SETTING THE STAGE
A Dramaturgy of Policy Deliberation

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This article aims to shed light on the performative dimension of participation in policy making. It is argued that we can enhance our understanding of the dynamics of policy deliberation examining the setting in which the deliberation takes place as well as the particular staging of that setting. Portraying political processes as sequences of staged performances of conflict and conflict resolution, this article analyzes how the design of the setting affects what is said, what can be said, and what can be said with influence. This helps to understand why many of the familiar participatory arrangements fail to satisfy both governments and the public. It also gives a new perspective on joint policy learning and opens a perspective on how to enhance the democratic quality of policy deliberation.

Is there a bias in participatory practices? A host of studies suggest that participation, once introduced to open up policy deliberation and allow for the voices of the citizens (and their associations) to be heard, often tends toward practices that have strong exclusionary effects (Mansbridge, 1980; Young, 2000). Ivo Hartman (1998), a reflective practitioner, speaks of a paradox of participation, suggesting that the more possibilities created for participation, the greater the gap between the citizens that use these opportunities and those that do not. Iris Marion Young (2000) argues that participatory practices are often governed by the norms of deliberation that, in her words, "implicitly value certain styles of expression as dispassionate, orderly, or articulate" (pp. 6-7), thus excluding those participants who do not confirm to this norm.

This worry about the performance of participatory practices is echoed in a very direct way in the theory of planning.[1] In a recent address to the

annual meeting of the American Schools of Planning, Judith Innes, one of the field's leading theorists, argued in a collaboration with reflective practitioner David Booher:

> It is time to face the facts we all know but prefer to ignore. The traditional methods of public participation in government decision making simply do not work. They do not achieve genuine participation in planning or decisions; they do not provide significant information to public officials that makes a difference to their actions; they do not satisfy members of the public that they are being heard; they do not improve the decisions that agencies and public officials make; and they don't represent a broad spectrum of the public. Worse yet, they often antagonize the members of the public who do try to work through these methods. Moreover, they pit members of the public against each other as they each feel compelled to speak of the issues in polarizing terms to get their points across, making it even more difficult for decision makers to sort through what they hear, much less to make a choice. More often these methods discourage busy and thoughtful individuals from wasting their time in going through what appear to be nothing more than rituals designed to satisfy legal requirements. (Innes & Booher, 2000)

All in their own terms, these authors raise the issue of form in participatory politics. Implicit in their analysis is the idea that it is not so much participation itself that is the problem but the very conditions under which the exchange of ideas has to take place.

If we understand participation as the attempt to involve a variety of actors from civil society in a discussion on policy interventions, we might, following Young (2000), see how this can be made into "a process in which differentiated social groups . . . attend to the particular situation of others and [are] willing to work out just solutions to their conflicts and collective problems from across their situated positions" (p. 7). Raising the issue of form, the question then is how one might create the conditions under which various groups can be allowed to create the situated and shared knowledge and understandings and "transform conflict and disagreement into agreement" (p. 118).

Yet, how can the variety of contributions be related to one another in a meaningful way? Moreover, what conditions need to be fulfilled for statements to be made that actually influence decision making? To understand the bias in participatory practices, we should not merely focus on the type of arguments that are raised but include the conditions (physical, technical, theatrical) as well. This can be done analyzing public participation in policy making in terms of the setting in which the deliberation takes place as well as the particular staging of an exchange. The first question then is

how does the particular setting influence what is said, what can be said, and what can be said with influence? Here one may argue that the setting in which utterances are made has a performative dimension: practices of participation construct their participants and some may construct people as protesters, whereas other practices may create collaborators. There are plenty of empirical studies that illustrate these effects, albeit without theorizing the role of setting in deliberation. Wynne's (1982) analysis of the bias in legal procedures is a case in point (Jasanoff, 1990), as is the early work of Amy (1987) on environmental mediation. Moreover, if the setting of policy deliberation has performative effects, then the active manipulation of the setting of policy deliberation, or what is here called staging, becomes a concern for a search for a new deliberative policy making.

Drawing on a case study, this article aims to shed light on this performative dimension of policy making. In a search for a new and more deliberative governance (Gomart & Hajer, 2002; Hajer, 2000; Hajer, 2003; Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003), it elaborates an analytical framework, adding elements of dramaturgy to the discourse-analytical approach to policy processes (Hajer, 1995). The analysis thus not only helps to understand the failure of these participatory arrangements but also aims to generate fresh ideas on how a policy deliberation may be conducted in a more democratic way.

THE CASE OF THE HOEKSCHE WAARD

The role of setting and staging in policy deliberation is examined in the debate on the future of the Hoeksche Waard in the Netherlands. It is a case with many familiar characteristics of contemporary regional planning. The Hoeksche Waard is a major island south of Rotterdam with, until now, mainly agricultural land use. Given its strategic location between the industrial and harbor complexes of Rotterdam to the north and the Belgian harbor city of Antwerp to the south, the Hoeksche Waard faces considerable pressure from developers, both from the government and the private sector. To many protagonists, the Hoeksche Waard is the obvious location for various new forms of urbanization and development. Within the span of 5 years, it was the proposed location of a second national airport, of a glass house horticulture (a major industry in the Netherlands) expansion, and of a major extension of harbor-related industrial activity. Currently, the construction of the high speed rail link to Brussels and Paris is under construction, chipping of a slice of the island. The extension of a

motorway from the north to the south is being debated, potentially result-
ing in the creation of a major intersection in the heart of the island. At the
same time, environmentalists consider the southern side of the island as
the ideal site for the large-scale creation of new wetlands, an obvious way
to act on the government's commitments under the European Habitat
Directive. For their part, policy makers from the national Department of
Public Works see this southern part of the island as an ideal water retention
area that could be used to cope with the newly recognized threat of
downstream floods from the major rivers flowing from Germany,
Belgium, and France.

