

**CINEFOGO conference
University of the West of England
14-15 February 2007**

**THE MOBILIZATION, CONSTRUCTION AND
INCLUSION OF STAKEHOLDERS IN EUROPEAN
GOVERNANCE NETWORKS¹**

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¹ Production of this paper was supported by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) under Research Award RES-000-23-1295 'Democratic anchorage of governance networks in European countries' (Skelcher and Sullivan) and an ESRC Collaborative Studentship Award with English Regions Network (Matharu).

Abstract

Governance networks are frequently used at local, regional, national and transnational levels within Europe as a means of developing, deciding and delivering public policy. Governance networks have been the source of considerable debate and empirical study, but there has been little theoretical attention to the way in which network actors mobilise to participate, their construction subjectively or by network meta-governors, nor the nature of inclusion/exclusion.

This paper uses theories of interest and identity in order to develop a framework for explaining mobilisation, construction and inclusion of actors in governance networks. The paper sets out ways in which this analysis can be applied in a European context. It contributes to the academic and policy debate about the institutional design of democratic governance networks that operate beyond representative government.

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents a theoretical perspective on the mobilisation, construction and inclusion of actors in governance networks, with particular reference to the European context. Our purpose is to provide a clear framework for research in an area of study where there has been much normative literature but little theoretically informed or comparative analysis. The paper uses theories of interest and identity to explain how actors are mobilised to participate in network institutions of governance, and how the construction of network actors affects patterns of inclusion and exclusion. It shows theoretically that significant tensions arise when interest and identity form the reference points for civil society actors and those involved in designing governance institutions. The paper illustrates the relevance of this analysis for the understanding and design of governance networks in European context.

Governance networks² have been the source of considerable debate and empirical study. Network forms of governance involve semi-institutionalised patterns of activity between governmental, civil society and business actors around particular public policy questions (Koppenjan and Klijn 2004). They occur at neighbourhood, city, regional, national and transnational levels within Europe as a means of developing, deciding and delivering public policy (Marcusson and Torfing 2007). So far, there has been little theoretical attention to the way in which network actors mobilise to participate, the nature of inclusion/exclusion, nor their construction subjectively by participants or by network meta-governors. These issues have considerable salience for academics, policy makers, and actual/potential network actors because governance networks constitute new sites of political power and authority. In particular, analysis of these issues can inform institutional design and evolution.

The analysis proceeds in the following way. First, we discuss why consideration of network actor mobilisation, construction and inclusion (MCI) will add value to the network governance literature, especially in a European context. In the second part of the paper we introduce the theories of interest and identity and briefly explain the basis of each. The third part of the paper considers mobilisation, construction and inclusion in relation to each of the theories, and draws out some of the main tensions between these approaches – especially when they are used as ‘theories-in-use’ by civil society actors and those designing governance institutions. The final part of the paper draws out the significance of the approach we are presenting in a European context.

The analysis is based on a literature review undertaken using key word searches for each concept, and from an analysis of the work of authors and journals known by the researchers to be relevant to this field. We also draw on our own research into civic engagement (e.g. Sullivan 2003; Barnes, Newman and Sullivan 2007) and democratic

² Following Klijn and Skelcher (forthcoming) we use ‘network governance’ as a high level concept describing an overall approach to civil society – government - business relationships characterised by interdependency and stronger horizontal relationships (often contrasted with ‘market’ and ‘hierarchy’). ‘Governance networks’, on the other hand, are the concrete expressions of civil society – government – business relationships around particular policy questions, expressed through semi-formal institutional arrangements such as ‘partnerships’ but also containing a strong informal aspect. The patterns of relationship described in the concept of ‘governance network’ provides a contemporary interpretation of what, under a corporatist regime, would have been called a ‘policy network’.

performance (e.g. Skelcher, Mathur and Smith 2005; Skelcher 2007) in the context of new forms of governance. This as an evolving field of study and we see our paper as a contribution to stimulate debate and interest in the question of stakeholder engagement with governance within a European context.

