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Unravelling decision making about the future developments of Amsterdam Airport Schiphol

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Unravelling decision making about the future developments of Amsterdam Airport Schiphol

**Paper 45th European Regional Science Association
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Abstract

The last widely accepted package deal for the development of Schiphol, the main airport of the Netherlands, was developed in 1991. Currently the parties involved do not manage to reach such an agreement again and as a consequence the environmental problems and the pressures on the competitive strength of airport pose serious threats for the future development of Schiphol. In this paper we try to gain some insights in the possible explanations of why the actors involved aren't able to create a new package deal. We have obtained five crucial factors from the relatively successful process of 1989 -1991, namely sense of urgency, leadership, common/ cultural beliefs, knowledge production and the ability to break through stalemates. After assessment of the variables on the current situation, which is done by a combination of in depth interviews and the analysis of the operative policy documents, we conclude that the changing context in which the decisions have to be made and the changing nature of the process itself are possible explanations for the stagnating creation of a new package deal. We argue that a new more thematically oriented approach is necessary that takes this changing context and changing nature of the process explicitly into account.

Keywords: Decision making, network society, airports, Schiphol, package deal

1. Introduction

Decision making about the future spatial airport development of the Dutch mainport Schiphol has been a controversial process since the opening of the new airport in 1967. Despite this, most of the time at least some consensus about the future investments could be reached. The last widely accepted package deal for the development of the airport dates back to 1991. The policy agreement was signed by the Ministry of Housing, Physical Planning & the Environment, the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Province of North-Holland, The municipalities of Amsterdam and Haarlemmermeer, as well as the Schiphol Group and KLM. The main problems tackled in this package deal had to do with finding the balance between economic development and environmental issues. Agreement was reached on the double objective of developing the airport and improving living conditions and the environment, substitution from air to rail, construction of a fifth runway, night flights, housing insulation programmes, industrial sites and landscaping, among several others (Kolpron, 1993). Although many doubt the quality of the contents of this so called “Policy Agreement Plan of Action for Schiphol and its surrounding area” (from now on called PASO), the process through which it was created can be characterised by the involvement of many actors who managed to draw together an agreement to which all involved parties committed themselves.

The acceptance and actuality of the 1991 agreement has diminished visibly. Most stakeholders, that is the actors involved in the future development of the airport, seem to agree upon the necessity of developing a new kind of package deal for the airport in order to facilitate the spatial development as efficient and consequent as possible. However, currently they do not manage to reach such an agreement and as a consequence many issues remain unsolved. The question rises why the actors involved currently do not reach an agreement on a new package deal.

In this paper we try to find an explanation for this. The aim is to identify and analyse the crucial factors that played an important role in the decision making process which led to the PASO agreement and analyse the current state of affairs regarding these factors. For this it is important to understand the changing context in which decision making has to take place. Therefore we first refer to some theoretical notions about decision making in the network society (2). After that we turn to the specific case of Schiphol and we reconstruct the last successful decision making process about the future airport development during 1989 – 1991

(3). We do this by referring to the work of Tan (2001), who identified seven main actors involved in the process and analyses their behaviour in great detail¹. From his analyses of three rounds of decision making which took place between 1989 and 1991, Tan extracts five crucial factors that led to the signing of the package deal in 1991 (Tan, 2001). It should be noted that this process developed not as simple as the stakeholders like to believe right now. Back then, there were also controversies, especially about the night flights, but nevertheless the stakeholders managed to develop a covenant. Despite this nuance, the process is widely seen as relatively successful because it led to a signed agreement with concrete measures. Therefore it can teach us something about the factors that are crucial when trying to develop a new up to date package deal (4). After this reconstruction and selection of the crucial factors, we turn to the present day problems. We hypothesize that the selected factors can provide insight in the status of the current process of decision making. By studying the operative policy documents of the seven actors identified by Tan (2001) and a round of in depth interviews with those main actors we make an inventory of the present day situation concerning the five crucial factors as Tan described them (5). In the conclusion we will try to answer the question why a new package deal is not reached at present times.

2. Decision making in the network society

Rise of the network society

The old economic structure of vertically integrated enterprises has gradually been replaced by a network economy. A network can be described as a set of interconnected nodes, wherein the node is a point where the curves intersect themselves (Castells, 1996). In the emerging networks the different nodes are interconnected and interdependent. Processes of deregulation, privatisation and globalisation were triggered by the evolution in the use of information technologies. Spatial contiguity is nowadays no longer the only prerequisite for social and economic interaction. This means that certain activities are no longer bound to specific places. Castells views this emerging new economic structure in terms of flows and spaces. He argues that capital, information, technology and organizational interaction assume the form of flows. They are able to circulate around the world in just a few seconds. He envisions the flows in terms of 'timeless time'. People and goods are also witnessing a boost

¹ The main actors Tan (2001) identified are: the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, the Province of

in mobility. A consequence is that the society as we know it is not exclusively organised around places anymore. Castells stresses the emergence of a new reality, one in which actions, organizations and decisions are constructed around flows². Next to the traditional world of places the powers and forces that structure the flows are gaining dominance in the shaping of society. The space of places and the space of flows can be seen as two parallel realities, both responsible for the shaping of society, but with different logics, ratio's and laws (Boelens, 2003).