The case of the Hoeksche Waard allows for the study of the role of set-
ting and staging for three reasons. First, there was a intensive controversy
on the future of the island. Second, a marked shift in terms of discourse
and discourse coalitions occurred.[2] And third, we can discern a series of
distinct practices that channeled the discussion. Over the last 5 years, five
practices can be meaningfully distinguished, and in each the debate was
enacted in a markedly different form.

Whereas the first two practices (a scenario study and the statutorily
required participation in a regional land-use plan, respectively) were more
or less traditional, the third practice was a cultural manifestation known as
AIR Southbound, and the fourth was a bottom up citizen initiative. The
fifth practice can be seen as the typical product of modern techniques of
network management in which interdependent policy actors were brought
together to address a particular problem (Kickert, Klijn, & Koppejan,
1997).

Over the course of the 5 years, the public's involvement changed from
an apathetic outlook that assumed that outsiders would decide on the
future anyway to a more self-confident stance based on an alternative plan
for the land's future. Interestingly, it was a cultural manifestation, that is a
seemingly nonpolitical practice that fulfilled a central role in this change
of outlook. Initially, this manifestation met with a lot of skepticism on the
island. As one of the principal protagonists put it, "There have been so
many plans for the Hoeksche Waard. The people are tired. They think: yet
another plan that will not be implemented" (Councillor K. van den Heuvel
of Korendijk, as quoted in "Inwoners betrekken bij ideeen 'hergebruik'
van Hoeksche Waard," 1998). Other politicians plainly saw the manifesta-
tion as a threat. "We are being prepared for changes to come," said B. Kol-
bach, mayor of one of the local municipalities. The manifestation AIR
Southbound was the arty vanguard of the coming columns of Rotterdam-
based industrialists. AIR was seen as "yet another plan, for us, but not by

us," and a row emerged over the fact that the cultural foundation had not set aside enough tickets for local people to attend its meetings. Even councilors were expected to pay a entry fee of $50 a day.[3] This incident was seen by the public as emblematic; it indicated precisely what the Hoeksche Waard could expect from AIR Southbound.

Taking this initial reception into account, the question is of course how the subsequent reframing could occur. The setting and staging of the debate are key elements of an explanation. Hence, this article will examine in some detail the way in which the setting and staging of AIR Southbound differed from the other practices of participation.

ANALYZING THE SETTING AND
STAGING OF POLITICAL DEBATES

Although the literature manifests a strong awareness that people do things with words (Austin, 1955), we sometimes forget that settings do things with people too. A discussion is not merely talk, it is an act as well. And every act takes place in a particular "contexture" (Lynch, 1991) that influences the quality of that act. The concepts of setting and staging are introduced to analyze precisely that.

The idea to examine the setting as a variable for understanding the quality of deliberation is, as such, not new. Aristotle and Pericles discussed the preconditions for deliberation in governing; Rousseau suggested that the authoritarian aspects of institutions would influence the cognitions and attitudes of those involved in the deliberation; and John Stuart Mill criticized Rousseau's ideas on the mandated representative as this form would delimit the quality of the deliberation, which was later reiterated by Burke (1969). All were examples of thinking about the contexture in which discussions were to take place and were inspired by a concern over the quality of the deliberation.

Signaling an effect is of course one thing, but how should we understand deliberation as a performative moment? In one of the few statements in which deliberation is directly related to setting and staging, Jon Elster (1998) speaks of the so-called deliberative setting. He argues,

> Deliberative setting can shape outcomes independently of the motives of
> the participants. . . . Deliberation about constitutions requires the creation
> of what I called a deliberative setting. The procedure must go beyond the
> simple recording of votes and allow for communicative interaction. Also,

the setting must steer this interaction towards arguing and away from threat-based bargaining. (pp. 104-105)

Yet, this statement begs the question: What sort of setting or staging allows for this sort of discussion? Elster assesses the influence of size, publicity, and threat of force on the quality of debates and decisions. Yet, when he talks about setting he refers to norms:

> Because there are powerful norms against naked appeals to interest or prejudice, speakers have to justify their proposals by the public interest. Because there are powerful norms against the use of threats, they have to disguise them as warnings. (p. 100)

Norms are too limited a category to explain the role of the setting. At the very least, the concept of setting should include the actual things (e.g., the stage set, the artificial devices that are employed). Moreover, in arguing his case, Elster refers to precisely those norms that others, most notably Iris Marion Young (2000), deem to be problematic for creating a truly democratic discussion (i.e., the proper and well-articulated argument and the orientation toward a common good; p. 7). To avoid this sort of confusion and get a handle on the role of settings, it is best to leave the normative concern for deliberation for the moment and go back to those social theoretical sources that tried to analytically come to grips with the role of setting without necessarily relating it to a normative ideal of a democratic discussion.

There is some helpful scholarship that can guide our thinking on how settings influence the act. Settings and staging have been an explicit theme in the work on political symbolism, most notably the work of Murray Edelman (1964). He states, "Although every act takes place in a setting, we ordinarily take scenes for granted, focusing our attention on actions" (p. 95). Edelman analyzed politics as drama, and the setting was a key element of his analysis of politics. Once politics is conceived of in dramaturgical terms, the mise-en-scène, or setting of the stage, is an obvious intervention in the play of politics: "In the drama, the opera, the ballet, in the display of paintings and in the performance of music setting is plotted and manipulated, just as often is in the staging of governmental acts" (p. 96). Note that here it is not the norm that constitutes the setting, it is the creation of a contexture. This can be sequential ordering of political moments or staging of the political act. It is what I call the setting of the stage.

