

**More than just two goals**  
**FC Twente and its partners in the  
revitalization of the Berflo Es area**

***Theoretical considerations on effective network governance and  
some expectations for the Berflo Es case***

Bas Denters and Pieter-Jan Klok  
School for Management and Governance  
University of Twente, Enschede (The Netherlands)

***Paper prepared for presentation at ECPR General Conference  
Section “Local Politics in the Age of Governance: Actors, Arenas and Democratic  
Decision-Making” (Panel on Local Governance II)  
Pisa (Italy), 6-8 September 2007***

## ***Introduction***

FC Twente, last year's proud number 4 of the Dutch Soccer Premiership, has its training facilities right at the edge of the Berflo Es area in the city of Hengelo. The modern FC Twente training grounds and the neighbouring recently renovated Fanny Blankers-Koen Athletics Stadium (FBK Stadium), the 2007 host of the European Athletics Junior Championships, stand out in contrast to the somewhat dilapidated state of the surrounding residential blocks of the Berflo Es. The Berflo Es accommodates 7.900 of Hengelo's 81.000 inhabitants. The area comprises of four neighbourhoods. Three of these four neighbourhoods are amongst the poorest districts in the city. Especially the two neighbourhoods (Veldwijk-Noord and Veldwijk-Zuid) closest to the FC Twente facilities and the FBK stadium are struck by serious problems of urban decay and poverty. This is reflected amongst other things in a high dependency on social assistance (12% in Veldwijk-Noord and Veldwijk-Zuid; as against 5% in Hengelo), a high concentration of non-western immigrants (28% in Veldwijk-Noord and Veldwijk-Zuid; as against 10% in Hengelo) and a high percentage of one parent families (28% in Veldwijk-Noord and Veldwijk-Zuid; as against 16% in Hengelo).

Inspired by examples of Community Programs of English football clubs like Arsenal and Manchester City a former employee of the municipality of Hengelo Drees Kroes, in 2003 approached FC Twente (FCT) with the idea of setting up a similar Community Initiative for the Berflo Es area.<sup>1</sup> In line with principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) the club should be sensitive not only to its primary objectives (competitive success: "scoring on the pitch") but also to its wider societal role. Joop Munsterman (who became FCT's chairman in 2004) and Gerard Oude Vrielink (member of FCT's board of commissioners) were enthusiastic about the idea and persuaded the club's management to take on this new challenge. Although the club had already been active in community programs (e.g. encouraging sports participation in a local secondary school and contacts with a regional rehabilitation centre) the scope of this new initiative – soon named "Scoring in the Neighbourhood" – was much broader. Rather than ad hoc initiatives that were closely linked to the club's primary objectives (football and sports-related matters) FCT's involvement in this new initiative would be a more structural and permanent involvement on a comprehensive

---

<sup>1</sup> This description of the history of this program is based on L. Broeze This MA-thesis was written under the supervision of the authors of this paper and is part of a broader research project that is aimed at monitoring and evaluating the FCT Community Initiative in particular and the municipality of Hengelo's neighbourhood policy more generally.

basis. This comprehensive approach would include sports activation and health programs, but also implied that FCT should play a stimulating role in developing area-based initiatives aimed at civic integration of ethnic minorities, programs to provide educational and career opportunities for underprivileged youngsters and projects aimed at improving the liveability of the Berflo Es. Although the idea of becoming so broadly involved in community matters met with some internal scepticism if not outright resistance, at the end of the day Munsterman and Oude Vrielink were able to rally broad support within the club.

The initiative received a further boost when the Dutch Ministry of Housing decided to subsidize a joint project proposal for “Scoring in the Neighbourhood” submitted by Hengelo and FCT, because of its innovative potential. The project was considered ground-breaking because it implied the formation of a potentially innovative alliance between old and new partners engaged in community revitalization. In addition to the traditional triangle in Dutch urban neighbourhood regeneration policies (municipality, housing associations and residents) the initiative also brought in new partners: alongside FC Twente, the initiative also involved the Regional College for Vocational Training, representatives of the area’s business community and various local and regional social welfare organisations. On 15 July 2005 the partnership between FC Twente and the municipality of Hengelo was ratified when a collaborative agreement was signed by the chair of FCT and two aldermen representing the city. In order to fulfil the Ministry’s conditions the School for Management and Governance of the University of Twente was also asked to become involved as a partner in the project in order to monitor and evaluate the project.<sup>2</sup> In the course of 2005 a separate foundation was established in order to serve as an organisational vehicle for the project. This foundation serves as an employer for the two staff members that actually run the project. The foundation is governed by a board with representatives from FC Twente, one of the housing associations that is active in the area, the Regional College for Vocational Training, and a local business man. The municipality is not represented in the Board of this foundation, but several times per year representatives of the Board and two aldermen meet to discuss matters relating to the project.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> In a second collaborative agreement (also signed on 15 July 2007) a partnership was established between FC Twente and the School for Management and Governance of the University of Twente. The first concrete example of the collaboration between these two partners was the involvement of the School in the evaluation of the “Scoring in the Neighbourhood” project.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to this the project leader employed by the Foundation and municipal administrators meet regularly to coordinate matters of mutual concern.