The transferring points in the networks, the nodes, also known as hubs, can be seen as the places where the space of flows interacts with the space of places. Large airports like Schiphol function as such an interchange. As a consequence, the spatial and economical policy making about the future of the airports have to cope with these partly parallel, partly intersecting universes. As shall be explained later, the rise of the network society has increased the complexity of the decision making process further. One way to clarify this changing context in which the airport and airlines have to operate is by looking at the changes that have occurred in the aviation business during the last decades.

The changing economic structure has had far reaching consequences for the aviation business. During the old aviation regime individual states negotiated the air services between two countries on a bilateral basis. The number of gateways accessible to each carrier of each nation, the frequency on routes between the two countries, the designated carriers, the division of seat capacity and an equitable exchange of traffic rights was put down in the bilateral air service agreements (asa's) (Doganis, 2001). The IATA regulated the tariffs. During the bilateral regime the European air market was heavily centred on the national airlines and their respective national airports. Almost every European nation had its own national airline (e.g. KLM, British airways, Air France) that pinned their star-shaped national airline networks around the national airport. The regime let little room for competition. Due to the deregulation this regime of bilateral asa's was gradually replaced by a regime of limited competition (Burghouwt et al, 2001). This liberalization of the European aviation market was set in pace in 1988, when the European Council adopted a first package of three deregulation measures. The process was completed in 1997. Nowadays the member states of the European

North-Holland, the municipalities of Amsterdam and Haarlemmermeer and the Schiphol Group. Although KLM did sign the final agreement, they are not considered to be a main actor.

² The question remains whether this reality is really new. The economic structure is evolving from earlier structures rather than as being a discontinuity.

Union and Switzerland operate in a single European aviation market. Outside Europe the European carriers still depend on their respective bilateral asa's. Due to the changes in the aviation regime, the competition between the carriers intensified. The European carriers were free to roam around the whole European market, and newcomers were free to enter the market. To cope with this intensified competition the major European airlines adopted new network strategies, of which the adoption of hub-and-spoke networks, the formation of global strategic alliances and the introduction of the low cost concept are among the most important (Burghouwt & Huys, 2003).

Another feature of the rise of the networks society and the adoption of new airline strategies was a tremendous growth of air traffic during the last decades, as a consequence of the dropping tariffs. The rate of growth in air traffic was twice as large as the growth of the world economy (De Neufville & Odoni, 2003). The airport authorities started to commercialize in order to diversify and increase the revenues. In short, the aviation market has become more competitive and the dynamics have increased and the main actors of the system like the airport authorities and the airlines had to adapt their strategies to cope successfully with the increased competition and uncertainty. This has made the process of policy making far more complex, as shall be argued in the next paragraph.

Decision making

The rise of the network society has made the process of policy making much more difficult. In order to gain some insights in these difficulties we have made a distinction between content related issues and process related issues for purely descriptive reasons. Of course in the development of policies, process and content are strongly interrelated and cannot be seen as separate elements.

As far as the content related issues are concerned we can outline the following picture. As we have seen, the aviation market has gone through some fundamental changes, like deregulation and liberalisation. This increased the competition and in order to survive the airlines had to adopt new strategies. The adoption of hub-and-spoke networks and the formation of airline alliances increased the volatility of air traffic at certain airports (Burghouwt, 2005). The enormous growth at certain hub airports brought some attendant problems, like noise pollution, health risks, emission of greenhouse and other problematic gasses, land-use planning problems and ecological disturbances (OECD, 1998). These negative external

effects have made the policy making about airport developments a highly controversial process. The tension between the economic advantages of further growth and the resulting disadvantages in terms of environment, safety and spatial planning has become increasingly to the fore the last years. Especially the argument of the diminishing quality of life, particularly as a result of the level of noise surrounding has gained more weight (Van Eeten, 2001). In short, there seem to be a lot of actors with diverging interests concerning the desired qualities an airport should possess. This trend is likely to last for the near future. Although it might seem right now that we have encountered an intermediate phase, in which the financial sustainability of the airline industry is the overwhelming concern in the policy debate it is expected that the longer-term predictions of growth will again bring environmental sustainability to the fore. This constitutes the greatest challenge facing the future air transport industry. Sustainability in a transport context can be defined as ‘satisfying current transport and mobility needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet these needs’. Recent studies argue that this future sustainable aviation is in doubt (Goetz & Graham, 2004).

Besides this increasing content related complexity the process of policy making has also become much more complex. Decision making was once the domain of the governments, but with the rise of the network society it started taking place in more informal, network type configurations. The main reason for this is that it became more difficult to achieve the wanted results because of this complex decision making environment. There are many actors in the field, and they often act on different spatial levels or on several levels the same time (Teisman, 1997). Also, the decision making processes through different levels and departments of government, are by many private actors seen as too bureaucratic, which triggered them to develop their own more effective networks and strategic alliances in order to reach their objectives (Boelens, 2005). In such a multi actor policy setting resources are spread among actors. If governments neglect the other actors in policy making it risks a lack of support or even opposition so that the resources needed become unavailable. The more actors involved the more complex the problem tends to be, since different actors have different interest and different perceptions of reality (Van de Riet, 2003). The interests of actors and their perceptions of reality determine their objectives, or the outcomes they want to achieve. Interests are affected by their values and the role they fulfill in society. Perceptions are influenced by the frame of references actors have. This is the view of the world of an actor. Actors base their behavior on their perceptions of the environment and the problems

they perceive in that environment. Actors select strategies and evaluate the possible outcomes on the basis of their perceptions. Perceptions are the images that actors have about their game simulation. These problem perceptions determine the direction in which the solution is sought. Only when parties are aware that different frames of reference are involved, the real substantial questions can be answered. The strategic uncertainty comes from the unpredictability of the strategic behaviors of the involved parties (Klijn en Koppenjan, 2004). Besides this, the involved actors sometimes have conflicting objectives, as we have seen indicated in the elaboration of the content related issues. In such a setting it is necessary for actors to cooperate. However, cooperation does not emerge spontaneously. Sometimes it is necessary to support interaction around complex issues in network settings.