MOBILISATION, CONSTRUCTION AND INCLUSION IN A GOVERNANCE NETWORK CONTEXT

The mobilisation, construction and inclusion (MCI) of network actors is a significant issue for academic inquiry in a European context. First, MCI has thus far been little problematised in the network governance literature. The literature on governance networks tends to reflect the normative presumption that it opens new routes to civic involvement in public policy, while that on civil society involvement has tended to address parts of the question rather than offer an overall theoretical formulation of the discursive processes through which MCI occurs. So we aim to complement the work of such authors as Sweeting and Haus (2006) on models of local political leadership, Bang and Sørensen (1999) on new modes of civic activism, Barnes et al (2003) on strategies and methods of participation, Edelenbos (2005) on interactive decision-making, and Sørensen and Torfing (2003) on political capital in governance networks.

Secondly, MCI has salience in the context of debates about European governance. There has been a significant drive towards multi-levelled and networks forms of governance in and across Europe, but, as in the network governance literature, the individual actors that make up the networks are often overlooked. Their motivation to participate, their 'fit' into network roles and even their very presence is often assumed. Closer analysis of the actors involved is now required, and will form the next stage in Europe's continuous institutional evolution. For European network designers/ meta-governors, taking the processes of MCI into consideration has implications for wider debates on European representation, legitimacy and, thus, European democracy.

Thirdly, MCI is important to consider because representative systems of governance have been opened-up, supplemented and challenged by new institutions predicated on other models of democracy – especially participative, deliberative, stakeholder and neo-consociationalist forms. Representative government is based on a set of established and relatively stable institutional designs that mobilise actors through parties and pressure groups, construct them as citizens, and include them through rules for voting, lobbying and other legitimated mechanisms. Governance networks provide new arenas for political activity in relation to the public policy process. They may be loosely coupled to institutions of representative democracy (Skelcher 2007) or engage elected politicians as key actors (de Rynck and Voets 2006; Wälti, Kübler and Papadopoulos 2004). Their institutional designs can be more or less formalised (Skelcher, Mathur and Smith 2005; Sørensen and Torfing 2003). Given these and other variations in institutional designs, questions of MCI need to be rethought in new ways.

ANALYSING THE CONCEPTS

We now turn to a discussion of each of the core concepts – mobilisation, inclusion and construction. In each of the following section we set out the debate about the definition of these concepts, and their relationship to other relevant concepts.

The word ‘mobilisation’ has been surprisingly difficult to locate in much of the relevant literature. Whilst there is an implicit understanding of this concept, for example in the literature on civic voluntarism or engagement, electoral participation, interest group activity and social movements etc., the term itself is little used. Instead, the word ‘participation’ is much more readily used to express mobilisation and the two are occasionally used interchangeably. However, we believe there is a distinction to be drawn. ‘Participation’ expresses a kind of voluntary activity; it is an action that results from some other, antecedent impetus. ‘Mobilisation’ is much more urgent, indeed it is that very impetus; mobilisation is the force that motivates action. That action may be labelled ‘participation,’ ‘engagement’ or ‘involvement’ but these are resultant actions from an initial stimulus.

This distinction is important because it is that very stimulus that is the focus of our framework. We are interested in identifying what it is that mobilises actors to participate in governance networks. We do not disregard participation; indeed the wealth of literature on this topic remains useful to our analysis due to the somewhat confused synonymy. Furthermore, the literature that does explicitly refer to mobilisation focuses on activity that is framed by a political party, i.e. voter mobilisation, which is of little relevance to the typically less structured, less formalised sites that are governance networks, particularly when compared to the more measured nature of action associated with participation. The distinction, then, helps to demonstrate the close relationship between the terms but also to narrowly define what exactly is meant by mobilisation in this paper.

Construction refers to the discursive processes through which public policy problems are formulated and the actors relevant to them are defined. Our approach reflects the work of policy discourse theorists who emphasise the place of ideas and communicative practices in supplying meanings that constitute the problems to be tackled by public action, the actors to be engaged, the institutional designs to enable governance, and the policy programmes to be deployed (Fischer 2003; Hajer 1995). These meanings are discursively constructed in the sense that language and the rules of language define a way of speaking about a policy problem, and by extension exclude other ways. A discourse may become hegemonic, supplying the dominant language, but even in this case can contain other discourses with which there is contestation. For example, our previous work shows that in England the hegemonic discourse of ‘partnership’ contains at least three sub-discourses that supply different meanings to institutional design and the delimitation of relevant stakeholders (Skelcher, Mathur and Smith 2005).