The “Scoring in the Neighbourhood” project is loosely coupled with the physical and economic reconstruction efforts that are made simultaneously in the Berflo Es area. On 23 March 2006 the municipality and the two housing associations that hold property in the neighbourhood signed an agreement to renovate the area. On that occasion the partners also declared their aim to coordinate the reconstruction efforts with an attempt to strengthen the neighbourhood’s social infrastructure. Recently (29 June 2007) a third agreement was signed by the municipality and the two housing associations. This protocol was aimed at strengthening the area’s economy and to improve the social position of its underprivileged residents (e.g. by helping them to find appropriate paid employment, to engage them in volunteer activities in the neighbourhood or by providing them with vocational training or schooling). As was emphasised during the ratification ceremony, the intent of the three partners was to coordinate these efforts closely with the FC Twente initiative.<sup>4</sup>

This paper is a result of the university’s involvement in this “Scoring in the Neighbourhood” project.<sup>5</sup> We will focus on the question: *Which factors and actors (potentially) shape the results of collaborative governance in projects like “Scoring in the Neighbourhood”?* The aim of this paper is first to outline the main theoretical presumptions guiding us in answering this question. Subsequently we will also discuss some issues regarding the evaluation of the results of collaborative governance. Since we are only in the early stages of the project this is very much a preliminary theoretical analysis. Although the analysis is primarily theoretical we will also draw some implications for our the “Scoring in the Neighbourhood” project. These implications are in essence hypothetical. From an academic perspective future research will have to provide systematic evidence for an assessment of the empirical validity of theoretical propositions. From a practical point of view, these hypotheses may serve as warning signs and could provide insight in potential risks and barriers that may stand in the way of successful cooperation.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> From a network perspective, the position of the housing association’s representative on the board of the Foundation is likely to be important here, because this representative provides a linking pin between the three initiatives.

<sup>5</sup> Our analysis of the “Scoring in the Neighbourhood” project is part of a broader research project in which we analyse the neighbourhood regeneration efforts in Hengelo. The Hengelo case study is part of an international comparative research project. This international Regeneration of Urban Neighbourhoods (RUN) project is coordinated by Clarence Stone (George Washington University, Washington DC, USA).

<sup>6</sup> In this sense our role in the project is not that of the classic researcher, who as an outsider merely describes and explains observations. By monitoring and feeding back intermediate results into the process we are also a participant in the project.

## ***Theoretical backgrounds***

Already in 1993 -- well before the current boom in tractates on networks and governance -- Alter and Hage (1993, pp. 10-13) pointed to the increasing relevance of interagency coordination of community-oriented activities in the public sector. In the course of the last decade the need for interagency collaboration and coordination became ever more obvious in the light of changes in systems of (local) governance. Contemporary local governance is to a lesser extent than before synonymous with what municipal government “does” (under the direction of its elected council; Leach and Percy Smith, 2001, p. 1). This implies a *new division of roles*, where especially in the case of cross-cutting issues like environmental sustainability, crime and social inclusion *successful collective action* has to be undertaken by a myriad of public and private actors (Sullivan and Skelcher 2002, pp. 56-79). Sullivan and Skelcher (200, p. 10) have argued that in the UK “the collaborative agenda for public purpose has been both under-theorised and overlooked.. It is under-theorised because the UK tradition of empirical social science finds fertile ground in the demands of practitioners and government research sponsors for ‘good practice’ advice. [...] The collaborative agenda is overlooked because the assumptions of the unitary English state are deeply embedded”.

To some extent this British diagnosis can be generalised. This is even true in the Dutch context – with its deeply ingrained tradition of consensus democracy (Lijphart 1999; Daalder 1990 [1981]) – where dependence on interagency negotiations and consultations in multiple actor networks are more likely to be seen as a historic continuity rather than as a “new fad”. Therefore it is not surprising that Dutch scholars were relatively early in focussing on networks and network management (e.g. Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan 1997; De Bruyn and Ten Heuvelhof 2000).<sup>7</sup> But, although their work provides a useful conceptual framework for the description of such networks and relevant actor constellations, and is also rich in prescription (in the form of recommendations for steering and managing such networks), this literature is only of limited use in providing a firm theoretical basis for understanding the success and failure of interorganisational collaboration in the public domain. In answering the main question in this paper we will have therefore to look elsewhere for answers.

Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) have usefully categorized the main theoretical approaches. They distinguish between optimistic, pessimistic and realist approaches. The **optimistic approach**

---

<sup>7</sup> These English language publications were the result of a decade’s research largely published in Dutch articles and monographs.

emphasises that (a) collaboration is likely to have positive effects for community welfare and that (b) the partners in the collaborative process are motivated to effectuate such benign community effects (2002, pp. 37). This may occur in a setting in which all major organisations in a particular organisational field prioritize the common weal over organisational objectives (Sullivan and Skelcher 2002, p. 38). The optimists point to individual (e.g. the presence of reticulists and boundary spanners, who are able to build bridges between different organisations) and cultural (e.g. interpersonal trust) factors that may facilitate the pursuit of community welfare.

