

Explaining Failures of Regaining Public Trust.

The case of agricultural policy-formation in the Netherlands

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Study group 2

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1. Introduction

This paper deals with the problematic trust-relations between Dutch farmers and state-officials. It concludes that the erosion of the coherent policy-perspective gave rise to public distrust and that despite administrative and organizational reforms, both, trust and distrust will stay in its place. Modern (agricultural) policies will, therefore, always generate various forms of trust and distrust at the same time. In the next paragraphs I first provide a definition and a theory about the generation and erosion of trust. This is followed by an application of the theory on the problematic trust-relations between Dutch farmers and government

Many studies on trust are often concerned with the propitious *consequences* of trust. They try to show what trust can do for society. The well-known studies of Putnam, for example, seem to show that social trust leads to high levels of co-operation, organizational development, and institutional performances (1993, 2000). Fukuyama (1995) suggests a positive relation between the amount of trust and economic performances. Beck (1992) discusses the relation between trust and risk, stating that as long as humans trust, risk-taking behavior is possible.

Other scholarly analyses on trust are mainly interested in discussing and classifying the *reasons* that individuals provide for their trust in someone or something. These exercises have resulted ‘in a wealth of typologies and measurement scales for various bases and modes of trust’ (Möllering 2001, 413). Putnam (1993) shows, for example, that traditions and institutions are probably the most common reasons for humans to trust. There are, however many more reasons why people can trust, such as, intuition, qualities of character, know-how, science, group-identification, affection, legal procedures, or family-ties (cf. Sztomka 1999). Cummings and Bromiley (1996) observed initially 273 reasons for trusting (cf. Möllering 2001, 412). Apparently humans can put forward all kinds of reasons to trust, even reasons that others would classify as irrational, naïve, or inconsistent. Just as Luhmann noted ‘the one who trusts is never at a loss for reasons’ (1979, 26).

In contrast to these studies, the following analysis does not focus on the positive societal consequences of trust, or on the contents of the reasons individuals provide for

their trust, but on the question, “how do individuals *arrive* at the reasons for their trusting?” In other words, this chapter does not discuss the contents of trust but concentrates on the process of gaining and losing trust.

2. The Process of Trust

In this paper trust is defined as *a mental status of favourable expectations*. Whereas many definitions involve more constraining elements, I deliberately opt for a more general definition.

According to an analysis of trust definitions, it turned out that more than half is related to *expecting* something (Castaldo 2002). These definitions contain however unnecessary constraints. First, almost all define trust as something that can only be vested in human beings. Trust then is defined as ‘an expectation that other people’s future actions will produce favourable results....’ (Castaldo 2002, 10). This is, however, incomplete. Individuals can have expectations that are directed to many other things than only human beings. One could, for instance, have favourable expectations concerning a machine, a construction or policy plan. The second constraint, which follows directly from the first, concerns the presupposed reason why people trust other people. Favourable expectations then are ‘predominantly based on the personal characteristics of the trustee. This would imply that no other reasons for producing expectations are considered, which is incomplete as well. Humans can give a lot more reasons for expecting something, other than personal characteristics. One could, for instance, expect some behaviour of a particular person for institutional reasons. If I need an operation, for example, it is very likely that I do not know the personal characteristic of the surgeon. However, since he is a doctor with sufficient university degrees, I probably encounter him with favourable expectations.

The first question then reads, how does one arrive at favourable expectations? Following Möllering (2001), I agree that this question implies two features: interpretation and suspension. First, an individual should become convinced that some specific reason (or reasons) is sufficient *to him* for having favorable expectations. Which reasons these are depend heavily on his interpretation of the situation. It is not necessary that other

people agree with his interpretation, nor that his reasoning is based on rational argumentation (though it could), nor that others will be concerned with his trusting. Initially, *only* he himself thinks he got *good reasons* to trust¹.

The second feature of the trust-process is suspension of the unknown and uncertainty. If an individual is convinced of his good reasons for trusting –based upon his interpretation-, he also suspends at the same time the uncertainties that come along with that particular interpretation. ‘Suspension, then, can be defined as the mechanism that brackets out uncertainty and ignorance, thus making interpretative knowledge momentarily ‘certain’ and enabling the leap to favorable (or unfavorable) expectations’ (cf. Giddens 1991, 3; 244 in Möllering 2001, 214). Without such suspension, the potential reasons for trusting will not lead to favourable expectations. Rather, an individual then shall refrain from actions or he shall act reservedly, suspiciously or cynically². Some illustrations could be helpful.

Suppose individual A encounters person B with a leashed dog. If they are about to pass, the master of the dog pulls the animal back. Whether for A to trust or distrust the dog depends on his interpretation of this “pulling back” of the dog. If A was bitten before then he possibly would interpret this as a warning – watch out, my dog likes to bite. If he likes dogs, on the other hand, he could interpret this situation in a positive way and think that person B just want to temper the dog’s enthusiasm in order to let it being petted. This means that whether person A has good reasons to trust or distrust the dog can only be grasped after an analysis of A’s interpretation of the situation.

It could be the case, however, that, although A adores doggies, he finds this particular dog a too fearfully looking creature and approaches it more reservedly. If its master then tells him that his dog ‘has never bitten before’, he might be easily convinced, suspends his uncertainties at the same time, and start stroking the dog. Moreover he also suspends other uncertainties, such as the good intentions of the dog’s master -he could be lying-, and the dog’s mood of that day –one can never tell with animals. Suspension can

¹ Note that “good” does not imply a normative theory from which individual behavior is deduced and which can be discussed. “Good” is as good as the trustor believes it is a sufficient reason for trusting..

² The degree to which humans suspend their uncertainties could be used for a theory about the modalities of trust. This, I think, is of important value. It can provide an analytical tool to analyze the various forms of day to day behavior. The basis for such analysis, however, forms the individual interpretation of real-life situations, which might be studied in line with stratified class interpretations.

even be so strong that, although person B warned him against the dog, the dog-loving person is so self-convinced of his 'dogs-never-bite-me' argument that he starts petting it anyway.

These two features combined, interpretation and suspension, form the theoretical scheme that is used in the following to analyse how favourable expectations are produced for public policies. If for example a public official wants to gain trust, a first step is to communicate, of course, what he is expecting. To arrive at this status he has to give reasons that support these expectations. These reasons, however, should have to be *good* reasons to the persons he is trying to win trust from. They have to fall on fertile soil, so to speak, meaning that the reasons that are provided should be in concordance with the interpretation of the one whose trust is being searched. And, finally, while telling what is expected and what the reasons are, one also should help him –if necessary- to suspend the uncertainties that come along with such interpretation. 'One can catch glimpses of suspension empirically when people say things such as 'everything will be fine', 'no need to worry', or 'just go ahead'' (Möllering 2001, 214).

3. Organizations, policies and trust

In the past, Dutch policy-makers have been rather successful in producing favourable expectations. In the period between 1945 and 1980 Dutch agricultural policies were produced in close co-operation between farmers, state-officials, agricultural spokesmen in parliament and representatives of farmer organizations (De Vries 1989, 31-48). All policies were aimed at the continuous increase of the levels of agricultural production. These after-war developments in Dutch agricultural are many times characterized as the rise of the agricultural modernization-project (Van Dijk, Klep and Merx 1999, 3; Van der Ploeg 1999, 431).