While there may be an a priori argument that citizens should be involved in governance networks, we are interested in the way in which discourses construct citizens in particular ways, for example as ‘residents’ within a defined neighbourhood, or ‘service users’ who individually benefit from public provision, or ‘community leaders’ who in some way represent or speak for the ‘community’.

Elsewhere we have shown that constructing ‘publics’ in these ways is often undertaken by public managers or politicians in the process of designing governance institutions such as neighbourhood regeneration initiatives or new projects to meet the needs of young children and their families (Sullivan, Barnes??). The process of constructing certain publics ascribes legitimacy on those so constructed, and by implication denies legitimacy to others. This discursive act thus has real implications for interest and identify, as we explore below.

Because we are concerned with institutional design, we define inclusion in terms of the rules for access by actors to the governance network. These rules have consequences in terms of who is enabled to participate and who is not. This issue of rules follows naturally from the question of construction, as we move from the generalised legitimation of particular groups of actors to the institutional rules through which their special status is enacted. Rules for inclusion would be expected to cover who the participants are, how their ‘representatives’ are to be selected (e.g. elected, nominated, appointed by third party), and what form of involvement they will have (consultees, co-decision-makers, scrutineers, etc.).

However we also need to be conscious that institutional designs may include rules for the involvement of general ‘publics’ beyond those specially constructed by the prevailing discourse. Thus, the institutional design for the governance network may include rules that permit open consultation at particular points in the policy process. This draws attention to the rules through which such inclusion of the excluded take place, and the authority of the judgements that they make (for example, are they open consultation events binding on the network, or purely a means of testing public opinion?).

AN INTEREST-IDENTITY FRAMEWORK FOR EXPLAINING STAKEHOLDER MOBILISATION

Earlier we commented on the way in which the important questions of stakeholder mobilization, construction and inclusion had been largely ignored in the literature on governance networks. In this section we set out a theoretically-based framework for explaining these processes. The framework draws on the work of Rowley and Moldoveanu (2003) who set out to explain how groups of stakeholders are mobilised in a business environment. This may immediately seem far removed from the world of governance networks, but there are two factors, in addition to the fact that it directly addresses stakeholder mobilisation, which make this paper both distinctive in its own field and relevant to ours.

Firstly, Rowley and Moldoveanu criticize the view that explanations of stakeholder action can be simply reduced to the calculated pursuit of utility maximisation. They dispute the validity of this rigid economic rationality whereby stakeholders act solely in accordance to their cost-benefit strategizing, which is the dominant view in research regarding stakeholder action. Instead, they consider behaviour that does not conform to these assumptions, for example they repeatedly return to the hypothetical situation in which stakeholders persistently pursue lost causes (2003: 204, 205, 208). This line of questioning leads them to conclude that stakeholder identity plays an important role alongside interest-seeking behaviour in stakeholder mobilisation.

Incorporating social identity theory into their model allows them to explain incidences of irrationality.

Secondly, Rowley and Moldoveanu focus on group identity. They are explicit from the outset that they are concerned with groups ‘in which individuals are consciously united and perhaps have some level of interaction with particular other members’ but stakeholders who ‘are members by virtue of a common association with the focal organisation (but cannot identify other members and may have no interactions with one another) are outside the domain of our theory’ (2003: 205). Again, this may immediately seem removed from governance networks, where the latter situation is perhaps more typical, but the idea of group identity can be relevant to governance networks on two levels: stakeholders are likely to share some linkage or ‘anchorage’ with the ‘home’ institution that they represent in the governance network; and they may, over time, develop a shared sense of identity with other members within the network. Indeed, a stakeholder may experience both at once, for example a stakeholder partner of an English regional assembly representing a community group may identify themselves as part of both that community group and the stakeholder group of the assembly.

This juxtaposition of the interest- and identity-based perspectives allows a greater understanding of stakeholder mobilisation than has previously been available. Using this as a starting point, we can build a framework to aid our understanding of the mobilisation, construction and inclusion of actors in governance networks. Theories on mobilisation, construction and inclusion, as well as related concepts where helpful, can be drawn out of a range of literatures and grouped together under these perspectives. The identity- and identity-based perspectives should not, however, be viewed as a dichotomy but rather a way to present the tension between the dominant discourses regarding governance networks.