The **pessimistic approach**, suggests that collaboration will only take place “in order that stakeholders may preserve or enhance their power, prioritising personal or organisational gain above all else” (Sullivan and Skelcher 2002, p. 39). Resource Dependency Theory (e.g. Pfeffer and Salancik 1978 ; Benson 1975) is based on this premise. This approach emphasizes the obstacles that stand in the way of successful collaboration.

The **realist approach** assumes that individuals and their organizations operate on the basis of mixed motives. They are neither the altruists assumed in the optimistic model nor the selfish individual or organizational utility maximizers in the pessimist models. Alter and Hage (1993) have formulated such a model in their evolutionary theory of organizational collaboration. On the one hand they emphasize the need of organizations to adapt to changing circumstances requiring interorganisational collaboration and on the other hand they point to the relevance of barriers to collaboration. Different factors are likely to determine the willingness and the collaborative capacity of organizations. Later on in this paper we will discuss some of these factors. The advantage of the realist model over its alternatives is that although it fully acknowledges the barriers that might stand in the way of successful collaboration it does also recognize that under particular (well-specified) circumstances it may be possible to overcome such difficulties and develop a successful collaboration.

### ***Towards a theoretical model***

In our research we will use the realist approach of people like Alter and Hage to add substantive content to what we consider to be a useful general framework for analyzing the behavior of actors in processes of collective decision-making, namely Ostrom’s Institutional Analysis and Development framework (e.g. Ostrom, Gardner and Walker 1994). The IAD framework combines actor-centred and institution-centred approaches to the analysis of

policy-making processes. In this respect it is related to e.g. the Scharpf/Mayntz's actor-centred institutionalism (e.g. Scharpf 1997).<sup>8</sup>

In this section we will outline the major elements of the framework and will link some of the premises and hypotheses implied in the work of scholars like Alter and Hage to this approach. The central unit of analysis in the IAD framework is the 'action arena'. Action arenas include an 'action situation' and the actors involved in that situation. Here the term action situation refers to "the social space where participants with diverse preferences interact, exchange goods and services, solve problems, dominate one another, or fight" (Ostrom 2005, p. 14). The action situation consists of seven elements (Ostrom et al., 1994, pp. 29-33):

1. "The first element of an action situation includes actors who have become participants in a situation [...];
2. Positions are simply place holders to associate participants with an authorized set of actions (linked to outcomes) in a process. Examples of positions include first movers, bosses, employees, monitors, voters, elected representatives [...];
3. The third element is the set of actions that participants in particular position can take at different stages of a process (or, nodes in a decision tree) [...];
4. The fourth element is the outcomes that participants can potentially affect through their actions [...];
5. The fifth element of an action situation is the set of functions that map participants (and/or random action) at decision nodes into intermediate or final outcomes [...];
6. Closely allied to the type of information function is the sixth element - the set of information available to a participant in a position at a stage in process. Many situations generate only incomplete information because of the physical relationships involved or because they preclude making all information available [...];
7. The seventh element is the set of payoffs that assign benefits and costs to actions and outcomes [...]"

For the explanation of the behaviour of actors (either individual or composite actors; for further distinctions: Scharpf 1997, pp. 52-58), Ostrom distinguishes four attributes of actors:

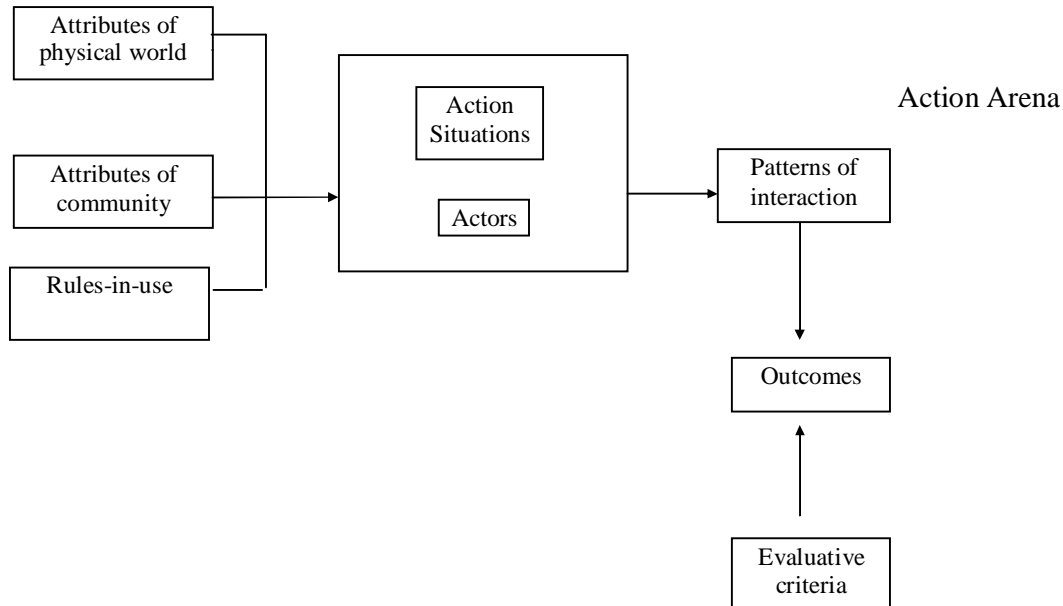
1. "the preference evaluation that actors assign to potential actions and outcomes;
2. the way actors acquire, process, retain and use knowledge contingencies and information;
3. the selection criteria actors use for deciding upon a particular course of action; and
4. the resources that an actor brings into a situation." (Ostrom et al., 1994, pp.33-35).

