

**Daring leadership in environmental change: understanding public leadership in
Dutch water management**

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1. Introduction

Processes of transformation, aimed at adaptation to environmental change, are often initiated in informal arenas where forerunners meet and breed. In order to connect such transformations to the existing socio-political context an adequate form of environmental governance is needed. This implies a key role for public decision-makers as gate keepers that can link an innovative policy proposal to the existing complexities of the government context in which social barriers, democratic obligations and the representation of existing routines that might be challenged by this innovation play a role.

This paper will focus on a radical change in the water management strategies of the Dutch south western delta area and specifically the re-salinization of the Volkerak-Zoommeer. In the light of ecological rehabilitation and safety from possible flooding the need to restore this artificially maintained fresh water basin to its former state and allow influence of marine dynamics has been articulated. These adaptations provide several challenges for finding alternatives for the supply and use of fresh water to existing agriculture and industry.

The role of local political leadership in the process of combining and synchronizing existing routines with innovations that require a change of these routines is regarded as essential. These connective capacities of leadership are subject to various influencing factors such as personal characteristics, the local and supra-local environment and institutional arrangements. In this article we will explore these influences and drivers behind leadership behavior.

The general goal of the paper is to identify key motivational elements that underlie specific leadership styles and behaviors in order to better understand the role of leadership in policy innovation, as well as its potential for the successful integration of innovative proposals into existing policy.

Two models will be used to describe and analyze both the exercise of leadership as well as the particular influences that shape the actions of leadership in three empirical cases of leadership (i.e. three provincial delegates) concerning the management of a fresh water basin in the Netherlands called the Volkerak-Zoommeer (VZ). The first model consists of a typology of leadership that was specifically conceptualized for describing and analyzing leadership exercise in the public domain. Based on the renowned dichotomy of transactional and transformational leadership styles which has been developed specifically in an intra-organizational context by Bass (1985) we have developed a third type within the continuum in order to be able to describe and analyze the characteristics of inter-organizational leadership in the public domain more fully.

The inter-organizational type description is more focused on connecting innovative content with a process of stakeholders and decision-making mechanisms in a highly complex and networked environment. This takes many skills and competencies but above that it requires a certain daring. The public leader needs to act without the certainty of attaining the required public and political support for the innovative proposal. We therefore have entitled this third type as daring leadership.

The second model provides an overview of influencing factors that shape the leadership exercise in the context of innovative and sustainable water management. In this model we attempt to converge views about the role and influence of personal characteristics on the behavior of leaders from psychological organizational perspectives

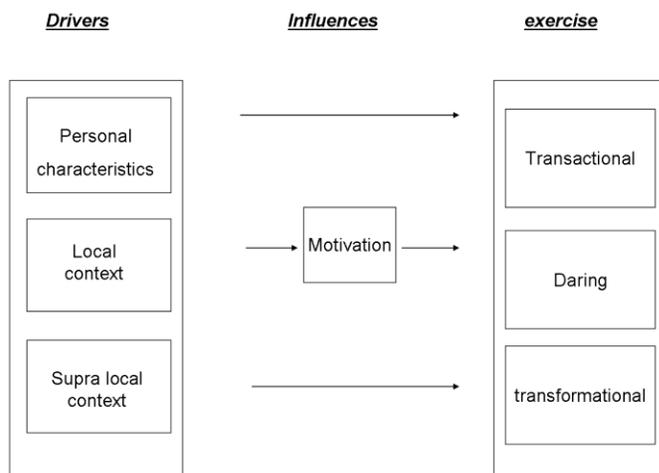
(Kets-de Vries, 1986; Miller et al, 1982) and viewpoints from the policy sciences that present contextual factors as main influential drivers for behavior of individuals (March, 1994; March & Olsen, 2006). With this model the specific motivational aspects that surround the leaders in the three individual cases are described and analyzed.

In the next section we will describe the model of leadership exercise, followed by a description of the influences model in the thirds section. In section 4 we will elaborate on the methods used in the case study. A general description of the case is given in section 5 while in section 6 the empirical results are described and analyzed followed by general conclusions and discussion.

2. The exercise of leadership: A typology of transformational, transactional and daring leadership

In this section we will describe the different theoretical concepts that we have used to describe and analyze both the leadership exercise as well as the influences that shape these leadership behaviors. In figure 1 an overview of this framework is given. The background drivers of leadership are formed by the personal characteristics of the specific leader and the contextual factors, both local and supra-local, within which the leader is operating. Leadership behaviors are then influenced by these personal and contextual characteristics as well as by the motivations that are formed by these specific drivers.

Figure 1: General framework of the study



In the description of the exercise of public leadership as it occurs in practice we make use of an ideal type classification of leadership behavior, the TDT typology. Based on the existing typologies used in descriptions of intra-organizational leadership (Bass, 1985, Bass & Avolio, 1994), this typology describes public leadership behavior in an inter-organizational context.

The typology uses the original dichotomy of transactional and transformational leadership to which a third type, daring leadership, is added. This recombines elements of transactional and transformational repertoires into a partly intermediary and partly new type of leadership that attempts to connect new and alternative issues to existing processes of public decision-making.

Based on several characteristics we will distinguish the three types of leadership behavior in detail. First a short description of the main characteristics of each type is given.

Transactional leadership is focused on marginal improvements, maintaining the quantity and quality of performance, how to substitute one goal for another, how to reduce resistance and how to implement decisions (Bass, 1985, Avolio & Bass, 1995). This type of leadership is essentially focused on the maintenance of the process of policy making. Activities are aimed at accommodating the current system and maintaining the existing status quo.

Transformational leadership is specifically focused on raising awareness about certain issues and convincing or motivating others to share the ideas on these issues. This requires a leader with vision, self-confidence and inner strength to argue successfully for what he or she thinks is right or good, not for what is popular or acceptable (Bass, 1985: 17). In terms of end and means, transformational leadership is generally more concerned about the ends in contrast to transactional leadership which is mostly concerned with the means.