APPLYING THE FRAMEWORK TO MOBILISATION, CONSTRUCTION AND INCLUSION IN GOVERNANCE NETWORKS

We now proceed to analyse questions of stakeholder mobilization, construction and inclusion from the perspective of the identity-interest framework. Our initial formulation is presented in table 1:

Table 1: An interest-identity framework for analysing the mobilisation, inclusion and construction of network actors

	INTEREST	IDENTITY
Mobilization	Defending or advancing interests (utilities) Self-interest	Presence (values/ meanings) Altruism
Construction	Pre-defined by government Singular (neighbourhood, ethnicity, age, service user, sector, etc.) Self-contained	Self-defined Multiple and overlapping Complex and contradictory (citizen and consumer and etc, etc.)
Inclusion	To assure due process Marginal to point of decision – protect ‘public interest’ from ‘special interest’ The more the interests of the group align with the interests of government, the greater the level of inclusion Focus on decision (achieve interest-based goals)	To promote legitimacy – politics of presence Co-option into decision

Mobilisation

As mentioned in our introduction to the interest-identity framework, theories about the motivation for mobilisation can be grouped under the interest- and identity- based perspectives. There are a number of different models that try to explain mobilisation or participation but the core elements of these can be drawn out and grouped under the interest and identity headings. This is not a vain attempt at reductionism, rather recognition that some theories emphasise the rational, utility-maximising behaviour while others lean towards identity as an explanation for mobilisation.

The interest-based perspective is relatively straightforward: an actor mobilises in order to defend or advance their interests; the focus is on the outcome, which should maximise utility at minimum cost. Of course, this is the hallmark language of the rational choice model. Less recognisable but equally as logical are the models of ‘instrumental participation’ (Parry, Moyser and Day, 1992) and ‘general incentives’ (Whitely and Seyd, 1996, 1998), which both stress the importance of achieving material gain through participation. Even the civic voluntarism model, which immediately appears to promote selfless activity, actually incorporates a ‘sense of efficacy’ - an ability to have an effect on outcomes (Pattie, Seyd and Whitely, 2003: 445). All of these approaches, then, are based on an underlying assumption of rationality that emphasises interest-fulfilling behaviour, which is befitting of an actor who *holds a stake* (Rowley and Moldoveanu, 2003: 206).

The simplicity of this perspective is appealing, which goes some way to explain its popularity and many nuanced guises. However, for many academics this model's simplicity is also its flaw. There are numerous instances of 'normal' behaviour that rational choice cannot explain. For example, this theory fails to adequately account for collective action. Essential to this discussion of governance networks and perhaps the greatest challenge facing rational choice theory, there is the 'free-rider problem' (Olson, 1965), which reasons that it is more rational for an actor *not* to participate and instead reap the rewards of others' efforts. A more contemporary issue, and again one that specifically relates to our discussion of emergent European governance networks, is one of territorial scale: how can rational choice explain stakeholder mobilisation at levels where the benefits, or utility, cannot be seen or felt? Such questions lead us to conclude that the interest perspective alone is lacking.

Rowley and Moldoveanu (2003) supplemented their interest-based model with an identity perspective in order to explain behaviour that is irrational in the strict, economic sense. They argue that the membership of a collective can mobilise stakeholders to act in certain ways for the very sake of that group identity, because 'each activity in which he or she participates (regardless of whether individual or group interests are achieved) will verify his or her association with the group and its particular social identity' (2003: 208).

In a similar vein, the model of 'communitarian participation' (Parry, Moyser and Day, 1992) holds that the sense of belonging to a community can be a strong motivational force for actors; a stakeholder may be mobilised to act in order to benefit their community as a whole. In this way, rather than pursuing narrow self-interest, a stakeholder is mobilised for altruistic ends. The civic voluntarism model, which highlights the 'importance of general involvement in the political system' (Pattie, Seyd and Whitely, 2003: 445), and Putnam's social capital model (2000), which promotes the benefits of cumulative civic engagement, too, focus attention on altruism and the community. This perspective, then, recognises the importance of values and meanings for actors, acknowledging that some stakeholders act for the principle of acting or for the sake of their identity.

These ideas are relevant to our discussion on European governance networks because they allow for the fact that some stakeholders may be motivated through their identification with a territorial space, their home organisation or even, in time, with the governance network itself. Alone the interest- and identity-based perspectives are incomplete but taken together they can help to simplify what is in reality a complex web of motivational factors. We do not believe that this discussion of stakeholder mobilisation provides every explanation for every action, but we do believe that this framework acts as a useful tool for analysing stakeholder engagement in European governance networks as it neatly brings together the central ideas across a wide range of literature and presents them for application by governance network academics.