The action arena is not situated in an analytical vacuum; it is part of a broader social context. Ostrom et al. (1994, p. 37; Ostrom 2005) distinguish three clusters of such exogenous variables factors that influence this arena: the attributes of a physical world, the attributes of the community, and the rules individuals use to order their relationships,. In figure 1 this is summarized graphically.

---

<sup>8</sup> Using this more general IAD framework has the advantage of pointing to neglected factors. Shortly we will see that, in the Alter and Hage approach the institutional rules get relatively little attention.

**Figure 1:** *The action arena* (source: Ostrom et al., 1994: 37)



### **Exogenous factors**

The first set of relevant exogenous conditions (attributes of the physical world) relates to the character of the decisions to be made in the action arena. Collective action is aimed at particular outcomes and the nature of the desired outcomes (in Ostrom’s terminology “the structure of events”; in terms of Alter and Hage “the complexity of task”) is an important factor shaping the action arena and the patterns of interactions therein. The ambitions stated in the Berflo Es cooperative agreements pertain to a broad range of community issues:

- an improvement of the quality of the housing stock and the physical infrastructure in the neighborhood
- an improvement in the quality of the social infrastructure, the social cohesion and the (subjective) safety and livability of the area
- an improvement of the socio-economic life chances of individual neighborhood residents.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The two first objectives pertain to the neighbourhood level of analysis, whereas the third pertains to individual residents. Attention for the individual life chances of residents is a relatively new element in Dutch regeneration policies, based on the presumption that a structural improvement of neighbourhood conditions also requires action resulting in socio-economic emancipation of residents.

In terms of Alter and Hage (1993, pp. 61, 66-68) achieving these goals, makes for a rather complex task, requiring a form of symbiotic cooperation, i.e. establishing cooperative arrangements between **actors working in different sectors**.<sup>10</sup> The scope of the envisioned collaboration is also **broad**, calling for **joint decision-making** on the physical and social infrastructure of the area and the provision of **joint services** to individual residents. Moreover achieving these aims also implies the need to involve a **large number of organizations** in addition to a variety of local government departments, the housing associations, also employers, social welfare agencies, schools and neighborhood groups. The fact that organizations stem from different sectors will also imply that their cognitive functions are very different, resulting in a large “cognitive distance” (Nooteboom, 2000a, pp. 72-73).

### ***Implication***

*In the view of Alter and Hage (1993) the prospects for successful cooperation in such an “event” are mixed. On the one hand, because in this case of symbiotic cooperation the actors are operating in different sectors (and are not direct competitors) cooperation will be easier to realize. On the other hand Alter and Hage also hypothesize that the scope of the envisioned collaboration<sup>11</sup> and the number of the organizations involved<sup>12</sup> will make that collaboration in the case of the Berflo Es will not be easy to accomplish.*

Alter and Hage (1993, pp. 16-17) also point to the relevance of a **culture of trust** as an **attribute of the community**. In agreement with social capital theory (e.g. Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1993) it is assumed that a high level of interpersonal trust creates an environment that is conducive for collaboration. In the words of Robert Putnam: “Trust lubricates cooperation. The greater the level of trust within a community, the greater the likelihood of cooperation” (1993, p. 171).

### ***Implication***

*With respect to the conditions in terms of trust, the prospects for successful cooperation in Berflo Es are also likely to be mixed. Some participants are deeply*

---

<sup>10</sup> This does not imply that there may not be more competitive relations between subsets of the actors involved, e.g. between the two housing associations in the area.

<sup>11</sup> The mere exchange of information is likely to be less problematic than more ambitious forms of collaboration, like the co-production of a service; Alter and Hage 1993, p. 49.

<sup>12</sup> The larger the number of organizations, the more complicated collaboration is likely to become; Alter and Hage 1993, p. 49.

*embedded in the community for decades or even centuries (municipality, housing associations) and could have developed a history of trust, whereas others are relative new in the community (most notably FCTwente).*

As for the third category of exogenous factors in the AID framework, the **rules-in-use**, Alter and Hage are remarkably silent. To be fair, in passing, they point to the fact that changes in rules might provide incentives for organizations to change their behavior and become more cooperative (1993, p. 77). But somehow this is not enough for them to give this factor a separate place in their evolutionary theory of collaboration. Nooteboom (2000b) is more explicit in his specification of the role of institutions in fostering co-operation between organizations (for instance the role of contractual law and general rules of ownership), but he uses a more encompassing conceptualization of institutions (including educational systems, infrastructure of information and professional organizations) than we prefer. In line with our previous work on collaborative and interactive forms of community decision-making we will use the AID-toolkit for analyzing the impact of institutional rules on the success of collaborative governance in the Berflo Es (Denters and Klok 2003; Klok and Denters 2005). These rules are particularly important because they, together with the two other exogenous factors, to an important degree will determine the nature of an action arena, in defining both the participants and the seven different elements of the action situation Ostrom has distinguished (as previously listed). However, it is important to note that these rules are not only fixed elements of the context, but they are to a considerable extent to be formulated for the specific action arenas, thus providing the opportunity for relevant actors to set the conditions for co-operation in what can be called “network management” or “network governance” (see below).