The coalition between the agricultural organizations and policy-actors has alternately been labeled as iron triangle, issue network, policy coalition or policy subsystem of Dutch agriculture. Although the accents differ, all these theoretical constructs refer to (1) a set of organizations that (2) share one relatively coherent policy perspective or policy goal. The post-war history of Dutch agriculture could, indeed, be

analyzed convincingly in terms of the rise and decline of co-operation between a set of organizations and the rise and decline of such coherent policy perspective (*cf.* Bekke, De Vries and Nelissen 1994; Van Dijk *et al.* 1999).

For many years, both organizational co-operation and the concurrence in policy goals provided stability and continuity in the Dutch agriculture policy. According to various academic studies this is the continuous thread that runs through modern Dutch agricultural history (Smits 1996; Duffhues 1996). Farmers and policy-makers knew where to go and what to expect. They were supposed to continuously improve production efficiency and increase their productivity, while “their” political representatives took care of their interests, both on a national and European level. In due time, the agricultural co-operation-networks (iron triangles etc) as well as the policy goals of modernization and mass production were highly trusted features that conducted day to day reality of Dutch farmers and policy-makers.

In the following sections I will illustrate how the initial favorable expectations (trust) in these co-operation networks and policies were produced, and how these have been eroding in the last two decades of the twentieth century. In other words, in this paper I propose a different policy analysis that does not only refers to the rise and fall of organizational networks or policy coherency, but to the analysis of the rise and fall of trust.

4. Producing favorable expectations.

4.1 Gaining trust during the after war crisis

The Second World War had left the Netherlands in 1945 in a deplorable state. The prime concern of the new minister of agriculture Mansholt was to restore the national food supply. In one of his first addresses to parliament, however, he stated that not the food supply, but the competitiveness of Dutch farmers would become the major problem in the long run (Acts of Parliament, TK (1945/1946), 123: 2). Because other countries had modernized their production methods during the war, Mansholt was afraid that Dutch farmers would fall behind (Duynstee and Bosmans 1977, 455). He therefore proposed to

increase production, while keeping low prices by intensifying and rationalizing the agricultural production³. Dutch parliament especially supported the land consolidation plans and the proposals to increase and speed up education and extension programs for efficient farming (Duynstee and Bosmans 1977, 456).

The minister gained trust for these modernization policies easily. As indicated in paragraph 2, to explain the origin of trust one should start by analyzing the interpretation of the situation of the actors involved. In the after-war period, this was straightforward. All actors involved felt a generally sense of urgency to overcome the post war crisis. It was the time of reconstruction and many expressed themselves in a shared understanding of co-operation. The minister expressed himself often in a we-mode: ‘Despite the war we have not lost our farmers’ and gardeners’ intentions to fight a new struggle. Fortunately, our farmers and gardeners have kept a large pool of experience and know-how...’⁴. All political representatives underlined the emergent situation and supported many various far-reaching regulations (Bogaarts 1989, 1508). Members of parliament and farmer representatives agreed on various state-guided activities, such as emergency regulations, initiatives for land consolidation plans and subsidies for extension and company efficiency projects (Van den Brink 1990, 39). They strongly urged the minister to make haste with the various rationalization projects (Duynstee and Bosmans 1977, 457). Farmer representatives of different associations not only fully agreed with the emergent-regulations, they also supported the plans to rationalize the production. They called on their members to cooperate loyally with state-officials: ‘A heavy duty is laid on our farmers to fully cooperate’ (Duffhues 1996, 174).

Representatives of the farmer associations considered rationalization project as a sufficient method to enlarge farmland and expand the level of production. In 1947 the so-called Dewez-committee of the influential Catholic farmer association was enthusiastic about land-consolidation and reclamation programs. It also supported the plans to improve efficiency by means of intensification and mechanization (Smits 1996, 176). The associations praised Mansholt for his policies (Duffhues 1996, 194). Even when in 1955

³ By rationalization is meant the whole set of plans for educating farmers how to improve efficiency and effectiveness, financial support regulations for mechanization and state-guided projects for land-consolidation.

the incomes of farmers were decreasing, because of the declining profits –which was a direct consequence of the successful intensification programs -, the secretary of the association Wellen said that farmers should not wail so much. Instead, they had to find more efficient production methods and to make more use of efficient labor in order to reduce their costs (Duffhues 1996, 194).

4.2 Gaining trust by examples and imitation

While politicians and representatives of farmer associations concurred over the situation of Dutch farmers and had vested high expectation in the rationalization programs, individual farmers still had to be won over for these projects⁵. Some observers even predicted that a land-consolidation program would only succeed if the population would undergo a radical change in mentality. And that this change would need much more skills and time than the actual restructuring of arable land: ‘The fight against the water in the winter and against the draughts in the summer means nothing compared to the fight against human history, iron traditions and suspicion’ (Andela 2000, 117).

To establish trust among farmers for modern and more efficient production methods implied that they had to overcome the uncertainties that came along with these new methods and landscape planning. Farmers were, for example, afraid that arable land would be damaged by using heavy machinery; that mechanical harvesting would result in bruised products; that the expensive machinery would not pay off; that they would be worse off after a land-consolidationproject; that industrialization of farming and house-keeping would destroy important peasant values. In any case, it is in general a common knowledge that every novelty is met with suspicion. The technique to suspend these uncertainties can best be summoned as the mechanism of examples. Instead of telling and convincing farmers to take part in the modernization of their farms, farmer-organizations and governmental agencies organized demonstrations and exhibitions.

⁴ Adapted from the first nota of the department of agriculture after the war. Published on the 11th of December 1945 (Acts of Parliament, TK (1945/46), 123:2? in Vermeulen 1989, 15).

⁵ The rationalization and intensification of agricultural projection has later been labeled as the “modernization-project” (*cf.* Van der Ploeg 1999).

The state-officials that were involved in land-consolidation and other rationalization plans deliberately used examples to gain trust. First of all, however, they were inspired by examples as well. The then chairman of the so-called agency for culture-techniques, Herweijer, who was responsible for the land-consolidation and restructuring programs, got inspired by different projects in the United States⁶. The broadly integrated and multi-purpose projects that were undertaken along the Columbia and Tennessee-Rivers, inspired him to introduce the multi-purpose concept in the Netherlands. During his visits and from the reports on the Tennessee-Value-plan (better known as the TVA-plan), he learned how the construction of various dams and hydro-electric stations in the rivers were integrated with industrialization plans, recreation policies, social housing projects and various other social and economic activities. Herweijer introduced this multi-purpose development approach in his land-restructuring plans.

Inspired by this new approach the land-consolidation programs not only involved restructuring of arable land and fields, but also the improvement of farm-houses, displacement of complete farms and development of other industries. Complete new standardized farms were erected. Scattered trees were removed, little streams straitened and old animal shelters torn down. New country-roads, highways and other infrastructure were laid out. The plans also contained the construction of new modern recreational areas. Because various subcommittees had concluded that the living conditions on the countryside were bad, the project-teams added also all kinds of social projects. Families that lived in hovels were expected to move to newly constructed houses in town-centers. The presence of non-agricultural population obstructed the implementation of efficient land consolidation. Besides, ‘without moving, these people would be devoid of modern social and cultural facilities such as kindergartens, community-centers, and stores’ (Andela 2000, 120).

‘In general farmers had vested full trust in the land-consolidation projects’ (Andela 2000, 121). The farmers that moved to new farms or who enlarged and improved their companies could now obtain larger pieces of land, because many small peasants, who only held land or animals as a side-income, sold their properties against good prices.