Edelman (1964) drew on Kenneth Burke (1969) and in particular on Burke's *Grammar of Motives*. Burke introduced the concept of scene-act

ratio by stating, "Whereby the scene is a fit 'container' for the act, expressing in fixed properties the same quality that the action expresses in terms of development" (p. 3).[4] In arguing that scenes have to be regarded as fit containers for certain acts, Burke meant that acts could not be understood without understanding the setting within which the acting took place.

Note that Burke conceives of the relationship between form and act as more or less constant. The scene-act ratio is seen as an institutionalized relationship. Here the concept of contexture allows us to take the analysis of setting and staging one step further. In Lynch (1991), the concept of contexture signifies that the setting defines the act. Dramaturgical analysis then draws out the way in which scenes are scripted and staged as well as how the multifold players then subsequently act within and upon those scripts and stagings.

This constructivist approach allows for a more plausible analysis of contemporary politics in which stable institutional contexts are often absent and political action takes place in between orders or indeed in new political spaces outside these orders (Dryzek, 2000). Indeed, one reason to draw attention to the role of setting and staging at this particular historical conjuncture is that the very variability of the setting and staging of politics calls for more explicit attention to the dramaturgical side of political processes (Hajer, 2003).

From a poststructuralist perspective, the existing work on the dramaturgy of politics is regarded with some suspicion as it seems to run the risk of overemphasizing the stability of the relationship between act and scene.[5] Although one might have concerns about the structuralism in his work, Burke presents us with a theory for analyzing the dramaturgical dimension of politics. Key is that we see political processes as a sequence of staged performances of conflict and conflict-resolution in a particular setting (cf. Hariman, 1995). These performances are a shared production in which actors might be positioned in the role of audience for a while but nevertheless always contribute to the performance.

In an analysis of the dramaturgical dimension of policy making, discourse is not seen as being determined by settings, nor is it considered meaningful to try and establish the scene-act ratio of participatory practices in general. What we can do, however, is analyze the way in which scenes and acts interrelate to produce a particular staging of public involvement. Moreover, by analyzing political processes as a sequence of staged performances we might be able to infer under what conditions a variety of people and voices emerge in the political discussions, how the variety of contributions can be related to one another in a meaningful way,

and under what conditions such statements can be made with influence on the actual decision making.

We will draw on the above to examine the role of setting and staging in the Hoeksche Waard. Elaborating on Lynch (1991), Burke (1969), and Benford and Hunt (1992), I will employ the following concepts. First, scripting refers to those efforts to create a setting by determining the characters in the play and to provide cues for appropriate behavior. Second, staging refers to the deliberate organization of an interaction, drawing on existing symbols and the invention of new ones as well as on the distinction between active players and (presumably passive) audiences. Third, setting is the physical situation in which the interaction takes place and can include the artifacts that are brought to the situation. Forth, performance is the way in which the contextualized interaction itself produces social realities like understanding of the problem at hand, knowledge, and new power relationships.

Finally, to avoid confusion in the case study, we will here also clarify the usage of three interrelated terms, discussion, discourse, and deliberation, that are often conflated but that here each have their own meaning in discourse analysis. In the below passage, discussion is held to be the empirical object of analysis; discourse is seen as a particular pattern to be found in a discussion (hence, discourse is used as a term reserved for something the analyst finds; Hajer, 1995); and deliberation is to used to refer to a good discussion (i.e., a particular normative quality in a discussion process found by analyzing the way in which a debate is conducted).

SETTING THE STAGE IN
THE HOEKSCHE WAARD[6]

Discourse formation is a process that takes place at a variety of overlapping sites. The discussion over the future of the Hoeksche Waard is no exception to this rule. In many regards, the policy practices that I discuss may be merely the front stage of policy making. They were accompanied by an intense interpretative struggle in the newspaper media and intense back-stage activity aimed at influencing the course of events. Yet, the focus of this article is on how participation changes face because of the settings in which it takes place.

The curious fact of the matter is that arguably the most important political moment actually occurred at a site that many would not even include in an analysis of politics in the first place.[7] If we analyze how and why this

cultural manifestation could take on this political role, we find that it had everything to do with the staging of politics as well as the unusual scripts that codetermined the political performance that took place. As this is a complex argument, we first examine the five practices of participation.

PRACTICE 1: THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AREA-ORIENTED SKETCH

The first practice was the so called area-oriented sketch (Gebiedsuitwerking[8]), which is best understood as a scenario study. The script for this drama called for bringing together policy makers from various levels of government and from well-established organizations from civil society to discuss their preferred models. The scenario study was intended to facilitate national strategic planning in the years to come. Key protagonists were the planner experts from the national government that were to propose different possible futures. The practice of the area-oriented sketch was marked by expert deliberation and construed the Hoeksche Waard as an object for future development. As the results were meant to be policy input, no effort was made to generate a broad-scale debate, and the document was written primarily with expert participants and like-minded readers in mind. The plan performed in precisely that way: The Hoeksche Waard was regarded as a free space for new national planning initiatives, and the aim was to avoid unnecessary unrest by keeping the local public at a distance.