Public leadership can play an important role in the process of pushing innovative proposals forward ('t Hart, 2000; Termeer, 2007; Uhl-Bien et al, 2007). Although a transformational style seems a convincing strategy to do this, in the context of public policy making, which is largely based on transactional processes, leadership styles that have a sole focus on the outcome have the risk of losing the connections with the processes through which decisions can be made. Especially in the case of inter-organizational leadership connections with the processes of decision making, the various actors in the process and the context within which policy proposals are to be embedded, need to be maintained (Teisman, 2001; Edelenbos, 2005) Connective capacities are therefore highly important in the public leadership role that is focused on combining existing processes of transaction with bringing in alternative issues that require adjustment of these processes.

The necessity for such coupling abilities has also been elaborated on by Uhl-Bien et al (2007) in the form of two co-existing types; adaptive and enabling leadership.

Capacities to create the stimulating environment in which connections can be made require a certain daring from the leadership position. This daring is needed to allow complexity and uncertainty into the policy system in order to enable possibilities for the development of creative and innovative solutions. Such an uncertain situation in the policy system is not without risk and can often be considered a bet on the public and political backing of the proposed plan. Marion & Uhl-Bien (2001) refer to this as: 'risking catastrophe to enable creativity and fitness.' This leads us to the alternative ideal type of daring leadership. In its focus on the coupling of alternative issues to the existing context the daring leadership ideal type forms a new combination of partly intermediary, partly crossed-over and partly unique aspects with regard to the ideal types of transactional and transformational leadership.

The three types are distinguished and described based on specific aspects of the leadership exercise (Table 1).

Table 1: Exercise of Leadership in the TDT-Typology

	Transactional	Daring	Transformational
<i>Focus of action</i>	Process	Connecting Content with Process	Content
<i>Main repertoire of activities</i>	Accommodating brokerage	Entrepreneurial brokerage & Advocacy	Advocacy
<i>Interaction form</i>	Cooperation	Coopetition	Competition
<i>strategies</i>	Dialogue, Decide and Deliver	Announce, Dialogue and Adjust	Decide, Announce and Defend
<i>Betting on support</i>	No	Yes	No
<i>Interest in the content of the decision</i>	Low	High	High

Focus of action

In this category of leadership exercise we distinguish between actions that are primarily focused on either process (transactional) or content (transformational) or, in case of daring leadership, on a combining of both. Transactional leadership is primarily focused on the maintenance of the decision-making process, the reduction of conflict and the following of procedures. Process is leading, and substance follows from process (Edelenbos et al., 2009). Contrary, transformational leadership is strongly content oriented and focuses primarily on the pushing of a proposal and the convincing of others. This approach is comparable with what is labeled in literature as project management (Mantel, 2005). In Daring leadership the focus of action is on combining the efforts to promote the preferred content with existing processes and deliberative routines. Actions are focused on influencing and directing toward certain policy content whilst simultaneously an openness and adaptability in the process of decision-making is created. New process rules may be negotiated along the way, if the content of the plan so requires.

Main repertoire

The main repertoire of leadership activities in transactional leadership consists of accommodating brokerage. This type of brokerage has a solely facilitative role in the

processes of decision-making. It is focused on maintenance of the policy process and keeping conflict levels low. In transformational leadership the repertoire exists mainly of advocacy activities. Here, the leader is constantly trying to convince others that this is the most preferable option to address a specific issue of consequence (Scholten et al., 2010). In a daring leadership repertoire advocacy activities, used to promote the proposed policy direction and energize others to further develop ideas in the proposed direction, are combined with specific brokerage activities. These activities have a strong entrepreneurial quality based on pushing the proposal forward through cooperating and bargaining with other parties in the process. In contrast to accommodating brokerage which merely facilitates the various stakeholders in their mutual relation building and decision-making processes, this type of brokerage actively uses stakeholder relations to enhance the position of the proposed policy and can therefore be labeled as entrepreneurial brokerage (Scholten et al., 2010).

Interaction form

Transactional leadership structures the process of decision-making on cooperation and continuous interaction with the different stakeholders in which conflictive decisions are avoided by integrating all interests in a package deal. This interaction form often results in a compromise that addresses the various different opinions but risks a reinterpretation of the initial policy goals (Scholten et al., 2010). The transformational form of interaction is characterized as competitive. A preferred proposal is pushed forward and put to compete with possible other ideas or interests (Teisman, 2001). The manager operates based on exclusion and avoids package deals because this makes things too (needlessly) complex (Edelenbos et al, 2009). Daring leadership is attempting to create a balanced process of competition and cooperation in the interactions between stakeholders in which the policy direction is fixed beforehand but the various different aspects and ideas get room to compete in order to generate creativity and mutual understanding in a cooperative search for solutions that concur with the policy direction. Such a combined interaction form could be characterized as 'coopetition'.

Strategies of decision-making

A transactional communication strategy is strongly focused on dialogue between the different stakeholders in the project. Decisions are resulting only from the process of communication and need to encompass the views of all participants. This strategy can be characterized as a DDD strategy: Dialogue, Decide and Deliver (De Bruijn et al, 1998). Transactional leaders focus on controlling the policy process and therefore apply regulated openness for the environment to their project. The process is open to all parties but the involvement of stakeholders is organized through strict procedures and rules of conduct. Decision-making in a transactional style is directed toward a compromise. The leadership role is focused on accommodating the discussion and debate between stakeholders eventually leading to a decision that is supported by the majority of involved actors yet might be hardly effective in addressing the problem at hand.