⁶ The agency was called in Dutch: de cultuur-technische Dienst

The gained trust in these projects was not just a matter of providing the (Marshall) money, but foremost a consequence of the agency's deliberate strategy to, first, involve as many local and societal organizations and association as possible and second, to 'use group-effects' (2000, 133). 'Due to the involvement of various social organizations, the land-consolidation projects not only resulted in economic prosperity but also in social changes' (2000, 125).

According to sociologists such as Hofstee, gaining trust for rationalization projects meant that for all other things the farmer's and countryman's mentality had to be changed. 'The country-population had to be prepared for changes by exerting intense social-pedagogical influence on them' (2000, 133). Hofstee presented the broad extension programs that were developed in the United States as an example. These programs contained not only technical assistance for product-development and production-methods, but also extension for housekeeping in a broad sense. Especially the programs that aimed at guiding the transition from a traditional peasant community to a modern welfare society were important. By using propaganda and organizing field-days the US government had been successful showing and convincing farmers and their families to change, accept and trust the new way of live. To implement these practices in the Netherlands, or, in other words, to adopt and import the 'home economics', the Dutch agency copied many methods, which sprang from the scientific management movement (2000, 132)

Following the concept of the US Country Agricultural Committees, co-operations were established between state-instructors and local representatives. The instructors visited the US to learn how efficiency in house and around the farm could be improved by work-simplification. They also imitated the propaganda materials, such as leaflets, newspapers, brochures, films, radio, television and exhibitions to show how to rationalize housekeeping and farming. Members of the women country association traveled to the US to see and experience themselves how extension should be executed. When they got back they organized all kinds of courses, such as efficient accounting, family-relations, interior decoration, and courses about clothing, food and modern kitchen devices. By showing how things could be done easier and less time consuming, both farmers and their wives got convinced of the modern way of life.

To gain trust by showing individual farmers and their wives what could be expected from the new rationalizations was, however not sufficient. According to Hofstee, gaining trust for a new way of life needed also collective trust from the joint community (Hofstee 1956, 16). To achieve such changes, the agency together with local leaders established example-villages where they experimented with gaining community trust for the new way of life. Because of its successful transformation one of the experiments is known as the ‘miracle of Kerkhoven’. Besides improvements of the stables and houses, all families in this small village attended courses to rationalize their housekeeping. Because the population attended the various activities jointly, they convinced each other of the importance of the new developments. ‘The group activities proved to be a stimulant (...) This village changed from a traditional peasant community into a modern and self-confident society’ (Andela 2000, 39).

The village of Kerkhoven was set as an example for other communities. Many farmer associations organized day-trips to Kerkhoven to show what an efficient way of life could do. The agency even had a complete coordinated schedule for such day-trips. In other words, the associations tried to gain trust from their members for a specific, rationalized, interpretation of life. By showing successful examples, such as the village of Kerkhoven, they intended to trigger a group-dynamic as of which their members would copy the observed methods in their hometowns. At the same time, the examples had also the objective to take away the uncertainties, their suspicion for the modern way of life. Setting these examples suspended the uncertainties that came along with the modernization-policies and resulted in collective trust concerning community development policies. Peasants gave up their traditional way of live. Many farmers and farmers-wives came back enthusiastic and initiated their own town-projects (Duffhues 1996, 230). Some, of course, did not want anything to do with such modernism, and saw in the examples only an affirmation of their suspicion

Finally, note that local leaders almost always took the first step towards these changes. Local chairmen of the various farmer associations, in whom farmers had vested their trust earlier, pushed their members to participate in new projects. The examples, however, proved to be the foremost convincing reason (*good reason*) to put trust in the modern way of life. I think that the initiation and continuation of joint activities to

rationalize community-life proves that examples resulted in collective trust for the modernization of Dutch agriculture and their countryside. 'Farmers had obtained the taste for modernization' (Andela 2000, 148).

4.3 Modernization policies

One of the foremost consequences of the modernization of Dutch agriculture was the enlargement and specialization of farms. Due to the increasing intensification of production it had become impossible to obtain and maintain know-how for various sorts of animals and therefore farmers were more or less constrained to specialize their production (Duffhues 1996, 202-203). Specialization, in turn, made it also necessary to enlarge the farms, because farmers could not simply stop holding one kind of animals. A farmer had to increase its amount of animals and buy new and expensive machinery and stables if he wanted to gain profits from this specialization. Because many small farmers shrank from the idea of modern capital-intensive farming, the department of agriculture proposed a new policy in 1963 in which the further development of large and efficient farms was combined with a policy for terminating small farms⁷.

The new combined policy became a major success. It meant that older farmers, without a successor, could easily terminate their business and retire early. On the other hand, the fund also provided opportunities for young, not well to do farmers to improve their farms and enlarge their lands. When state officials introduced this policy on local farm meetings, it turned out that they were not telling an unexpected story: 'specialization and development had already been in practice on company level for quite a while' (Duffhues 1996, 204). In other words, not only policy-makers, but also farmers had underlined the necessity to specialize. Since it now had become a policy, all other small farmers were pushed either to terminate or to shape up. While many shivered by the idea of developing, others enthusiastically started building. All farmers realized that a choice had to be made. 'A great number of people who could not keep up in the agriculture have been supported in a proper manner' (Duffhues 1996, 205; Smits 1996, 180).

⁷ Ontwikkelings- en saneringsfonds

To stimulate farmers to increase productivity and efficiency even further, the rationalization policies were supplemented by a system of fixed prices. These were fixed in such a way that ‘only those farmers working under favorable conditions of production, upon efficiently run farms, that is, farms of an economic size, for example, achieve an acceptable reward for their labor’ (Nooij 1977, 21). These combined policies were successful as long as farmers were able to find a job outside agriculture, and, as long as the rise in productivity could still be made profitable. The modernization policies and the system of fixed prices, which resulted in the draining of labor from agriculture continued for about ten years, when the first problems occurred.

4.4 The effects of trust

The two previous paragraphs contained some social mechanisms that partially explained how trust was established for the modernization of Dutch agriculture. The shared crisis-interpretation of the situation after the second world war had resulted in high expectations for modern farming. The many uncertainties that came along with these modernization plans were suspended by using examples, and to by imitating successful initiatives from the US. Local leadership and group-effects contributed to a further increase in suspending these uncertainties and finally the creation of the mental status of favorable expectations⁸. These expectations, in turn, have contributed to the explanation of the large increase of farmer co-operations and modernization-policies. The following figures show some of these effects. Note, however, that I do not claim that *only* these favourable expectations explain the successful institutional development. Also other explanations for co-operation, besides trust, could be valid, such as power, influence, or group-effects.

The expectations had their effect on both the institutional development of co-operation and the successful implementation of the modernization-plans. The following figures and tables illustrate both the successful modernization policies, as well as the development of consultation networks.

⁸ Note that I do not claim to be fully exhaustive in explaining the rise of favorable expectations. The mechanisms mentioned here might be supplemented with other mechanisms.

