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*“As a professor, I tended to think of history as run by impersonal forces.
But when you see it in practice you see the difference personalities make”*

– Henry Kissinger, former-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United States of America, in 1974 -

Dirk M. Koppenol MA

The megaproject effect

Entrepreneurship during the decision-making process of Maasvlakte II (1993-2008)

In 1969, the Municipal Port Management of Rotterdam (hereinafter: the Port Management) proposed the first concrete ideas for an expansion of the port by Maasvlakte II. This Port Management is a department of the Municipality of Rotterdam and, as a result, decisions are made by the City Council. Within a few years these plans were put on ice, as a result of resistance from the local nature preservation and environmental pressure groups and the national government.¹ Moreover, in the 1970s the decrease of the transshipment made an expansion unnecessary. Twenty years later, a new political basis was provided for port expansion. In order to fight the 1980s crisis, the Dutch national government chose the transport sector as the spearhead of national policy. In order to stimulate this sector, two ‘mainports’, or important distribution hubs, were pointed out as the economic centres of the Netherlands.² These were airport Schiphol and the port of Rotterdam. Moreover, the Cabinet decided to create an integral planning procedure for the regions around the mainports. For example, in 1991, in the region of the port of Rotterdam, projects for the stimulation of the economic development were linked to the creation of new nature reserves.

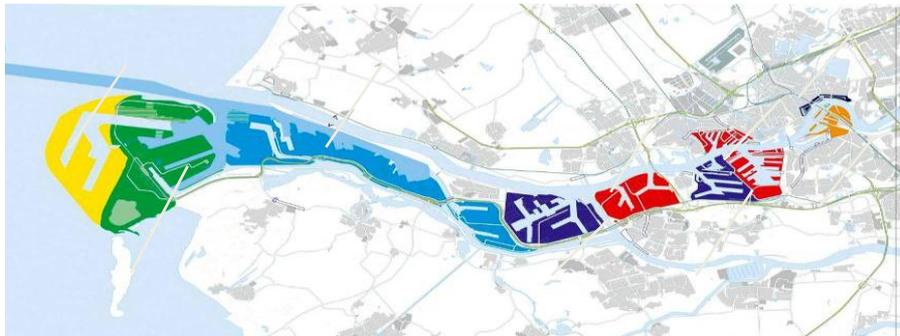
This new national policy gave the Port Management fresh impetus to create a new plan for a port expansion. In 1991, the plan for Maasvlakte II was presented and almost immediately added to the integral plan for the port region and linked to the

¹ Archive: Gemeente Archief Rotterdam 232.02 30, Plan 2000+ 1969 and J. U. Brolsma, *Havens, kranen, dokken en veren* (Rotterdam 2006) 272-273..

² B. Kuipers and W. Manshanden, *Van mainport naar wereldstadhaven. Belang en betekenis van mainports in 2040 voor de Nederlandse economie* (Rotterdam/Delft 2012) 11. It is a Dutch concept, combining the words main and port.

creation of 750 hectares of nature reserve. The need for a port expansion was, not only, based on the lack of harbour plots, but also the idea that deeper docks were needed to welcome the increasingly larger containerships. Especially, in the 1990s, fast growth of the container sector was expected. The Port Management of Rotterdam was convinced that the Dutch national government would subsidize the Maasvlakte II port expansion. For example, in the past 1/3 was paid by the Municipality and 2/3 by the national government.³ As a result, it was expected that within the foreseeable future, the national government would grant a public subsidy, making the port expansion possible.

Figure 1: Maasvlakte II (in yellow)



Source: Port of Rotterdam (2013)

However, after five years of negotiating between 1993 and 1998, still no definitive decision was made. What is more, the Ministry of Finance still refused to spend public money on the project, as it distrusted the usefulness and necessity of the project.⁴ In addition, nature preservation and environmental pressure groups convinced the government, to include an alternative to Maasvlakte II to the spatial shortage of the Port of Rotterdam.⁵ For example, the expansion of another port in the Southwest of the Netherlands was proposed. However, despite the resistance in 2008 the construction began. Moreover not only, did the pressure groups and national

³ J. U. Brolsma, *Havens, kranen, dokken en veren*, 251.

⁴ J. De Heer, M. Berendse, H. Duijnhoven and S. Merkus, *Besturen onder druk. Bestuurscultuur en besluitvorming over infrastructurele projecten*. (Amsterdam 2010) 59.

⁵ Archive: Ministerie van Economische Zaken, AS/ES 1075 5B 1-1 June 29th, 1999.

government accept the port expansion, but they also began to support it. This raises the main question: why did fierce resistance during the decision-making process of Maasvlakte II, changed into full support (1993-2008)? It is argued in this paper that entrepreneurship of individuals was of essential importance.

The goal of this paper is to illustrate the first conclusions of my PhD-research into the decision-making process of Maasvlakte II. No earlier research about Maasvlakte II through a historical perspective has been done, although it is an important addition to current research on the port expansion. For example, earlier port expansions (1950-1970) strongly influence the decision-making process of Maasvlakte II. For this research, new primary sources are used from the Port Management of Rotterdam, the Ministries of Economic Affairs, Finance and Transport and the most involved nature preservation and environmental pressure groups (hereinafter: the pressure groups).⁶ In addition, more than thirty interviews were conducted, from among others the Minister of Transport (1998-2002), Port Directors and directors of pressure groups.