A transformational communication strategy is characterized by the relative absence of dialogue. The desired solution is decided upon in a more or less autocratic fashion, without consultation and deliberation. This decision is then announced to the environment and defended against opposing arguments or misgivings (Beierle and Cayford, 2002; Quah and Tan, 2002). This strategy can be characterized as a Decide, Announce and Defend (DAD) strategy. As a result the decision-making process in transformational leadership is closed for the whole range of stakeholders. Only those actors that have sympathy for the proposed policy or can be convinced to share the vision are actively involved. Although this can be convincing, a transformational orientation might push for a proposed solution too hard, and risk ending up with a lack of public and political support.

Combining both strategies in a daring leadership style leads to an advertising strategy that announces an issue of consequence in the form of an explorative proposal and invites to a dialogue between all stakeholders which can lead to an adjustment within the fixed boundaries of the proposed policy direction. Such a style can be characterized as an Announce, Dialogue and Adjust (ADA) strategy (Scholten et al., 2010). In the combining of both repertoires daring leadership expresses a clear policy goal and accompanying direction and attempts to combine this with a joint effort of exploration with stakeholders to determine how the proposed concept can be brought further. In the decision-making process the leader alternates between moments of exploration and fixation. In such a combining of fixating achieved consensus on partial results and further exploration of the following steps, the decision-making is being shaped.

Betting on support: dealing with complexity

The public domain is characterized by a specific complexity. In processes of policy-making various parties interact on various levels with different goals and different backgrounds, using different rules and perceptions, in an ever-changing world (Scholten, 2010). Within this complexity public leaders have to operate based on the support of the majority of parties. When focusing on an issue of consequence and promoting a specific innovative proposal that combines the issue with the existing context of policy making, a step beyond daily routine is taken. In an attempt to push such a proposal further and connect the innovative ideas to the existing policy arena public and political support are ultimately essential. Initially it is unclear whether the necessary support will ultimately be found. The aspect of betting on support in the TDT-typology represents the specific way that the three ideal types relate to this issue as well as how they deal with the uncertainties that it provokes in the complex context of decision-making (Teisman, 2005).

The ideal typical transactional leader would in the case of such uncertainty remain focused on the process and as a result this approach leaves little room for pushing an innovative proposal. The process oriented transactional style can only function within the boundaries of existing commitment to a certain issue. Without the commitment of stakeholders the transactional leader can not initiate a process. In other words, the transactional type does not display a bet on support.

Leadership that goes beyond transactional behavior and focuses attention on a specific issue in the form of a proposal without the assurance of support for such ideas

can be regarded as betting on public and political support. Such leadership exercise requires daring. Yet, there is an important difference between the ideal types of transformational and daring leadership. The typical transformational leader strongly believes in the content of the proposal and is convinced that others will become followers as soon as they are confronted with compelling arguments that show that the proposed solution is indeed the best solution. This typical way of dealing with support can seem like a bet for outsiders but the individual leader has no doubt in this case. Therefore, from the leadership point of view, it can be concluded that there is no actual bet on support.

Daring leadership considers the existence of ultimate support as uncertain and therefore is actively betting on support. In this case the bet is accompanied with an active involvement in the process of exchanging viewpoints with other stakeholders. The daring leader is attempting to merge views and incorporate different interests into a policy trajectory that still aims for the goals that were set in the initial proposal.

As such a daring style actively engages the complexities of the policy process instead of attempting to reduce complexity. Such a complexity reducing behavior can be witnessed in the strong focus on the rules and regulations of the process as it is done in transactional leadership. Transformational leadership attempts to reduce complexity by a sole focus on the content and the pushing of this proposal, regardless of the specific circumstances.

Interest in the content of the decision

Generally the transformational leadership type is accompanied with a high interest in the content of the specific outcome of the decision-making process. Contrarily, the transactional type is mainly occupied with process maintenance. In this style the process denominates content. A daring type of leadership is also accompanied by a high interest in the content of the proposed decision and specifically tries to connect this content with the existing context.

3. Drivers and influences on leadership

In the investigation of factors that influence leadership behavior, this article uses a conceptual framework based on an existing model to study local political leadership and map key elements that are of influence (Sweeting, 2002). We have enriched this model with contributions from various authors that have developed similar and related concepts on leadership and the motivational factors that influence specific leadership behavior (John & Cole, 1999; Taylor, 2008; Scholten, 2009). The framework consists of three major components; personal characteristics, the local environment and the supra-local environment.

The package of motivations that partly shapes leadership behavior is characterized by great complexity. Before we describe these complex motivations, we will first have a closer look at the drivers of leadership performance.

Personal characteristics

Personal characteristics form the first component. Psychological characteristics, personality, traits and skills are stressed as an important factor in many leadership theories and typologies (John & Cole, 1999; Burns, 1978; Kets-de vries, 1996). Firstly, this component is made up of the personal *traits and skills* to display distinct strategies and tactics in the policy process.

Another important part of this component is formed by the individual leader's *preferences and priorities*. In this category we identify the personal drivers for leadership behavior that are dependent on personal commitment and corresponding values to the proposed policy (Taylor, 2009), personal views of managerial responsibilities and political ambitions (Schlesinger, 1966).

Local environment

Firstly we identify the direct political environment. Direct influence can be expected in the close interaction with direct delegate colleagues, political parties, councils and also other leading figures in the direct political environment. Local stakeholders that have a direct relation to the proposed policy are a second characteristic element. Furthermore, the local environment includes the specific characteristics of the region and the specific issues that are on the local agenda for which the leader is the responsible representative (Sweeting, 2002).