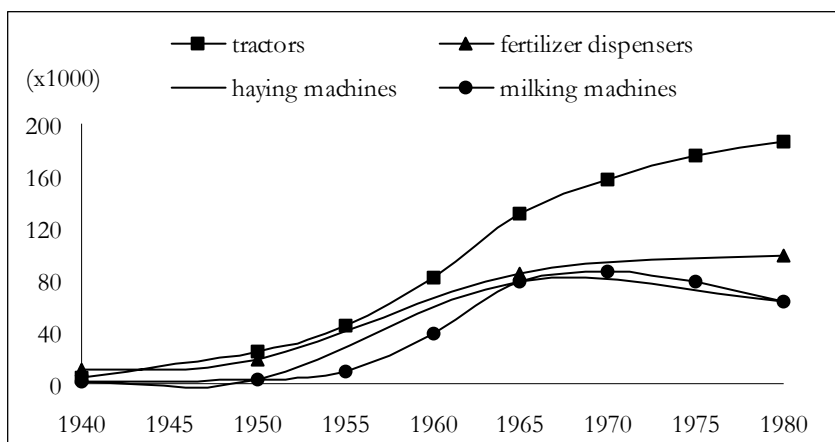


Figure 4.1. Mechanization in Agriculture (*Sources*: Andela 2000, 45; Statistics Netherlands (CBS), *Statline* (www.cbs.nl); Van den Brink 1990, 24).

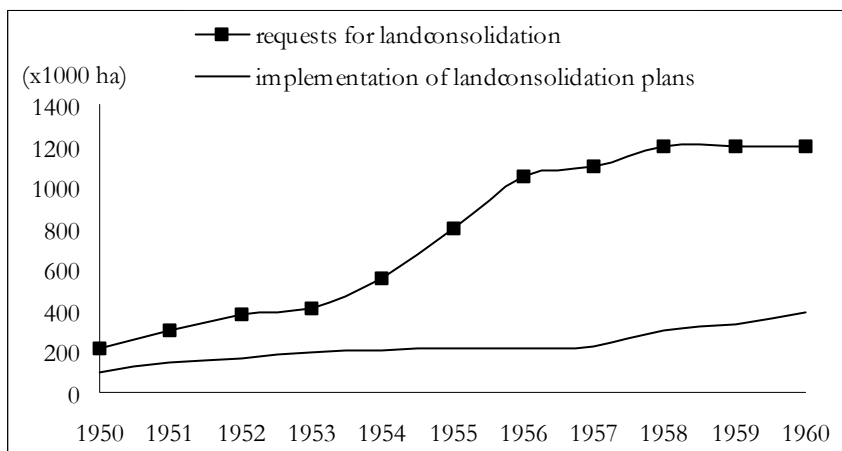


Figure 4.2. Interests in Land-consolidation-project (*Source*: Van den Brink 1990, 75).

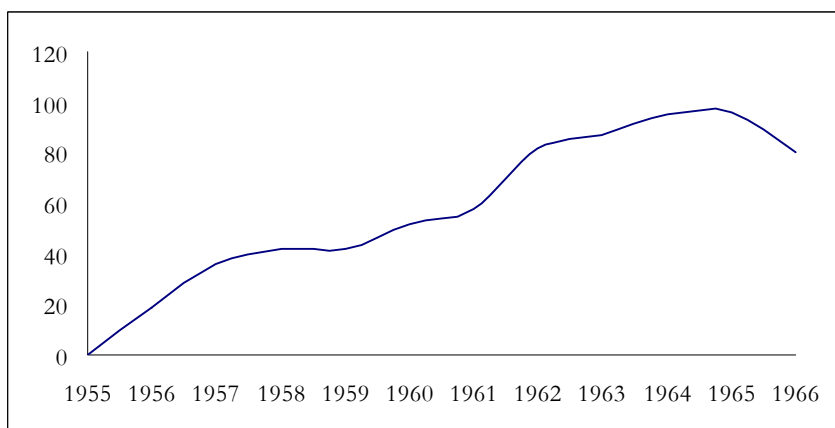


Figure 4.3. The Amount of Regional Social-Improvement Plans (*Source*: Karel 2000, 76).

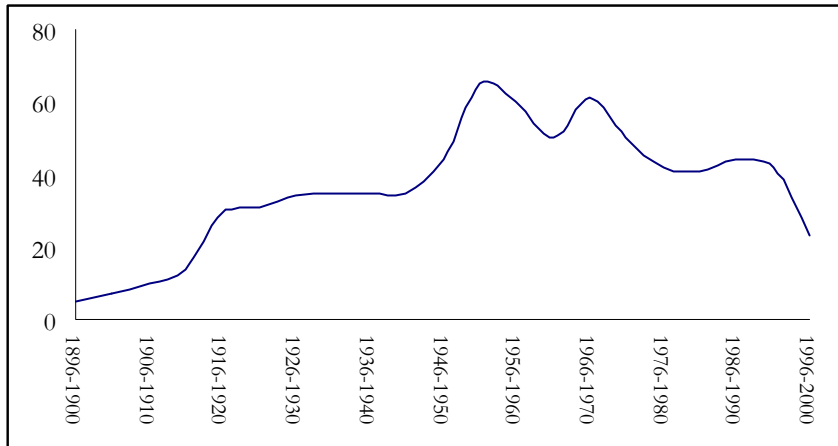


Figure 4.4. The Development of the Amount of Catholic Farmer Organisations (KNBTB) (*Source: Smits 1996, 299-302*).

5 Producing unfavorable expectations

5.1 Loosing trust during the oil-crisis of 1973

While the responses to the post-war crisis had resulted in increasing trust for modernization-policies, the economic downturn in 1973/1974 resulted in the steady fading of favorable expectations regarding these policies. In 1973, during the oil crisis, the prices of oil quadrupled resulting in high inflation, and declining incomes. The traditional and much confided response in the agricultural sector contained the stimulation of production by means of efficiency regulations combined with the draining of expensive labour. The leader of the Catholic farmer associations, Mertens, indeed, stated in an interview on the 31st of July 1974, that more small farmers had to terminate their business (Algemeen Dagblad 31-7-1974). According to him, it would be necessary to get another 30% of the farmers out. This statement was in itself not unique, because the government and associations had been commonly formulating and implementing the structural adjustment policies of the fifties and sixties themselves. Mertens, however, had not sufficiently considered the changed circumstances.

In 1973 Dutch farmers encountered a lot of major economic setbacks. The successful modernisation of Dutch agriculture had resulted in large production surpluses as of which the consumer-prices had declined. The European commission, who had

become responsible for the fixed-price system, had decided not to increase the minimum prices to make up for the lost incomes. An extra increase in efficiency or production could not make up for the income-losses. When in 1974 a drought had oppressed the farmer's incomes even further, farmers spontaneously started protesting. Their protests increased further when, in contrast to the Belgium, Danish, French, and German governments, the Dutch minister of agriculture did not provide supplemental policies in order to soften the financial burdens of their farmers. They were especially angry because of the reluctant behaviour of the Dutch government and the leaders of their very own farmer associations who were so much involved in the policy-making process.

On 29th July some individual farmers in the north of the country blockaded the frontiers with Germany. These militant actions spread to other parts of the country and a number of roads were alternately blockaded during a week. The leaders of the farmer associations, however, maintained their full confidence in their traditional consultation network. On 1st August the Catholic chairman Mertens, stated for example: 'We achieve much more if we negotiate with rational thinking partners, with well-founded arguments than if we organise spontaneous, inconsiderate actions on our national roads and crossings' (Boer en Tuinder 1-8-74). In previous situations such appeal should have worked, but now the militant actions continued. In contrast, the farmers had felt a feeling of self-awareness, because of their successful demonstrations, and as a consequence, the statements of Mertens made farmers even angrier (Nooij 1977, 32 note 3). In order to channel the unrest, the combined farmer associations decided to organise a mass meeting in a soccer-stadium on 10th August. When Mertens came to speak at this mass meeting, the enormous noise prohibited him to do so. The minister of agriculture was also made unable to speak. Unofficial leaders, however, who had no link to the traditional associations or policies, and who had been involved in the roadblocks were more successful.