In the first section, theory on entrepreneurship is put forward, as it helps to show which forces were of essential importance for the success of the decision-making process of Maasvlakte II. Success is within this context defined as: the accomplishment of the aim to construct Maasvlakte II, with broad support of the governments (the local and national government) and the nature preservation and environmental pressure groups. In the second and third section, in order to elucidate this success, the decision-making process is divided into two distinct parts: the financial and spatial planning track. In the case of Maasvlakte II, agreements on both tracks were equally important. On the spatial track resistance of the pressure groups had to be settled and on the financial track the opposition of the Ministry of Finance had to be coped with.

⁶ Ministerie van Economische Zaken, Ministerie van Financiën and Ministerie van Verkeer en Waterstaat.

§1 Theory: entrepreneurship and megaprojects

In this paper it is argued that the success of the decision-making process of Maasvlakte II was based on successfully applied strategies. Responsible actors for these strategies were *entrepreneurs*. In 1984, John Kingdon for the first time linked this entrepreneurship to public actors. He defined these *policy entrepreneurs* as: ‘advocates for proposals or for the prominence of ideas’ in the public sector.⁷ Within this context these are person with a key role in the decision-making process, which can be characterized by risk taking behaviour and willingness to spend time, money and reputation to achieve their goals. In addition DeLeon (1995) notes that *policy entrepreneurs* are involved in the policy change process – from idea development to implementation.

Especially, the DeLeons addition strongly decreases the number of possible policy entrepreneurs in the case of a megaproject, as such a project tends to have a longer decision-making process than a normal project.⁸ Furthermore, as a megaproject is also more complex than a normal project, one could argue that the number of good informed persons is also lower than during a normal project.⁹ These two distinct characteristics of megaprojects on the number of influential persons is defined here as the ‘megaproject effect’. As a result of this effect a clear distinction has to be made between long and short involvement (see Table 1). The hypothesis is that persons that are long involved tend to have more influence on the decision-making process. Influence is measured by comparing the wishes at the beginning of the decision-making process to the eventual outcome. Another division which is made, is between policy entrepreneurs (civil servants) and political entrepreneurs (politicians).¹⁰ The policy entrepreneurs have foremost an advising role and have, as a result, directing power. The political entrepreneurs have the eventual say in the acceptance or rejection of the project. In other words, decisive power.

⁷ Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies* (1984) 129.

⁸ K. Trapenberg Frick, 'The cost of the technological sublime: daring ingenuity and the new San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge', in H. Priemus, B. Flyvbjerg and B. van Wee (eds.), *Decision-making on mega-projects. Cost-benefit analysis, planning and innovation* (Cheltenham 2008) 241.

⁹ *Ibidem*, 241

¹⁰ Stijn Brouwer, *Policy Entrepreneurs and strategies for change. The Case of Water Management in the Netherlands* (Amsterdam 2013), 4-6

Table 1: entrepreneurs and megaprojects

National and local	Civil servants	Politicians
Long involvement	Considerable directing power	Considerable decisive power
Short involvement	Limited directing power	Limited decisive power

Source: made by Dirk M. Koppenol (2014).

Successful entrepreneurship cannot, however, be separated from ruling ideas about the content of the strategies, as it must be acceptable to the public and politicians in order to be successful. To define these ruling ideas the *discourse coalitions* approach is used. This term was introduced in the influential book of Maarten Hajer *The politics of environmental discourse*, as an addition to earlier approaches towards policy-making, such as the more traditional *advocacy coalitions* approach.¹¹ The most important addition of Hajer is that his approach focuses on groups of organizations with shared ‘normative and causal believes’ (advocacy coalitions), but on groups of organizations with shared terms and concepts (discourse coalitions).¹² In short, to illustrate this with the case of Maasvlakte II, his approach does not only focus on the supporters and opponents of the port expansion by Maasvlakte II, but on groups that share a common understanding of economic and ecologic development of the port region in general. In order to come to structural cooperation, pressure groups should be part of the same *discourse coalition* as the government. The *discourse coalition approach* is used in this paper to clarify the debate between the pressure groups and the government.

Entrepreneurs also need freedom to act, to implement their strategies. In other words, it strongly depends on the political climate and other actors involved, whether certain persons are given the freedom to implement their strategies. For example, whether a Port Director can implement a strategy, strongly depends on the political climate in the City Council and the attitude of the Port Alderman.

¹¹ Maarten A. Hajer, *The politics of environmental discourse: Ecological modernization and the policy process* (Oxford 1997).

¹² *Ibidem*, 68

All in all, with regard to entrepreneurship the ruling ideas and the freedom to act are taken into account. After the description of the decision-making process in the following sections, in the conclusion, the persons longest involved are put forward, in order to theorize about the influence of entrepreneurs in decision-making processes of megaprojects.