Construction

The construction of stakeholders can be analysed from the perspective of interest and identity theories. These perspectives provide insights into the discursive processes through which the actors relevant to particular public policy problems are constituted. It is important to stress that we are not necessarily taking a constructivist approach to

the definition of interests, but are interested in the ways in which actors themselves – whether stakeholders or government – understand their relationship to the policy issue.

When stakeholders are constructed in terms of what we understand to be ‘their interests’, we are saying something about which of their characteristics we take to be fundamentally reflective of, or an adequate proxy for, these interests. The design of governance networks typically involves some consideration of which interests should be ‘represented’ – although the notion of what is ‘represented’ and by whom raises a distinct set of issues to which we return later in the paper. The characteristics typically employed by governments to construct interests are: socio-economic (age, gender, disability, ethnicity, employment status, religion, etc.), locational (tenure, neighbourhood, urban/rural, etc.), or relational (service user, citizen, tax payer, business, community sector, etc.). Some governance institutions have places reserved for individuals with particular characteristics, or special committees or forums composed of these individuals, in order to assure that those interests are present (Smith and Stephenson 2005).

An important characteristic of the construction of interests for governance is that interests are often defined in a mutually exclusive way, or at most with a limited combination – for example ‘older women’ or ‘gay men’. Interest construction segments the world into discrete elements, and confines ‘representatives’ to speaking about ‘their’ interest.

This is in contrast to the construction of stakeholders through identity. Identity suggests a subjective self-construction, in contrast to the objective other-construction of interests. Identity construction requires the active participation of the subject – it is they who construct their identity. Interests, on the other hand, may be defined independently from the individual. Finally, identity presupposes a collective relational process through which the interactions between individuals produce, reproduce and transform that self-understanding.

Construction of stakeholders from an identity perspective thus opens up a more complex reality of multiple and shifting self-recognition. For example, it is captured in the idea of the ‘citizen-consumer’ (Clarke et al 2007) who potentially can hold mutually exclusive positions (as the collectively-oriented citizen and as the self-oriented consumer). This poses a challenge to those engaged in the design of governance networks as it presents a more untidy world than is apparent from an interest perspective. It also suggests that design has to be inductive and dynamic, in order for identities to form, establish ways of participating in the governance network, and evolve over time. This is a challenge at the frontiers of academic research and institutional design.

Inclusion

Exploring the inclusion of stakeholders from the perspective of interest and identity theories opens up discussion about the ways in which institutions and power combine in the design and operation of governance networks.

One of the rationales underpinning the promotion and development of governance networks is that a wider range of stakeholders can be included in decision making

about matters of public purpose, so improving the quality of decisions in terms of improved outcomes and the legitimacy of the decision making process to the public (Barnes et al 2007, Skelcher et al, 2005). In some cases governance networks are formally charged with securing the inclusion of those that might be ordinarily 'hard to reach'. This label is often used in relation to governance networks that are set up to achieve community revitalisation or regeneration and refers to attempts to access community members who may be considered 'disadvantaged' and/or 'disaffected', and are unlikely to engage with formal institutions (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002, Taylor, 2003).

Practising inclusion from the perspective of interest theory focuses attention on the construction of stakeholders according to their perceived predominant interests (e.g. socio-economic, political, or cultural). It is also based on an assumption that stakeholders will wish to be included on this basis and will mobilise either to secure a place in the governance network or in response to an invitation from other network actors to join the network. This approach is derived from traditional political science interpretations of how representative democracy operates and its relationship to interests and has particular implications for the way in which governance networks are designed. For example, the rules and norms governing access to and membership of the network will have an organisational focus, representation in the network will be based on the linkage between an individual and their stakeholder organisation, the conduct of deliberation within the network will be informed by the 'rules and norms' governing debate within government and government representatives will exercise considerable influence over the outcomes of the deliberations within the governance network (in order to protect the wider 'public interest' over that of any 'special interests').