It also became more and more important to acknowledge the shifts in resources and power bases. The influence of the network related actors like the airlines and the airports seems to have grown in the network society. Not only do processes and actors play on different scales at the same time, but the relationships between the main actors have also been altered. In essence, relations have become more dynamic. So the actors are more dependent on each other and they have to play different roles during one game. We already stated that no one actor has the resources and the power to dominate and structure the policy making process. The actors have become more interdependent and they need each other to fulfill their goals. In sum, individual actors are less and less capable of acting solely on their own. They need each other in order to achieve something. What does this content and process related complexity, caused by the rise of the network society and the related changes in the aviation business, mean for the analysis of the policy making process?

One of the main problems for management in the emerged network society is that today's governance structures are bound to specific territorial places. The rise of the network society seems to have diminished the role of territory. It is however in the networks, which are not necessarily bound to specific places, where the main processes take place. The relative autonomous and territorial based management is not sufficient in such a context (Salet, 2004). As we have described, the game is played in a multi-level and multi-actor context (Rotmans, 2003). Both the global and the local factors and actors are involved in the policy making process. So there is the problem of a mismatch between administrative entities and the territory. More specific, there is a lack of a governance structure that provides connectivity between different spheres of planning. A possible explanation for this is that it seems that the

institutional conditions are path dependent. They are not able to cope with the new situation and they are very hard to change. The focus should be on enlarging the capacity to make connections (Healey, 1997).

In other words, with the rise of the network society, new institutional conditions have emerged. And it seems that conventional methods of making policies in such a setting are not equipped to handle this complexity and uncertainty in an adequate way. Before the rise of the network society and the changing aviation market, policy makers could force policies top down on the society. Such a top down approach does not work in an environment in which actors are mutually dependent for their goal achievement and the power of the national government has diminished. They need the means of some of the other involved actors. Although it is often not possible to enforce decisions top down anymore, it is important to recognize that in the public domain there is always a call for strong public managers who take firm decisions. Nowadays such a strong manager seems to be missing (Edelenbos, 2003).

For the analysis of policy making, knowledge about the context in which decisions are made is of crucial importance. Especially the way in which the involved actors perceive this environment is one of the leading factors in determining the role they play. Their perceptions are the fundamentals of their strategic behaviour (Teisman, 2001). They form the background against which actors weigh out the best way to fulfil their own needs and goals. To start with, actors perceive the problem in a different way. A policy problem can be described as the gap between the existing or expected situation and the desired situation (Enserink et al, 2004). So before starting the policy making process there should be agreement about the problem. This is not as easy as it sounds. Policy problems in complex environments and in which several actors are involved are called ill-structured problems or wicked problems (Dunn, 1981). This kind of problems is characterized by the many stakeholders involved, conflicts of values and an endless amount of policy options. As has been said, ill-structured problems demand a first analysis about defining the nature of the problem itself. In the words of Ackhoff (1974): 'The problem is, what is the problem'. Given the mutual dependencies that make it impossible for each of the involved actors to solve complex problems in isolation, the process of problem solving is first an issue of interaction where the stakeholders must manage to coordinate their perceptions, activities and institutional arrangements.

We can conclude that the network society has a need for approaches to policy making that acknowledge the uncertainties and complexities of the multi actor, multi level and multi domain context. As Innes and Booher (2000) put it *"Authority is fragmented and trust in government and in large institutions is low. There's lack of shared values across and within societies. Businesses, individuals, communities and societies that succeed are those, which make connections and new partnerships, keeping constantly on the leading edge of knowledge. They collaborate in order to create network power. Network power is built on reciprocity. This means that both players gain by creating new opportunities, because they share what each uniquely can provide"*. Healey (1997) calls this the need for institutional capacity building.

From this point forward the paper is about the case Schiphol. The Dutch mainport is embedded in such context as described above and the many involved stakeholders have as such great difficulties in developing a package deal for the spatial development of the airport. In the following part we start with a reconstruction of the relatively successful policy making process during 1989-1991, which resulted in the widely accepted PASO. This reconstruction is based on Tan's (2001) analyses of the 1989-1991 decision making process. After the reconstruction of the process, he managed to identify five crucial factors that played an important role in the successful outcome of the process. Finally, we use the same actors as selected by Tan to figure out why the creation of a new package deal regarding the future developments of Schiphol Airport is currently faltering.

