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Innovation Ltd. Boundary work in deliberative governance in land use planning

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CHAPTER 6 INNOVATION FRONTIERS LIMITED

6. Innovation limited

In cooperation with scholars in public administration, governmental actors in planning and land use often innovate in their ways of governing. They facilitate cooperation in networks for various reasons: to resolve stuck debate, to stimulate efficient and effective policies, to produce better reasoned, better informed, or more legitimate and credible decisions (Rhodes, 1990; Klijn and Teisman, 1991; Thompson et al., 1991; Waarden, 1992; Kickert, 1993; Rhodes, 1996; Kickert et al., 1997; Hodges, 2005; Laws, 1998; Laws et al., 2001; Rhodes, 2003b; Sørensen and Torfing, 2007; Teisman, 2000; Tatenhove and Leroy, 1995; Forester, 2000; Dryzek, 2000a; Hajer et al., 2004; Hajer, 2009).

In the introduction I distinguished *government* theory from *governance* and *deliberative governance* theory. In government theory, governmental actors are considered to have political authority and make legitimate and authoritative decisions based on formal arrangements and procedures. Governmental actors are a ruling power in society that can make decisions, and command and control to protect the common good. In governing through “governance,” decision making takes place in a network of interdependent actors that each have relevant knowledge and other resources to contribute to decisions for the common good. “Deliberative governance” builds on the idea of network governing, but it pays explicit attention to the quality of the interactions between interdependent governmental and non-governmental actors for two reasons. First, it is in deliberation that collaborative learning and change for better decision making can take place. Second, in network governance, decisions can become credible through interactions of a deliberative quality. Deliberative governance theory as developed in this thesis argues that actors in a network engage in conversations of a deliberative quality for collaborative learning and change that leads to credible decision making. I defined the deliberative quality of conversations as *reflective* which means that in those conversations actors can be empathetic with other interpretations, and can afford to criticize dominant discourse (that is, be parrhesiastes). This kind of reflectivity contributes to collaborative learning and to a credible change of dominant discourse.

I studied if, and if so how, *deliberative governance discourse* gained credibility in policy practice. Many scholars in public administration and political science establish an observable shift to network governance, and some even prescribe this shift. However, we often don’t know *if* and *how* this shift occurs in policy practice. We know that practitioners design and implement experiments with (deliberative) governance, but does government alter its interactions with society in these experiments? How do other actors such as businesses, non-governmental organizations, and citizens become partners in a network? Moreover, do all these actors start to consider deliberative governance to be a credible way of governing, and if so, why? This thesis studied the three theoretical models as discourses that participants produce and reproduce, in other words *enact*, in policy practice. The three discourses strive for dominance in *credibility struggles*.

To be able to establish which discourse became credible, I studied the details of the interactions between government and other actors in their conversations in three experiments with deliberative governance: Creative Competition for redevelopment of the Bijlmerpark, the Dairy Gateway project that aimed at a more sustainable region, and the Protein Highway Project: Make it Happen that wanted to improve the spatial quality of a region. These experiments injected deliberative governance discourse. They were temporarily erected, they engaged participants from several governmental layers, several

policy domains, several scientific disciplines, and the experiments included a variety of actors from society such as citizens, businesses and non-governmental organizations. These experiments also had a deliberative design with standards of conduct and strategies to convene and facilitate conversations of a deliberative quality.

6.1. EXCLUSIVE DELIBERATIVE GOVERNANCE

To study the credibility struggles between government and deliberative governance discourse, I introduced a conceptual framework of *boundary work*. Boundary work is either a demarcation or a transcending of boundaries around discourses. By studying boundary work in conversations, we could analyze how participants challenged or protected government discourse²⁹⁴ or deliberative governance discourse. There are at least two types of boundary work. First, there is the introduction of **boundary concepts** that span boundaries between discourses. For example, in the Dairy Gateway project the concept of stewardship connected government discourse with deliberative governance discourse. It enabled an interpretation of farmers not only as polluters — as is common in government discourse — but also as protectors of the land. Hence, boundary concepts can enable a change of more frozen discourse. They sit at boundaries between discourses and provide alternative interpretations of policy problems and of their solutions. Second, actors can **demarcate** a discourse. In doing so, they attempt to gain credibility for their interpretation of, for example, a policy problem or a boundary concept. For instance, in the Protein Highway Project, the concept of scenarios was interpreted from a government discourse to mean a vision for a region that governmental actors and academic experts developed and promoted. Actors demarcated this meaning from a deliberative governance interpretation in which scenarios were considered a way to facilitate deliberation about possible developments in the region and policy options to stimulate or dampen these. I explained that discursive boundary crossing and demarcating is powerful with help of a Foucauldian notion of power. I considered a demarcation of discourse or a transcending of boundaries particularly powerful when it resonated with more or less frozen, that is, more institutionalized discourse. Participants accepted these demarcations or transcending without articulation or contestation. The frozen discourse was reproduced.

However, alteration of more frozen discourse was also possible in conversations. This could happen when people started to reflect on demarcations or boundary concepts. The concept of parrhesia — fearless speech — theoretically enabled the introduction of alternative discourse. Parrhesia is a possible escape from discursive disciplining powers and at the same time introduced new ones. It is fearless speech that can induce a contestation of, or a reflection on, more frozen discourse OR on new discourse, for example, boundary concepts. These reflective conversations are a condition for frozen or new discourse to become credible.

Hence, I focused on the *dynamics* of the credibility struggles between government and deliberative governance discourses in policy practice. This meant that I first described the innovative projects: the agenda, the number of deliberative venues (Fung, 2006, p. 64),

the scope and depth of participation (Berry et al., 1993; Fung, 2006, p. 65), and the way participants were engaged, for example, in consortia that drafted a plan or built scenarios for a region, or in a dialogue about conflicts between environment and agriculture. Second, I looked into the details of the conversations of participants in the experiments. I established if the content of their conversations was altered and if the interpretations of actors changed. More specifically, I determined if the participants started to believe in and enact a deliberative governance discourse.

In the three innovative policy projects I reconstructed patterns of boundary work in two stages: the drafting of proposals for the experiments, and the experiments themselves. In the first stage, governmental actors, often together with a consultant or academic experts, started to form a change coalition and introduced boundary concepts. In the second stage, other non-governmental actors were invited to join deliberations. The change coalition applied a deliberative design for this stage. In both stages, patterns of boundary work evolved. I reconstructed these patterns with help of a research format and Transana software. In addition, I interpreted and typified the kinds of conversation participants engaged in and what the outcomes of these conversations were.