Supra-local environment

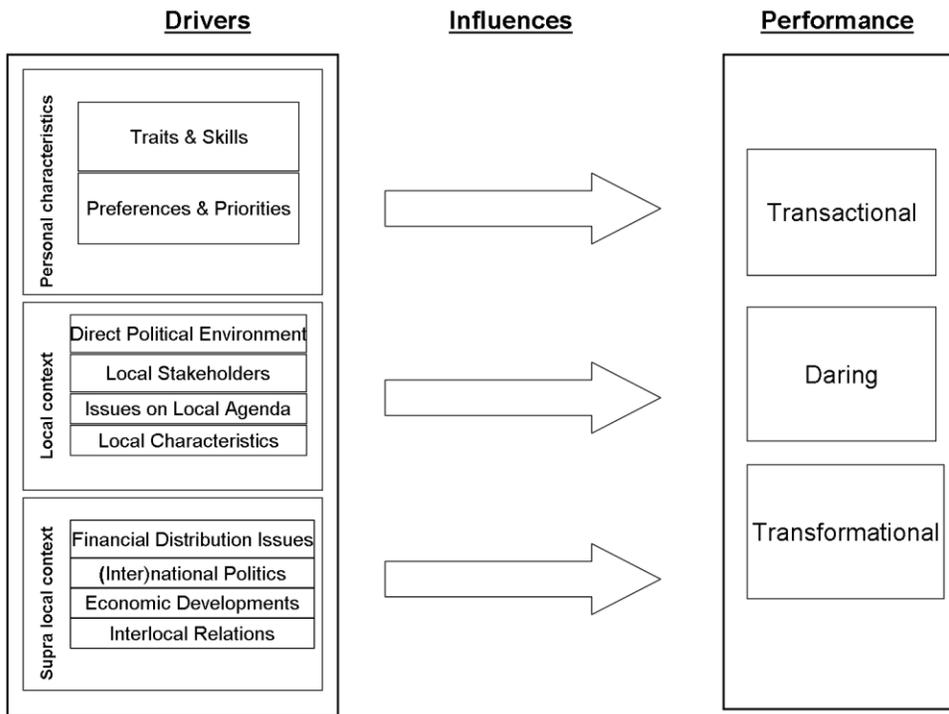
The supra-local environment consists of the broader context within which leadership is exercised. Policy decisions and happenings on the national and international level, economic developments, election results or developments in public opinion are examples of the influential factors in this category. Another important factor is formed by the issues of financial distribution that concern public as well as private parties on local, regional and national levels.

In this article we observe leadership in the context of new plans for water management. Due to the interconnectedness of the water system, changes in the management scheme have an influence on a much larger scale. Apart from public organizations, a multitude of other stakeholders are involved and may experience potential benefits from the implementation of the plans. It is expected that if benefits are shared, so are the costs. Yet, the identification and distribution of costs and benefits can be a difficult process that can have a profound influence on the implementation process and the role and subsequent exercise of leadership.

The interconnectedness of water issues is not only of influence on the financial distribution issues but has a profound influence on every step of the governance process. Inter-local relations between the various parties based on the interconnectedness of water are therefore also an important factor influencing the leadership exercise.

The three components described here form a constellation of influencing factors that shape the motivations of leadership as well as the actual leadership behaviors which are defined in TDT-terminology (figure 2).

Figure 2: A framework of drivers and influences on leadership



The drivers described here, can be categorized into different forms of influence. Firstly there are drivers that directly influence the leadership exercise such as the personal capacities of leaders or the contextual opportunities that shape the possibilities and limitations of leadership exercise. Subsequently in the interplay between the personal and contextual factors, influences converge into a package of case-specific motivations.

In the following sections we will use this framework to describe and analyze the leadership of three provincial delegates in a multiple case study on water governance issues in the Dutch Southwestern Delta region. One of the main projects in the region concerns the Volkerak Zoommeer (VZ). The VZ is an artificial fresh water basin which suffers severe ecological degradation. Proposed solutions to this problem are found in a salinization of the water, which has profound effects on the local stakeholders. Before giving a more elaborate description of the VZ project, we will first give an overview of the methods that were used to gather and analyze empirical data in the VZ project.

4. Methods

Three cases of individual leadership were selected based on the role of three provincial delegates in the project VZ: Zeeland, Zuid-Holland and Noord-Brabant. The three provinces are connected in the project VZ due to their location, adjoining the Volkerak-Zoommeer.

In the describing and analyzing of the three individual leaders and their specific contexts a qualitative multiple case study design was used. To capture the richness of individual settings and understand how actors act and think within their specific contexts, a case study approach is highly appropriate (Yin, 1994).

The empirical material in this study has been obtained from two sources. Firstly, the main part of the data has been obtained through semi-structured interviewing. This type of interviewing allows for openness and dynamics and is considered the most appropriate tool in explorative research designs (Babbie, 1995; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). These interviews have been conducted in two rounds. The first round focused on the direct circle of public servants, process facilitators and other colleagues in the VZ project surrounding the individual leaders that were the focus of this study. Semi-structured interviews of one to one and a half hour were undertaken. If necessary for additional data certainty or precision, a follow up by telephone, e-mail and even additional interviews has been carried out. Respondents were selected based on the following criteria: 1) long tenure in the organization in order to provide an historical overview that stretches beyond the position of the current leaders, 2) direct involvement with the three individual leaders, to provide deeper and first-hand knowledge and 3) functional variety to obtain a more colorful range of perspectives on the leadership position. The second round consisted of interviews with the three public leaders themselves. The use of multiple respondents provides the opportunity to mitigate biases or socially desirable answering by allowing the information to be confirmed across several sources (Golden, 1992). A total of 14 qualitative in-depth interviews were carried out. In addition to this, observations during public meetings concerning the decision-making process of the VZ project have been done.