§2 Financial track: towards corporatization

There is always conflict about public spending, as it is a political decision, to which project money is given. Moreover, the Minister of Finance has the task to reduce the costs of projects. However, this cannot explain two outcomes of the financing of Maasvlakte II. The 2004 corporatization of the Municipal Port Management of Rotterdam and the 2005 national governmental 30 percent buy-in through shares in this corporatized company. Both the corporatization and the buy-in were preconditions of the Ministry of Finance to invest in Maasvlakte II. In order to understand this outcome, it is, firstly, important to explain how the idea for a corporatized came into being. In other words, which persons were involved? Furthermore, why the Ministry of Finance began to demand the corporatization. Moreover, why the City Council of Rotterdam accepted the corporatization of their most profitable department.

Already during the late 1980s, the idea emerged for the corporatization of the Port Management in order to improve the efficiency of the management of the port.¹³ However, especially from 1993 and onwards it was the new Port Director Willem Scholten, who saw it as his personal goal to give the Port Management a more independent status.¹⁴ In 1992, Scholten became the new director. He was generally considered to be a skilled negotiator and a strategic thinker.¹⁵ Moreover, he had a great personal charm, but was also has sometimes the characteristics of ‘an absolute ruler or autocrat’.¹⁶ In a 2012 interview he responded to the question: who had most

¹³ E. A. G. Van den Bent, *Proeftuin Rotterdam. Bestuurlijke maakbaarheid tussen 1975 en 2005*. (Rotterdam 2010) 240.

¹⁴ Interview: Willem Scholten, former port-director of the Municipal Port Management of Rotterdam, September 25th, 2012.

¹⁵ J. U. Brolsma, *Havens, kranen, dokken en veren*, 326

¹⁶ Employee GHR R. van Weerden, 14 January 2005. ‘Scholten was absoluut alleenheerser’ in *Ibidem*, 326

influence on the decision-making process? ‘I [was] the personification of Maasvlakte II’.¹⁷

In contrast to Scholten, the City Council wanted to keep the Port Management under local political control as it was seen as a public entity.¹⁸ In addition, it was the most profitable department, which transferred ninety percent of its profit to the treasury of the Municipality. As a result, a corporatization was also financially unbeneficial. Furthermore, in the City Council it was regarded as outrageous to sell shares to the national government in order to finance a port expansion.

The wish of the Port Management to become more independent and the sense of urgency for the financial acceptance of Maasvlakte II coincided perfectly. Mid-1990s, the Mayor of Rotterdam Bram Peper and the Port Director Scholten were frustrated by the refusals of the Ministry of Finance to subsidize Maasvlakte II.¹⁹ Between 1984 and 1998 Peper was the Rotterdam Mayor. As no other, Peper tried as mayor to fight for the development of the port. In order to influence national politics, he used his political channels of the Labour Party to directly contact the Ministers. Important in this context is that a Mayor in the Netherlands is appointed, rather than elected. As a result, a Mayor has a reasonably independent status. In 1997, according to Mayor Peper, Minister Gerrit Zalm could not be convinced of the fact that the expansion of the port of Rotterdam was of national importance.²⁰ Also the role of Zalm stayed of great importance as he was Minister Finance between 1994 and 2002 and 2003 and 2007, in other words, almost during the complete length of the decision-making process (1993-2008).

In 1997, in order to convince Zalm of the need of Maasvlakte II, Mayor Peper approached chairman of the Social Economic Council of the Netherlands – *Sociaal Economisch Raad* (SER) Klaas de Vries, who was an acquaintance and also a party associate of the Labour Party.²¹ January 1998, in direct contact with the Minister of Transport, De Vries became the chairman of the committee. Other members were Mayor Peper, Port Director Scholten, two Aldermen of Rotterdam, and seven high

¹⁷ Interview: Willem Scholten, former port-director of the Municipal Port Management of Rotterdam, September 25th, 2012.

¹⁸ Ibidem, 324-327. Interview, former-Mayor of Rotterdam Bram Peper, November 15th, 2012 and Interview, Willem Scholten, former port-director of the Municipal Port Management of Rotterdam, September 25th, 2012.

¹⁹ Unknown, 'Gerrit Zalm kreeg zijn zin', *Het Financieel Dagblad*, November 18th, 2003, .

²⁰ Interview: former-Mayor of Rotterdam Bram Peper, November 15th, 2012.

²¹ Interview: former-Mayor of Rotterdam Bram Peper, November 15th, 2012.

officials of the most involved Ministries and the representatives of the unions and employers organizations.²² The goal of the committee was officially to inquire the positioning of the Port Management as port manager of the Rotterdam harbour and industrial complex. However, according to Peper the only reason for the establishment of the committee was to convince the Minister of Finance to subsidize Maasvlakte II.²³ Through the committee the national importance of the Port of Rotterdam could be proved and Zalm was given the opportunity to earn from his investment in Maasvlakte II by corporatizing the Port Management and buying shares.