STAGE 1: PATTERN OF BOUNDARY WORK IN DRAFTING THE PROPOSALS

In the first stage of each project a group of actors drafted the proposals for the experiments. In the two Dutch cases this change coalition was formed by consultant(s), academic expert(s) and civil servant(s). In the Dairy Gateway project these actors were accompanied by representatives from agrobusinesses and environmental organizations. In this stage the potential members of the change coalitions conducted boundary work in three steps: (1) demarcations of deliberative governance discourse from government discourse; (2) introduction of boundary concepts; (3) a) demarcations of interpretation of the boundary concept *stewardship*, or b) introduction of two more boundary concepts: *scenarios* and *innovation*.

In the case of Creative Competition in the Bijlmerpark, the consultant and an external academic expert formed a change coalition that demarcated the “normal” versus a “new” way of policy formation. They argued that the “new” way would produce a variety of feasible plans for the Bijlmerpark and that citizens were to be considered experts. They contrasted this to the making of *one* feasible plan through which, as they argued, diversity of solutions and local knowledge gets lost. The consultant and academic expert introduced several new procedural elements of deliberative governance, for example, the inclusion of citizens’ expertise. They also altered the meaning of feasibility and expertise, which became boundary concepts. From the analysis I conclude that a feasible plan came to mean a financially, technically and democratically agreed upon plan. In this case, the concept of feasibility spanned the boundary between government and deliberative governance discourse.

In the Dairy Gateway project in Wisconsin, governmental actors, academic experts and societal actors collaboratively drafted a proposal. In this proposal these participants demarcated dialogue and learning from conflict, and they demarcated stewardship by farmers from farmers who pollute. In their conversations, potential members of the change coalition, which included environmental organizations and farmers’ representatives,

demarcated their interpretations of dialogue, learning and especially stewardship. This resulted in a conflict and one of the environmental organizations left the coalition. This organization no longer believed that industrial farmers could be considered stewards of the land. Hence, it no longer believed in this element of deliberative governance.

In the case of the Protein Highway: Make it Happen project it was mostly governmental actors, consultants and some businesses that drafted the proposal. The members of this change coalition first demarcated a doomsday scenario for the region from a desirable perspective that included cluster development. Cluster development was interpreted as a spatially bringing together of agrobusinesses that would benefit these businesses, but also as a way to put less strain on land use in the area. It was even thought to be a way to increase animal welfare and the environmental quality of the region. Second, the change coalition introduced the boundary concepts *scenarios* and *innovation*; these were also multi-interpretable. The concept of scenarios was interpreted as a “seductive perspective” that was to be promoted while others interpreted it as being a tool for deliberation. Innovation meant the innovation of products of businesses in the region, for example, new ways to use chicken feathers. Innovation also meant new ways of cooperation between agrobusinesses, and it was interpreted as being an innovation of the “system” in which government, businesses and non-governmental actors operate. Third, the change coalition enabled the its members to blur their different interpretations of the concepts *innovation*, *scenario* and *cluster development*. Table 6.1. illustrates the three steps of boundary work in the first stage of the three projects.

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
<i>Creative competition in the Bijlmerpark</i>	Demarcation of deliberative governance discourse from government: new versus old	Boundary concepts: Feasibility and expertise	Blurring feasibility
<i>Dairy Gateway project</i>	Demarcation of deliberative governance discourse from government: dialogue versus conflict	Boundary concepts: Dialogue, learning and stewardship	Demarcation of government interpretation of stewardship: fracture line
<i>Protein Highway: MiH Project</i>	Demarcation of deliberative governance discourse from government: doomsday scenario versus desirable scenario	Boundary concepts: Innovation and scenarios	Blurring innovation, scenarios and cluster development

Table 6.1. Three steps of boundary work in the first stage of the three cases

Hence, in all projects the change coalition introduced boundary concepts that challenged a more frozen government discourse. They all criticized and provided alternatives to this discourse. The change coalitions proposed to improve the interactions between government and society. These proposals paved the way to explore new *content*, for example, cluster development and stewardship. In the two Dutch projects a blurring of the interpretation of the boundary concepts feasibility, innovation, and scenarios enabled the continuation of the projects. In the first stage of the Dairy Gateway project demarcations of interpretations of stewardship induced conflict and one potential coalition member left. In this case the remaining members of the change coalition all interpreted stewardship from a deliberative governance discourse. In all three projects a change coalition was formed, and

the acceptance of the proposals marked the transition to the organization of deliberations with a broader range of participants.

STAGE 2: PATTERN OF BOUNDARY WORK IN DELIBERATIONS

In the second stage of all three projects, a variety of participants engaged in deliberations that consultants had designed. Creative Competition for redevelopment of the Bijlmerpark had a design that brought together a consortia of citizens and professionals. These consortia drafted plans for the park and competed to win. In the Dairy Gateway project the consultants applied a deliberative design that consisted of mediation in regional farmer-to-neighbor meetings, farmer-to-farmer meetings, and consensus building at a statewide convening. This design included rules of interaction and facilitated conversations. Deliberations took place between governmental actors, businesses, business representatives, environmental organizations, and both organized and unorganized citizens. These deliberative venues covered a large part of the project. In contrast, in the end the Protein Highway: Make it Happen project did not include many deliberative venues nor did organized or unorganized citizens participate. At the start of the project consultants had proposed organizing scenario workshops and public arenas that would include a broad range of societal actors. However, these never materialized. Instead, the consultants invited a few of the professional environmental and animal welfare organizations to the one-day workshop. Moreover, at the majority of the meetings in the Protein Highway: Make it Happen project, governmental actors interacted with businesses from the agrosector. Below I will address my conclusions on the design and number of deliberative venues, and the scope and depth of participation in relation to boundary work. But first I will present the reconstructed patterns of boundary work in the second stage of the three projects. This will reveal that boundary work led to credible *government* discourse in the redevelopment of the Bijlmerpark. In the Protein Highway Project *governance* discourse became credible, and in the Dairy Gateway project *deliberative governance* discourse.