3. Decision making about Schiphol 1989 –1991: Identifying crucial factors

The Fourth Report on Spatial Planning, introduced in 1988, identified two powerhouses of the Dutch economy, one of which was Schiphol Airport. In this report, the government acknowledges the fact that the airport is of major importance for the economy and should be able to expand, but also that the environmental situation in the area surrounding the airport is deteriorating. That is why the report orders a plan of action for the Schiphol region in which a double objective is crucial, on the one hand developing the airport to become an important node of intercontinental and European transportation flows and on the other hand improving the environmental situation and quality of life in the airport's surroundings. In his book, Tan (2001) provides an in depth analyses of the decision making process leading towards this plan of action. He observed and analyzed the behavior of the different actors involved in order to answer the question if this decision making process was successful. In his analysis Tan makes

use of Teisman's decision making theory and his method of reconstructing the decision making process. Teisman (1992) introduced a pluricentral perspective for the analysis of decision making. This means that a variety of actors involved in the process are depending on each other to reach a satisfying result, which can not be reached if a single actor has power of decision (see also paragraph 2). In this pluricentral perspective the quality of policy is judged not by self interest of one of the actors or even by general interest, but by common interest of the actors involved. That is why, in Teisman's pluricentral perspective, the emphasis is on interactions between different actors which lead to the development of those common interests.

Tan (2001) has analyzed the policy making process around the expansion of Schiphol Airport, which took place from 1989 to 1991 and resulted in three different policy products: the Start Covenant (1989), the Plan of Approach to Schiphol and its surroundings (1990) and the Policy Agreement Plan of Action for Schiphol and its surrounding area (1991). To be able to identify the crucial factors in developing this plan of action, the process first has to be reconstructed. Tan makes use of Teisman's method of identifying rounds of decision making. This method states that a phase like approach appears to deny the iterative, multi-linear process of decision making. So, as an alternative Teisman developed a model with rounds instead of phases, in which this multi-linear and iterative character is explicitly recognized (Teisman, 1997).

Three rounds of decision making: 1989-1991

In the first round of policy making, which resulted in the signing of the Start Covenant in 1989, the central issue was to form a new coalition to transform the statements of the Fourth Report on Spatial Planning (1988) into a regionally based plan of action to develop the airport as a powerhouse of the Dutch economy and to improve the quality of life in the airport region at the same time. The initial leadership in the development of this coalition lies in the hands of the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment. It was the minister who contacted the Schiphol Group to see if they were interested in joining the policy making process. Also the Province of North-Holland, the municipalities of Haarlemmermeer (in which the airport is located) and Amsterdam as well as the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Transportation, Public Works and Water Management are invited to join the process. Tan (2001) identifies these seven actors as being the main actors involved. All of them involved acknowledge the urgent need for a set of concrete measures regarding the

future development of Schiphol Airport. They agree on the policy goal as stated in the Fourth Report on Spatial Planning (1988). It is clear that everybody who is involved wants to allow the airport to expand, but only if the environment and quality of life in the airport's surroundings improves. However it has to be noted that this first round of decision making is not yet about the policy contents in detail. This is even expressed in a side-letter added to the Start Covenant by the Province of North-Holland. Though, the parties recognize their interdependency and realize that they have to cooperate to be able to shape an efficient mainport policy.

The second round of decision making, which took place between september 1989 and december 1990, resulted in the Plan of Approach for Schiphol and its surroundings. Tan (2001) divides this round into two different phases for descriptive reasons. In the first phase the focus was on knowledge development. The actors involved took time to familiarize themselves with the standpoints and interests of the other actors. They also identified a great lack of knowledge that had to be developed in order to come to a common vision on the airport's future. They came forward with a shared research agenda, in which the possibilities for expanding Schiphol Airport and the improvement of the environment and quality of life were identified. They use the information gathered during the joint research projects to directly negotiate with each other about certain issues regarding the expansion of the airport. However, some issues remain unsettled, for example the allowance of night flights. These unsolved issues are skillfully pushed forward to the new round of decision making.

The third and final round of decision making focused on two aspects, which remained unsettled in the second round. One of those issues is the already mentioned allowance of night flights. The Province of North-Holland stated that the agreement reached in the earlier rounds will only be applied if they are part of an integrated package of measures, also dealing with the night flights and the other unresolved issues which were put aside during the earlier rounds of decision making. Although the issue of night flights is not resolved in the end, the Province of North-Holland agrees in signing the Policy Agreement Plan of Action for Schiphol and its surrounding area (1991).

Identifying crucial factors

With describing this third round of decision making Tan (2001) completes the first part of his analysis, the reconstruction of the decision making process. He continues with judging the

process by looking at the three criteria defined by Teisman (1992): (1) the ability to interweave the goals of different actors, (2) The ability to establish connections and link-ups between different actors and (3) The ability of different actors to arrange their interactions when connections are made. In the period between 1989 and 1991 all actors realize and accept their interdependency. They managed to interweave their goals and objectives to some extent, by the formation of a common view on the development of the airport and the environmental issues related to this. Central in this process was the common belief in the economic importance of the airport's development. With regard to Teisman's second criterion, the ability of actors to establish connections, it can be concluded that this is certainly present in the case of the expansion of Schiphol Airport. All kind of connections are made between the parties involved, which results in the founding of various steering committees, project groups, etc. Within these groups all actors actively participate in the process and commonly develop a plan of action for the expansion of Schiphol Airport. The actors also proved to be able to organize their interactions. This was especially the case in the first round of decision making, when the rules of the game and the organizational structure of the process were established.

Tan (2001) argues that some of the behavior shown by the parties involved can not be explained by the three elements of judging decision making provided by Teisman. He identifies five crucial factors that shape the decision making process:

1. Cultural issues that bind the actors but generally remain unspoken
2. The presence of a sense of urgency that galvanizes the actors
3. The leading role played by the central government
4. The significance of the development of knowledge for policy change
5. Breaking through stalemate during the decision making process.

Here we describe the five crucial factors in more detail.