Some scholars have stated that during the mass meeting of 1974 'the green front' had had its waterloo (Van Dijk *et al.* 1999, 75). This means that the favourable expectation in both the traditional policy network and the modernisation policies started eroding. The complete coupled policy-system of close co-operation between government and farm-associations as well as the modernisation policies such as the drainage of small

farmers and the fixed price system became discredited. The interpretation of the chairmen of the associations and state-officials concerning how agriculture had to be modernised did not longer provided *good* reasons for farmers to support such policies and to hold favourable expectations. In contrast, unofficial leaders delivered good reasons for *unfavourable* expectations of the policies. A non-aligned farmer, Olieman, for example, had initiated various protest committees, because first of all he fully disagreed with the price-and efficiency policies. He also, distrusted the chairmen of the associations for their interlocking positions. He argued that because leaders of farmer-associations were often so much involved in various policy-making committees that they simply were negotiating with themselves. They therefore were in no position to further the interests of the farmers. Olieman obtained a lot of support and stimulated the distrust in the existing institutions and policies (Smits 1996, 198-199).

The mass demonstrations of over tens of thousands of farmers sufficiently show how the existing modernisation policies resulted in collective distrust. From 1974 onwards the members of the farmer-associations raised discussions concerning the status of their organisations. Many members argued that they had to be turned into real interest organisation, whereas others wanted to continue their privileged position and let the interwoven policy-positions in place. In 2000 this was still a matter of concern (Lecture, Van Oosten 2000).

5.2 Loosing trust under external threats

The conflict during the oil-crisis can be considered as the first consequence of the limits to increasing agricultural production. The interpretation of reality that farmers would increase their amounts of production unlimited became more and more under pressure. Not only because of EEC-budgetary limits, but also because of limits to environmental pollution, and limits to international trade disturbances. As a result of the successful modernization, the sector got confronted with external effects such as massive milk-surpluses, manure-problems, fishery shortages (tragedy of the commons), and problems of environmental sustainability and nature-preservation. To overcome these problems, the department had to take more and more restrictive regulations. While the department tried

to formulate new laws, implemented many regulations and undertook various reorganisations, the criticism of external parties increased anyhow and, at the same time, their clientele, the farmers, lost their trust.

In 1977 a fresh Member of Parliament Braks, learnt that environment was becoming a major political issue. He also saw that the manure surplus was becoming a real problem. Once when he visited his farming brother in the Southeast region of the Netherlands he found out that the animal feed for pig had had such high levels of copper that when the pig-manure was spread over the field, sheep would die. The supplier's only response when Braks confronted him with this problem was that pigs ate and grew extremely well on copper. From then on Braks intended to put a hold to these practices. In 1980 he got the opportunity when he became minister of agriculture⁹.

In this year after a major pollution scandal soil-problems in general were put on the societal and political agenda¹⁰. In that same year new reports were published on the manure-problem. Both Braks and the new minister of environment, Winsemius, intended to limit the amount of pigs. The public discussions concerning possible restrictive production regulations had, however the opposite effect. Pig-breeders wanted to have their herds expanded before possible restrictions would be imposed. Yet, both ministers were determined to put a hold to these environmental damaging practices. In other words, Braks, in contrast to his predecessors, had had affinity with other kind of values, such as environmental sustainability besides economic efficiency. He brought with him a new interpretation concerning the function of what agriculture should be.

The real break-through came in 1984, when new figures had shown that the amounts of pigs and manure-surpluses were still rising. Braks concluded that the Netherlands had completely "manured" (Bloemendaal 1995, 13). In secrecy he and a small group of his legal staff prepared an emergency law to restrict the expansion of pig and poultry farms¹¹. The law prohibited the expansion of pig- and poultry farms with more than 10% in specific concentration areas and with more than 75% outside these

⁹ Braks was minister from 1980 to 1981. Then, after a small interlude, he was again minister from November 1982 until 1989. In November 1982, the new minister Winsemius had become Braks' counterpart on the department of environmental affairs

¹⁰ A whole urban area in the small place of Lekkerkerk turned out to be polluted.

¹¹ In Dutch: interimwet beperking varkens- en pluimveehouderijen.

areas (NL Legislation, Staatsblad 1984, 02-11) The law was presented, accepted and came into force at the same day.

Braks also played an important role by implementing a second restrictive regulation, the milk-quota system. As a result of the increasing efficiency, the Dutch dairy industry had increased its amount of production. This efficiency was largely generated by the system of fixed minimum prices. When in the sixties the dairy market became satiated the EEC had slowly reduced its minimum guaranteed prices to reduce its costs. For if the market price for milk dropped below this minimum level, the Commission had to buy the milk-products surpluses (milk powder and butter). In order to make-up for the lost income, however, farmers started producing more milk by trying to increase their efficiencies. In order to put a hold on this “rat-race” (Nooij 1977) the council of ministers of the EEC had decided to implement the milk-quota system.

Initially the ministers had decided that the quota-system would hold for five years. The system stayed, however, for at least two decades¹². The system was based upon an individual held quota of production of milk or a dairy product per year. If a farmer had exceeded his amount of milk deliveries in excess of his quota he had to pay a punitive levy. This so-called super-levy, however, was only payable if the Member State as a whole had exceeded its national quota. The directive contained a list of the total quota per member-state (EU-Legislation, EEC directive 856/84). These amounts were based upon the total amount of milk-deliveries in 1981 plus 1%¹³.

A third restrictive policy concerned the quota-regulations for fisheries. In 1983 under pressure of biologists and environmental issue-groups the EEC had decided to limit the amount of fish that was allowed to be caught.

Finally, in 1983, the department did not have to formulate a fourth restrictive policy in a direct sense, it had to learn to formulate and implement total new regulations for nature-conservation policies. As a consequence of the increasing claims on the various uses of land, both departments of agriculture and recreation¹⁴ had had conflicts over land-use. A new government therefore decided to integrate the subsection *nature*

¹² It has been extended to 2008

¹³ This amount was equal to the threshold of the guaranteed production of 1983/1984. (Recall that for 1982/1983 this threshold was only the amount of production of 1981 plus 0.5%).

¹⁴ Department of Culture, recreation and social work.

conservation and open-air recreation (NBOR) of the department of recreation into the department of agriculture. Once the section was transferred the minister decided to split it into *nature, environment and fauna-management*, and *open-air recreation*. The first section was placed in a new directorate, called *countryside and quality management*. Braks had already pleaded earlier in 1980 for more nature-conservation regulations, and therefore it could be concluded that he had some affinity with these new policies (Bekke *et al.* 1994, 39).

5.3 Producing distrust while implementing new policies

The presentation of these restrictive policies, as well as the introduction of the new section for nature conservation policies, should all be considered as a result of external pressure to adopt to a changing external environment. The restrictive policy regulations ended the farmers' uncomplicated trust in the modernisation-project (Van Dijk *et al.* 1999, 49). All sectors had to respond to changing interpretation of the position of agriculture. Not only the pig-and poultry industry but also the fishery industry and the diary farmers had to respond to restrictive policies. Farmers were expected to adapt to a more qualitative production-perspective and to limit their production. This new policy perspective, or in words of this analysis, this interpretation, was not easily accepted

The policy network turned out to be less able to channel the new perspective on farming through the network. What is more, when the new policies were communicated and got implemented, farmers fiercely rejected these ideas. When public officials, governmental representatives and farm-leaders initially tried to discuss the problematic surpluses with farmers in local meetings, they often met skeptical farmers. Van Dijk reported, for example, that once a farm-leader had held a lecture on "more quality, less quantity", his chauffeur, who was sitting in the back of the room, had said afterwards that 'they (farmers) all looked rather glassy: they let you babble away, thinking more is still better' (Van Dijk *et al.* 1999, 51).