The conclusion of Committee De Vries resulted in the 1998 establishment of a national committee, attended by all involved Ministries, including the Ministry of Finance.²⁴ The goal of this national committee was to develop an integral and coherent vision on the development of the Port of Rotterdam.²⁵ It would take, however, another three year before Zalm would demand a corporatization.

Zalm had his own agenda. In 1998, critical public and political questions were posed about the usefulness and necessity of one of the megaprojects his Ministry had accepted during the early 1990s. More specific, it was doubted whether this megaproject - *the Betuweroute*, which is a dedicated goods rail link to the German border, would ever become profitable.²⁶ The reason why the Ministry of Finance had agreed on the construction of this 5 billion euro (prices 2004) project was the national governments focus on the transport sector. In 1995, for example, the national government decided to create a special fund for the strengthening of the Dutch economic structure – *Fonds Economische Structuurversterking (FES)*. The goal of this fund was to invest in the Dutch economy for the future generation.²⁷ Besides the specific political focus, also large cash flows were available. In the 1959, the largest

²² Wetten.nl Instelling Commissie De Vries, February 3th 1998.

²³ Interview: former-Mayor of Rotterdam Bram Peper, November 15th, 2012.and confirmed by Interview: former-secretary of the Port Management, March 9th 2014.

²⁴ Archive: Ministerie van Economische Zaken OI-AS- 896 753F (v) and Ministerie van Economische Zaken AS/ES 1072 5B1-1. BOM OVERLEG 14-03-2000. *Bestuurlijk Overleg Mainport (BOM)*

²⁵ Archive: Gemeenteraad Rotterdam Raadsstuk SEZ 99/4040. September 1999.

²⁶ Unknown, 'Kabinet gaat ondanks kritiek door met aanleg van Betuwelijn', *De Volkskrant*, November 7th, 1998.

²⁷ http://wimdreesstichting.nl/page/downloads/TvOF_2009-n1-art3.pdf

gas field in Europe was discovered in the Netherlands and especially from 1975 and onwards large quantities of money from gas sales and taxes flowed into the public treasury.

In order not to lose face Minister of Finance Zalm was determined to find definitive proof of the usefulness and necessity of a project before accepting a subsidy. He was backed by the Netherland Bureaus of Economic Policy Analysis – *Centraal Planbureau (CPB)*. This advisory body had a monopoly on the analysis of policy documents of the Dutch parliament and the Ministry of Finance. As a result, its reports were of great influence on the discussion about megaprojects such as Maasvlakte II. In 1997, the CPB argued in its report that the estimates of the Port Management about the shortage of harbour plots were wrong. According to it the discussion about a port expansion should be postponed to 2010-2015.²⁸ This countered the report of the Port Management in which it was argued that the port would lack space around 2000.²⁹ The deviation in outcomes, was based on difference in approach. The Port Management based the need for new harbour plots on vision. According to them the port should always have a few hundred hectares in reserve in order to accommodate new companies. In other words, in their opinion the dock should be ready before a ship could be welcomed. This contrasted to the calculated approach of the CPB, which was supported by the Ministry of Finance, which focussed on the most efficient use of the harbour plots and most beneficial exploitation. They wanted to delay the construction of the port expansion until the port was fully filled up, to construct Maasvlakte II on demand. The negative stance of the Ministry of Finance towards the financing of this port expansion must be placed in this context. In other words, the Ministry was not per se against the public financing of the project, but not on the short term.³⁰

In 1998, although the CPB still considered an investment in a port expansion useless and unnecessary, Zalm was forced to start an investigation into the financing of the project as the spatial problem of Rotterdam became a project of national importance. This was one of the reasons why the Ministry proposed to the Cabinet to inquire a Public Private Partnership for the project. On the one hand the private sector

²⁸ Centraal Planbureau, *Economische en ruimtelijke versterking van mainport Rotterdam*, (1997) 92 and 114. Original quote: ‘Dit kan dan beter over 15 jaar geschieden, waarbij we dan ook gewapend zijn met de kennis van de feitelijke ontwikkelingen in de periode tot 2010 of 2015.’

²⁹ Projectorganisatie Maasvlakte II, *Maasvlakte 2. Trendbreuk analyse* (Delft March 1997).

³⁰ Interview: Rijksinspecteur Financien, Hein Hamer, February 14th 2013.

could judge about the profitability of such an expansion and, furthermore, part of the investment in the project could be funded by this sector.³¹ The idea of a Public Private Partnership was part of the neo-liberalistic wind, which got grip on Dutch politics. For example, in the 1998 coalition agreement, it was underlined that the Public Private Partnership practice in the Netherlands should be stimulated.³²

However, between 1999 and 2000, it became increasingly more evident that a Public Private Partnership would be impossible. In 2000, the Municipality of Rotterdam rejected it.³³ Foremost, the Municipality argued that the management of the port should not be divided between a private exploiter and the Port Management. In addition, as according to the local government the procedure was taking too long. For example, in the two years between 1998 and 2000 still no definitive steps were taken towards a Public Private Partnership. Besides the negative stance of the Municipality of Rotterdam, two other developments resulted in the end to the Public Private Partnership idea. Firstly, the financial trajectory was overtaken by the spatial planning trajectory. Whereas in 2001 the final agreement was signed for the national spatial law between the pressure groups and the governments (the local and national government), the Ministry of Finance still did not reach a final decision about the financing of the project. As a result, the Public Private Partnership became a burden rather than an advantage. Furthermore, the national government experienced a period of high economic growth and, as a result, a fast increase of income. As a civil servant involved in the Public Private Partnership project argued that the Ministry of Finance had enormous cash flows coming, why use a difficult way of financing, if there was an easier alternative?³⁴