Ad.1. When referring to the cultural issues we would like to add the importance of a dominant belief system. We describe a belief system as a set of basic values, causal assumptions and problem perceptions (Sabatier, 1993). By using this definition we broaden the cultural dimensions by beliefs that are more content and problem related. The definition refers to the existence of a certain 'common belief' among the participants in the decision making process. In the case of the decision making regarding the expansion of Schiphol Airport, Tan argues that the actors involved all share the same feelings about the airport as being of major importance for the Dutch economy. Everybody is convinced that the airport fulfills an

important economic, social as well as cultural role. So there certainly was a common belief with regard to the economic importance of the airport. The cultural dimension in these common beliefs is that the airport is a national symbol for many people, representing the Dutch strength in trade, distribution and the nation's long history in traveling and trading all around the world. Although these common beliefs usually remain unspoken, because actors often are not aware of them themselves, they play an important role in bringing parties together.

Ad. 2. The second factor refers to a sense of urgency experienced by all actors participating in the decision making process. The fast growing aviation sector and the deteriorating environmental situation urged all participants to take action. Everybody agreed that further postponement of decision making was unacceptable. This sense of urgency also seems to play an important role in bringing the actors together.

Ad. 3. Leadership of the central government is identified as an important factor in the decision making process with regard to the expansion of Schiphol as well. The central government took part in this process in many ways. Different ministries of the central government were involved and they often took the lead in the decision making process. They provided strong procedural leadership as well as leadership regarding the content. Together with the common belief that the airport was of national importance, this arrangement worked well and was widely accepted by the other actors involved.

Ad. 4. Knowledge production proved to be a crucial factor in this particular process of decision making as well. The actors agreed together on the necessity of new knowledge in order to be able to form a common view on the development of the airport. This assured the acceptance of the research results by the parties involved, especially when the research was carried out together.

Ad. 5. Eventually Tan (2001) refers to the ability of breaking through stalemates as an important success factor in decision making. He incorporates this aspect of Termeer's (1993) configuration approach. An example of a stalemate in the decision making process regarding the expansion of the airport can be found in the fact that the issue of night flights caused major concern among the Province of North-Holland. The issue was resolved by partly ignoring it and partly developing some pragmatic measures, which enabled the parties to

break through this fixation of the process. Table 1 gives an overview of the important factors that played an important role in reached agreement on the package deal regarding the development of the airport.

Table 1. Crucial factors in the decision making process 1989-1991.

Crucial factors	Main question
1. Common beliefs and cultural factors	Is there a common/ cultural belief among the stakeholders?
2. Sense of urgency	Do all stakeholders experience a sense of urgency?
3. Leadership of central government	Is there a widely recognized leader, like the national government?
4. Knowledge development	Do the stakeholders agree on the necessity for knowledge production?
5. Breaking through stalemates	Is there ability to break through stalemates?

4. Current state of affairs regarding the crucial factors

We now turn to the present day situation. The actuality and acceptance of the 1991 package deal has diminished. Since 1991 the involved actors have not been able to reach a new package deal about the future development of the airport and its surroundings. We are going to apply the five crucial factors to the present day situation to find out the current state of affairs regarding these factors. We do this by answering the questions we have formulated in table 1. For a sound comparison between the decisions making process that led to the PASO and the current situation we collected our data from the same actors that Tan (2001) identified for his analysis of the decision making process of 1989-1991.³ An analysis of policy documents regarding the airport development drawn up by the Ministry of Spatial Planning, Housing and the Environment, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, the Province of North-Holland, the municipalities of Amsterdam and Haarlemmermeer and the Schiphol Group, as well as in depth interviews with representatives from these parties, allow us to answer the questions formulated in table 1. Interviews were necessary due to the nature of the questions asked in table 1. They deal with aspects regarding content and process of which the latter is usually not expressed in policy documents. The specific perceptions on the five identified crucial factors can also only be attained from in depth interviews. In the next part we present the current state of affairs

³ Note that although KLM signed the final policy product, according to Tan (2001) they were not one of the seven main players in the decision making process.

regarding the five crucial factors in the decision making process based on the interviews and operative policy documents.

Ad. 1 Cultural issues, common beliefs

As Tan (2001) concluded, the process of decision making in 1989-1991 was fed by a set of common beliefs about the economic importance of the airport and the cultural image of Schiphol and KLM as an icon of Dutch wealth and trademanship. The economic, social and cultural importance of the airport is still acknowledged by the actors involved. In the National Strategy on Spatial Planning, issued by the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, the airport is still described as a cornerstone of the Dutch economy (VROM, 2004). The ministry supports a further development of the airport at its present location and sees the airport as an important asset in promoting the competitiveness of the Randstad (VROM, 2004). The ministry of Transportation, Public Works and Water Management expresses a similar view in their National Mobility Policy Document (2004). A further development of the accessibility of The Netherlands by air is the main focus of the airport development as stated by the ministry. In their main policy document, the Ministry of Economic Affairs mentions the mainport Schiphol as an economic engine of The Netherlands, not only by direct air transport related activities, but also by its contribution to the international competitiveness of the Dutch business environment (EZ, 2004). Similar conclusions can be drawn from the Regional Plan North-Holland South (Provincie Noord-Holland, 2003; Provincie Noord-Holland, 2005, interview). The municipality of Haarlemmermeer acknowledges the importance of the airport for its own municipality as a creator of jobs, as well as for the region by increasing the competitiveness of the regional business environment (Haarlemmermeer, 2005, interview). The municipality of Amsterdam focuses on Schiphol as an asset for the local economy. In their economic policy program they state that “...*Schiphol is an important job creator for the city of Amsterdam and an engine of the national and local economy.*” (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2002). It will come as a surprise that the Schiphol Group also stresses the importance of the airport in the national economy and its capability of attracting international business to the Randstad. We can conclude that there certainly is a strong common belief and agreement on the importance of the airport in terms of economics and competitiveness of the Randstad region as well as The Netherlands as a whole (Schiphol Group, 2005, interview).

