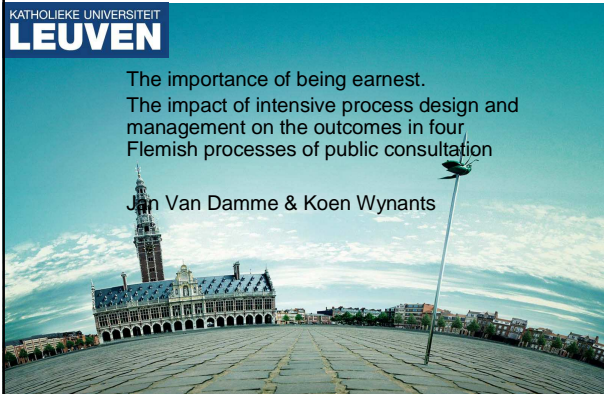



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The importance of being earnest.  
The impact of intensive process design and management on the outcomes in four Flemish processes of public consultation

Jin Van Damme & Koen Wynants





## Outline

- Problem setting
- Policy making in the network society
- Design and management of public consultation processes
- Analytical framework
- Empirical findings
- Conclusion




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## Problem setting

- ✓ Increase in number and diversity of public consultation arrangements in policy making >> competition
- ✓ Hybrid democracy –what are the rules?
- ✓ Diverging trends of professionalization, interactiveness, political primacy..
- ✓ Tension between public law perspective and network perspective

>> How we set up and manage processes of public consultation with the best possible outcomes?



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## Policy making in the network society

- ✓ governance literature & network management
- ✓ Interactive policy making as a more “open” process (new actors, broader scope, deliberative process)
- ✓ However, in practice stressing output legitimacy (policy enrichment, policy support)



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## Policy making in the network society

- ✓ Participatory democracy, stressing input legitimacy
- ✓ Deliberative democracy, stressing process legitimacy



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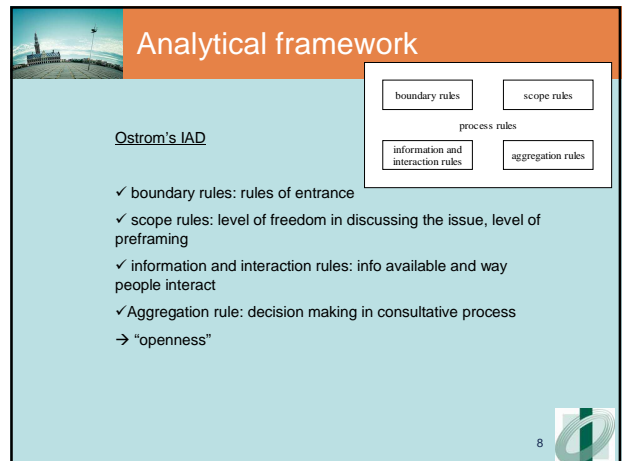
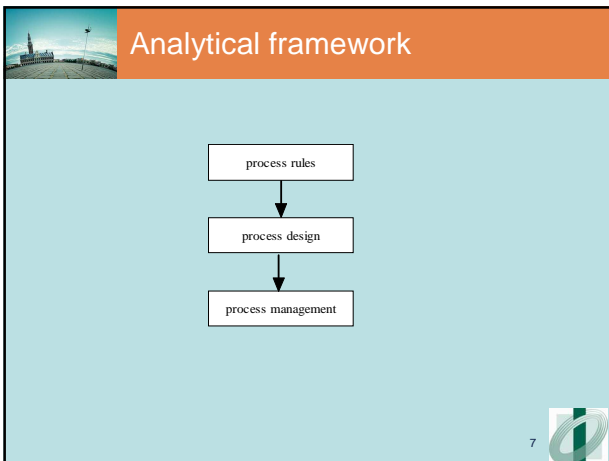


## Design and management of public consultation processes

- ✓ Public consultation processes as “processes initiated and organized by government in which citizens or organisations can give their opinion on future policy”
- ✓ Literature stresses the importance of process design and management



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- ## Analytical framework
- ✓ process design
  - ✓ process management
- "intensity"
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## Analytical framework

Results

	Objective results	Subjective results
Content results	•Policy enrichment •Policy impact	•Satisfaction with content
Process results	•social learning •conflict reduction	•satisfaction with process

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- ## Empirical findings: case descriptions
- ✓ case 1: regional nature development plan, strict procedures, steering group of local stakeholders, initiative of ANB
  - ✓ case 2: regional nature development plan, strict procedures, "notice and comment" public at large, initiative of ANB
  - ✓ case 3: local Health plan in polluted area Beerse, little legal constraints, local stakeholders, initiative of Z&G, LNE
  - ✓ case 4: local Health plan in polluted area Noorderkempen, little legal constraints, local stakeholders, initiative of Z&G, LNE
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## Process rules

Rules ("openness")	NRP steering group	NRP notice and comment
Boundary	-- Very closed, only open to mandated representatives of specific organisations	++ Very open, general and not-targeted communication
Scope	- Rather restricting frames of the discussion, "societal check" of policy proposals	-- Restricting frames of the discussion, late in policy process, extra "societal check" on a very operational level
Information and interaction	+/- Quite a lot of information is provided and tailor-made. Interaction mostly limited to participants commenting on government-prepared policy proposals. Little interaction between participants.	-- Limited information provided. Interaction limited to participants commenting in writing to ANB and written reply, no interaction between participants
Aggregation	- Quota rule and unanimity rule for specific part of advice. Possibility of minority opinion	++ Simple aggregation of comments, no filtering

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## Process rules

Plan Beerse	Plan Noorderkempen
- Rather open, self-selection though targeted communication to specific groups. A maximum of two representatives of each organization, and maximum five representatives of local community.	++ Very open, self-selection though targeted communication to specific groups
+ (+) Open, almost no restricting frames, problem definition and solutions to be developed in the process	+/- Rather restricting 'frames' of the discussion. Quite a lot of room for developing specific actions
- Quite a lot of information is provided and tailor-made. Interaction rules stress open interaction between participants and administrators.	- Quite a lot of information is provided and tailor-made. Interaction rules stress open interaction between participants and administrators.
- Consensus rule, verging on unanimity	+/- Consensus only needed for those parties collaborating on specific issues, not entire group

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## Empirical findings: rules

- ✓ Plan Noorderkempen and Plan Beerse most "open" but some differences
- ✓ NRP "notice and comment" combines open boundary and aggregation rules with narrow scope and interaction
- ✓ NRP combines consultative processes in a classic "checks and balances"

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## Empirical findings: results

- ✓ NRP "notice and comment" little overall outcome, but satisfied administrators
- ✓ NRP "notice and comment" largest divergence in satisfaction <-> plan Noorderkempen
- ✓ NRP steering group generates few new perspectives but high impact
- ✓ Plan Beerse best overall outcome, most "transformative"

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## Empirical findings: process design and management

- ✓ NRP "notice and comment" very low intensive design and management ("follow the procedure")
- ✓ Beerse most intensive design and management ("design the process")
- ✓ NRP steering group, intensive design but limited possibilities to adapt to policy situation, less intensive management ("optimize the procedure?")
- ✓ Plan Noorderkempen, mid to high intensive ("optimize the process?")

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## Empirical findings: PDM & outcomes

- ✓ more intensive PDM leads to better results
- ✓ management of expectations crucial
- ✓ process management more important than process design? <-> managed interaction between participants crucial
- ✓ even with limited autonomy, procedure can be optimized
- ✓ social learning crucial > managed interaction > trust
- ✓ different processes score differently on (input, process and output) legitimacy >> trade offs

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