In 2001, as a Public Private Partnership became increasingly less likely, and the CPB produced a positive cost-benefit analysis, the Ministry of Finance showed the willingness to publicly finance the project.³⁵ However, in order not to lose face, as

³¹ Archive: Ministerie van Financiën IRF 23612 PMR. Report: Notitie 'kasproblematiek investeringsprogramma V&W' July 1999.

³² Regeerakkoord 1998. Original quotes: Er wordt naar gestreefd de besluitvormingsprocedure de komende kabinetsperiode af te ronden. Gestreefd wordt naar een gecontroleerde verbreding van de PPS-praktijk in Nederland.

³³ Archive: Ministerie van Financiën IRF 23612. January 2001.

³⁴ Project Mainportontwikkeling Rotterdam, *Logboek. Leerdocument van Project Mainportontwikkeling Rotterdam* (Den Haag 2002) 64.. Visser: 'Het geld stroomde op dat moment bijna letterlijk de kantoren van Financiën binnen. Wat zou je dan moeilijk gaan doen?'

³⁵ Archive: Por Auhority of Rotterdam doc. Nr. 721483-v1 September 2000.

had happened during the Betuweroute, Zalm demanded the corporatization of the port management and a buy-in as a precondition for the financing of Maasvlakte II.³⁶ Two pillars supported Zalms demand. Firstly, he wanted to earn from the investment in Maasvlakte II. Secondly, the Minister wanted to have a say in the management of the port. Not only, because the management of the port was seen as a national and not a local duty, but also to directly influence the steering of the port. Paradoxically, Zalm now demanded for a partial nationalization, although the corporatization was inspired by the neo-liberal thought of more market-orientation.

All in all, the strategy of Mayor Peper and Port Director Scholten to contact De Vries for an inquiry was a success, as Minister of finance Zalm accepted to finance Maasvlakte II. However, it still has to be explained why the City Council accepted the corporatization of their most profitable department – the Port Management. During the period 1996 and 2004 the political steering was weak. No less than five different Port Alderman came and went during this period of eight years. Furthermore, already since 1984 Mayor Peper was in office, making him a dominant figure within the political arena in Rotterdam. As a result, Mayor Peper and Port Director Scholten had the freedom to create their risky plans.

After 2000 the City Council experienced increasingly more pressure from the Ministry of Finance to corporatize its Port Management. As the dominant party, the Labour Party, was strongly in favour of the creation of Maasvlakte II, along the way corporatization became acceptable, but only under the precondition that 100 percent of the shares would be owned by the Municipality. Also here the Port Management, under leadership of Scholten had a distinct role. As Scholten had to advice the City Council on behalf of the Port Management, the City Council was strongly depended on him. When in 2001 the City Council started an inquiry into the possible change of the legal status of the Port Management, it was Scholten, who was part of the inquiring committee.

The March 2002 elections eventually accelerated the process of corporatization. During the March 2002 local elections the new right-wing party Leefbaar Rotterdam (translated. Livable Rotterdam) won 35 percent of the votes and the former largest party, the Labour Party, fell back from 30 percent in 1998 to 22 percent in 2002. This was an earthquake in the political situation in Rotterdam,

³⁶ Archive: Ministerie van Financiën IRF 22255 PMR. Hamer to minister Zalm. April 7th, 2000.

because since the Second World War no coalition had been created without the Labour Party. Paradoxically, although the party leader of Leefbaar Rotterdam Pim Fortuyn was against the corporatization of the Port Management and the construction of Maasvlakte II, the rise of his party was an important stimulus to the process of the corporatization and financing of Maasvlakte II.³⁷ An important reason was that Leefbaar Rotterdam had to cooperate with the Christian Democrats –*Christen Democratisch Appèl (CDA)* - and the Conservatives – *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD)*, which were in favour of a corporatization. As a result, Leefbaar had to find a pragmatic solution in order to form a coalition. As a result, in 2004, the Port Management was corporatized and, in 2005, 30 percent of the shares were bought by the national government.

§2 Spatial track: towards cooperation

The Port Management under leadership of Scholten was also active on the spatial track. In contrast to the financial track, not the Ministry of Finance, but the nature preservation and environmental pressure groups had to be convinced of the usefulness and necessity of Maasvlakte II. Based on Charles Tilly's much cited definition of social movements, Wim van Noord created a definition of the environmental pressure groups: 'a composition of actors and activities aimed against harm to nature and the landscape, the depletion of energy sources and raw materials and air, water and ground pollution.'³⁸ In this case the focus is specifically on organizations which try to save nature and the landscape from harm (nature preservation organisations) and those which fight air, water and ground pollution (environmental organisations). The nature preservation organizations were stakeholders as they managed the nature reserves around the port mouth and the city of Rotterdam. Moreover, the environmental pressure groups were involved as they were concerned about the direct and indirect

³⁷ <http://www.pimfortuyn.com/pim-fortuyn/archief-columns/164-de-betuwelijn-en-verder> (March 20th, 2014).