When in 1984 the restrictive regulations got implemented, many actors involved characterised these laws as a kind of "stick-up" laws, or as the *somersault* of agricultural policies and a break with the policy-community (Bekke *et al.* 1994, 42). Farmers and

fishermen rejected the proposals collectively and the department got confronted with militant actions and increasing amount of fraud. Some leading figures simply did not accept the restrictive policy-perspectives and tried to hold on to the previous trusted view on reality. In 1990, for example, a chairman of a pig-breeding association stated 'we still have to modernise our production-methods. (...) This will not be easy for we face many difficulties that are threatening our sector. (...) I however do not doubt that we will overcome (Termeer 1993, 194). This implied an ever-strong trust in the technical solutions to new problems.

Civil servants of the department of agriculture had to adapt to the new policy-perspective as well. Since they were also interwoven with the traditional policy community and not used to formulate detailed restrictive regulations, they had difficulties to change their habits. While in the past they only formulated general regulations, which were thereafter smoothly further implemented by various corporatist farmer bodies, had now to formulate legally detailed legislation. This has resulted in the increase of legal staff, who had no traditional ties to the agricultural policy community and possessed legal know-how for formulating the new types of policies.

Some highly ranked official also developed scepticism concerning the new nature conservation ideas of the department of agriculture. One even stated that nature-policies were now "billeted on the enemy". Some officials on the other side, however, argued that the importation of this section should be considered as a Trojan horse, which has contributed to the environmental *somersault* of the department (Bekke *et al.* 1994, 50).

While farmers rejected the somersaults in the interpretation of what agriculture was all about, they also did the opposite of suspending uncertainties, i.e. extremely articulating the risks and uncertainties that came along with restrictive policies. They initially argued that 'if the amount of pigs would be reduced the complete breeding-industry would be jeopardised' (Termeer 1993, 197). The arguments then turned to slogans such as 'when farmers die, famine is near'. When, however, it became clear that the restrictive policies were going to last, the arguments became more rude. In the nineteen-nineties, some farmer-groups boldly stated that the minister of agriculture was killing 10,000 farm families.

5.4 Conflict policies and harvesting criticism

The policy changes resulted in many conflicts and hampering policy initiatives. First of all, the relations between farmers, the chairmen of farmer-associations and state-officials became under pressure. Especially the inspectors had a hard time adapting to the changing rules. Whereas in the past the inspectors were only overseers and had had friendly relations with Dutch farmers and fishermen, they now had to conduct criminal investigations. New inspectors without an agricultural track record were recruited, such as old policemen, which in turn led to internal frictions. Especially the investigations to the fisheries-fraud led to many problems; fishermen threatened inspectors, and officials accused each other of illegal wire-tapping.

Also on national level the conflicts between civil servants increased. Initially policy-makers accepted the recruitment of legal staff, who did not have an agricultural background. In due time, however, when the new staff undertook many policy-formulating activities, the sitting staff developed a lot of aversion against them. And finally, the importation of officials from the department of CRM (Recreation), resulted also in a lot of conflicts of competence.

In the meanwhile the policies which were finally formulated did not seem to function properly. The civil servants of the departmental section *cattle-breeders and diary* that had formulated the milk-quota regulations, for example, appeared to be insufficient. There were a lot of legal gaps and exceptions, which had to be solved by the new legal staff. In the end the regulation was 19 times adjusted. Also the inspection on the fishery sector hampered. Seven years after the implementation of the quota-system, an old inspector said in front of the camera's that fishermen were still able to sell their products on the black-market. This last problem has even resulted in a parliamentary enquiry and the resignation of minister Braks in 1991.

In general, the department of agriculture encountered a lot of critics for their lack of initiatives. Although a lot of new policies were tried, the image of the department was bad. A study of Wageningen University, for example, stated that 'the department of agriculture is not sharp and does not anticipate to new developments. Creativity is insufficient, and it shows little new ideas for the problems in agriculture' (Janmaat and

Van Woerkom, 1991: V). In other words, in 1991 the department arrived at an intense crisis-situation, for which solutions had to be sought.

5.5 The effects of distrust

The oil crisis of 1973/1974 has marked the beginning of a new interpretation of what farming is, and ought to be. These new, constrained perspectives on farming disturbed the traditional coherent policy-perspective and policy-network. With the introduction of further restrictive policies this process of erosion continued and resulted in the extreme articulation of risks and, the production many unfavourable expectations, both within the department and between farmers and public officials.

The produced distrust contributes to the explanation of the decrease of farmer co-operations and the rise of lawsuits against the department of agriculture. The milk-quota, for example resulted in 30,000 legal appeals, while the Netherlands counts 55,000 diary farmers. The regulation itself contained 25 separate regulations, which has been modified 47 times in the first one-and-a-half year. In reaction the department had to increase its legal staff (see figures below).

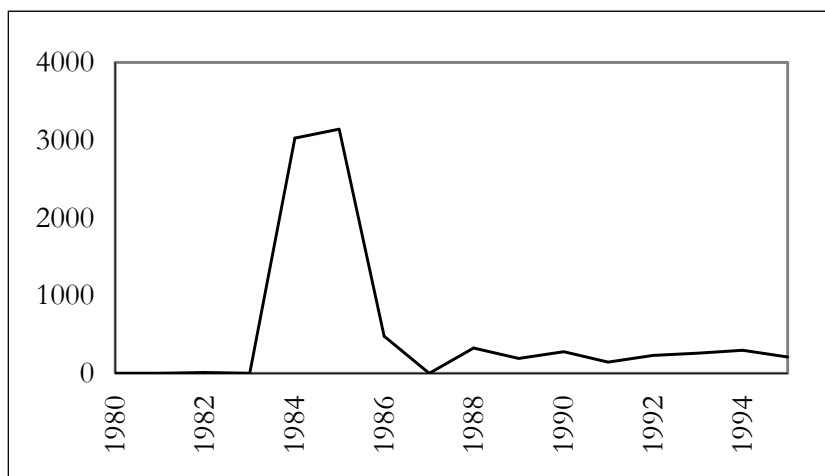


Figure 5.1. The Amount of Legal Protests Against the Department of Agriculture
(Source: Public Management Onderzoek & Advies 1998, 9).

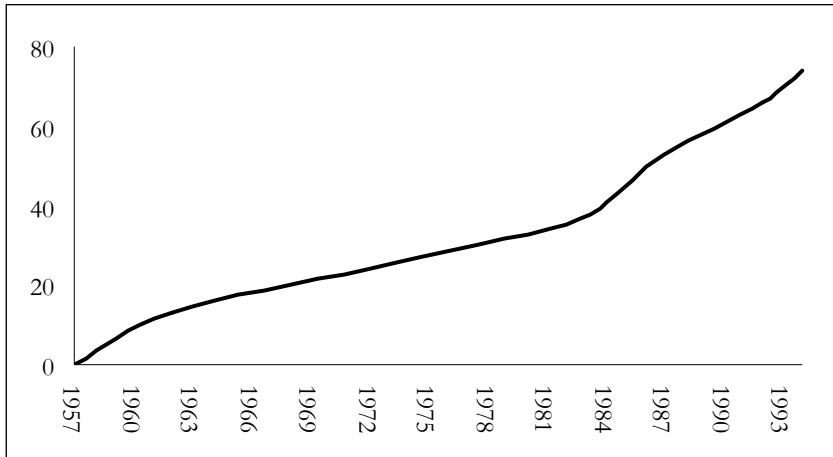


Figure 5.2. The Development of Legal Staff at the Department of Agriculture (Source: Bekke, et al. 1994, 44).