### **Actors and interactions**

The basic structure of the AID framework can be characterized as a variant of actor-centered institutionalism. We have just discussed some of the basic (institutional) factors setting the stage for analyzing the interactions of actors in the action arena’s in which (at the strategic and operational level) make collective decisions. In order to understand the behavior of the participants in action arenas a crucial assumption refers to the preferences that drive the actors’ selection of behavioral alternatives. As we saw before, the literature on network collaboration we find different approaches, some based on purely self-interested actors and others based on altruism. The realist approach provides a useful synthesis in which it is

assumed that actors are driven by a mix of “self-interest and moral commitments” (Alter and Hage 1993, p. 33). In this approach the degree to which the behavior of actors is guided by one or the other concern is considered to be affected by actor-specific factors and by the context in which these actors make their decisions (the action situation).

Alter and Hage (1993, pp. 38-40) point out that actor’s decisions to engage in interorganisational collaboration is not only governed by short term organizational interests (e.g. the need to secure necessary expertise and financial resources) but also by long-term considerations (e.g. the need for adaptive efficiency) and a concern for the public good. From such a realist position the actor’s willingness to cooperate might be stated somewhat more precisely. This collaborative propensity might be conceived of as the result of a calculus of the anticipated effects of cooperation on the short term organizational interests (defense and acquisition of resources and the guarding of organizational autonomy), its potential for the long-term effectiveness of the organization, and by the organizations concern for the public good

Resource-dependency theory emphasizes the importance of short-term organizational interests. Benson (1975) has provided an insightful discussion of the effects of such considerations on actor decisions to engage in collective action. He assumes that organizations will typically orient themselves to acquire and preserve the main resources they need for their preservation; i.e. authority and money. Authority refers to the legitimacy of organizational action in particular domains: “the right and responsibilities to carry out programs of a certain kind, dealing with a broad problem area or focus [...] The possession of a domain permits the organization to operate in a certain sphere, claim support for its activities, and define proper practices in its realm” (Benson 1975, p. 232). Money is important in that it allows organizations to set up and pursue programs, and to hire staff and acquire buildings and necessary equipment and material resources for the pursuit of its goals. Benson (1975) argues that such a resource orientation, for the organization’s decision-makers is likely to become the “operational definition of the purposes of the organization and thus of their responsibilities as decision-makers” (1975, p. 231). On the other hand, the substantive goals are likely to “recede in the background” where they may serve as a “continuing ideological legitimation for ongoing activities” (1975, p. 231).

In order to secure sufficient resources organizations have a natural tendency to stick to established programs, will try to boost the social importance of their domain and guard their autonomy and dominance over other organizations in this domain, and will try to promote their particular view of the world and methods of coping with problems and delivering goods and services (Benson 1975, pp. 232-233). Only in cases where resource-dependencies impel collaboration actors will opt for cooperative strategies on a voluntary basis.<sup>13</sup>

Benson (1975, p. 231), also hypothesizes that such a primary orientation on resources (as against a substantive focus) and reluctance to enter into collaborative networks are more likely for “older, larger, and more complex organizations” and in organizations with multiple goals (as compared with organizations with simple goals). Likewise, Alter and Hage, argue that large, generalist organizations (as compared to small, specialized ones) are less motivated to collaborate (1993, p. 43).

### ***Implications***

*For our Berflo Es case this analysis implies that from among the various actors involved in the regeneration effort, the municipal bureaucracy is likely to be a rather reluctant partner in the collaborative effort. The municipal bureaucracy, after all, is not only by far the oldest and largest institutional actor in the regeneration arena, it is also a general purpose organization (the Dutch Constitution grants a power of general competence to this unit of local government), which is characterized by a high degree of vertical and horizontal (functional) differentiation and internal complexity. On the other hand, the theoretical analysis suggests that, relative newcomers in the regeneration area, especially FC Twente, and to some extent also the housing associations, are likely to be relatively flexible and as relatively small organizations with a limited focus (on one or a few objectives) these newcomers are also likely to be more open to collaboration, not captivated by old organizational routines and therefore more innovative than the municipal agencies involved in the process. Moreover, the theoretical analysis also suggests that it is likely that the differences in orientations may cause tensions between the different partners. The municipal*

---

<sup>13</sup> These conditions may occur more or less spontaneously or they might be invoked by purposive action by an actor. According to Benson (1975, pp. 243-245) this may be done by threatening the resource generating capacity of other actors (disruption), by changing the incentives for resource seeking actors in order to make the pursuit of particular substantive objectives or (collaborative) strategies more attractive (manipulation) or by the use of rules and regulations to change the actor orientations (authority).