PRACTICE 2: PARTICIPATION IN THE DETERMINATION OF THE DRAFT REGIONAL PLAN

Under Dutch planning law, provincial governments are legally required to periodically update their regional land use plan (streekplan). An official draft of the newly updated plan came out in 1998. The spatial developments in the Hoeksche Waard were placed in the context of the general socioeconomic developments in northwest Europe. In this light, major new issues, such as water management, nature conservation policy, and infrastructure development, were put on the agenda. In terms of concrete policy measures, the regional plan proposed to develop a very substantial enterprise zone in the middle of the island. To enhance the connectivity of this enterprise zone, it also proposed to extend the A4 motorway from the north to the south. Apart from this, the provincial plan suggested the creation of a new large location of 265 hectares for glasshouses for intensive horticulture.

Once again, the Hoeksche Waard was seen as a logical free space for new plans of higher government. This was legitimized by quantitative research showing an assessment of future spatial claims of various sectors of trade and industry in the province. The scripting foresaw a role for the provincial government as visionary and leader, proactively acting upon a changing world on behalf of society. In the newly created northwest European perspective, provincial planners conceived of their task as catering to claims of provincial interest in a global economy, thus logically superceding the local interests of particular regions. It actually drew on the four models from the area-oriented sketch and, along with other techniques, produced the idea of planning as an expert-led matter of finding the optimal location for various spatial claims.

In many regards, this scripting seemed effective as the plans initially generated the targeted support in the political and administrative elite. This was symbolically reconfirmed in the staging of the joint signing of a Declaration of Intent by various politico-administrative bodies on April 7, 1999. It argued for a "qualitative positioning of the Hoeksche Waard" in its larger urbanized context[9] and aimed at signaling a shared sense of loyalty expressed in the argued need for enhanced coordination. It announced a yearly program of implementation. In inimitable policy language, the ambition was summarized as follows:

> Conservation, development and strengthening of the qualities of the area, that have been marked as carriers of identity; recognition of the internal impulses for change and evaluation thereof in terms of potential value to exploit or strengthen the qualities of the Hoeksche Waard; recognition of the external impulses for change (spatial claims) and evaluation thereof in terms of chances to exploit or strengthen the qualities of the Hoeksche Waard.[10]

The vague reference to internal and external impulses underlined the appreciation of the specific needs of local and provincial governors, respectively. The declaration (with no official status in land-use planning) was a first symbolic string to hold together an already complex politico-administrative coalition. Local authorities were pleased with the recognition of internal impulses, the province claiming success because of the recognition of the right to use the Hoeksche Waard as search space (external impulses). A steering committee with representatives from the various agencies was announced to oversee the implementation. The committee, aiming to further strengthen the legitimacy of this discourse, announced

that actors from civil society (maatschappelijk middenveld) would be involved later on, not at the level of strategic planning but in the context of individual projects.

In many regards, the setting was one of traditional elitist policy making, which aimed at creating an alliance among policy makers and key players from business and politics. The script required them to agree on a plan, with others clearly being regarded as a passive audience. If the performance provided cues for appropriate behavior, it must have been to signal that there was not much point in complaining. After all, the plan could count on widespread administrative support, ranging from individual municipalities to the national government.

Following statutory requirements, a round of public consultation started after the acceptance of the concept regional plan by the provincial parliament on March 26, 1999.[11] People had a right to comment on the draft plan by means of written comments to the province. When the time for participation closed on June 28, 1999, more than 6,000 letters of protest had been received. In fact, nearly all of the 6,000 letters were preprinted letters of protest handed out by an organization that fought a purely conservationist cause aiming to stop all further development of the Hoeksche Waard and targeting in particular the intended enterprise zone in the middle of the island.

The combination of an inward looking politico-administrative practice and the classic form of political participation created political deadlock. The development plan was accumulating various wishes while the public simply said no. In the face of 6,000 letters of protest, the national parliament—which has the statutory duty to approve or refute all regional plans—was unwilling to give its approval. On April 25, 2000, the draft plan was withdrawn by the province.

PRACTICE 3: AIR SOUTHBOUND

In the nearby city of Rotterdam, there emerged alongside the official planning process a cultural manifestation called AIR Southbound— where the landscape begins. Starting on September 4, 1998, AIR was to investigate the changing relationship of the country and the city. Over the previous years, the AIR Foundation had gained a reputation for causing cognitive shifts among the minds of politicians, experts, and citizens on a variety of issues in urban design and planning. Each manifestation of AIR was meant to

confront and stimulate policy makers, politicians and the world of urban renewal in Rotterdam via international ideas on local problems of urban planning and architecture, by posing relevant questions for research, hand out commissions for design and raise attention to developments in urban planning and design. (*Programmawerkgroep AIR-Rotterdam Zuidwaarts*, 1997, p. 7)

AIR Southbound was the first AIR effort to attend beyond the city boundaries. It chose the Hoeksche Waard because the initiators were convinced this was an area in which many of the problems of the relationship of city and country could be examined.

If anything, AIR Southbound was scripted as an intervention in the debates in Rotterdam and in the national debate in The Hague. Moreover, its focus was on the quality of the landscape not on economic development or the improvement of citizen involvement. In the national debate, AIR sought to challenge the then prevailing "Vinex strategy" that, it was becoming obvious, created very repetitive suburban extensions to Dutch cities.[12] According to AIR, this Vinex landscape was not merely a conceptual choice: it was seen as the result of the dominant way of conducting politics, a politics that was a matter of negotiation among politicians and administrators. The resulting compromises, according to AIR, were leading the Dutch landscapes to ruins. This was a big theme in the circles around the AIR Foundation.[13]

Similarly, AIR Southbound was based on the assumption that planning practice stood in the way of better approaches to relating the city to the countryside. It saw good design as the way out. In all its previous manifestations, AIR had started from the assumption that merely saying no was not a good strategy. It wanted to put the value of good design and professionalism across not by playing in the context of the existing political practices but by showing the value of concrete design interventions. Although the cast was not that different, AIR Southbound provided an alternative staging of planning politics. Instead of expert-led policy making, the search for politico-administrative compromise and finally public participation promoted a notion called research by design (onderzoekend ontwerp), blurring the typical division of labor in planning processes. According to the research by design practice, designers, researchers, and stakeholders were to interactively produce a plan. Through this particular staging, conflicts would be part of the development of the design, and the support for a plan could gradually grow.

