have merely focused on just one of the two principles, either fairness or competence. In this sense deliberative democrats usually focus on the fairness of the debate, whereas the literature on policy networks tends to be primarily concerned with providing guidelines for an efficient, or competent interactive process. An explanation for this division could be found in the assumptions on legitimacy both groups use. Deliberative democrats seem to be primarily concerned with input oriented legitimacy, whereas the literature on policy networks (implicitly) focuses on legitimacy on the output side.

As was outlined above, deliberative democrats seem to be focused on the fairness of interactive processes, as they see equal participation as an important – or even the most important – source of legitimacy. However, deliberative procedures contribute to equal participation only to the extent they meet the criterion of inclusiveness; the total population of stakeholders should be represented in the deliberative forum (see for example Barnes, 1999; 2002; Elster, 1998; Akkerman, 2001). The opportunities to take part in interactive processes are in many cases equal, but empirical data show that participants in deliberative forums are usually high-educated men, whereas women, ethnographic minorities or citizens with low incomes are overwhelmingly underrepresented (see Mansbridge, 1983; Hooghe, 1999; Edelenbos and Monnikhof, 1998). The same distinction between equal chances to participate and actual participation must be made concerning other forms of participation, for example voting. Following this line of reasoning the question

can be asked whether the government only should provide equal opportunities to participate, or to ensure that participation is actually equal.

Furthermore a remark must be made that open procedures alone do not automatically lead to equal participation (see Verba, Scholzman and Brady, 1995) and not all participants share the same level of deliberative skills (Stokman, 2003; Sanders, 1997; Hartman, 1998). In this light Hartman (1998) argues that more deliberation creates more inequalities, because it works in the advantage of the already privileged citizens. For this reason it is difficult to defend the claim that the introduction of interactive governance is likely to increase legitimacy on the input side, as the idea of fair debates in which stakeholders have an equal chance for influencing policy decisions seems to be an utopian ideal.

In addition to this, Blaug (1996) states that we simply have to accept that no form of deliberative democracy is free from inequalities in the distribution of influence within processes of political deliberation. In fact, he raises questions considering the use of the attempts to incorporate a full degree of equality into political deliberation. According to him citizens do not necessarily oppose deliberative processes in which influence is not equally distributed among all participants and non-participants. No, what citizens truly want is deliberative processes to be effective, which means that these processes should contribute to solving pressing social problems and create policy which is in line with their own preferences. Because citizens want the process to be effective in terms of solving social problems and reaching their goals, Blaug believes that citizens accept that a trade-off is being made between competence (i.e. effectiveness) and fairness (i.e. equality). In this respect the strict interpretation of fairness should be relativized, and should be put more into line with the preferences and goals of citizens. Citizens do not necessarily stress the importance of a full degree of fairness. On the contrary: if interactive processes completely live up to the ideal of fairness, but are not capable of producing effective outcomes, citizens may become disappointed or even frustrated. In the words of Wille (2001: 91): 'Citizens do not want to be a part of just a ritual'.

In addition to this Benou and Hendriks (1996) remark that if the group of participants becomes too large, the transparency of the interaction process declines, and as a consequence, the chance that the preferences of all

participants will be heard and taken into account may be reduced. In this respect a paradox occurs: The notion of fairness is to be seen as a procedure to translate citizens' preferences into political decisions, which is necessary to enhance legitimacy on the input side. However, too much fairness limits the possibilities for participants to effectively influence decision-making, and thus makes it more difficult to link their preferences to decisions. Interactive policy-making then becomes nothing more than an empty ritual. In that respect fairness is both a necessary condition as well as a threat for input-oriented legitimacy.

5. Interaction and legitimacy

If fairness in interactive policy processes is a utopian ideal, and a trade-off between the principles of fairness and competence is a necessary evil, does this mean that interaction can hardly be seen as a source for democratic legitimacy? It may be appealing to answer this question positively. Fairness in the interactive process refers to such democratic values as inclusiveness and equality, and may therefore be seen as an important – but also a 'dangerous' – source for arriving legitimacy on the input side. However such an observation fails to see that input-oriented legitimacy is not the only form of democratic legitimacy and that input oriented legitimacy is not only about these democratic values, but also about the opinions, which citizens have about the process. To a certain extent they will also stress these democratic values, but citizens also take other issues into account. This is the point where the relationship between input- and output legitimacy shows up; citizens want to reach their goals (output legitimacy) and are therefore willing to sacrifice some democratic values.

In this light Hanberger (2003) states that legitimacy is a 'product of satisfying felt needs and solving perceived problems'. Legitimacy, then, is not only achieved to the extent that democratic institutions meet the principle of fairness, but to the extent these institutions are able to produce effective outcomes. According to Hanberger the 'crisis' in legitimacy can be explained by the failure of democratic institutions to respond to pressing problems. According to him, legitimacy increases through 'problem oriented' and

‘problem effective’ policies (Hanberger, 2003: 270). In other words he stresses that output-oriented legitimacy, rather than legitimacy on the input side, is increasingly becoming important.

Easton’s distinction between ‘specific’ and ‘diffuse’ support may be helpful to explain why the importance of output-oriented legitimacy is increasingly being stressed in the literature (see for example Dalton, 1999). Easton describes diffuse support as a deep-seated set of attitudes towards politics and the operation of a political system that is relatively impervious to change. It is this type of support which is often used for measuring the legitimacy of political institutions. To put it differently: diffuse support may be seen as an indication of legitimacy on the input side.