Table 5.1 Illustration of the Increased amount of Legislation (Source: Department of Agriculture, 1987)

Explanation: To provide an example of the increasing amount of juridification in agriculture, the following regulations were necessary to restrict the production of milk. These concerned the so-called super-levy regulations. Within 1,5 year (March 1984 to September 1986) 25 official degrees were implemented and 33 additional regulations (a total of 58), which were adjusted 47 times.

Amount	Type of regulation	Adjusted
5	EEC directives	21
6	National directives	15
2	Implementation regulations	3
23	Internal regulations	
2	Cooperative Dairy regulations	2
4	Cooperative Dairy implementation rules	
10	Cooperative Dairy internal rules Circular letters	
6	Administrative regulations	6
58	totals	47

The solutions to these problems and to restore trust between members of the department and to regain trust from their traditional clientele was sought in reorganizations. This process was called *swallow process* (after the bird). It was aimed at creating more transparency, redefinition of responsibilities, offensive actions, creativity and integration.

6 Producing mixed expectations

6.1 Producing expectations by reorganising

In order to restore trust between civil servants and between the department and society, the department initiated from 1992 onwards various reorganizations. One line of reorganizations focused on the creation of a core-department with various decentralized agencies and the other tried to restructure the department from a bureaucracy into a learning- and enterprising organization. The first strand of reorganisations was part of a national reorganisation program aimed at efficiency improvement and modern public management, while the aim of the second type of reorganisations was to improve the internal relations and to react more sharply to the new policy-challenges¹⁵.

The general efficiency operations (GEO-project) produced favourable expectation among politicians and others that were mainly interested in a budgetary healthy public administration. In total 30 reorganisation projects were implemented of which many concerned decentralisation projects. The department of agriculture, however, supplemented these projects with other reorganisations to solve their more specific problems. The emphasis in these swallow projects concerned mostly the adaptation of the departmental culture.

In order to improve the detection of new changes in society, the department suggested various organizational changes. The first suggestion contained the establishment of ad-hoc policy committees. This provided opportunities to quickly handle new policy-issues, such environmental and nature-conservation issues. The ad-hoc committees improved the communication of various issue-groups. A second plan concerned the separation between policy-preparation and implementation. This would improve the long-term policy development, because the departmental top would no longer be bothered with detailed implementation problems. Another plan provided the regional representatives of the department with tools to integrate the various policy-issues on a local scale. These local representations were destined to coordinate the various policy issues coming from recreational-, farming- forest-, and other organizations.

¹⁵ See for an overview of these projects: Bekke *et al.* 1994, 65-80.

Both strands of reorganizations were expected to work out to a better department of agriculture. The GEO projects answered to one aspect that had to be made 'better', that is efficiency. The internal initiated projects had to make the department 'better' in reacting and responding to new types of policy issues. In other words, the latter was deliberately aimed at importing more and different interpretations concerning the tasks and function of the department of agriculture. Civil servants, therefore, did not only have to respond to traditional issues of farm-efficiencies, for example, but they also had to consider environmental issues. Environmental issue groups expressed their support for these organizational changes. They had moderate positive expectations. Ad-hoc committees, for example, provided opportunities to deliberate and put forward their issues, or their interpretation of a problem or issue. The farmer associations were less happy, because they saw their deliberation monopoly fading. They were confronted with a department that undermined their privileged position, which in turn resulted in uncertainties, which were hard to suspend and finally in unfavorable expectations. (Bekke *et al.* 1994, 74) In terms of this analysis, the organizational reforms triggered both favourable and unfavorable expectations

6.2 producing expectations by formulating policies

The importation of more perspectives had, of course, its influence on the formulation of policies. As a result of the organizational changes, the department had, partly intentionally established a so-called 'network of conflicting issues'¹⁶. Instead of the traditional policy community that contained only a limited amount of actors, more groups got involved, such as the animal protection organization, the foundation for nature-conservation and environment, greenpeace, world nature fund, etc. Such network brings forth various, often conflicting values. In contrast to a closed policy-community it is difficult to reach consensus over policies (Bekke *et al.* 1994, 66).

The policy-formulation over a particular issue results both in favourable and unfavorable expectations. If, for example, the department develops a policy that is aimed at stimulating genetic-engineering techniques, some groups of farmers, as well as, export-

¹⁶ In Dutch 'strijdpuntennetwerk'

companies and research institutes would be pleased and cherish favourable expectations concerning this policy. Other groups of farmers, as well as environmental issue-groups, on the other hand, would either principally disagree with this type of engineering (interpretation), or dare not suspend the risks and uncertainties that come along with this policy. In terms of this analysis, modern agricultural policies would often trigger both favorable and unfavorable expectations.

I propose to call this type of modern policy-making, in which both trust and distrust are triggered at the same time, policies of dissonance.

6.3 policies of dissonance

Three features characterize policies of dissonance. First, in modern policies there is always a potential for conflicts over the interpretation of a policy-perspective. Second, policy-makers increasingly have to communicate with different interest groups, either to learn what their perspective is or to gain their trust for a certain policy-plan. Third, modern policies always trigger both trust and distrust.

The erosion of a clear policy-perspective resulted in a lot of uncertainties for both farmers and public officials. New restrictive policies made many farmers suspicious, some cynical, whereas environmentally friendly farmers got excited and vested their hopes in the new policies. These opposite expectations have already resulted in many conflicts between for example, biologically intensive poultry farmers and ‘free-chicken action group’ that want to abolish these production methods. Also discussions have come up under farmers themselves: While small groups of farmers and state-officials cherish high expectations of hi-tech and large-scale farm companies, want others to establish new multifunctional or ecological medium sized farms

Initiatives for new styles of farming need a lot of argumentation to gain trust from others, because of the competing perspectives. If for example farmers want to change their style of producing by product-quality differentiation (in stead of mass-production) they need to provide a lot of reasons to convince the retailers and others of their moves. I came across a group of pig-breeding farmers, who started using high quality, yet more expensive, animal-feed in order to differentiate their meat-quality. In their eyes

differentiation has become a good reason to shape up and to adjust their production in line with the restrictive policies. In their eyes they obtained a trustworthy perspective on farming: ‘we are convinced that we will be profitable and earn an honest living. The hardest thing in the whole process, however, was to win trust from the slaughterhouse and the retailers to wrap the meat differently and sell it against higher prices. They were only used to mass-productions’.¹⁷

Modern agricultural policy programs come in many forms and they both restrict and support agricultural production. Programs such as ecologically friendly farming and bio-diverse sustainability restrain production, whereas hi-tech bio-industrialization and genetic-manipulation push production upwards. The dissonance between the various interpretations about the appropriate form of farming has sometimes results in contradictory studies about the future of Dutch agriculture.

6.4 consequences of these mixed expectations

As a result of various external societal developments, the department of agriculture had to adapt to its changing environment by importing multiple, and often contradictory policy perspectives. The discussion concerning the uncertainties and risks that came along for both public officials, farmers and other officials have become a daily routine. Various different groups with different values try to provide arguments for their interpretation of an issue and try to suspend the uncertainties or risks, by using experts-knowledge, for example. These modern policy making processes have resulted in the continuous production of both favourable and unfavourable expectations.