The research by design strategy of AIR implied both research to generate images and research to find existing meanings and adherences (reëel

bestaande betekenissen) in the area. Here we see an appreciation of discursive politics in action. The provincial planners had employed the general socioeconomic developments in northwest Europe as a starting point of their intervention in the Hoeksche Waard. The Program Committee of the manifestation saw this as an illustration of the shortcomings of the prevailing planning practice. Arguing like this, an island like the Hoeksche Waard would be overrun by the "inevitabilities of the new network society," ruining the landscape and alienating the public.[14]

The appreciation of the discursive dimension of politics came out in the idea that the best way to protect the landscape was to create another story line for the area (Sijmons, personal communication). Moreover, for this story line to have political power, it had to be widely shared. Here the discursive meets the dramaturgical: just as run-of-the-mill politics produces run-of-the mill landscapes, only a new staging could lead to a new appreciation of the qualities of the Hoeksche Waard.

The conflict over the discovery of the Hoeksche Waard. The script of the program committee of AIR Southbound aimed at bringing about a cognitive shift among the key policy actors. It therefore wanted those actors to discover the unknown qualities of the island they had thus far merely regarded as a search space. In the first phase of the manifestation, visual artists, photographers, designers, anthropologists, and writers were sent out to try and capture the qualities of the Hoeksche Waard, all under the banner of the discovery of the Hoeksche Waard. Key to this staging was the intention to break through the then-dominant deductive-analytical reasoning (the inevitabilities of the network society) and the related planning concepts of urban landscape and carpet metropolis. To create a breakthrough, it investigated the particularities and special qualities of the concrete case of the Hoeksche Waard. The results were published in the first magazine of AIR Southbound titled *The Discovery of the Hoeksche Waard*.

Yet, this scripting only provided cues for appropriate behavior for the policy makers. To the people living in the Hoeksche Waard, the title of discovery had a different meaning. For them, the idea of being discovered was offensive and the reactions to this unintended positioning were negative: "We are not some rare tribe from the rainforest" (Mayor B. Kolbach). Locally, the term discovery was interpreted in terms of a frame of reference in which the city of Rotterdam (with its ever expanding harbor) was primarily seen as a well-known oppressive force.

Hence, the AIR staging, which was intended to be a critique of the prevailing way of conducting the politics of planning, was locally understood

in terms of the very practices it aimed to criticize. This was not only due to the title of the first magazine. In fact, it had not considered the dramaturgical effect of its overall staging of the manifestation. For instance, as part of the exploratory phase, AIR had sent busloads of students of architecture (a group not easy to overlook because of its arty dress codes) to the island to take notes. AIR also had politicians (including a minister from the Dutch Cabinet) looking at the area from the top of a mobile crane and had others traveling over the island in a hot air balloon, whereas various artists and anthropologists individually explored the island. It was all part of AIR's attempt to document the meanings on the island. This was of course a performance on the island that was easy to interpret as a regional imperialism. The intervention of artists put off the tightly knit local communities (part of which is known to be the Dutch Bible belt). Hence, the staging of AIR Southbound had an unintended effect: It appeared as a clever variation by outsiders with ideas for but not by the people of the area.

Setting the stage: The presentation of designs as alternative setting. So far AIR Southbound might serve as a useful example of the role of actual dramaturgy in policy making, but it is still unclear why the AIR manifestation had a positive impact on the policy discussion. Indeed, if anything, it reinforced the tendency to regard the nonorganized local citizenry as a passive audience and added to an adversarial atmosphere. It was only when it became obvious what sort of plans this exploration made possible that AIR started to gain this more positive role.[15]

A new phase within the manifestation AIR Southbound started when the six designer teams presented their plans (see Devolder, 2000). Some designs gave people the idea that the future of the Hoeksche Waard could be discussed in several different ways. Without going into details, this stage became the stage at which the Hoeksche Waard was discussed in different terms. This phase was illuminating in another regard: Not only were the plans different from the ones from previous occasions, but the setting was different too. Provincial administrators and politicians, accustomed to having a central role in planning meetings, saw designers and landscape architects occupying center stage. The designers that had been commissioned to elaborate a plan presented these plans and got comments from some selected specialists. After that, a discussion with a wide variety of people in the audience followed. Hence, it was not so much that policy makers and politicians were not present but rather that the scripting did not give them an explicit and dominant role to fulfill.

Depending on the type of design and the way in which the designs were presented, the debate took a particular turn.[16] Indeed, if we look at these meetings, we can see how each design in fact created its own audience and influenced to what extent the audience could actively contribute to the deliberation. Whereas the more conceptual proposals fell on deaf ears or merely aroused irritation,[17] some others opened up the debate with new people contributing to the discussion. Most notable was the opening up that occurred in the discussion of a plan by H+N+S landscape architects. Whereas most presentations triggered questions and queries from colleagues, their presentation drew in many others.

The key question is of course why one plan drew in many more people who also represented a much wider variety of citizens. To observers, the audience had, until then, seemed to be composed of the usual suspects of policy makers and representatives from organizations all knowing one another pretty well. During the H+N+S presentation, it became obvious for the first time that there had been, in fact, many citizens from the Hoeksche Waard among the audience as well. Somehow they had not until then contributed to the discussion on the future of their island.