The Dutch cases: hidden interpretative conflict becomes overt

In both Dutch cases the change coalition introduced boundary concepts. In the case of the Bijlmerpark the two concepts, *feasibility* and *expertise*, were interpretable from a government and a deliberative governance discourse. In the case of the Protein Highway Project, the concepts *innovation* and *scenarios* were introduced. In the conversations at the deliberative venues organized in each project, the following pattern of boundary work could be reconstructed:

Step 1: Boundary spanning concepts

In both Dutch cases, the facilitators introduced the new discourse and participants immediately engaged in a collaborative inquiry into boundary concepts such as a feasible plan and cluster development. The participants did not negotiate the meaning of these concepts, but started to design feasible plans for the Bijlmerpark, and in the Protein Highway project developed instruments for cluster development. Hence, participants in the Dutch cases seemed to enact deliberative governance discourse and engage in mutual learning. However, in the Protein Highway: Make it Happen project participants only briefly discussed the meaning of the concept of scenarios and of innovation. Were scenarios desirable futures, or possible futures that would help to explore options? For most of the project, these interpretative struggles were not settled. The meaning of scenarios and

innovation remained blurred when participants engaged in a collaborative inquiry into cluster development.

Step 2: Conflicting interpretations: demarcations of discourses

In both Dutch projects, the boundary concepts became the subject of an interpretative conflict. At the last meeting of Creative Competition in the Bijlmerpark participants entered this conflict. Citizens claimed they could not recognize any of their expert input in the plans that professional planners presented. The alderwoman settled this conflict. She claimed that they did not recognize their input in the professional plans because of the citizens' ignorance and her own. The participants accepted this interpretation and the policy formation returned to the usual planning procedures in which professional planners resumed their roles as experts. This case demonstrates that more institutionalized and rather frozen discourse can resist change.

At the scenario workshop of the Protein Highway project, there was one instance at which the steering committee members started to discuss their conflicting interpretations of cluster development and innovation. So far, this interpretative struggle had been hidden. They argued whether cluster development was about relocation of businesses to improve the economic viability of the area, or about relocation of businesses (and others) to improve the economic viability AND land use. In relation to this question, they discussed whether a broad range of stakeholders had to be involved in the deliberations or not. In this discussion the steering committee members demarcated their interpretation of innovation and cluster development. To gain even more credibility for their interpretations, they referred to the support they had gained in their parallel workshop. The hidden conflict about meaning became overt. It was settled in the deliberative meeting with participants. The participants agreed that the Protein Highway: Make it Happen project was about cluster development by businesses. Spatial quality was not their concern. Other societal actors were not needed for these sorts of innovation. The Innovation Network had acted as parrhesiastes and criticized more frozen government discourse. In the course of the project, their interpretation of cluster development, innovation and scenarios from a deliberative governance perspective had been excluded.

Step 3: Boundary transcending continued in collaborative inquiry

In Creative Competition in the Bijlmerpark there was no third step of boundary work. The project had ended. In the Protein Highway project, the interpretative conflict resulted in a collaborative inquiry into cluster development by businesses and governmental actors. They agreed that government had to stimulate business entrepreneurship. Participants believed that a "seductive perspective," a desirable scenario that included cluster development by businesses had to be developed and communicated to other businesses. *Governance* discourse by entrepreneurs had become credible. This case demonstrates that innovative policy formation was possible but also limited. Governmental actors and businesses considered network governance as a form of entrepreneurship. First and foremost, this businesslike policy innovation (Innovation Ltd./Innovatie B.V.) had to benefit agrobusinesses in the region.

Hence, in both Dutch cases, it appears as though participants avoided conflict as long as possible. First, politicians and civil servants turned to experiments with deliberative governance to avoid political struggles in the normal policy formation process about

building in a park or about cluster development. Second, when the experiments started, the change coalition and participants blurred interpretations of the proposals regarding the experiments and the boundary concepts in them. This enabled a continuation of the experiments. However, at some point in the second stage, an interpretative conflict about the boundary concepts entered the conversations. These became fracture line concepts. Interestingly, in both cases a potential conflict about the content did not evolve. In the case of the Bijlmerpark, a possible conflict about building in the park remained off the table. In the Protein Highway Project participants did not discuss the potentially controversial concept of cluster developments (which earlier on also had been referred to as agroparks and piggery apartments). This was markedly different in the U.S. case.

Dairy Gateway project: credible deliberative governance

In the Dairy Gateway project I constructed three additional steps of boundary work. My analysis reveals a different credibility struggle.

Step 1: Demarcating dialogue from conflict and enactment of stewardship

In the Dairy Gateway project, the first step consisted of three elements. First, the consultants introduced dialogue or learning and demarcated them from conflict. They did so at almost all meetings. Second, at most meetings, participants also enacted dialogue or learning, for example, by sitting in a circle and sharing stories. The mediators applied several strategies that I recognized as strategy of indirection (Forester 2000; 2009), to encourage dialogue and learning. Third, to gain credibility for the concept *stewardship*, farmers immediately wanted to prove they could be stewards of the land. They demonstrated their willingness to improve their environmental performance either through hands-on solutions, the development of an EMS, or the development of standards for a generic EMS. They invited citizens or environmental organizations to deliberate on these concepts of stewardship.

Step 2: Reflective conversations about demarcations

In the second step participants engaged in conversations mostly about stewardship. In some instances these conversations developed into a conflict, especially when a manure spill or some other incident had occurred in the recent past. The facilitators were able to return the conversations to normal or reflective ones by re-enactment of dialogue and learning. In the reflective conversations participants talked about the differences between their normal adversarial relations and the new cooperative relationships. Moreover, this led them to cross boundaries around their subdiscourses, which are part of government discourse, and to interpret farmers as stewards of the land, environmentalists as potential partners to improve farming practices, and government as a facilitator rather than inspector.

Step 3: Boundary spanning continues in collaborative inquiries

In the Dairy Gateway project, it was only after the first two steps that participants engaged in a collaborative inquiry into several forms of stewardship. Neighbors of farmers suggested to farmers how they could improve their environmental performance, for example, with help of straw covers or a digester. At the farmer-to-farmer meetings, farmers and governmental actors engaged in an inquiry into Environmental Management Systems²⁹⁵ that would be acceptable to both actors. In statewide deliberations, environmental organizations and farmers' representatives elaborated on environmental standards that could be used in the EMS's. Moreover, as a final step at these meetings, the participants collaboratively set the agenda for the next steps to be taken to further develop stewardship

of farmers. Deliberative governance discourse had become credible. Table 6.2 summarizes the patterns of boundary work in the second stage of the three projects.