*agencies are likely to feel at unease and perhaps even threatened by the “modernism” of the newcomers and may scold them for lack of professionalism and bungling. On the other hand the more businesslike approach of the corporate actors are likely to be frustrated by what they conceive of as the slackness and perhaps even outright obstruction by the municipal bureaucracy. The implications are subject to an important ceteris paribus clause. The basic organisational reflexes as outlined in Benson’s analysis may be counteracted especially if political-ideological considerations by the municipality’s political management (on the basis of long-term considerations or politico-ideological motives) forces the bureaucracy to changes their traditional modes of operation and enter into collaborate. March and Olsen (1983) have pointed to the vulnerability of politically imposed reforms in public sector organizations. To resist organizational opposition, successful reforms require permanent political attention, and precisely long-term persistent political attention is in short-supply and tends to erode during the reform process or might stop with inevitable changes in political leadership (because of electoral change or forced resignation). Therefore the forces of bureaucratic inertia, that might be silenced in the early stages of the reform process, may gradually regain the upper hand. For the research this implies that we have to describe the different roles that political and administrative actors play, both within the municipality and in relation to the other partners.*

Benson’s analysis also implies that even if actors, on the basis of (enlightened) self-interest or concern for the public weal are willing to cooperate, successful cooperation may not emerge because of disagreement on the division of roles between the partners involved. Actors are likely to assume particular roles, based on traditional definitions of their domain. O’Toole has pointed to the danger that especially managers in a network may wrongly “assume that they possess authority” and he warns that “giving directives may actually weaken influence (O’Toole 1997, p. 48). Recent theoretical work on the emergence of “spontaneous” social order through mechanisms of self-governance also indicates that direct, substantive interventions in the process of self-organization are likely to be counterproductive (Van Gunsteren 2006, pp. 57, 92). This warning is especially relevant vis-à-vis municipal administrators and politicians, who may be tempted to claim a special position in these networks, referring to the municipality’s constitutionally codified responsibility for the

common interests of its citizenry and the electoral legitimation of the local council.<sup>14</sup> In the practical and the academic debate in the Netherlands the role of the municipality is often defined as that of a “director” -- a metaphor inspired by the world of theatre plays and movies. The metaphor applied in the context of interorganisational networks is misleading in a number of ways. For one thing it suggests the presence of an actor, who is in a position to provide all the others actors on stage (i.e. in the relevant arena) with instructions and guidance, and whose directing role is accepted by all the players. Moreover, the director operates on the basis of a script or the text of a playwright, and intervenes substantively in the interactions between the actors on stage. As the above theoretical considerations indicate in the context of interorganisational networks both these presumptions are likely to be mistaken and may jeopardize successful cooperation.

### ***Implications***

*For our Berflo Es case this analysis implies that there is a danger that the municipal representatives in the networks may want to assume a directing role that is not accepted by the other actors. To the extent that this occurs the acts of the municipality are likely to meet with resistance from other actors and will make productive collaboration more difficult.*

This is not to imply, however, that it would not be possible to create favorable conditions for productive collaboration. Four observations are important here:

1. Whereas substantive, direct controls are likely to be counterproductive (see before) because they are likely to destroy what constitutes the potential strength of networks (i.e. the willingness of different actors to contribute resources to a collective effort), the “management” or “governance” of networks should primarily be *indirect and facilitative*: creating favorable conditions for problem-oriented collective action in the action arena.<sup>15</sup>
2. Facilitation may involve both actions *within* the network (e.g. by providing new information to actors or by providing incentives for cooperative behavior) and actions aimed at *changing the network structure* (e.g. by extending or limiting

---

<sup>14</sup> This attitude might be further strengthened by a concern that other local organisations may lack a concern for the common weal, lack appropriate expertise or may not be representative for their constituents or clientele. Research among Dutch local politicians indicates such concerns may not be uncommon (Denters 1993).

<sup>15</sup> We use the word “management” with great reluctance because again this may have connotations of mono-centric guidance and control. See also point 3 below. We prefer the word “governance” (Nooteboom, 2000a), as it implies a form of multi-actor guidance and control.

access to the network; changing decision rules; see O'Toole 1997; Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan 1997; De Bruyn and Ten Heuvelhof 2000) .

3. In the context of networks, facilitation may be undertaken by any of the actors in the network or even by authoritative outsiders (e.g. national legislators who may determine rules and regulations that determine different aspects of the action situation; see figure 1). In the words of O'Toole and Meier: "In networks [...] efforts to manage the network – including in the interest of different and potentially competing conceptions of purpose – can come from a number of directions or a number of actors, with only a limited potential to render these consistent. As one manager tries to shape the setting and its performance along one course of action, others –at other nodes in the system– can press or concert people and resources in another direction." (1999, p. 511).
4. We should not simply assume that facilitation or network governance is a managerial, a-political activity undertaken only for the sake of improving the performance of the network and the beneficial effects of its joint activities for the community. A focus on "adequate management" is likely to ignore the political context in which these activities take place. In such a political context, "network management" is also likely to shape "definitions of issues and goes a long way toward determining who wins and who loses on policy questions" (O'Toole and Meier 2004, p. 684).