So, the presentation of designs not only robbed politicians of their central role, but it also, in one particular case, created an active public. At least three aspects might help understand this change in the policy deliberation: the style of presentation; the type of plan; and the contrast space of the presentation. First of all, whereas most presentations laid out their formal research leading to the actual design, the presentation of the plan by H+N+S landscape architects started with a series of slides that was about the many ways in which different people used the Hoeksche Waard. It showed people fishing, cycling, plowing, mowing, driving, eating, going to church, sporting, shopping, and so on. This bombardment of slides suggested that the designers were aware of the variety of ways in which people used the island. Of course, it was a festival of associative images, and it was by no means clear how the slides informed the actual plan. Yet, the presentation signaled an appreciation of the variety of ways in which people used the island.

The particular style of presentation also came out in the map that was the usual centerpiece of a presentation. Interestingly, the designers from H+N+S spoke of their map in apologetic terms. "It is almost a Hergé-type map," they said, referring to the Belgian author of the comic book *Tin Tin*. In a way, the map did not meet the criteria for a map that the designer community would normally adopt. Yet, clarity of the map also made it easier to

read it. Indeed, reconsidering the dynamics of policy deliberation, it was in response to this map that many new people took to the floor. Interestingly, their critical comments suggested that the map was inaccurate or that proposed plan was doomed to fail. One example was a farmer arguing that a particular kind of crop could not be grown at the suggested location: "We have tried that before, and it did not work." But by speaking up and making all sorts of suggestions (even if they were predominantly negative), the map drew in the audience and created a dramaturgical loyalty (Benford & Hunt, 1992) to the process. The map, the cornerstone of the H+N+S plan intrigued and motivated many to participate in the debate.

A second explanation relates to the type of plan that was presented. The plan most certainly did not suggest anything extravagant should happen. Whereas some other plans suggested either to chop the island into smaller units to allow for a new sort of urbanization of small harbor villages (the Calthorpe plan), or to hide much of the program of urbanization under the agricultural surface (the Francois Roche plan), this plan clearly also catered for local needs. Yet, it also contained potentially controversial elements. It was for instance a clear development-oriented plan that could easily put off the strong conservationist lobby on the island.

The third element to the explanation, the contrast space, helps us understand why such a development-oriented plan could go down relatively well. Contrast space, a phrase of Alan Garfinkel (1981), means to explain occurrences in terms of the interpretive context in which they take place. In a way, the success of the H+N+S presentation might be explained by the level of frustration among the audience with the very abstract presentations that preceded it. The audience rediscovered its voice via the presentations of H+N+S.

So, despite its unfortunate start, AIR Southbound changed the parameters of the discussion on the future of the island. It created a widely shared awareness of the multifold qualities of the island and also showed possible ways of acting upon those qualities. The staging of AIR Southbound as a cultural manifestation was key to its success. After all, in terms of the cast, nothing much had changed. In fact, the same politicians, journalists, designers, policy makers, and academics were involved. Yet, what had changed significantly was the allocation of roles. This was partly according to the script, but it partly emerged during the manifestation.

The discursive dynamics. A manifestation like AIR is of course completely dependent on subsidies. In this particular case, it had received a considerable amount of money from the provincial government. Initially,

the province considered the manifestation as "sjeu in de besluitvorming," as "divertissement," or as an entertaining companion to a complex decision-making process. The subsidies had probably been given with the development-oriented reputation of the AIR Foundation in mind. As the provincial discourse saw the Hoeksche Waard primarily as search space, the local politicians were probably right in arguing that AIR was merely to prepare for things to come. Yet, as the manifestation progressed, provincial administrators showed themselves seriously disappointed with the effect of the manifestation. Whereas the province had hoped it would prepare the ground for the implementation of the provincial plans (P. Hordijk, personal communication, April, 2000), it led to the creation of a much more locally based coalition with its own ideas about the future of the island. To understand this, we need to further trace the process of discourse formation.

PRACTICE 4: AIR PLUS

If AIR Southbound had sparked off new ideas about what the future of the Hoeksche Waard might be, it still had a relatively small reach. Five individuals—a dike warden, a businessman, an architect, an architectural historian, and a journalist—that had participated in the manifestation, all from the Hoeksche Waard, felt that the type of reasoning and visioning might help to bring the political debate on the Hoeksche Waard back to life. To facilitate this, they started the Hoeksche Waards Initiatief, or Initiative Hoeksche Waard. As a first step, they brought the exhibition of the AIR designs to the island. Until then, the AIR exhibition had only been on show in the National Architectural Institute in Rotterdam. The initiative brought it to the hall of the headquarters of the water management board in the town of Klaaswaal.

It was the first element of what became AIR-Hoeksche Waard: What is next?—a series of regional debates on the future of the Hoeksche Waard. Eventually, the exhibition, guided tours, and debates resulted in a relatively broadly shared vision on the future of the island. This was then laid down in *Het Hoeksche Waards Manifest*. Here, AIR Southbound was the basis for a well-argued critique on the plans of the provincial government. An alternative idea for the development of the area was promoted based on respect for key qualities such as emptiness and greenness and on acknowledging the fact that the area represents different qualities to different groups. Without too much preparation and without a professional publicity policy, they intrigued more than 1,000 people, including

farmers, teenagers, urban importers, and politicians, with the exhibition and the debates.