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Result
CC in Bijlmerpark	Collaborative inquiry into boundary concept <i>feasible park</i> .	Conflict and government interpretation of feasible and expertise "wins."	-	<i>Credible government discourse</i>
Scenario building in PH	Collaborative inquiry into boundary concept <i>cluster development</i> . Discussion about scenarios.	Conflict about meaning of scenarios and innovation. Governance interpretation "wins."	Continued collaborative inquiry (government and business) into cluster development.	<i>Credible governance discourse by entrepreneurs</i>
Mediation and Consensus building in DG	Demarcation of dialogue and learning from conflict. Enactment of dialogue and learning. Boundary concept <i>stewardship</i> , often introduced by farmers.	Reflective conversations about stewardship.	Collaborative inquiry into stewardship.	<i>Credible deliberative governance</i>

Table 6.2. Boundary work in stage two of the three projects

CONCLUSIONS: BOUNDARY WORK AND CREDIBLE DELIBERATIVE GOVERNANCE

The empirical results demonstrate that the introduction of boundary concepts, such as the concept of feasibility and stewardship, created a sphere of engagement for participants. It is in this sphere that participants explored the boundary spanning ideas and demarcated their conflicting interpretations to gain credibility for them. These demarcations made visible the potential fracture lines between discourses and thus between different interpretations. The analysis also demonstrates that without an interruption by facilitators, these fracture lines led to conflict. Moreover, conflict made it impossible to change frozen discourse but when facilitators redirected demarcations toward reflective conversations this enabled alternative discourse to become credible.

As we saw in the two Dutch cases, conflict about interpretations of boundary concepts prevented deliberative governance discourse from becoming credible. In Creative Competition for redevelopment of the Bijlmerpark this conflict occurred at the end of the experiment. The alderwoman no longer considered citizens to be experts that can produce feasible plans. She demarcated government discourse in which professional planners are the only experts. At this moment, *government* discourse regained credibility. In the Protein Highway Project, a conflict about interpretations of the concepts *scenarios* and *innovation* surfaced almost at the end of the project. In this case, businesses and a majority

of governmental actors argued against the Innovation Network and its deliberative governance interpretation of these concepts. They believed that one desirable scenario that government, academic experts and businesses had developed for the region had to be promoted, and that innovation meant product and process innovation rather than innovation of the way actors interacted. In this case, the conflict led to credible *governance* discourse. However, the Dairy Gateway project demonstrates that with help of specific facilitation techniques — of which participants' enactment of deliberative governance discourse at the start of meetings is a part — a facilitator can redirect demarcations and make them part of reflective conversations. For example, one of the neighbors of a large farm questioned the stewardship of the farmer. The farmer responded with a demarcation of government discourse and argued that it was not possible to prove that he had contaminated the water. At this point, the facilitator asked both to engage in a dialogue about possible solutions rather than to sustain conflict. This is when they started to reflect on their conflicting interpretations of stewardship, and engaged in a dialogue to explore possible solutions. In this case deliberative governance discourse gained credibility.

Hence, a comparison of two Dutch cases and one from the U.S. demonstrated that it is through boundary work and participants' responses to it that government discourse, governance discourse, or deliberative governance discourse became credible. It also demonstrated that it was only in the Dairy Gateway project that deliberative governance discourse gained credibility, including the idea to include environmental organizations and citizens in a dialogue on the development of stewardship and environmentally friendly farm practices. It was only in this experiment that participants engaged in *reflective* conversations about government and deliberative governance discourse, for example, about the meaning of dialogue and of stewardship, and about the subdiscourses of farmers, government and environmentalists. The introduction of boundary concepts and a reflective quality of the conversations among participants contributed to a gaining of credibility of deliberative governance discourse. Innovation of government discourse was limited but possible. From the analysis of boundary work, I conclude that the credibility of policy innovation varied with the implementation of the deliberative design.

6.2. INNOVATION LTD.: BOUNDARY WORK, DELIBERATIVE DESIGN AND DEMOCRACY

The comparison of boundary work in three policy innovations leads to three general observations that result in practical and theoretical recommendations. Finally, as the most significant result of this study, I will discuss the democratic promises of deliberative governance theory.

OBSERVATION 1: FACILITATORS DETERMINE THE FATE OF DELIBERATIVE GOVERNANCE

My first observation is that in the three cases a change coalition and participants interpreted the innovative forms of governing from a deliberative governance discourse, a government, and a governance discourse.²⁹⁶ The experiments in themselves were boundary concepts.²⁹⁷

These innovative forms of governing were multi-interpretable and this enabled coalition formation.²⁹⁸ However, I also demonstrated that the interpretation of the change coalition — and the facilitators part of that — turned out to be crucial for credible deliberative governance discourse. It was important to have a discursively undivided change coalition that interpreted boundary concepts from a deliberative governance discourse.²⁹⁹ At the same time this coalition needed to stimulate facilitators to create reflective conversations about various critical interpretations of the boundary concepts.

As we saw, the implementation of each experiment was determined by — in the Dutch cases — a hidden, well embedded, almost frozen, interpretation. In the Dairy Gateway project the change coalition contested and negotiated deliberative governance discourse. After these negotiations they formed a broad and united coalition that included farmers and environmentalists that believed in farmers' stewardship. In stage two of the Dairy Gateway project, this united change coalition enabled facilitators to guard deliberative governance discourse. This meant that the facilitators were able to stimulate reflective conversations about the boundary concept *stewardship*. In this case, at several critical moments when conflict occurred, the facilitator was able to redirect adversarial participants and asked them to speak fearlessly about their critical interpretations of stewardship. At the same time they encouraged participants to engage in a dialogue. In both Dutch cases, a hidden dominant interpretation of the experiments limited the possibility to alter government discourse. For example, in the case of the Protein Highway, a dominant *governance* interpretation of the proposal and of the boundary concepts in it led to a *governance* implementation of the deliberative design. This interpretation excluded other possible interpretations, for example, of *innovation* as systems innovation, of *cluster development* as a spatial and environmental improvement, of *scenarios* as a technique to foster deliberation and reflections. In this case, the boundary concepts that addressed the procedures, for example scenarios and innovation, were also interpreted from a governance rather than deliberative governance discourse. This dominant interpretation led environmental and animal welfare organizations to exclude themselves. At critical moments, the facilitators were unable to guard deliberative governance discourse. For example, when members of the change coalition started to fight about the interpretations of the boundary concepts, the facilitators were unable to redirect the conversation to a reflective collaborative inquiry. The facilitators had become part of the conflict and were defending the dominant interpretation of the experiment. As a result, the change coalition, in alliance with participating businesses, imposed their interpretation of cluster development, scenarios and innovation. They promoted it as the desirable future for the region. This limited the discursive deliberative space in which others could contest or reflect on the interpretations of boundary concepts.

