

**Summary (English)****Authoring Cultural Change – Discursive (de)Legitimation within Rijkswaterstaat**

This is a story about legitimation and delegitimation as part of an unfolding process of change. It is based on an ethnographic study within the organization of Rijkswaterstaat and focuses on the interpretive struggle amongst so-called narratives of change – the alternative, partially competitive, narrative constructions about the change process. Three cases are used to show that organizational actors use a variety of discursive strategies to legitimate or delegitimize the organizational repositioning. In addition to the three elements of classical rhetoric – authority, rationality and morality – the analysis illuminates the use of temporality, exemplarity and mockery. The study further illustrates that legitimation and delegitimation discourses operate together in producing change and draws attention to the unintended consequences of discursive legitimation: legitimation discourses produce delegitimation discourses and vice versa. In addition, it shows how accounts over success and failure are linked with processes of identity construction and it highlights the inherently political nature of discursive legitimation through identifying mechanisms such as juxtaposing, polarizing, othering, empowering and disempowering, generalizing and stereotyping.