PRACTICE 5: SPATIAL ORGANIZATION HOEKSCHE WAARD

The fifth and final practice was the initiative Ruimtelijke Inrichting Hoeksche Waard (RIHW). The RIHW was essentially a practice of administrators and politicians that had emerged to accommodate the need to coordinate policies and interventions. Yet, the RIHW acquired a new role through the protest against the draft regional plan and the discussions following AIR. RIHW was a practice that connected these debates back to the circles of government. It published its own manifesto titled *The Hoeksche Waard Knows What it Wants!* (De Hoeksche Waard Weet Wat Zij Wil!) in 2000. This was the first time that the politicians from the six municipalities who had come up with a vision for the island could rejoice in widespread support from the residents on the island. In this sense, it was a marked development from the earlier Declaration of Intent of April 7, 1999.

The RIHW has many of the features of what in public administration is called network management. The key is not to have decision-making powers but to organize coalitions that cut through the diverse governmental agencies to create visions with which people can work. On March 30, 2000, the RIHW staged a debate with approximately 120 counselors and representatives from the water management boards to discuss the future of the Hoeksche Waard. On October 11, 2000, it handed its manifesto to the National Minister for Spatial Planning, Jan Pronk. Following this, the Minister announced his intention to make the Hoeksche Waard into a national landscape, thus effectively obstructing the idea that it merely was a search space.

CONCLUSION: THE DRAMATURGY OF POLICY DELIBERATION

Public participation is not merely a matter of allowing the public to have its say. This case study has brought out the performative dimension of policy deliberation showing that deliberation is not merely about persuasion of the better argument. In fact, successful deliberation also is a performative act creating a public of its own. This article shows that

groupings and communities are best seen as fluid so as to be able to see how they too can change over time in the policy process.

Following the findings of this article, the failing of the practices of public participation might also be understood in dramaturgical terms. Over the years, the fixed statutory-based modes of participation have produced their own dramaturgy, one in which the dramatis personae is well known and the different actors play their roles from a generally known script. The case study showed that even with the same cast policy deliberation can change face through experiments with new settings and stagings. It thus suggests that we need to rethink the settings of public participation.

The public becomes what the setting makes it. The case of the Hoeksche Waard illuminates the performative dimension of policy making, showing how each practice of participation constructed its own participants. Like the traditional post hoc participatory practice (symbolized by the 6,000 letters of protest) that produced an effective blockade, the subsequent practices indicate how a new public emerged over the sequence of settings and stagings. The debate wandered, taking several, mostly unplanned turns, but a broadly shared new idea emerged over time.

This can be explained in terms of setting and staging. The case study showed how most of the time the players in this debate were composed of the same core of politicians, planners, policy makers, and key stakeholders. It was the meandering of the debate in the context of changing settings that produced new insights and new ideas. The central role of the seemingly nonpolitical cultural manifestation sheds light on the constraining power of the implicit scripting and staging of ordinary policy making practices. Initially, politicians and administrators did not recognize the political force of the cultural manifestation. Yet, it was the risky form that transformed the politics of planning in the area. Several explanations can be given.

First of all, the discursive component: Compared to the two preceding settings, it was the first staging of policy deliberation that broke through the conventional policy talk, the mystifying, expert-dominated conceptual way of planning discussion with its well-recognized exclusionary effects (Stone, 1997; Torgerson, 2003; Tribe, 1972). AIR Southbound created new entry points into a complex policy conversation, not always pleasing its audiences but constantly refracting the debate. In this sense, AIR Southbound might be considered to be what Foucault (1986) called a heterotopic space in which various discursive power-effects mutually defract one another. Although standing in relation with a variety of sites, AIR had the capacity or propensity to change the imbedded relationships

of power and interpretation of those other sites. This included the interpretation of public participation in land-use planning. This capacity was imbedded in its practice of investigatory design: It involved a blurring of the discourses and practices of research, narrative, art, design, and planning.

One particularly effective way of breaking though the discursive code was the wide employment of visuals including slides, video, photos, and maps. These artifacts created an active public, allowing people a way into the policy conversation. It was not a matter of the employment of visuals per se but should be explained as it showed the field work that had been done by those particular landscape architects. The presentation made clear that the designers had really made an effort to try and understand the various ways in which people related to the area and thus legitimized their contribution to the actual presentation itself.

Secondly, compared to other policy related practices, AIR Southbound actually had a very different dramaturgy. There was a clear sequential side to this staging of a policy deliberation. Apart from its public presentations, AIR introduced various staged acts: excursions, openings, and presentations. Over time, this sequence of staged events helped produce a dramaturgical loyalty, something that was meticulously monitored by the people from the AIR Foundation and later by the activists from AIR Plus.

Furthermore, this article sheds new light on the dynamics of policy learning. The dynamics in this case study cannot be explained as a matter of rational cognitive learning through reiterated deliberation. The outcome is hard to explain without taking into account the scene-act-ratios of the various policy practices. This case suggests that the initial search space discourse also failed because of its poor dramaturgy. The declaration of intent took too limited a view and produced a weak dramaturgical loyalty on part of some governmental players only (based on the adding up of a variety of wishes). Civil society actors quickly employed the existing legal possibilities to crash this approach. AIR, on the other hand, allowed people to experience learning and, arguably more important, to share events as moments of learning. Hence, just as there is a symbolic dimension to power and control, there seems to be a dramaturgy to policy learning as well. The build up through a sequence of events, the lead up to a climax, and the constant capacity to meander and adjust help to explain the creation of a broadly agreed upon plan for the region. Here the rootedness in the world of arts seems to have facilitated an unusual trajectory: The idea of a vernisage of policy plans would have been hard to conceive, but here it worked and facilitated the creation of a new discourse

coalition. In this sense, the cultural manifestation AIR Southbound allowed for the creation of the dramaturgical climax needed to persuade a fragile coalition to move ahead. Hence, this article has shown that there is often an element of drama in a cognitive shift in complex policy situations. Perhaps that should not come as a surprise as changes of commitments require people to leave positions they previously defended. Successful policy learning is a collective experience and also has to do with the dramaturgy of policy deliberation.