OBSERVATION 2: DELIBERATIVE DESIGN FACILITATES REFLECTIVE CONVERSATIONS

A second observation is that the differences in deliberative designs induced different patterns of boundary work. These patterns influenced the quality of the conversations. In the Dairy Gateway project, facilitation techniques, such as sharing stories, and strategies of indirection, enabled reflective conversations about different interpretations of boundary concepts. For example, participants explored the meaning of stewardship. With help of the deliberative design and its implementation, the change coalition made room for arguments about stewardship. Participants were able to demarcate their subdiscourses. The change

coalition did not impose their interpretation of stewardship. They suggested it and created a sphere of engagement to explore whether this was a credible idea. In this case, these disagreements did not turn into conflict. The facilitators were able to induce participants to reflect on their conflicting interpretations.

The Dutch proposals included a deliberative design that consisted of rules of conduct and it prescribed how many meetings were to be held, with whom and with what agenda. However, it lacked facilitation techniques and in both Dutch cases parts of the design were altered when they were implemented. In these cases participants did not negotiate the meaning of boundary concepts such as cluster development or a feasible plan. Participants started to draw plans for the park and think about ways to develop agro-clusters. They were not assisted to demarcate their interpretations of the boundary concepts, nor to engage in a struggle about possible conflicting interpretations. In these cases conflict occurred at moments at which members of the change coalition tried to impose their interpretation of the boundary concepts. The members of the coalition started to fight. The facilitators were unable to redirect this conflict. They had no facilitation techniques to fall back on, nor could they re-enact an agreement to engage in dialogue or a learning process. In these cases, dominant discourse was not altered.

Hence, the empirical findings suggest that a deliberative design can contribute to the reflective quality of the conversation if, and only if, this process is well facilitated. Subsequently, the reflective quality of a conversation leads to credible deliberative governance. A practical implication for experiments with deliberative governance is that deliberative settings can be staged in such a way that they enable participants to reflect upon and demarcate their discourses and subdiscourses. Through an “active manipulation of the setting” facilitators can influence how participants behave in this setting (Hajer, 2005a, p. 626). A setting can encourage participants to engage in *reflective* collaborative inquiries. Hence, it is a *convening* of the process but also a *facilitation* of reflective conversations that can be considered. In other words, in experiments with deliberative governance a design should specify who should participate, at what moments, and with what agenda. A design can also include facilitation techniques, such as sharing stories or signing a document with conversations rules. These facilitation techniques stage the setting and enable participants to engage in a collaborative inquiry and, in case of conflict, enable a reflective conversation about interpretations of boundary concepts to occur (see also below).³⁰⁰

OBSERVATION 3: COLLABORATIVE DISCOURSE SHOULD EMERGE, NOT BE IMPOSED

A third observation, which complements the previous one, is that a quick move toward a collaborative inquiry that lacks reflectivity makes it difficult to alter relatively frozen discourse. In other words, if there is no room to contest new ideas they will not be accepted.

Conflict and reflectivity were avoided especially in the Dutch cases. In contrast to the Dairy Gateway project in Wisconsin, the Dutch did not apply techniques to facilitate demarcations that might lead to conflict of interests or interpretations. Moreover, the analysis demonstrates that participants also did not evoke these struggles. In both Dutch cases, the change coalitions successfully applied a pragmatic approach that aimed at solutions.

They wanted participants to focus on a development of feasible plans for the Bijlmerpark, and on instruments for cluster development in the Protein Highway Region.³⁰¹ That is what participants did. However, this pragmatic approach also limited the possibility for deliberative governance to become credible. An avoidance of conflict made it harder to gain credibility for deliberative governance discourse. The boundary concepts of scenarios, innovation and cluster development were interpreted from a dominant discourse. This excluded alternative interpretations.

The contrasting case, which the Dairy Gateway turned out to be, demonstrated that conflict does not need to be avoided. Moreover, it shows that conflict — including demarcations of discourses — contributes to change of dominant discourse. In this case two things happened: facilitators redirected conflicts about interests to struggles over interpretations, and they invited participants to reflect upon and speak fearlessly about their conflicting interpretations.³⁰² In this case, conflict was on the table, but it was redirected to a reflection on differences and possible agreement on interpretations. The boundary concepts and a deliberative design that paid attention to facilitation techniques enabled this reflective collaborative search. In the Dairy Gateway project, rather than being antagonists, participants turned into agonists (Mouffe, 2008). They agreed to disagree at some points and to collaboratively try to improve the environmental performance of farmers.³⁰³

Hence, experiments with deliberative governance should not immediately move to “collaborative discourse³⁰⁴” (Rosenberg, 2007a, p. 132). This is what happened in the Dutch cases. In other words, tension and a facilitation of the emergence of conflict need to be part of the conversations. New forms of governing and the alternative solutions can become more credible if *differences* in interpretations and positions, and *consensus* in outcomes are facilitated.³⁰⁵

A winning team: deliberative design, boundary work and good facilitation

A practical implication of the three observations is that a deliberative design and facilitators that make boundary work possible are crucial to bring about credible deliberative governance.³⁰⁶ The deliberative design should stage settings for reflective conversations in which participants can demarcate their interpretations. To become part of credible discourse, the meaning of boundary concepts should not be imposed but negotiated and reflected upon. Hence, credible deliberative governance discourse can be achieved when three conditions are taken into account. First, a change coalition interprets the experiment from the perspective of a deliberative governance discourse. Second, the experiments with deliberative governance are organized and facilitated. This means that facilitators apply a process design and a design for techniques and strategies to alter the type of conversation in which actors engage. Third, the facilitators (in cooperation with a change coalition) try to induce the following ideal pattern of boundary work:

Step 1: Boundary concepts: a united change coalition that introduces boundary concepts that provide different interpretations of a (policy) problem.