Furthermore, a document analysis was undertaken. This included documents such as policy papers, technical reports and notes of meetings. This document analysis was used to reconstruct the various events in the process and forms the basis for the case description in this article. The combining of this archival data with the information obtained in the interviews provided opportunities for data triangulation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

The interviews were recorded, transcribed and subsequently processed with the software package MAXQDA. The transcripts were analyzed through selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The process of coding was based on the conceptual model of leadership influences and exercise described in figure 2 and table 1. The various components of the leadership exercise as well as the drivers have been further developed into codes and sub codes. These codes were used to group and structure the statements from respondents. In the establishing of patterns in the data using codes, special attention was given to the various factors that form the drivers and motivations for a specific leadership exercise. Text segments that gave the most expressive, colorful or pronounced description of the component behind the code are also used in the empirical description

that follows in the next section. In addition to the codes that were derived from the conceptual model, alternative codes were created to capture other factors that emerged from the empirical research but were not preliminarily conceptualized. One example is found in the exercise table in section 2 in which the element ‘Interest in the content of the decision’ was added during the process of data analysis.

5. The VZ case

The south-western part of the Netherlands consists of a large estuary in which some of Europe’s largest rivers find their way into the North Sea. In this area safety against floods has always been an important issue. The constant building and improving of storm and flood barriers proved to be difficult and expensive. A solution was found in the closing of the main river estuaries. This solution is widely known as the ‘delta works’. A hazardous flood in 1953 created a sense of urgency that led to the adoption of the delta works solution and implementation of the plans started in 1954.

The delta works were intended to protect large areas that had been prone to frequent flooding and soil salinization. All but one of the estuaries were sealed off by storm barriers, sluices and dams which created a highly compartmentalized, and highly controllable, estuarine area.

Besides the safety measures, the dams in the delta were functional in the controlling of the water levels in the Rhine-Scheldt connection, that formed a direct route between the ports of Rotterdam and Antwerp. They further functioned as means to stabilize the environment for agriculture in the provinces of Zeeland and West-Brabant. Due to the dam structure a number of fresh water basins came into existence. These basins formed a possibility for the development of intensive agriculture in an area that had been historically unfit for cropping. The Volkerak-Zoommeer (VZ) consists of two of these basins which are connected through the Rhine-Scheldt canal.

Problems

Although the delta works have been regarded as a wonderful piece of engineering, it appears that it is not the solution it once seemed to be. Over the past years a steady decline in ecological diversity and water quality have been identified in almost all parts of the delta region. Even the once so innovative sluice construction in the eastern Scheldt has resulted in an unforeseen decline of marine sedimentation. Apart from ecological degradation due to this decline, the process is also counterproductive regarding flood prevention since the natural accretion of land in a natural situation is now reversed into sand decretion due to the technical measures that have been implemented.

In order to create a more ecologically sound environment in the delta and enhance adaptive capacity to rising water levels due to climatic changes a change in the management strategy is needed. The former perspective of extreme control needs to be changed toward a management style that allows the return of estuarine dynamics in the delta area.

In order to manage the problems in the delta an administrative body consisting of delegates of the three provincial governments directly affiliated with the delta, the local

water boards as well as the ministry of water has been established. This *Delta Committee*, supported by a project team, has created a management programme that should encompass solutions for all the major problems in the delta area. A very important part of this solution program is formed by the VZ. Since it is an area that connects the three provinces and local solution strategies in one province have possibly profound influence on the other provinces, the VZ project has become central in the dynamics of decision-making.

The VZ project

As a result of the deployment of storm barriers and dykes in the eastern Scheldt, two large fresh water basins connected by the Rhine-Scheldt corridor formed the Volkerak-Zoommeer. The basin receives fresh water from several rivers and canals. Due to the high concentration of nutrients in the water as well as the marginal outflow due to the dams the basin is highly eutrophicated. As a former estuary the bottom soil is rich in phosphates which flow into the water during the summer season (MER waterkwaliteit VZ, 2010).

These circumstances culminate in a severe algae bloom during the summer period which severely destabilizes the ecosystem and creates a major impediment to the local communities. The decay of algae results in a toxic residue that leads to a high mortality of fish and bird species and results in skin and stomach problems for humans. The water is very low on oxygen and emits an awful smell.

From 2002 onward the administrative council for the VZ together with the national water authority have investigated possible solution strategies with the ambition to have found and implemented a solution by the year 2015.

After intense research it appeared that a re-salinization of the basin in combination with a reintroduction of some of the original tidal flows would be the only viable solution. Such a solution strategy would be much more costly and intensive than what was initially hoped for. However, the proposed solution fits very well with the changing paradigm in Dutch water management based on the idea that less human control and more space for water dynamics in riverine and maritime areas can provide more safety as well as a growth in ecological and landscape quality (van Buuren et al, 2010; Smits et al 2006).

Local agriculture is very dependant on the availability of fresh water in the region and uses the VZ as a source for fresh water. The re-salinization of the region could pose a threat to the agricultural industry on the islands. An alternative supply of fresh water is necessary to continue agricultural production in its current form. In the period of 2005-2009 a decision-making process that involved a large group of stakeholders led to a proposal for re-salinization on the condition that alternative supplies of fresh water would be established (Stuurgroep Zuidwestelijke Delta, 2009).

In 2009 the proposal faced a new challenge. The re-salinization of the VZ would pose a threat to the adjacent 'Hollands Diep' (HD), a large fresh water basin that forms a major source of fresh water for agriculture, horticulture and industry in the Rotterdam Harbor, all major players in the economy of the province of Zuid-Holland. Due to the frequent opening of the sluices in the Rhine-Scheldt corridor large quantities of salt water would flow into the HD. Also, the HD has already been confronted with a project of its own. In the light of ecological rehabilitation of the delta area, plans were made to leave a small opening in the storm barrier that separates the basin from the sea on the western

side. A controlled influx of maritime dynamics and possibilities for fish migration would strongly enhance the region's vitality. However, an expected influx of sea water has resulted in the replacement of fresh water inlets toward the east. Now with a saline VZ a new influx of salt water is to be expected coming from the east. This is experienced as a threat and has led to a further development of the proposal for the VZ in which a re-salinization can only be implemented after the establishing of alternative fresh water supplies as well as the implementation of technical solutions that reduce the eastern influx of salt water in the HD with at least 90 percent.