### ***Implications***

*For our Berflo Es case this analysis implies that network facilitation is likely to occur at different nodes in the network, and is not the prerogative of only one actor (e.g. the municipality). Moreover, even in the case of completely altruism (actors who are only committed to the community objectives of the project) there is no presumption that the "facilitative" efforts of various actors nicely contribute to purposive and potentially effective collective action. In a political context (O'Toole and Meier 2004) where actors are also motivated by organizational self-interest, network facilitation is likely to be just as politicized as substantive interactions.*

## Outcomes and evaluations

In the previous sections of this paper we have theoretically outlined some of the major factors that determine the interactions and finally the outcomes of collective decision-making in network arenas. As partners in the project our role is to provide an evaluation of the results. In this paper we will not extensively discuss our evaluative standards and their operationalization. In the present context it should suffice to state that we agree with Provan and Millward (2001) who argue that an evaluation of the effectiveness of networks should be evaluated at three levels of analysis: the effects at the community (outcomes), the network (outputs/performance), and the actors/participant (individual goal attainment and continuation of participation in the network). At the **community level** the effectiveness criteria relate to the degree to which the community problems (poor quality of the housing stock, poor liveability, substandard social infrastructure and underprivileged socio-economic status of residents) will be solved. For a number of reasons it will be difficult if not impossible to provide firm evidence regarding the effectiveness of the project for such: the likely time-lag between the interventions and the emergence of any possible effects; the broad scope of the aims and the wide variety of the interventions undertaken and the classic problem of convincingly establishing a causal link between interventions and possible consequences. Therefore it may be necessary to rely on proxy measures; e.g. public and expert assessments of the *potential* effectiveness of the programmes. It may also be important to ascertain whether the collaborative agenda of the network concurs with public perceptions of the most urgent need of the local community. This is particularly relevant in the light of what O'Toole and Meier (2004) have aptly termed the "dark side of public management in networks": the fact that such networks may serve in such a way as to favour established and organised interests rather than underprivileged community clienteles. In an earlier analysis of Dutch urban regeneration partnerships it was shown that at the level of the composition of the relevant networks such biases did indeed occur: local government organisations and professional not-for-profits dominated the arenas and the inclusion of organisations of residents and target populations was problematic (Denters, Van Heffen, de Jong 1999).

With regard to the effectiveness at the **network level** there are at least two relevant concerns. From a *process perspective* it is important to establish whether the network was capable of making decisions effectively (decisiveness) and whether it is then also capable of implementing these decisions: by providing agreed upon new services and implementing network programmes (implementation). From a dynamic perspective it is also important to

assess the strength of the network. For the long-term viability or sustainability of the network it is important that network ties become more numerous and stronger, that network multiplexity (by establishing relationships on multiple dimensions) increases and that the mutual trust between network partners increases over time. A longitudinal study of the structure of relevant networks is necessary for such an analysis (Provan and Millward 2001, p. 419; see also Provan et al. 2005). From an *output perspective* it is of course also important to assess the actual performance of the network across the entire range of its envisioned outputs: how many clients are being served? what are the range and quality of the services provided? how satisfied are the clients with these services? how many houses were renovated houses? what was realised in terms of neighbourhood physical and social infrastructure?

Finally it is also important to gauge the extent to which the network also is effective at the **level of its participating actors**. From an *outcome* perspective, Benson's analysis suggests that it is especially important here to determine whether the network also allows its members to secure sufficient resources (both in terms of providing it with a legitimate task domain and in terms of its financial resources). A viable network is only possible if participation is not detrimental for the vital interest of its main partners. Obviously there may be an inherent tension between the effectiveness at the network and community level and organisational effectiveness. But voluntary cooperation is only viable when the major partners in the arena on the basis of (enlightened) self-interest are prepared to commit their scarce resources for the common cause. Therefore viable community coalitions should keep a keen eye on the vital interests of its major participants. From a process perspective it is important to study the development of the strength of the network ties for each individual participant. This refers to the same variables as at the network level (strength, multiplexity, trust), but also to the development of "specific investments" by actors in network activities (Nooteboom, 2000a), as more specific investments reflect higher commitment to network success.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper we have focused on a promising and most ambitious project aimed at the regeneration of the Berflo Es, an urban neighborhood in the Dutch city of Hengelo. The case, like any case, may be singular in some respects; e.g. the prominent and wide-ranging involvement of FC Twente. But on a higher level of generality it may be seen as a manifestation of a much more common phenomenon, namely community coalitions or

community partnerships. Although the use of these coalitions is widely endorsed and advocates claim that such coalitions are vital (energetic, dynamic, vigorous) and allow for purposeful action (e.g. Tops and Cornelissen 2006, p. 4) the evidence on the effectiveness of such coalitions is rather bleak: “Reviews of large-scale community coalition evaluations suggest that most have not been successful either in involving a broad array of institutions or in meeting their outcome goals” (Kadushin et al. 2005, p. 255). In this paper we have provided a theoretical analysis of the dynamics of collective decision-making in such coalitions and the implications for the chances of success of such a coalition. From an academic perspective this analysis suggests hypotheses that might be tested in (comparative) empirical studies of community coalitions. From a practical perspective the analysis suggests on the one hand that hopes for success of such innovative alliances should perhaps not be set too high and on the other hand the analysis also suggests a number of lessons that people engaged in such alliances might want to learn in order to avoid at least a number of the pitfalls that lie ahead on the road to successful community coalitions.