The mixed production of expectations, while making modern public policies, in turn, contributes to the explanation of the lack of one coherent agricultural policy-program. One of the consequences is the increased amount of policy sector participants. Termeer, for example, illustrated how the policy network that got involved in solving the problem of the surplus of pigs and pig-manure increased in due time (Table 6.1)

¹⁷ This quote is from a letter send to Van der Ploeg. Used with permission

Table 6.1. *Overview of the Amount of Actors Involved in the Manure-Policy Formation*
(Adapted from Termeer 1993)

Year	Actors	Dispersed over the following groups
1975	23	3: Farmers, Environment, and Critical Observers
1983	27	3: Farmers, Environment, and Critical Observers
1987	31	4: Farmers, Environment, Government, Intermediators
1991	32	4: Farmers, Environment, Government, Intermediators

A second consequence has been the increasing differentiation of various forms of farming and side activities. Some farmers, who wanted to stop producing bulk products, started for example, nature-preservation activities, while others traditionally increased their scales anyway.

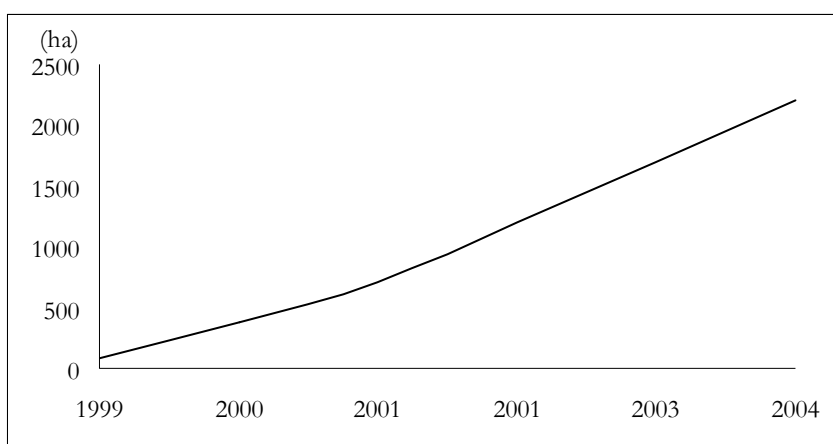


Figure 6.1. The Expected Development of Private Nature-Conservation Plans (in ha) (*Source*: Department of Agriculture 2001).

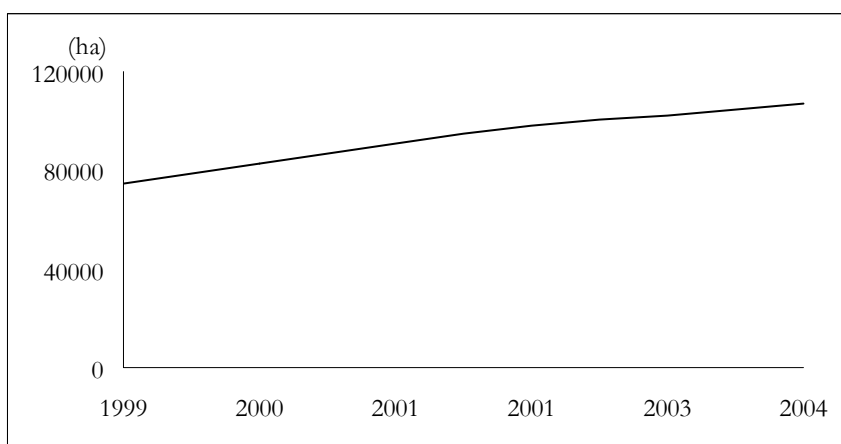


Figure 6.2. The Development of Public Nature-Conservation Plans (in ha) (*Source*: Department of Agriculture 2001).

And third, increasing and competing amount of policy prospects of what the future of agriculture ought to be. Some studies, for example, predict high-rise industrial pig-breeding enterprises located near the international main port of Rotterdam (including slaughterhouse and manure-plants), while others predict the disappearance of all agricultural activities from the Netherlands (see for a full discussion the documentary Porkplaza of the Rathenau institute). In 2001, for example, various institutions published their perspective for the future of, in this case, cattle breeding

Table 6.2. *Various Different Studies on the Future of Cattle-Breeding* (Sources: The Various Organisations mentioned).

Date	Name Organisation	Name Report
May 2001	Department of Agriculture	<i>The Future of Cattle-Breeding: An Agenda for Restructuring the Branch.</i>
May 2001	Organisation for Agriculture and Horticulture (LTO-Nederland)	<i>The Future of Cattle-Breeding in Society and Market</i>
April 2001	Foundation for Nature and Environment	<i>On Green Pastures, Perspectives for 2030: Sustainable Agriculture that is in Harmony with Nature.</i>
2001	Foundation for Animal Protection	<i>Breeding Cattle in the Year 2030: Perspective on the Future of Cattle-Breeding (from the Dutch Foundation for the Protection of Animals).</i>
2000	Wageningen Research Institute	<i>The Turnover and Future in Cattle-Breeding.</i>

7 Conclusions

Due to external changes, or in more broad terms, due to the increase in the diversity of policy perspectives constrained the department of agriculture to adapt their policies. The problems of trust that evolved from these restrictive policies called for new public management ideas and tools such as, the establishment of core-departments with decentralized agencies and new views on politico- administrative relations.

These new ideas and public sector reforms have generate reasons that seem to be good reasons for establishing trust, for those that are interested in efficiency. These and

other reforms, however, have contributed to the increasingly conflicting policy-claims, which in turn contributed to the creation of both trust and distrust. This brings us to the conclusion that public reorganizations might contribute to the production of favorable expectations concerning their management, it does not follow that public trust in their policies will increase at the same time. In contrast, the reorganizations in the agricultural sector have imported more policy-perspectives to the front, which implied that gaining trust has even become more difficult.

Finally, in sociology the concept of trust has been a major research-topic. The general argument in these studies, such as those from Luhmann (1988), Giddens (1991, 1994a, 1994b), Beck (1992), and Seligman (1997), concerns the shift in (post) modern societies from institutionalised relations –or clearly defined social roles- to more diffuse, less defined and more individually based relations. Whereas trust in the past could be more easily produced by a generally shared interpretation of reality (usually defined as confidence), in a modern society trust has to be won. As far as I know, little analysis has been conducted how indeed these general sociological trends have worked out in the making of public policies.

Most public policy analyses are concerned with theories that focus on policy subsystems and policy learning (Hecl, 1974, 1978; Sabatier, 1999; Hall, 1993; Pierson, 1993). These theories describe and analyse how and when (groups of) individuals dominate the interpretation of a policy issue. In more sociological terms, these constructivist theories describe how humans try to structure the discourse of a problem for their own benefits. By learning what is going on in society, departments are supposed to be better equipped to make a policy. Organisations of public administration then are supposed to develop into learning and enterprising organisations that are capable of sensing more sharply the changes in society. The analysis above hopefully shows that in modern society, despite, or even as a consequence of the re-organisations and new public management initiatives, policies will always trigger both favourable and unfavourable expectations.

One of the possible consequences of the above conclusion concerns the amount of transparency. If a department, for example, wants to gain trust for a certain policy, it has to suspend the uncertainties and risks that come along with this policy. Suspension,

however, is *not* achieved when all information is made public and the policy direction is discussed extensively. More information and more experts, increase the knowledge about potential risks and uncertainties, and therefore make suspension, and finally trust, more difficult to achieve (O'Neill, 2002)

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