The proposal has been further developed and in cooperation with the Dutch national ministry of Water and public works in order to find solutions for both implementation demands. The leaking of salt water into the HD could possibly be prevented with an experimental design for regulating water flows and dynamics. This design is being tested and final results are expected in 2011. In relation to the demand of an alternative water supply, both measures for water supply and measures to save water are being explored.

6. The role of individual public leadership in the Volkerak Zoommeer project

In this section we will describe the leadership behavior of the three provincial delegates that have a key role in the VZ project. These are the delegates from the provinces of Zuid-Holland, Brabant and Zeeland. A case description is given of every individual delegate based on the delegate's actions and behaviors within the context of decision-making concerning the VZ project. This so-called exercise of leadership is described and then further clarified through the conceptual lens provided in table 1. This has resulted in a visual representation of leadership exercise in which the TDT ideal types are used as a means to capture patterns in the coding. The leadership exercise tables can therefore be regarded as interpretative. Such an interpretative endeavor undoubtedly has its limitations but also results in an adequate analytical tool for hypothesis building.

Directly following the description of leadership exercise a description of the various personal and contextual opportunities and constraints is given in order to shed light on the motivations behind the displayed leadership behavior.

In the analysis part we will further explore possible relations between the exercise and influential factors based on the framework provided in figure 2.

Leader 1

The exercise of leadership in the Volkerak-Zoommeer project

The leadership exercise of delegate 1 has been undergoing a radical change in recent years from a rather uninterested and inactive position toward a highly committed and decisive role in the process of the southwestern Delta and specifically the VZ project. In this moment of change the delegate has put in many efforts to gain the chair position of the committee that is responsible for the South Western Delta. The VZ project is one of the key projects in the proposed plans for this area.

This resulted in the fact that she is now a leading figure in the policy process. An administrator from the neighboring provincial government of Brabant remembers:

“In that specific week she has been calling our delegate almost every day to make sure that she would be getting the chair position”.

The delegate shows an intention to couple the plans for the VZ project with the interests of the larger delta area and specifically with the interests of the involved stakeholders in her province. As such the focus of her actions is on connecting the content of the VZ proposal with the existing processes, which is consistent with daring leadership behavior. Generally her leadership style can be described as trying to convince others with an energetic and dash leadership exercise.

She wants inspiring results and when she believes she knows the ins and outs, she starts to convince others. She has a lot of energy and inner drive.

Consequently, advocacy is a dominant factor in her repertoire. This tendency toward advocacy behavior sometimes has negative effects in the case of the VZ project where so many different opinions and interests collide. The delegate herself is aware of this and refers to this in the context of the VZ project as follows:

‘My personal weakness is that if I personally believe in a proposal I want others to believe in it too! But oftentimes they don’t. This makes it very difficult to deal with.’

The difficulties of such a style were also experienced in the general interaction with other parties which is initially characterized by a competitive form. One of the informants points out that:

‘The power in her style is more articulated through conflict than through connectivity’

It is important to note that, although in practice the delegate often has the tendency toward a competitive interaction and a Decide, Announce and Defend behavior, the overall aim and strategy in the VZ project can be characterized as a daring leadership style in which the announced and initially defended idea is eventually subject to dialogue and can as such be adjusted to the various different opinions within the parameters of the

proposed policy direction, following the ADA-strategy. The delegate describes this as follows:

Communication in this process is in two directions. And those that object the proposed policy must eventually be able to find that their objections have had an influence on the process and are as such embedded in the eventual decision.

Furthermore, the delegate shows an intention to couple the plans for the VZ project with the interests of the larger delta area and specifically with the interests of the involved stakeholders in her province. In this process the delegate attempts to combine openness toward stakeholders with decisiveness.

“You need to always stay open minded to the ideas and input of others and to the fact that these might change the initial viewpoint or proposal, but this should not prevent the necessity of reaching a decision in a timely fashion.

A visualization of the exercise of leadership using table 1 describes a leadership behavior which has a daring orientation but simultaneously involves a specific transformational element.

Table 2: the leadership exercise of leader 1

	Transactional	Daring	Transformational
<i>Focus of action</i>	Process	Connecting Content with Process	Content
<i>Main repertoire of activities</i>	Accommodating brokerage	Entrepreneurial brokerage & Advocacy	Advocacy
<i>Interaction form</i>	Cooperation	Coopetition	Competition
<i>strategies</i>	Dialogue, Decide and Deliver	Announce, Dialogue and Adjust	Decide, Announce and Defend
<i>Betting on support</i>	No	Yes	No
<i>Interest in the content of the decision</i>	Low	High	High

With the sudden change in interest for the VZ project and the assuming of a leading role in the policy process, the delegate displays a daring attitude and takes a bet on support in the pursuit of success in this difficult project which is faced with a lot of opposition. Although her direct political environment is not at all convinced of the plans for the VZ project, she continues to push forward and states that:

'The mobilizing of power to convince them is needed.'

She also shows a high interest in the content of the proposed plan and uses this knowledge of the ins and out of the plan to ensure the interests of the stakeholders in Zuid-Holland are being looked after.

In the next section the context of leadership and its relations with the leadership behavior are elaborated further.

Influences

With a large urban area and many connections with other urban provinces in the so called 'Randstad region', the provincial government of Zuid-Holland is traditionally focused on the urban region whereas the VZ project is located in the rural periphery of the province. Above that, the provincial government had its hands full with a neighboring Delta project, concerned with the opening of the sea sluice in the waterway of the 'Hollands Diep'. This explains the marginal initial interest in the project VZ.