³⁸ Charles Tilly and Lesly J. Wood, *Social Movements 1768-2012* (London 2013, third edition) 4 and 5; Wim van Noord 1988 *bevlogen bewegingen*, 19 (original quote: 'een samenstel van vele actoren en een verscheidenheid aan publiek activiteiten dat gericht is tegen de aantasting van natuur en landschap de uitputting van energiebronnen en grondstoffen en de verontreiniging van lucht, water en bodem')

effect of economic activities on Maasvlakte II on the liveability in region of the port, such as an increase of traffic.

During the twenty years since the 1970s, the nature preservation and environmental pressure groups changed from protest to cooperative organizations.³⁹ This had several reasons: Firstly, during the 1980s and 1980s unemployment in the Netherlands arose and the economy recovered slowly from the oil crises. As a result, they were aware of the need for projects to stimulate the economy. Secondly, the pressure groups began to favour cooperation with the governments and companies in contrast to protest. This was caused by the fast growth of the pressure groups in terms of members. The total membership of the four largest national pressure groups increased from 412,000 members in 1980 to 2,036,000 in 1995.⁴⁰ In other words, the number of members increased fivefold. As a result, they grew in organizational size. This made them more independent on the contribution of their members, which made them less radical. Thirdly, the protest against infrastructural projects in the Netherlands showed them that they were only able to delay a project; however, they were unable to actually realise their ideas. These three reasons stimulated them to try to increase their influence at the beginning of a decision-making process rather than at the end.

The most involved nature preservation and environmental pressure groups in the decision-making process of Maasvlakte II were organized in one umbrella organization. In 1996, Arno Steekelenburg, employee of a provincial environmental pressure group based in Rotterdam – *Milieufederatie Zuid-Holland* -, established this umbrella organization ‘ConSept’, which was a cooperation of seven nature preservation and environmental pressure groups active in the Province of Zuid-Holland. Their procedural goal was to improve the cooperation between the public and private sector in the discussion on Maasvlakte II by cooperating from the first phase of the decision-making process.⁴¹ Their literal goal was to add as much measures to increase the liveability and create as much new nature as possible, without using juridical procedures.

³⁹ J. Cramer, *De groene golf: geschiedenis en toekomst van de Nederlandse milieubeweging» toon extra info.* (Utrecht 1989) 89, 99-100, 122.

⁴⁰ Hein-Anton v. d. Heijden, *Tussen aanpassing en verzet. Milieubeweging en milieudiscours* (Amsterdam 2000) 117.

⁴¹ ‘Con’ (Spanish for ‘with’) and ‘Sept’ (French for ‘seven’).

In other words, one could argue that in contrast to the 1970s, in the 1990s the pressure groups and the governments, including the Port Management, were part of the same *discourse coalition*. Whereas, in the early 1970s there were two *discourse coalitions*: one supporting and another resisting economic growth, in the 1990s both the pressure groups and the government supported the goal to stimulate the economy and simultaneously improve the liveability. In 1993, the Port Management linked its plan for Maasvlakte II to the national plan to develop the region around the port with a double goal: stimulate the economy and create new nature reserves. The pressure groups were in support of this approach. As a result, conflict was not about the content - growth or no growth, but about the procedure – how much influence the pressure groups would be given. However, trust had to grow before the pressure groups and the governments were able to cooperate and make fast steps towards a general agreement. The chairman of one of the pressure groups – *Milieufederatie Zuid-Holland* – argued that the pressure groups and the Port Management agreed on 80 to 90 percent of the content, but only began to understand this after active cooperation.⁴²

Trust grew only through cooperation, but it was at the same time distrust which blockaded effective cooperation. The local and national government distrusted the pressure groups as they were afraid that these groups would use the inside information during the meetings against them. Furthermore, some Ministers still considered the choice for a megaproject a political decision. Consequently, only influence during a later phase in the decision-making process was seen as appropriate.

Simultaneously the pressure groups distrusted the government. Being part of a formal cooperative organization did not only strengthen, but also weaken the position of the pressure groups. On the one hand these pressure groups could directly discuss matters concerning the decision-making process to the minister and ask for inquiries. On the other hand they bound themselves to the eventual outcome of the process, as they were part of the decision-making process organization. As a result, the pressure groups were keen on influencing the decision-making process as much as possible, in order to justify their cooperation with the government to their members.

In 1996, in order to keep the nature preservation and environmental pressure groups on board, the Ministry of Transport decided to include the pressure groups in

⁴² Interview: Ellen verkoelen, former-director of Milieufederatie Zuid-Holland, March 18th 2013.

the meetings on national level. However, the mid-1998 change of Cabinet resulted in a confrontation with the pressure groups. The new Minister of Transport Tineke Netelenbos of the Labour Party refused to share further information with the pressure groups. According to her, expertise of the pressure groups was wished for, but not at this stage.⁴³ As a result, in 1999 the pressure groups officially rejected further cooperation with the national government in this matter.