## References

- Alter, C., and J. Hage. 1993. *Organizations working together*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Benson, J. Kenneth. 1975. The Interorganizational Network as a Political Economy. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 20 (2):229-249.
- Broeze, Linda. 2007. Scoren met samenwerking. Een onderzoek naar de samenwerking tussen de deelnemende organisaties binnen het project Adoptiewijk FC Twente. MA-thesis, School for Management and Governance, University of Twente, Enschede (The Netherlands).
- Daalder, H. 1990. Consociationalism, centre and periphery in the Netherlands. In *Politiek en historie: opstellen over Nederlandse politiek en vergelijkende politieke wetenschap*, edited by H. Daalder. Amsterdam [1981]: Bert Bakker.
- De Bruijn, Hans, and E. Ten Heuvelhof. 2000. *Networks and Decision Making*. Utrecht: Lemma Publishers.
- Denters, B., P.J. Klok, O. van Heffen, and J. Huisman. 2003. Rebuilding Roombeek: An institutional analysis of interactive governance in the context of a representative democracy. In *The rise of interactive governance and quasi-markets*, edited by B. Denters. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Denters, S.A.H. 1993. Raadsleden en partijdemocratie. In *Leden van de raad.: hoe zien raadsleden uit zeven grote gemeenten het raadslidmaatschap?* edited by S. A. H. Denters and H. v. d. Kolk. Delft: Eburon.
- Denters, S.A.H., O. van Heffen, and H.M. de Jong. 1999. An American Perestroika in Dutch Cities? Urban Policy in the Netherlands at the end of a millennium. *Public Administration* 77:837-853.
- Gunsteren, Herman van. 2006. *Vertrouwen in democratie: Over de principes van zelforganisatie*. Amsterdam: Van Genneep.
- Kadushin, Charles, Matthew Lindholm, Dan Ryan, Archie Brodsky, and Leonard Saxe. 2005. Why It Is So Difficult to Form Effective Community Coalitions. *City & community* 4 (3):255 - 275.
- Kickert, W.J.M., E.H. Klijn, and J.F.M. Koppenjan. 1997. Managing networks in the public sector: findings and reflections. In *Managing complex networks: strategies for the public sector*, edited by W. J. M. Kickert, E. H. Klijn and J. F. M. Koppenjan. London etc.: Sage.
- Klok, Pieter-Jan, and Bas Denters. 2005. Urban leadership and community involvement. An institutional analysis. In *Urban Governance and Democracy. Leadership and Community Involvement*, edited by M. Haus, H. Heinelt and M. Stewart. London etc.: Routledge.
- Leach, R., and J. Percy-Smith. 2001. *Local governance in Britain*. Houndmills etc.: Palgrave.
- Lijphart, A. 1999. *Patterns of democracy: government forms and performance in thirty-six countries*. New Haven etc.: Yale University Press.
- March, J.G., and J.P. Olson. 1983. Organizing political life: what administrative reorganization tells us about government. *American Political Science Review* 77:281-296.
- Nooteboom, B. 2000a. Learning by Interaction: Absorptive Capacity, Cognitive Distance and Governance. *Journal of Management and Governance* 4: 69-92.
- Nooteboom, B. 2000b. Institutions and Forms of Co-ordination in Innovative Systems. *Organization Studies* 21 (5): 915-939.
- O'Toole, Jr., Laurence J. 1997. Treating Networks Seriously: Practical and Research-Based Agendas in Public Administration. *Public Administration Review* 57 (1):45-52.

- O'Toole, Laurence J., Jr., and Kenneth J. Meier. 1999. Modeling the Impact of Public Management: Implications of Structural Context. *J Public Adm Res Theory* 9 (4):505-526.
- O'Toole, Laurence J., and Kenneth J. Meier. 2004. Desperately Seeking Selznick: Cooptation and the Dark Side of Public Management in Networks. *Public Administration Review* 64 (6):681-693.
- Ostrom, E. 2005. *Understanding institutional diversity*: Princeton University Press.
- Ostrom, E., R. Gardner, and J. Walker. 1994. *Rules, games and common-pool resources*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Pfeffer, Jeffrey, and Gerald R. Salancik. 1978. *The external control of organizations: a resource dependence perspective*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Provan, Keith G., and H. Brinton Milward. 2001. Do Networks Really Work? A Framework for Evaluating Public-Sector Organizational Networks. *Public Administration Review* 61 (4):414-423.
- Provan, Keith G., Mark A. Veazie, Lisa K. Staten, and Nicolette I. Teufel-Shone. 2005. The Use of Network Analysis to Strengthen Community Partnerships. *Public Administration Review* 65:603.
- Putnam, R.D., R. Leonardi, and R.Y. Nanetti. 1993. *Making democracy work: civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Scharpf, F.W. 1997. *Games real actors play: actor-centered institutionalism in policy-research*. Boulder: Westview.
- Sullivan, Helen, and Chris Skelcher. 2002. *Working across Boundaries. Collaboration in Public Services*. Houndmills etc.: Palgrave-MacMillan.
- Tops, P.W., and E.M.H. Cornelissen. 2006. Vitaliteit en vitale coalities in het openbaar bestuur; Een verkenning. In *Conferentie 'Betovering in een Onttoverde Wereld'*. Kaatsheuvel (De Efteling).