Only recently the attention for the VZ project has awakened. Especially since predictions have shown that a salinization of the VZ would lead to a severe leaking of salt water into the Hollands Diep fresh water area. In this area many of the fresh water inlets for local agriculture as well as the water supply for the more northern situated greenhouse industry. Apart from that the Rotterdam harbor industries also obtain their water from this area. With an opening of the sea sluices on the western side of the HD and the emerging possibilities of salt leaks at the eastern side of the HD, many stakeholders feared being caught in the middle. The local farming and glasshouse industry as well as the various other industrial activities in the harbor region are very strongly relying on the availability of high quality fresh water.

These developments led to a heightened interest in the VZ project and opposition came from many parties. Especially the agricultural organizations and water boards created a strong lobby that reached even to the national government. Also within the provincial government many parties felt that although the VZ project would contribute to the implementation of the ecological policy agenda and would solve a local problem, its disadvantages for the region were prevailing.

Furthermore there are many other projects that are considered to have a higher priority so the choices for projects and accompanying political priorities were subject to debate. This debate is accompanied by a lot of competition for projects, funds and fame within the board of delegates.

'In this situation I have to deal with my colleagues which are also my competitors. If you push for your ideas and have some success and media exposure then this creates sentiments with the others that make things difficult.'

In this situation it is not easy for the delegate to obtain the needed political support in the pushing of the VZ proposal. When this article was written, two political parties (one of which is the delegates own party) were skeptically awaiting the test results of the technical measures to prevent salt leaking.

Despite the obstructions within the local environment, the delegate saw many opportunities to solve a problem for the local communities and make sure that the interests of the province and its stakeholders are being looked after. Apart from this motivation her personal preferences also play a role according to the informants:

'Personal ambition might also play a role here. In her former period of office she was responsible for a major project with many challenges and lots of media attention. When she returned for a second period someone else already confiscated that project and so she searched for a new challenge. She found it in the chairmanship of the South Western Delta. As chair she is the one that can speak with the Minister. And the other two can't. These personal characteristics do play a role'

This high level of ambition and the desire to be a champion shows to be a strong driver for leadership behavior.

According to her direct environment the delegate has a strong, convincing and somewhat provocative style that enables strong leadership in the political sphere. However, such a style impedes the relations with local stakeholders. This is seen specifically in the interactions with the farmer community:

The delegate can't really relate to these people and vice-versa. The farmer organization in Zuid-Holland keeps its distance and remains skeptical

Nevertheless, a deliberative campaign in 2009 with many discussions amongst all stakeholders resulted in a situation in which the majority of stakeholders has agreed to possible salinization of the VZ provided that the salt leak is reduced to a minimum and alternatives for fresh water supply are accommodated.

In this behavior we see many examples of the typical daring leadership style in which the leader is very much aware of the necessity of support and exercises her leadership in this dynamic balance of connecting the proposed policy to the existing context and constantly trying to incorporate the many different views and stakes, adjusting the elements of the plan yet simultaneously making sure that the ultimate goal of the process remains in sight.

I need to phrase and rephrase arguments in order to incorporate the views of others and as such find support for these arguments. This means that a delegate needs to invest enormous amounts of time in deliberation from stakeholder platforms to the kitchen table and explain how the arguments have been formulated and remain open to suggestions.

Leader 1 interprets her leadership role as a responsibility to contribute to society and not just be passive and conserving. With this interpretation of the leadership function in a very skeptical and unwilling local environment a bet on support is clearly taken

Also in the light of supra-local contextual factors such as financial distribution issues, a daring attitude is being displayed. The financial distribution issues play an important role in regard to the province of Zuid-Holland. The provincial government has a limited budget and many priority disputes. At the same time the project VZ has the least

direct benefits for the province but the negative side effects of salt leakage are expected mainly on its territory. The province of Zeeland is also struggling with their financial issues and the province of Brabant is reluctant to contribute financially because in their view it is a national responsibility to finance this project. As we have seen the national economy is unstable and due to political changes it is unclear whether the innovation in the delta area will be a national priority.

In the interaction with the other leaders that are involved in the VZ project, some difficulties can be indicated. Her dash and provocative behavior has proven difficult for the equally ambitious delegate of Brabant and their mutual relation is known to be somewhat tense:

They call each other very often but can't seem to get along very well. Of course they won't criticize each other in public but within the organization it might surface now and then.

Analysis

In this section we will analyze the relations between the described exercise and the different categories of influences based on the framework provided in figure 2.

Influence of local context

We have seen in the direct political environment strong competition in getting specific issues on the agenda is going on. There is a general focus on the urban core areas of the province and it can be concluded that there is no supportive political environment for the plans concerning the peripheral VZ project. Local characteristics show the connectedness of the various water systems and many parties fear being caught in the middle. Local stakeholders are very skeptical and have strong ties with national level politics. Thus, the local context comprises a tense situation with many uncertainties regarding the availability and persistence of political and public support. Such a context does not invite a leadership behavior that extends beyond transaction and focuses on coupling alternatives that challenge the existing status quo. Yet this leader displays daring behavior combined with transformational repertoires that are focused on doing just that. This behavior is therefore contrary to what the context invites.

Influence of Supra-local context

The supra-local context is largely similar for all three cases of leadership, yet the specific ways to deal with the supra-local elements indicates an important role for personal characteristics in the influencing of the leadership exercise. The supra-local context provided the opportunity for chairmanship of the Delta committee. The ambitious move to claim this role has proven to be a strong boost for her leadership position.

Influence of personal characteristics

The exercise table displays a leadership behavior that shows many characteristics comparable with the daring ideal type. One exception catches the eye. The repertoire of activities shows a transformational character. Here a difference exists between wanting and doing: the delegate would like to have a leadership repertoire comparable with the daring type, yet is clearly aware of the fact that she often has a transformational tendency in her day to day leadership exercise.