The stalemate between the Minister of Transport and the pressure groups, was the direct incentive of the Port Management under leadership of Scholten, to start talks with the pressure groups. Between 1996 and 2000 the Port Director of the Port Management Scholten saw the support for a fast acceptance of the Maasvlakte II project crumble. In 1998, in order to speed up the process, Port Director Scholten changed his strategy from focusing on the *strong* to focusing on the *weak ties* - from focusing on the Ministries, towards focusing on the pressure groups. This was a radical shift, as until 1996 the pressure groups were basically ignored. Between 1998 and 2000 a specific agreement, Visions and Courage – *Visie en Durf*, was negotiated with ConSept and the two largest nature reserve managers.⁴⁴ After the covenant Vision and Courage was signed Steekelenburg said: ‘it took long, a three to four years fight, to come to a serious dialog’.⁴⁵ ‘However, with this plan we give a signal to the national government’⁴⁶ Willem Scholten reacted that ‘this was a successful effort to put our point of views next to each other’.⁴⁷ From their reaction it can be concluded that this approach was radically new for both parties. The agreement showed that there was no resistance against Maasvlakte II, as the pressure groups accepted an expansion by 1000 hectares net.⁴⁸ Furthermore, the Port Management showed that it was prepared to give in. For example, it was agreed that Maasvlakte II would become 1000 hectares net maximum, instead of earlier plans for a Maasvlakte II of 2000

⁴³ Interview, Tineke Netelenbos, former-Minister of Transport, October 8th, 2013.

⁴⁴ Gemeente Rotterdam, Havenbedrijf Rotterdam, natuurorganisaties, *Visie en durf*, (2000) .

⁴⁵ T. Van der Veeken, 'Havenbedrijf en milieubeweging. In het Rotterdamse ...', *Milieu-Actief*, 27 (2002) 11. Original quote Arno Steekelenburg: ‘De slag om serieus in gesprek met elkaar te komen, duurde lang, 3-4 jaar.’

⁴⁶ Unknown, ‘Akkoord tweede maasvlakte. Rotterdam en Milieubeweging maken totaalplan’, *Trouw* June 6th 2000. Original quote Arno Steekelenburg: ‘(...) maar met dit plan willen we een signaal afgeven aan politiek Den Haag (...)’

⁴⁷ Ibidem, 10 Original quote: Willem Scholten: ‘Visie en Durf is een geslaagde poging geweest om standpunten hard en onomwonden neer te leggen’.

⁴⁸ Gemeente Rotterdam, Havenbedrijf Rotterdam, natuurorganisaties, *Visie en durf*,

hectares.⁴⁹ Moreover, it was agreed upon that Maasvlakte II would be the last expansion towards the west. In other words, the expansion of the port would come to an end.⁵⁰ All in all, in the agreement the Port Management showed for the first time that it was prepared to moderate the size of the future port expansion and accept large compensation plans. As a result, the pressure groups began to support the expansion by Maasvlakte II. Important within this context was the role of Steekelenburg, who zealously tried to make ConSept work.

The Vision and Courage agreement stimulated the process on national level as it resulted in trust between the nature preservation and environmental pressure groups and the Port Management. In 2001 a general agreement on the spatial planning track was signed.⁵¹ Between 2005 and 2008, however, again entrepreneurship was needed to overcome the disputes with some pressure groups. In 2005, against all expectations, the Council of State – *Raad van State* - rejected the spatial law for Maasvlakte II based on appeals from some nature preservation and environmental pressure groups. However, this period showed the importance of the grown trust between the pressure groups, the local government and the Port Management.

In order to avoid another conflict later on in the decision-making process, the Port Authority (before 2004: the Port Management) accepted a radical new strategy towards all stakeholders in the region.⁵² It was called Strategic Environment Management – *Strategisch Omgevingsmanagement (SOM)*.⁵³ The goal of SOM was to broaden the coalition by searching for all possible stakeholders in the Maasvlakte II project. As a result, more than 170 possible stakeholders, including nature preservation and environmental pressure groups, were identified and approached, although some of them did not even consider themselves to be a stakeholder.⁵⁴ This broad search made it possible to find structural solutions for problems in the region and make deals and covenants if needed.

⁴⁹ Ibidem,

⁵⁰ Ibidem,

⁵¹ Wijnand Duyvendak, Ingrid Horstik and Bertram Zagema (eds.), *Het groene poldermodel. Consensus en conflict in de milieupolitiek* (Amsterdam 1999). and Interview: Huub van Zwam, PMR director, April 5th 2012.

⁵² Interview: Marc Wesselink, consultant SOM (September 10th 2013).

⁵³ M. Wesselink and R. Paul, *Handboek strategisch omgevingsmanagement* (Deventer 2010) 50-51.