Step 2: Boundary concepts “proven”: a powerful actor, for example, a farmer, demonstrates that he or she indeed can span boundaries (at this stage credibility can also be gained by a demarcation of expertise or experience).

Step 3: Reflective conversations: in these conversations among a broad range of actors there is room for demarcations of subdiscourses. Participants contest and explore the

meaning of the boundary concepts in a reflective way. They can be both critical and empathetic of dominant discourse.

Step 4: Reflective collaborative learning: enactment of the boundary concepts through a collaborative inquiry and a communal agenda setting for a followup of the deliberations.³⁰⁷

REFLECTION 1: FLUID AND FROZEN POWER IN THE ANALYSIS OF BOUNDARY WORK

In chapter 1, I argued that the analysis of boundary work adds a dimension to the study of experiments with deliberative governance: the study of fluid power in language. I believed this was necessary because in the experiments that I had been part of participants followed the procedures of deliberation, but in their language (and actions) they did not necessarily seem to believe and enact deliberative governance discourse. It was hard to alter “frozen” discourse and practice. Therefore, I argued that we need to study the *discourse* and *practice* of experiments with deliberative governance. In addition to pushing back the consequences of these more frozen power differences through deliberative designs (cf. Benhabib, 1996; Cohen, 1989; Gutmann and Thompson, 1996; Fung, 2006, p. 5; Zijde, 1998; Bekkers et al., 2007b; Rosenberg, 2007b; Hendriks, 2009; Dodge, 2009; Metze, 2009), this study sought to demonstrate that fluid power differences embedded in language need to be taken into account as well. For example, in the case of the Protein Corridor: Make it Happen project, participants agreed to continue to refer to animals as “protein.” Even though animal welfare organizations and environmental organizations had been invited to deliberate, this more frozen discourse of the agro-sector (self-) excluded them from this project.

The analysis of boundary work demonstrated that indeed, even though all actors accepted the participation of non-governmental actors in decision making, they continued to struggle over the interpretation of the *quality* of this participation. In other words, in all three cases participants accepted and implemented procedures of deliberative governance. However, at the same time routine frozen discourse determined interpretation of these procedures, for example, whether citizens’ local knowledge was considered expertise, or if innovation included interactions between all sorts of actors. Both through procedures and through discourse people and ideas were included and excluded in these experiments with deliberative governance. The study of boundary work made visible how discourse (hence, content) became credible, and how other discourse was discredited. This also implied that certain ideas and actors were included and others were excluded from the experiment with deliberative governance. Therefore, an analysis of boundary work complements a study of procedural elements such as number and scope of participants, the assembly of a change coalition, the type and number of deliberative venues organized, transparency in information and procedures.

However, there are some limitations to the study of boundary work that need to be further explored. Important questions, for example, are how it relates to number and scope of participants? How boundary work relates to the number of deliberative venues, and what the impact is of changed discourse on people that did not participate in these experiments? It might be relevant to know how *many* and what type of people participated and started to believe in the discourse. Another important question is how boundary work relates to, for example, the status and charisma of people who draw and span boundaries. A question is whether boundary work by more charismatic, authoritative or original people would be

more easily accepted. The empirical results suggest that a politician, a professional planner, or a farmer that proves to be a good steward, had more impact on a change of discourse than a random citizen. Actors that speak authentically and upright might be powerful in experiments with deliberative governance. They need to set an example before others will believe a new discourse, in this case deliberative governance. Hence, it is interesting to find out if it matters who transcends boundaries or demarcates them, as this can also limit or enable change of discourse.

To sum up, knowledge about the assembly of the change coalition, the number and scope of participants, the number of deliberative venues and conditions under which they participated reveal how big the “movement” was. The analysis of boundary work tells us *what* discourse changed. However, we also learned that there are still challenges to better appreciate the interplay between the content of boundary work in relation to the procedural aspects of experiments with deliberative governance. Hence, a follow-up study that further investigates connections between fluid power and static power of actors, organizations and institutions would contribute to knowledge about how deliberative governance discourse becomes credible.

REFLECTION 2: THE DEMOCRATIC AMBITIONS OF DELIBERATIVE GOVERNANCE

In the introduction I argued that governing through deliberative governance promises to improve the democratic quality of government decisions through an enhancement of the quality of the conversations: learning and change are stimulated and decisions become more credible. To conclude, I will revisit these claims of deliberative governance theory.

Learning and change

Deliberative governance theory builds on the idea from deliberative *democracy* theory that exchange of arguments and reflectivity enable better informed decision making and collaborative learning and change. It is the communicative style in interactions that needs to be improved to facilitate learning and change. In chapter 1, I introduced the concept *parrhesia* – critique of dominant discourse – as one way to induce reflectivity. Moreover, empathy with other interpretations is how participants engage in reflective conversations. In the empirical studies of the three experiments I concluded that in reflective conversations participants were able to contest routinized government discourse and were empathetic with other conflicting interpretations. Through reflective conversations, deliberative governance discourse indeed became credible, whereas conversations that did not reach this quality merely reproduced dominant discourse. In reflective conversations, participants interacted differently than before, and they became convinced of a deliberative governance interpretation of concepts. For example, they started to believe that industrial farmers could be stewards of the land, or that environmentalist could help farmers to be good stewards. Hence, reflective conversations enabled learning and change. This promise of deliberative governance theory was kept in the policy practice due to an active involvement of participants in a negotiation on the meaning of these innovations. Moreover, these participants immediately also implemented this change: they started to interact differently.