The other type of support Easton distinguishes, specific support, is related to the performance of the government, and may function as an indication for output-oriented legitimacy.

According to Dalton (1999: 59), a democratic political system requires a reservoir of diffuse support independent of immediate policy outputs.

Dissatisfaction within the citizenry with the performance of the ruling elites is not necessarily a signal of eroding legitimacy, just as long as there is support for the procedures by which decisions are reached. This changes when negative attitudes toward government performance become structural, and democratic institutions are not able any more to produce desired outcomes. In such a situation the lack of specific support may result in a declining diffuse support. A structural lack of legitimacy on the output side may therefore have severe implications for input-oriented legitimacy. In addition to this

Hoogerwerf (1993)² argues that democratic procedures alone are no longer sufficient to enhance democratic legitimacy, as government performance is increasingly becoming the most important source for legitimacy. Also the Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP, 2002, p.213) stresses that the

² Hoogerwerf distinguishes three sources of legitimacy. According to him legitimacy may arrive from a shared ideology (ideological legitimacy); the degree to which decision-making procedures are democratic (procedural legitimacy); and effective government performance (task- legitimacy). Due to processes of ongoing individualisation, ideological legitimacy is losing its importance. Furthermore, citizens would no longer regard democratic institutions as a safe yard for decent decision-making. Therefore the quality of government performance is becoming the most important source for legitimacy.

performance of the government is increasingly becoming the most important base of people's judgement about their government.

If output-oriented legitimacy is becoming more important, interaction in policy-making might be an important source for democratic legitimacy to the extent that interactive procedures are able to produce effective outcomes that satisfy the preferences of citizens. If the principle of fairness is stressed, effective outcomes might not be realised. On the other hand a 'good' procedure is needed to come to an effective result: stakeholders want to have the chance to participate and want to have a certain influence on the outcomes. This all means that a certain trade-off between fairness and competence is inevitable. Fairness in terms of representation and equality can only be realised if every stakeholder is given the opportunity to participate. As we have stated before a full degree of fairness is not only a utopian ideal, but may also be counterproductive, as more equality will decrease the chances of individuals to effectively influence decision-making. However the possibility exists that the preferences of those who choose not to participate or those who do not succeed in formulating their wishes might be forgotten. However the remark must be made that issues of interactive processes are mainly on relatively small issues on the local level. In most of these cases final decision-making is left in the hands of the city councillors. Of course these councillors should also take into account the preferences of the stakeholders who were not represented in the interactive process. In this respect fair interaction procedures are not the only way to enhance legitimacy on the input side, because also councillors have a responsibility in making fair decisions.

However the point that we would like to emphasise here is that fairness should not be the leading principle in managing interactive policy-making. These processes usually focus on relatively small local problems that directly affect the lives of the citizens involved. These citizens put more value in effective solutions to these problems than in the fairness of the procedure by which these solutions were formulated. If the notion of fairness dominates the notion of competence, effective solutions might not be reached, and makes it impossible to reach legitimacy on the output side.

6. Conclusion

In this contribution the question was raised to what extent the rise of interactive governance might increase legitimacy. Following Scharpf, legitimacy was described as a two dimensional concept, which refers to both the inputs as well as the outputs of a political system. In order to make a contribution to legitimacy on the input side, processes of interactive governance should meet the principle of fairness, which means that all stakeholders should have equal opportunities to influence the outcomes of the interactive process. Furthermore, interactive policy-making could increase output-oriented legitimacy, when the interactive process meets the criterion of competence. This principle holds that the interactive process should be organised in such a manner that effective outcomes can be reached.

Competence requires the participation of a selective group of high skilled actors.

The principles of fairness and competence pose different, rather conflictual, demands on the organisation of the interactive process. As a consequence, managing interactive policy processes involves setting priorities, which means a trade-off must be made between both principles of fairness and competence. There are several reasons why more weight should be put on the criterion of competence, rather than fairness. The first argument is pragmatic by nature. Empirical research has often shown that striving for interactive processes that are completely fair is a fruitless effort. In practice no single interactive process is free from inequalities in the distribution of influence. To put it even stronger: empirical data show that usually well-equipped citizens are able to influence the decisions made in interactive processes. Even when the possibilities to gain access to these processes are distributed equally among all stakeholders, interactive governance is more likely to create new inequalities rather than reducing them. In this respect the claim that the rise of interactive governance is likely to increase legitimacy on the input side in terms of these democratic values is difficult to sustain. However, we should emphasise here once more that citizens might be satisfied with the procedures of interactive

governance, even if these procedures do not contain a full degree of fairness. In this respect fairness – just like beauty – lies in the eyes of the beholder. However, the claim that the introduction of interactive governance must be seen as an effort to enhance legitimacy on the input side is based on a romantic but outdated idea of citizen participation. The opportunities for interactive governance to increase legitimacy lay not on the input but on the output side of the political system.

Emphasising possibilities to increase legitimacy on the output side could be seen as a pragmatic way to gain legitimacy, and fits in the individualised society in which citizens ask for policy effectiveness. As a consequence, not fairness, but competence should be the leading principle in managing interactive policy processes. This does not mean, however, that the principle of fairness should be completely ignored, as a certain degree of fairness is necessary to formulate effective policy in which the preferences of stakeholders are translated. In this respect input and output legitimacy complement rather than compete each other.

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