Finally, these research findings speak to the search for new forms of and for democratic governance. Following Benhabib (1996), we would argue that the quality of the setting here is one that allows for, or indeed triggers or provokes, an interplay of opinions that allows for interactive preference formation. We also have created some counterintuitive conclusions. The case study shows that the most desirable characteristic in terms of democratic governance is not necessarily one of maximum openness. Indeed, much is to be gained in that regard by the provision of clear guideposts for debate, or what Gomart and Hennion (1999) have called generous constraint. So, more important than openness in policy deliberation is the usage of particular techniques that create a meandering conversation that allows a variety of people into the policy deliberation.

NOTES

1. Hardly a coincidence, of course, because land-use planning was the field in which participatory practices got their legal place in many Western countries in the first place. Planning theory has therefore always had an active debate on participatory practices (Friedman, 1987).

2. For an explanation of these terms, see Hajer (1995).

3. Kritiek op manifestatie AIR neemt toe, De Dordtenaar, October 15, 1998.

4. Exploring the essentials of motives, Burke (1969) introduced five key terms of dramatism: act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose. In Burke's conception, scene stands for the "the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred" (p. 15). According to his analysis, the nature of acts and agents should be consistent with the nature of the scene.

5. Yet, as Robert Hariman (1995) rightly pointed out, Burke (1969) did take into account aspects such as the situational transformation and synthesis or even subversion of particular pregiven ideas. Yet, on the other hand, in the one section of his *Grammar of Motives* where Burke explicitly addresses the relationship of setting and staging to democracy, there is, however, the structuralist orientation. In the section in which Burke employed his vocabulary to the issue of democracy, he started from the notion of a scene-act ratio, suggesting that it implied a markedly different take on democracy than the act-agent ratio: "Many people in Great Britain and the United States think of these nations as 'vessels' of democracy. And democracy is felt to reside in us, intrinsically, because we are 'a democratic people.' Democratic acts are, in this mode of thought, derived from democratic agents, agents who would

remain democratic in character even though conditions require the temporary curtailment or abrogation of basic democratic rights. But if one employed, instead, the scene-act ratio, one might hold that there are certain 'democratic situations' and certain 'situations favorable to dictatorship, or requiring dictatorship.' The technological scene itself, which requires the planning of a world order, might be thought such as to favor a large measure of 'dictatorship' in our political ways (at least as contrasted with the past norms of democracy) . . . . By the scene-act ratio, if the 'situation' is itself no longer a 'democratic' one, even an 'essentially democratic' people will abandon democratic ways" (pp. 17-18).

6. A first analysis of this case can be found in Gomart and Hajer (2002). That article focuses on the potential of an enhanced exchange between science and technology on one hand and political science on the other.

7. Elsewhere, I have called these sites "new political spaces" (Hajer, 2003).

8. Officially called the Gebiedsuitwerking Hoeksche Waard 2010-2030/Verkenning Inrichting Lange Termijn Hoeksche Waard (VILT-HW).

9. In Dutch: "Kwalitatieve positionering van de Hoeksche Waard in het spanningsveld van het stedelijk gebied van Rotterdam en de Drechtsteden en het landelijk gebied van de Rijn-Schelde Delta." The agencies involved were the province South-Holland and the water management board (waterschap) De Groote Waard, as well as the six municipalities from the Hoeksche Waard: Binnenmaas, Cromstrijen, 's-Gravendeel, Korendijk, Oud-Beijerland, and Strijen.

10. For further information, refer to http://www.pzh.nl/index.html?/actueel/streekplan/szh-4-3.htm.

11. Please note that this differentiation between policy making and participation was always seen to be a positive feature of the Dutch planning system, the idea being that the state should not bother its citizens with plans for which there was not complete agreement. As a consequence, the plans are only announced once the various governmental players (and in this case, some key players from trade and industry as well) are in agreement. For an explanation of the peculiarities of the Dutch planning model, see Hajer and Zonneveld (2000) and Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid (1999).

12. From the minutes of the third meeting of the program committee on November 4, 1996. Vinex was the acronym of the then-binding national white paper on urban planning.

13. One of them, Joost Schrijnen, deputy director of the Rotterdam Department of Housing and Urban development, had argued for a new role for design in the country both in the city and outside of it. As the manifesto did not reach its intended audience, he and others searched for new sorts of interventions. A few years later, the New Map of the Netherlands was presented. It showed all the plans that had already been accepted but had not yet been built. This strategy of visualization of a looming catastrophic event was effective and caused a major upset in politics and the media.

14. From the minutes of the sixth meeting of the program committee on March 5, 1997.

15. The AIR Southbound manifestation took 8 months and comprised four phases: exploratory research, an international conference on the city and the country, the commissioning of six designs for the area, and the exhibition and discussion of the designs.

16. As part of our research, we attended these meetings as observers.

17. This was particularly true for the plan of the French team led by architect Francois Roche that was called unfolded landscape. It foresaw the relocation of housing and industry under the natural surface of the Hoeksche Waard, with a hilly landscape as a result (Devolder, 2000, p. 100-107). The German team of Dettmar, Beuter, Fritz, and Hastenpflug got a similar reception because their plan proved extremely difficult to read (pp. 108-113).

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