The empirical results demonstrate that in all three experiments, the ideas of learning and change are convincing. A demarcation of the concepts of *expertise*, *experience*

and *learning* persuaded participants and made deliberative governance discourse more credible. For example, when the change coalition argued that an environmental management system or a digester had been tried out in the Netherlands or by another farmer, this was a convincing argument, for environmentalists as well, to further explore these ideas. In all three projects, it was the usual academic experts and all sorts of other actors who successfully demarcated their expertise, experience, or learning or that of others. In the three projects, what I have called *learning* discourse was a successful way to gain credibility for interpretations and to alter solutions. Moreover, it was a way to include all sorts of knowledge in the deliberations, including that of lay people. As we saw in the introduction, this is what deliberative governance theory aims for: the inclusion of citizens as experts to improve decision making (cf. Mansbridge, 2007; Funtowicz, 2003; Jasanoff, 2004; Fischer, 2000, p. 2; Dryzek, 1990, p. 131 & 132).³⁰⁸ Hence, a learning discourse in this case was a “democratized form of science” (Woodhouse, 2001)³⁰⁹ in which other forms of knowledge are considered as important as scientific knowledge. It includes a variety of actors as experts, and their knowledge and experience³¹⁰ as expertise and knowledge.

However, from the cases we also find that the learning discourse is convincing too. It is a relatively frozen discourse that cannot easily be rejected. This is also why it is a discursive resource to change other discourses. To address citizens and other actors as experts is a powerful way to both make actors that usually are excluded more easily accepted as equal partners in deliberations, and to have participants engage in a collaborative inquiry rather than in negotiations or a conflict of interests. To demarcate a learning discourse can be a strategy of change. As we saw in the Bijlmerpark and in the Dairy Gateway, the labeling of a variety of participants as experts contributed to more equal deliberations. Due to this labeling these actors were included and their arguments were considered in these experiments. Moreover, a demarcation of a learning discourse was a powerful way to convince participants of deliberative governance discourse. For example, in the Bijlmerpark the consultant convinced governmental actors and planners to regard citizens as experts that could co-determine the feasibility of the plans. In the Dairy Gateway project and in the Protein Highway Project otherwise adversarial professional organizations were able to cooperate as experts.

Hence, the learning discourse in experiments with deliberative governance is a democratization of expertise. It allows for inclusion of expertise and experience other than merely academic. At the same time the labeling of citizens and non-governmental actors such as businesses and animal welfare organizations as experts is a powerful way to make them, their interpretations and their arguments more acceptable to actors in power. Deliberative governance theory promotes a learning discourse, and at the same time this discourse promotes deliberative governance. It is crucial, however, to facilitate a meaningful exchange among various actors. A mutual questioning of assumptions is necessary for deliberation rather than power to prevail.

Credibility on the line

Deliberative governance theory, as developed in this thesis, promises credible decisions. In deliberative governance theory, the concept of credibility means the enactment and acceptance of discourses in interactions. This is different from legitimacy and authority that is granted through formal and legal positions, procedures and procedural aspects, such as transparency.³¹¹ In this thesis, I did not explain acceptance of dominant discourse

by looking at its formal legitimacy or authority, rather, I studied the discursive dynamics by which participants started to believe in or reject, in our case, deliberative governance discourse. This is in line with the ideas in deliberative democracy theory that argue, for example, that: “Without deliberation, democratic choices are not exercised in a meaningful way. If the preferences that determine the results of democratic procedures are unreflective or ignorant, then they lose their claim to political authority over us. Deliberation is necessary if the claims to democracy are not to be de-legitimized” (Fishkin, 1991, p. 29; cf. also Dryzek, 2001, p. 651; Benhabib, 1996, p. 69; Cohen, 1989, p. 145-146; Besette, 1994; Hajer, 2009). I introduced boundary work in deliberations as the way by which credibility of discourse, and through that democratic choices and procedures, comes about or does not. For example, participants in deliberations contested boundary concepts that were part of new discourse. Sometimes participants started to believe in these new solutions and sometimes they did not. It is a dynamic process through which new discourse gains credibility, or fails.

The empirical results also demonstrate that the formal and legal positions, procedures and procedural aspects, by which we legitimize authority of government, for example, can gain credibility in deliberations. For example, in the Dairy Gateway project government’s normal role to inspect farmers gained credibility among deliberating farmers. They negotiated and reflected on this role and started to believe that government’s authority in this case was credible. They concluded that they did not want to police each other, but that government was the best actor to inspect them. In this way, the farmers re-enacted government’s authority as an inspector. In deliberations they confirmed the role of government, which was already formally legitimate. This empirical example shows that it is a misunderstanding that deliberative governance theory considers authority or legitimacy derived from formal rules, procedures and institutional arrangements as obsolete. On the contrary, this example validates the idea of deliberative governance theory that it is in deliberations that the credibility of formal rules, procedures and institutional arrangements is often substantiated. It is the *enactment* of credibility of these formal arrangements in conversations that makes sure that legitimate authority of governmental actors stays legitimate. It is also in these interactions that it can become discredited and through that, perhaps in the long run, illegitimate.

Credible democratic deliberative governance

Finally, I will discuss the pragmatic approach of deliberative governance theory. This approach means that it promotes *collaborative inquiries* into solutions for the common good. This is a better way for decision making than ideological debate and bargaining about interests. For example, Parkinson argued that interactions should be deliberative and not as “irrational as bargaining and strategic action” (Parkinson, 2006, p. 4). Settings for learning and change should be staged for credible decision making. This implies that deliberative governance theory does not take a normative stance as is sometimes emphasized in critical policy analysis. Scholars in this tradition — Fischer, Fung and Wright, and Dryzek, among others — argue that policy analysts should deliberately take a stand in democratic debate. They should be normative and support those who are not in power, for example, environmental organizations or citizens’ groups. Political scientists should be normative and stand side by side with powerless citizens or organizations and empower them. Otherwise policy analysis is always at risk of reproducing the status quo.

Deliberative governance theory is on strained terms with this type of standpoint reflectivity. It is exactly the normative standpoints that experiments with deliberative governance try to avoid, as these hinder collaborative learning and change. Deliberative governance theory does not want to start from such premises as, for example, that farmers or other businesses are always the polluters, or that government and environmental organizations are trying to ruin businesses. On the contrary, it argues that these conflicting standpoints can be overcome when actors engage in reflective collaborative inquiries into solutions for the common good. When political scientists take a normative stance in these deliberations, a pragmatic approach of finding credible solutions in a collaborative inquiry will be impossible.³¹²

However, the case studies in this thesis demonstrate that standpoint reflectivity is necessary in experiments with deliberative governance: the “low” road is always alluring for both governmental actors or others that initiate these experiments, and for participants in experiments with deliberative governance. First, the Dutch cases demonstrate that initiators of the experiments can pay lip service and interpret and implement deliberative governance as an experiment with network governance, or even disregard the results and return to normal policy making procedures as soon as possible. From the study of boundary work in these cases we learn that experiments are boundary concepts in themselves. People who initiate these experiments, whether governmental actors, business leaders, consultants, or academics, interpret them from different discourses. As we have seen, the initiators’ dominant interpretation of the experiment determines what discourse becomes credible. The most conservative interpretation that leads to the least change for powerful actors tends to become the most credible. This is one low road that is attractive. The experiments can easily become isolated incidents of credible deliberative governance, or they can turn into a case of credible (network) governance that reproduces the power of networks already established, for example, between government and businesses. In a pragmatic point of view, this would not be a problem, since problems are getting solved. However, alternatively I may argue that these experiments are still too exclusive. Through dominant and routine discourse, too many participants and forms of expertise are excluded.