The cultural common beliefs are more difficult to describe. Tan (2001) mentioned the cultural aspect related to the airport, with its home carrier KLM, as an icon of Dutch trade and travel. However, after the merger of KLM and Air France the iconic image of KLM is deteriorating. KLM has more or less lost its Dutch identity. The twofoldness of KLM and Schiphol does not exist anymore in the way it existed in the late '80s and early '90s (Schiphol group, 2005, interview; Amsterdam, 2005, interview, Ministry of Transport, interview). It seems that the feeling of pride with regard to the national airport and airline is evaporating under influence of global developments like alliances, mergers and take-overs. In this sense there is no strong cultural common belief among the different actors in regard to airport and airline. The discussion about loss of cultural identity under pressure of the globalization is a possible and plausible explanation (Mommaas, 2001).

Sense of urgency

Especially the Ministry of Economic Affairs strongly puts forward the deteriorating position of Schiphol airport compared to its main competitors Frankfurt, Paris and London (EZ, 2004). Something has to be done to make sure the position of the airport is improved. This also in order to be able to facilitate the Skyteam alliance in which Air France – KLM takes part and which has announced to further rationalize its network after 2008. The overall conclusion is that the competitiveness of the Randstad for international business is getting worse and competition from other metropolitan regions in Europe and elsewhere is fierce. According to the Ministry of Economic Affairs this calls for short term action. The municipality of Amsterdam underlines this deterioration of the competitive position of Amsterdam and the Randstad (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2002). The municipality noticed a lower economic growth, rising unemployment and intensified competition with other cities and regions. To cope with these issues, the municipal authorities in Amsterdam urge for concrete action. The strong sense of urgency is also based on the fact that there is uncertainty about the development strategy of Air France – KLM (Amsterdam, 2005, interview). The Schiphol Group (2005, interview) focuses on a two-fold strategy of developing airports elsewhere as well as strengthening their airport in Amsterdam. They put forward the argument of strengthening the airport to be able to accommodate the newborn carrier Air France – KLM, which now has two major hub airports in Europe (Schiphol and Paris Charles de Gaulle).

Though, during all interviews it came to the fore that a distinction should be made between a short term sense of urgency and a long term sense of urgency. As stated before, policy

documents and interviews with the actors involved show a strong sense of urgency for measures to consolidate the hub status of Schiphol Airport. This means that on short term they all feel the urgency to take measures to facilitate the Air France – KLM group. However, on the long term this sense of urgency is much less apparent. For the long term developments of the airport the vision of the different actors diverge widely, from strictly economical to strictly environmental (Amsterdam, 2005, interview; Haarlemmermeer, 2005, interview; Schiphol Group, 2005, interview, Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment, 2005 interview). Especially the municipality of Haarlemmermeer stresses the importance of the environmental aspects in the long run, and the municipality of Amsterdam seems to be satisfied with a ‘status-quo’, where as the Schiphol Group refers to further future growth in order to remain competitive (Amsterdam, 2005, interview; Haarlemmermeer, 2005, interview; Schiphol Group, 2005, interview).

Leadership

According to Tan (2001), strong leadership of the national authorities, in particular of the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, was a crucial factor in the succeeding of the policy making process in 1989-1991. But has the national government still the ability and desire to take the lead and who must otherwise take the lead in present times? An analysis of the National Strategy on Spatial Planning reveals an interesting shift in terms of leadership. The ministry argues for a regional approach, similar to that used in 1989-1991 in which a regional plan was drawn up for the Haarlemmermeer area. However, the ministry also indicates that it is not them who will be primarily responsible for this, but that the regional partners like municipalities, airport authorities and other regional bodies should take the lead in this process of policy making (VROM, 2004). A similar view is expressed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs. Although they indicate the competitiveness of the Randstad and the airport region in particular should be increased, they see this as the responsibility of the companies involved, like for example the Schiphol Group and Air France – KLM. In the opinion of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the state should limit their efforts to general issues, like creating a level playing field, in which companies can flourish. This implies a diminishing desire of leadership from the national government’s side. The principle of subsidiarity, which states that decision should be made at the lowest administrative level as possible, can be recognized in this. However, according to municipal and provincial authorities the state, during the last few years a turn is taking place. It seems that the state secretary for aviation policy (Ministry of Transportation and Public Works) in particular tries

to regain leadership in the process of decision making (Schiphol Group, 2005, interview; Haarlemmermeer, 2005, interview; Provincie Noord-Holland, 2005, interview; Amsterdam, 2005, interview). Although they agree with the state taking the lead, they also notice a problem with regard to this. In the '90s state authorities choose to step down and only set the limiting conditions in terms of environmental pollution (mainly noise). So in fact they left the development of the airport to the airport authorities and the local and regional authorities involved. As a consequence a lot of knowledge about airport related developments has disappeared at the national level. Local and regional authorities put forward their experience of this lacking knowledge and they also indicate the lack of a common vision on the development of the airport by the different ministries (Amsterdam, 2005, interview; provincie Noord-Holland, 2005, interview). The question rises if the state is capable of being the leader in the process at this moment, considering they have the desirability to take on this role.

