



Institutional Interventions in Urban Systems: Rearranging Complexity and Managing Interfaces

Stefan Verweij et al.

Point of departure

- Urban intervention
 - Coming in between existing socio-physical order
- Institutional intervention
 - Coming in between existing institutional order
 - I.e. ad-hoc arrangements between actors
- Implies redrawing boundaries
 - Facilitates action to intervene in urban order
 - But creates new interfaces with new coordination challenges



Research question

- What boundary decisions are taken (*what*)?
- What are the underlying boundary judgments (*why*)?
- Which boundary issues emerge (*coordination challenges*)?
- How are these dealt with (*evaluation*)?



Boundaries that define the intervention

- Participation
 - Inclusion and exclusion of actors
- Territorial
 - Geographical area of the intervention
- Functional
 - Scope of the intervention
- Structural
 - Tasks and responsibilities of involved institutions

Case 1: DBFM contract A15 MaVa corridor



Rijkswaterstaat

Lanes15
VOOR RIJSTROKEN MET EEN A-LABEL



Boundary decisions

- Territorial
 - Transport axis between Vaanplein and Maasvlakte 2
- Functional
 - Mainly infra (roads, civil structures)
- Participation
 - Stakeholders involved via ‘implementation agreements’
- Structural
 - DBFM contract between RWS and A-Lanes A15

Boundary judgments: simplifying

- Participation
 - DBFM contracts results in higher quality and speed, and lower costs of infrastructure development
- Structural
 - Stakeholder interests are secured beforehand (implementation agreements)



Boundary issues: complexity increases

- The interface RWS/stakeholders was ‘outsourced’ in DBFM contract (RWS/A-Lanes)
- Three new interfaces/coordination challenges emerge:
 - Friction 1: A-Lanes/stakeholders
 - Friction 2: RWS/stakeholders
 - Friction 3: A-Lanes/RWS
- Dealt with by:
 - Contra spirit of DBFM, RWS reasserts control...
 - A-Lanes in trouble



An attempt at some conclusions

- Redrawing boundaries does not reduce but changes complexity
 - Boundaries are socially constructed, hence debatable
 - Boundary judgments of interventions \neq boundary judgments actors in urban system
 - Drawing boundaries = (necessarily) neglecting elements and relationships
- New coordination challenges
 - Boundary judgments shift, but contracts are rather rigid
 - Adaptive management is required

Questions and suggestions for improvement?

- Conceptualizations
- Methods
- Conclusions to pursue