The empirical results from the Dairy Gateway project also demonstrate that there are at least two ways to guard the democratic ambitions of deliberative governance theory. First, as we have seen in this case, the initiators of the experiment reflected on their conflicting interpretations. This enabled them to cross discursive boundaries and further promote credible deliberative governance discourse. Second, academic experts, consultants, facilitators, and governmental organizations that convene and facilitate the experiments can be watchdogs of a deliberative governance interpretation of the experiment. They can point out when interpretations of these experiments are leading toward a low road. At these moments they can use facilitation techniques to push an interpretation of the experiment from a deliberative governance discourse.

A second way in which pragmatic deliberative governance can become naïve pragmatism is when it does not take into account the low road that is alluring for *participants*.³¹³ Actively engaged citizens or businesses can easily become passive consumers or entrepreneurs. For example, it is tempting for farmers to be free riders in voluntary programs (Delmas and Keller, 2005; Darnall and Carmin, 2005; Rondinella and Vastagb, 2000; Tanesescu, 2006). The analysis of the three cases demonstrates that the low road is alluring indeed. For

example, in the Protein Highway Project governmental actors, consultants and businesses did not mind that environmental and animal welfare organizations excluded themselves. Even though they were invited, these organizations did not want to participate since they refused to think of animals as protein. In fact, this self exclusion was encouraged by a demarcation of government discourse. For example, businesses and some governmental actors successfully referred to governmental reconstruction plans to gain credibility for the exclusion of animal welfare and environmental organizations. They agreed that these organizations did not need to be included as they already had co-established the zoning plans. Moreover, in this case business leaders, again together with some governmental actors, interpreted cluster development as cooperation between businesses to benefit the business case. They excluded the alternative deliberative governance interpretation that considered cluster development a way to improve land use and spatial quality in the region. In two ways these actors agreed to take the low road rather than the high road. Even though procedurally the “marginalized voices” (Christiano, 1996, p. 259) were included, through boundary work and dominant discourses they still were excluded. Moreover, businesses were not encouraged to be actively involved and accountable for problem solving for the common good. Governmental actors and businesses agreed that businesses did not have to actively contribute to an improvement of land use or the spatial quality in the region. Hence, when dominant government discourse can be demarcated to exclude marginalized voices and ideas, the democratic promises of deliberative governance theory are no longer kept.

Again, the example of the Dairy Gateway project demonstrates that this low road can be avoided. In this case, participants used the (exceptional) Green Tier Law as an argument to continue to explore the credibility of a marginal discourse. This law made it possible for governmental actors to give businesses incentives for voluntarily going beyond environmental rules and regulations. Moreover, it stimulated businesses to deliberate with citizens and organizations that normally would oppose them. This law helped to maintain a deliberative governance interpretation of the Dairy Gateway project. Subsequently, the deliberative design of the Dairy Gateway project stimulated participants to speak fearlessly and bring their objections to the table. They were invited to contest the boundary concept of *stewardship*, and in that way test its credibility. By doing so, environmental organizations, citizens, and governmental actors started to believe that farmers can be good stewards. In this project adversaries were stimulated to engage in reflective conversations to resolve their conflicts and create an outcome that was credible to all participants.

Moreover, in the Dairy Gateway project it was through rules and regulations — routine government discourse — that environmental organizations, citizens and government created urgency for businesses to voluntarily do good for the environment. In this project farmers felt the need to improve their environmental performance. They wanted to participate in the Dairy Gateway project to acquire a *social* license to operate. They felt hindered or were afraid to be hindered by society in their farming businesses. In this case, the incentive to actively participate and feel accountable for problem solving for the common good was a threat of conflict with their neighbors and environmental organizations. Through rules and regulations, citizens and environmental organizations might be able to limit the farming businesses. Hence, fearlessly giving voice to normative positions in experiments with deliberative governance, in combination with existing governmental rules and regulations, can stimulate collaborative learning and change. In the case of the Dairy Gateway, both conflict in deliberations and the threat of court action, were necessary incentives for many

participants to change dominant discourse. Farmers became convinced that they wanted to “do well by doing good.”³¹⁴ Environmentalists, citizens and governmental actors started to believe in this stewardship of farmers because they were able to confront them with doubts and conflicts of interests in settings that resulted in reflective conversations.

Credible *democratic* deliberative governance needs conflicting standpoints for two reasons. The first is to empower citizens and organizations that participate in experiments with deliberative governance. Without conflict and struggle it is easy for powerless actors and powerless ideas never to be empowered, even though all procedures of deliberation are taken into account. Frozen discourse remains dominant. There is no incentive to learn and change. Conflict and debate are ways to create urgency for powerful actors, such as businesses, to feel more responsible for the common good. Conflicts encourage initiators and participants to take the high road in experiments with deliberative governance. Second, conflict as part of the deliberations makes deliberative governance discourse credible. If actors cannot discuss their doubts, express their interests and demarcate their subdiscourses, it will be hard for them to believe the newly proposed solutions. Participants need to be engaged in an empathetic and critical way in explorations of boundary concepts.

The study of boundary work demonstrates that credible *democratic* deliberative governance is limited: it occurs only in experiments that stage reflective conversations. To be more than an “innovation business”, participants have to be encouraged — by the setting and by the incentives from rules and regulations — to transcend boundaries around frozen discourse. Moreover, a deliberative design and facilitators that are able to redirect conflict into reflective conversations are of great value. They enable critique and empathy in conversations and consensus in outcomes. These are vital ingredients to create credible, innovative and democratic decisions.