Considering inclusion from the perspective of identity theory problematises both the construction of who is to be included and the shape and nature of the institutions that guide deliberation within the governance network. The multiplicity of identities that individuals may hold, contingent upon the public space that they are operating in at any given moment, means that inclusion becomes necessarily more complex than simply casting the membership net sufficiently widely to embrace those who may be perceived to be 'marginalised' or 'disaffected'. Instead it implies that inclusion is an ongoing activity that will take different forms depending upon the issue/outcome/community that is its focus. Examining inclusion in governance networks through the lens of identity theory also offers the possibility that governance networks will be transformed through acts of engagement and deliberation and will generate new collective identities (Barnes et al, 2007).

Identity theory offers a new perspective on the rules underpinning the design of governance networks. These are the subject of contestation and debate in the same way that the subjects of deliberation will be. Practising inclusion in this context requires a reconsideration of 'membership' of a governance network (i.e. going beyond an organisation base), a reconceptualisation of 'representation' built upon an acceptance that the process of representation itself is one that is constitutive of those who are deemed to be represented (Saward, 2005), the development of 'rules and norms' of deliberation that are shared and not imposed from elsewhere and therefore emerge from a process of deliberation themselves (Sullivan et al, 2002), and an acknowledgement that the legitimacy of decisions arrived at in the governance

network will be authorised by the network and not by the most powerful member (Hajer, 2003).

MOBILISATION, CONSTRUCTION AND INCLUSION IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

As stated earlier in the paper, we seek to relate our analytical framework specifically to the European context. Firstly, this allows us to demonstrate the applicability of the interest- and identity- perspectives. The contextual details can aid our understanding and provide a good example of how the framework can help to organise thoughts about mobilisation, construction and inclusion of stakeholders in governance networks. Secondly, the following discussion of the European context brings this paper in line with the forefront of the wider network governance literature, which has since moved beyond national boundaries, much like the governance networks themselves. Again, the aim is to contribute to this field of work.

To begin, it is important to elucidate what is meant by 'Europe.' Thus far we have used the terms 'Europe' and 'European' without clarifying whether we are referring to the political or geographical entities. This is intentional. In many ways it is almost impossible to distinguish between the two and there is perhaps something lost through drawing too sharp a distinction. Sometimes we refer to the territorial space or collection of states where governance networks have become commonplace, particularly in the West. At other times we emphasise the political dimension, i.e. the European Union, which has been a keen promoter of network governance. Both these dimensions are relevant to the following discussion.

As noted, there has been a marked growth of governance networks in and across Europe. It is fair to say that this has been somewhat 'messy' and unplanned, and it is difficult to identify any starting point. However, it is plausible to speculate that Europe itself has in some way initiated this development. Given the lack of a collective European demos and, thus, the European Union's questionable democratic credentials, there has been a significant effort to forge new routes for civic involvement. Bringing government together with agents from civil society and representatives from the business sector, there has been an acceptance of this all-embracing inclusion and a legitimization of new forms of representation. Indeed, the EU was born out of this desire to collaborate in more productive ways than the former Westphalian state-centric method. In this way, and others, the EU can itself be seen as a kind of overgrown governance network.

Now, whether due to some form of path-dependency or other institutional logic, or whether more intentional, the EU actively promotes this kind of collaboration. To manage the difficulties of territorial scale, the EU advocates vertical communication and co-ordination through multi-level governance. To ensure inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders, the EU encourages the development of governance networks. In fact, both of these are central pillars in the recent EU White Paper on governance (CEC, 2001). Even the EU's push for further integration via the open method of co-ordination (OMC), which allows for the voluntary (although arguably coercive) collaboration of states that wish to pursue closer harmonisation in certain areas, has at

it's core the same principles of network governance: productive action through groupings of willing and appropriate actors.

In these ways the EU has been instrumental in discursively constructing what has become the hegemonic discourse of widespread participation in governance networks. Networks are now widely accepted in and across Europe as a central part of modern governance. However, as in the literature, there is little mention of the processes of mobilisation, construction and inclusion. Previously, these have perhaps proceeded on an ad hoc basis, but are now attracting attention. For example, even with regards to the high-level issue of EU accession, the qualification for inclusion is not systematised (note the controversy surrounding successive eastern and southern enlargements). We are now entering the next stage in the continual evolution of Europe in which questions are being asked about the early stages of network formation: who is not included? Who has not been given voice? How have some stakeholders been mobilised and not others?