Knowledge development

When describing the present day knowledge development process it is necessary to distinguish between the joint development of knowledge and the development of knowledge by the separate actors. The joint creation of knowledge does happen, however, not by all actors together, but in separate groups of different composition. The municipalities of Amsterdam and Haarlemmermeer made clear they do undertake joint research with for example the Schiphol Group (Amsterdam, 2005, interview; Haarlemmermeer, 2005, interview). During the most interviews it came to the fore that the dialogue was far from complete, meaning that there was not one forum in which all stakeholders involved were all actors were participating at once. Most actors have developed knowledge themselves or jointly with some other actors involved. The problem in this is that this individual knowledge mostly lacks the acceptance of the other parties affected. Another problem is that this individual knowledge development is taking place in a rather closed setting. Communication is infrequent, so the different parties do not really know about the activities of each other (Amsterdam, 2005, interview; Haarlemmermeer, 2005, interview; Provincie Noord-Holland, 2005, interview; Schiphol Group, 2005 interview). For some parties (Amsterdam, Province North Holland) this below par transparency has put a serious pressure under the trust relations between the parties involved. Other parties (Haarlemmermeer, Schiphol) indicate that they don't have a lower level of trust then during the period 1989 – 1991. The difference in these perceptions lies in the roles the parties have in the decision making process. During the 1989 - 1991 process, only the national government had much influence on the outcomes of the

process. The only thing the parties could do was defend their interests as good as possible. By now the roles have changed. The lower public authorities have gained more influence and Schiphol has to fight harder than back in 1991 to guarantee its interests. In other words, they miss the help of a strong national government (Schiphol, 2005 interview). So the nature of the process seems to have changed, and other rules define the game than 15 years ago. The different actors seem to have more scope to display strategic behavior. So some are deliberately less willing to share their knowledge, dependant on the level of expectations of the benefits they can gain by working together. The outlined picture has the shape of a ‘*circulus vitiosus*’; the missing of joint knowledge development, undermines the trust between the parties involved and this lack of trust mean that the parties find it more difficult to develop knowledge together (an example of negative feedback).

Breaking through stalemates

Because the process of developing a new package deal has just started, it is difficult to say something about the breaking through stalemates. In fact, actors seem to be in the middle of a stalemate right now. None of the actors involved seems to know how to break successfully through the current stalemate. Of course this problem is interrelated with the variables that we have described. In the conclusion we shall come on this. In table 2 we summarize the current state concerning the selected variables. On the basis of the descriptions we try to answer the questions as identified in paragraph 3 (table 1).

Table 2. Crucial factors applied to the decision making process of Schiphol, 2005

Main question	Summary analysis
Is there a common/ cultural belief among the stakeholders?	All parties interviewed acknowledge the economic importance of the airport. All parties are aware of the need for environmental improvements. However, a feeling of national identity/ pride seems to be lacking nowadays.
Do all stakeholders experience a sense of urgency?	Yes, but only on the short term, to give a signal to Air France –KLM, and maintain the competitiveness. However, on the long term the stakeholders experience different gradations of urgency.
Is there a widely recognized leader, like the national government?	No. The role of the national government has diminished during the 1990’s. However, there are some indications that they are trying to regain the leadership. Local and regional parties are skeptical about this, because they

	doubt the ability of the national government to lead. Besides this, they are very hesitant to take on this role themselves. And they doubt the ability of the other parties to take the lead.
Do the stakeholders agree on the necessity for knowledge production?	All stakeholders agree on both the importance of joint knowledge development as well as the importance of sharing the individually developed knowledge (transparency). This does not mean that the knowledge production actually takes place. The process is very complex and actors seem to have more scope to display strategic behavior.
Is there ability to break through stalemates?	No

5. Conclusion

As we have seen, decision making about the future airport development of the Dutch mainport Schiphol was both during the period 1989-1991 and the present-day situation a complex and controversial matter. We have tried to follow the line of reasoning that Tan (2001) displayed in his book in order to make an as sound comparison between the 1989-1991 and the current situation as possible. So we used the same factors that Tan identified as being of crucial importance in the relatively successful decision making process of 1989 – 1991 and assessed them on the same actors he identified. On the basis of this analysis three main points of interest came to the fore.

First it seems that the *context in which the decision making has to take place* has gone through dramatic changes the last fifteen years. For this we refer to our theoretical framework about the rise of the network society. During the interviews all the actors indicated that the actors involved in the 1989-1991 package deal, do not make up the whole arena anymore in present times. The multi-actor, multi-level and multi-domain context indicates that other parties have entered the arena. Although we can not precisely conclude who these new actors are from the interviews or policy document analysis, it is very important to acknowledge that the actors involved in 1991 express the need for a wider and broader policy arena. Several of the interviewed representatives indicated that for their goal achievement other parties like private firms, dedicated interest groups, etc. should play a role in the decision making process.