⁵⁴ Johanna Muis, Stakeholdermanagement bij Maasvlakte 2, March 25th 2013.

http://www.decommunicatiedesk.nl/artikel/-/marketing_artikel/411462/Stakeholdermanagement+bij+Maasvlakte+2 (09-01-2014).

A large number of nature preservation and environmental pressure groups chose for a structural cooperation. May 2008, based on the Vision and Courage agreement, the Vision and Trust agreement – *Visie en Vertrouwen* - was signed.⁵⁵ In other words, the work of among others Scholten and Steekelenburg formed to basis of this new agreement. The goal of Visions and Trust was to overcome the constant distrust between all parties, caused by political changes and new directors. Consequently, the Vision and Courage agreement had to be improved. Visions and Trust was a ‘non-personal’ agreement and it underlined, among others, the need to monitor the implementation of the agreement. The monitoring would continue for the coming decades. As a result, structural trust was created and the basis was set for further cooperation during port development.

As a result, of the close cooperation between the governments and the pressure groups 35 projects were linked to the Maasvlakte II project in order to improve the liveability in the city of Rotterdam and around the port, including the creation of the 750 hectares of new nature reserve north and south of the city of Rotterdam. The rejection of Maasvlakte II would for that reason also be a loss for the pressure groups. In 2008, by using this *mutual gain* approach, finally the construction of Maasvlakte II started with support of all pressure group.⁵⁶

Conclusion

Early 1990s, it was expected by the Port Management that within the foreseeable future, the national government would accept a public subsidy, making the port expansion possible. However, after five year of decision-making between 1993 and 1998, still no definitive decision was made, as a result of conflicts with the CPB and the Ministry of Finance, and the nature preservation and environmental pressure groups. Finally, in 2008, the construction began, but now the pressure groups and the Ministries, not only, accepted, but also fully supported the expansion. That is why the main question is: This raises the main question: why did fierce resistance during the decision-making process of Maasvlakte II, changed into full support (1993-2008)?

⁵⁵ Visie en Vertrouwen (2008)

<https://www.maasvlakte2.com/kennisbank/Afsprakenkader%20Borging%20PMR.pdf> (02-05-2014).

⁵⁶ Ibidem,

It can be concluded that the decision-making process was successful because of the ruling ideas and the entrepreneurship. In contrast to the 1970s, the pressure groups formed a *discourse coalition* with the governments, making cooperation easier. In other words, they supported the integral development of the port region. Furthermore, they changed from protest to cooperative oriented organizations. As a result, they were open for discussion. Moreover, as they were part of the same *discourse coalition* and had a cooperative stance, the discussion was more about the procedure than the content. More specific, about how much influence the pressure groups would be given. For example, after the cooperation between all involved parties became more intense and trust grew, fast agreements could be made. Furthermore, certain persons were able to leave a distinct mark on the project.

Table 2: entrepreneurs and megaprojects (12 years or more in office) during the decision-making process of Maasvlakte II (1993-2008).

	Policy	Political
Local	<p>Willem Scholten Port Director, 1992-2004</p> <p>Bram Peper Mayor of Rotterdam, 1984-1998</p>	<p>(none)</p> <p>Aldermen</p>
National	<p>(none)</p> <p>Officials</p>	<p>Gerrit Zalm Minister of Finance, 1993-2002 and 2003-2008.</p>

As a result of the ‘megaproject effect’, which is the phenomenon that megaproject tend to be more complex and stretch out over a longer period than a normal project, the total number of entrepreneurs were three: Willem Scholten, Bram Peper and Gerrit Zalm.⁵⁷ All three men were entrepreneurs as they had key positions in the decision-making process. Moreover, Peper and Scholten spend time, money and

⁵⁷ Arno Steekelenburg, although active for nineteen years at the provincial environmental pressure groups – *Milieufederatie Zuid-Holland* – is not added to the list, as he only represented ConSept for ten years.

reputation to create Maasvlakte II and Zalm tried zealously not to lose face, by trying to find a favourable financial solution to the project.

A few conclusions can be drawn about the 'megaproject effect'. Firstly, these three persons became increasingly more important over time. For example, Scholten gained more influence as the management structure of the Port Management was changed along the way. Secondly, the most influential persons became closer during the process. Zalm and Scholten, for instance, eventually combined forces to persuade the City Council to corporatize the Port Management and finance Maasvlakte II. Thirdly, these persons had freedom to act as a result of the lack of other persons that were long in office. Scholten, for example, was able to act freely as there was no political continuity as a result of the fast shift of Port Aldermen.

Also a conclusion can be drawn about the outcome of the project in relation to these entrepreneurs. It can be concluded that the organizations and Ministries which were represented by those who were longest in office during this megaproject, gained the most from the decision-making process. The Port Management was corporatized and Maasvlakte II was accepted; and the Ministry of Finance became partial owner of the port and began to earn from its investment in Maasvlakte II.

Intriguingly, in the 1990s and 2000s, Maasvlakte II was one out of five decision-making processes of megaprojects in the Netherlands. As a result, one could argue, that as 1990s Dutch politics was dominated by the megaproject effect, national and local policy had a strong personal touch.

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