In an effort to bring some sort of clarity to the institutional complexity of Europe, institutional designers and/or meta-governors need to consider the questions that have been raised in this paper: what mobilises actors to participate? How are these agents constructed into governance network stakeholders? Who should be included in or excluded from the network? Taking both the interest- and identity-based perspectives into consideration ensures a comprehensive approach to the design process. For example, if a governance network is proposed to agree a mutually acceptable solution to a regional planning problem, a stakeholder with a business *interest* could be brought into a network alongside an actor with some notion of regional *identity*. Through the inclusion of both perspectives, the European meta-governor could then claim to have secured adequate representation, thus granting the output of the governance network some degree of legitimacy.

This example goes some way to demonstrate the salience of the issues of mobilisation, construction and inclusion of stakeholders in governance networks to Europe. The politics of institutional design have much wider implications on debates of representation and legitimacy, as well as democracy. With no fixed end point to the evolution of European institutions, the EU struggles to rely on output legitimacy. At the same time, the EU cannot claim to ensure input legitimacy since it is haunted by a democratic deficit. Instead, Europe must continuously forge its own legitimacy by ensuring the representation of a wide range of actors and, thus, promote its democratic credentials. By closely examining the often overlooked processes of MCI through both the interest- and identity-based perspectives, Europe can arrive at a defensible position at least with regards to governance networks.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we show that the mobilisation, construction and inclusion of stakeholders in governance networks can be explained in two ways: by interest theory and by identity theory. We take the general formulation of Rowley and Moldoveanu and apply it to the particular case of governance networks in Europe – the evolving and often semi-formal institutions that emerge to shape, decide and implement public policy around complex multifaceted problems. Interest theory starts with a set of

assumptions about stakeholders as rational actors motivated to maximise and defend their interests. Identity theory emphasises the social processes involved in belonging, and the way in which this can engage with a more altruistic rationale for involvement³. We show that these theoretical perspectives have a salience for debates about governance networks in a European context due to the complex and evolving institutional arrangements at European level and in Europe's relationships to the system of multi-level governance.

We suggest that our approach can make a contribution at the academic and practice levels. In terms of academic research, our interest and identity framework offers a way of explaining the behaviour of stakeholders in relation to governance networks. It moves beyond the debate about capacity, skill and the design of deliberative arenas to offer a more fundamental analysis of stakeholder behaviour. In particular, we think there is considerable value for generating new knowledge on stakeholder engagement by considering interest *and* identity together – as the two faces of stakeholder involvement. In other words, we do not see these theories as mutually exclusive, but follow Rowley and Moldoveanu in suggesting that they offer us two perspectives on the same phenomenon. Indeed, it will be particularly valuable to consider the interaction between interest and identity in explaining stakeholder mobilisation, construction and inclusion.

An example of the way in which this agenda can be taken forward is by considering the 'theory-in-use' of those responsible for institutional design, and the extent to which it reflects best theoretical explanation of the behaviour of stakeholders. We can hypothesise that the effectiveness of the governance network is likely to be greater where there is congruence between the design theory-in-use and the rationale for stakeholder mobilisation out in the community. For example, there are likely to be tensions within the governance network where institutional design is predicated on a notion that stakeholders are mobilised around 'interests', when in fact stakeholders construct themselves around identity. These tensions may be manifest in reluctance by stakeholders to participate because the unitary and mutually-exclusive interest-based categories that will be used to define stakeholder do not match their own more complex and overlapping self-perception of identity.

The importance of this analysis for those engaged in the design and practice of governance networks is that it offers a more fundamental analysis of the reasons for non-participation or tensions between stakeholders and the state actors sponsoring governance networks. Non-participation is conventionally explained by inappropriate facilities (e.g. lack of crèche facilities to facilitate attendance by parents of young children; meeting rooms that are laid out in a formal way), potential participants' lack of information, blocking tactics by established community leaders, and lack of civic awareness or capacity to participate. Our analysis suggests that these factors, although important, may be epiphenomena resting on more fundamental problems about the understanding by institutional designers of how stakeholders construct themselves, and why they mobilise. Identity and interest theories thus have the potential to be very relevant to policy makers and others involved in the design of governance networks, as well as opening up a new theory-led research agenda.

³ It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider the way in which the reductionist nature of rational actor theory could understand 'identity' in instrumental terms.

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