One way to explain the growth of the actors involved is referring to the functional evolution the airport has gone through since it's opening in 1967. In short, the airport has developed from a provider of air services to an airport urban field, with companies, shops, hotels etc.

which can be called the ‘Aerotropolis’ (Kassarda, 2000) (see Huys & van Gils, 2004 for a more extended review of this evolution). As a consequence of this enlarged spatial reach the number of people that are affected by the airport development or that can affect the airport development has increased dramatically. In this way the functional evolution also explains that the airport has now more different users and clients, who all have different needs and demands. So, the rise of the network society, in which the airport functions as a transferring node where the space of flows interacts with the space of places, has made the decision making process more complicated. Not in the least because the network society caused a tremendous increase in passenger volumes and this growth increased the negative external effects, especially deteriorating environmental conditions (noise, emissions and health risks).

So we have concluded that actors are nowadays more interdependent, which mean that they need the means and ends of the others to achieve something. Our second point is related to this. The roles the different actors play has also changed, due to changes in the separate power bases of the actors. In short, it seems that the *nature of the decision making process* has been altered significantly. This is due to the fact that the national government had a much stronger leadership role during 1989 – 1991 then it has by now. The other actors involved have gained more influence and have more possibilities to defend their own specific interests. This leads to all kinds of strategic behaviour, which makes the process more complex. During the round of interviews three parties came to the fore that plays an important role in today’s developments, but did not during 1989 – 1991. The first is the European Union. It imposes important directives on the development of the airport, e.g. the environmental restrictions to noise and stench, the development of an open skies agreement in which all the airlines are free to enter and leave the market, the prohibition of state support, the wish to develop a level playing field. The second party that has become much better organized and institutionalized is the environmental lobby. Especially their political influence seems to have grown since 1991. It is also important to notice that the relationship between the different actors has changed over the years. This is especially true for the position of KLM, the third party, that is now part of a worldwide airline alliance and less bound to the physical location of Schiphol airport. The KLM-AF alliance is nowadays seen as one of the key players when considering the future development of the airport. The power base seems to have shifted from the public authorities to the private parties.

A third point that came to the fore during this analysis was that the desirability of a new PASO was put under question. This can be explained by referring to the layered sense of urgency all the parties involved experience. For the long run there is no common sense of urgency among the actors and therefore a new PASO is not something all actors experience as necessary. The interviews revealed a need for a more thematical approach to solve specific problems. This means that they want to tackle the problems one by one with the parties involved in that problem. These do not necessarily have to be the actors involved in the 1989-1991 process. Although the parties experienced the 1989 – 1991 process as relatively successful, they indicated that an identical process and agreement is not desirable and attainable within the current situation.

This need for thematical approaches and specific problem solving arises from the notion that the problems concerning the development of the airport are too complex and surrounded with too many uncertainties to solve within one package deal. The explanation of this complexity can be found in the changing context in which the process takes place and the changing nature of the process, as we have already described.

Within this more complex context all the parties involved in this research indicated that they still experience a certain sense of urgency to develop a new package deal. The main reason for this can be found in the interests the parties share. They all want to maintain the economic position of Schiphol to some extent, and within the environmental constraints. As we have indicated, this sense of urgency is especially apparent on the short term, because after 2008 AF-KLM has pronounced to further rationalize their network. As such all the stakeholders want to undertake the necessary measures to seduce AF-KLM to expand their operations at Schiphol airport, within the environmental constraints. The feeling of a sense of urgency concerning the long-term development of the airport was much weaker. This is due to the fact that most parties have differing interests.

From our analysis of the cultural dimension of the common beliefs we can conclude that this played a more evident role during the process 1989 – 1991 than it does right now. The role of a national identity, like having a national airline, is undermined by the international developments. The strength a shared historical consciousness can have to trigger collaboration has thus eroded. As we have shown by the need for a more thematical approach, most parties were quite skeptical to developing an overall package deal. The fact that there is no widely

recognized leader plays an eminent role in this. The absence of such a leader means that nobody takes responsibility in developing a new package deal. A possible explanation for this is the political sensitivity of the Schiphol file. It seems that most public parties don't want to burn their fingers on Schiphol dossier.

The lack of joint knowledge development can be seen as a result of the lacking leadership and lacking long term urgency. All the parties agreed that knowledge development was essential for making progress in the policy making process, but none of them felt like taking the lead. Besides this the parties indicated that the transparency was lacking and the dialogue was sometimes faltering. The parties still agreed upon that the national government is probably the best equipped party to take the lead. The problem in this is that within the national government the sense of urgency to develop a package deal was much higher in 1989 then it is now. Besides this, the ability of the national government to take the lead is in doubt.

In unraveling the decision making around Schiphol the five crucial factors that we have studied in depth have proved to be helpful in explaining the process that is taking place right now. However, there are of course many more factors at play that we did not take into account. At least two aspects that can explain the current decision making process need further research. First, the existence and growing importance of the complexity of the decision making arena, like the existence of countervailing powers and the influence of private partners, the future uncertainties, the shifting power bases and constantly changing nature of interactions etc., seem to have a disturbing influence on the process. To be able to deal with this complexity it is necessary to find out what the underlying logics and the consequences of possible outcomes are. An in depth study into the new actors involved should be undertaken to picture the current policy arena in a more detailed way. Second, the factor trust seems to lie at the core of all the other factors put under study. Without trust the parties shall stay in a constant stalemate, because of their interdependency. Therefore further research is needed about the trust-relations between all the actors, in order to find ways to restore this necessary ingredient in the process. There are some fruitful grounds to create some kind of package deal on the short term, because the actors do feel a sense of urgency for short term action. However, the long term developments of the airport and its surroundings shall remain a controversial issue.

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