This can possibly be explained when regarding the influence of personal characteristics. Here we have seen that her traits and skills are mostly in the sphere of strong leadership with much convincing capabilities combined with a dash and provocative behavior. Her preferences and priorities show a strong ambition and a need to score combined with a general perception on her role as delegate as a responsibility to contribute to society.

Many quotes indicate a behavior that searches for that middle position between pushing content and simultaneously focusing on the processes in which openness and flexibility are of great importance. Therefore the leader is considered to have a propensity for daring leadership.

Conclusion

The local context in this case can be characterized as uninviting for the specific behavior that the leader displays. Nevertheless this leader has shown ambitious moves and a display of daring behavior. These observations provide indications for an important role of personal characteristics as drivers for the leadership exercise.

The personal characteristics of this leader show a high personal ambition and a desire to score and contribute to society. Also a desire for the accompanying public attention is found. From these findings it can be hypothesized that these factors have been a motivation for daring decisions and an accompanying daring leadership style even though the context can be regarded as uninviting to non-transactional behavior regarding public and political support. Furthermore, to explain the observed tendencies toward transformational behavior in an otherwise daring exercise respondents emphasize personal characteristics as a main driver in this case. Therefore we hypothesize that personal characteristics of the delegate in this case play an important role in the exercise of leadership.

Leader 2

In the second case we have encountered a peculiar exercise of leadership in which ambition once again emerges as an important driver for leadership behavior. Yet, the empirical findings show that it can have both a motivating and de-motivating effect. First a description of the leadership exercise is given. Then the personal and contextual background which forms the motivational foundations of the exercise are being explored and analyzed.

The exercise of leadership in the Volkerak-Zoommeer project

The leadership exercise in the project VZ of this delegate has been far less intense compared to his colleagues in the project. Initially he put some effort in the project but later on his role has been characterized by absence.

His initial effort is characterized by a transformational style of leadership. During this phase a public meeting was held to discuss the problem of fresh water supply to the region of the VZ project. The delegate's repertoire of activities consisted mainly out of advocacy behavior in which a proposed solution was pushed forward. With the display of a decisive and convincing decision-making strategy it was hoped followers could be found and as such the meetings would give birth to immediate results.

He started the process of deliberation with stakeholders by announcing the results of research reports about the possible solution strategies concerning the alternative fresh water supply and attempted to push the proposal that was provided by his department based on these reports. One of the process facilitators during this period describes it as follows:

"We wanted to start with an orientation of stakeholder opinions but the delegate had different ideas on that. He believed everything was sorted out and solution strategies could be presented and put into action. He wanted actions that lead to results. If there is no immediate result to focus on, he won't act."

A transformational leadership style could also be found in the strategies of communication and the interaction with other parties in the policy process.

"In this case I think the delegate is not so interested in listening, he will be more apt to send out his message."

This message contained the proposed solution strategy and was communicated in a style that can be characterized as a Decide Announce and Defend strategy. The proposal was treated as the preferable decision and as such announced and defended. In that specific exercise of leadership the involvement of stakeholders was closed for those that had possible other opinions.

This competitive interaction form resulted not in the emergence of followers. The group of stakeholders that were present at the meeting didn't agree with the delegate and demanded a process of deliberation about the possible solutions.

With this outcome the delegate reoriented his focus and attention and decided to put little further effort in the project. Consequently, this led to a period of absence of the delegate in the decision making process.

“..He thought it could be arranged in two meetings, but when it appeared to take longer, he sent his subordinate to attend the meetings. We haven’t seen him since.”

Summarizing the exercise of leadership using the exercise table we can clearly observe a transformational leadership exercise in this specific case.

Table 3: The leadership exercise delegate 2

	Transactional	Daring	Transformational
<i>Focus of action</i>	Process	Connecting Content with Process	Content
<i>Main repertoire of activities</i>	Accommodating brokerage	Entrepreneurial brokerage & Advocacy	Advocacy
<i>Interaction form</i>	Cooperation	Coopetition	Competition
<i>strategies</i>	Dialogue, Decide and Deliver	Announce, Dialogue and Adjust	Decide, Announce and Defend
<i>Betting on support</i>	No	Yes	No
<i>Interest in the content of the decision</i>	Low	High	High

The element ‘focus of action’ remains empty. Due to the decision to refrain from an active involvement in the policy process it is concluded that the delegate’s actions were not convincingly focused on either facilitating the process or pushing for specific content. Efforts to connect process and content were also not undertaken.

‘I am more interested in the main issue. And others tend to focus on the problems and side issues. Well, that probably all needs to be solved but I leave that to others. I am holding on to the main issue.’

The delegate’s interest in the specific content of the decision is considered low. In the project VZ his attention has been focused on the possibilities for achieving direct results and making possible decisive moves.

‘He doesn’t like to complicate things, he wants to reach decisions.’

When results were not directly available the delegate left the process in the hands of his subordinates and the process facilitators while concentrating his efforts on other things. A bet on support for the initially proposed content is therefore also not made.

Influences

The province of Brabant has been the initiator of the process concerning the VZ project. Two previous delegates have been involved in this process, before it became a responsibility of the current delegate. In the local environment years of policy preparation and participative processes have paved the way for a possible implementation of the VZ project. There is no substantial resistance against the plans and the arranging of a stable freshwater situation in the region is highly appreciated since the local agriculture depends heavily on the availability of high quality fresh water. The local stakeholders are participating in the process of finding suitable fresh water solutions.

Another local issue concerning the establishing of emergency water storage areas that can be used in case of flooding hazards is strongly related to this process.

In his previous administration the delegate was responsible for economy. He entered new elections with a mission statement to reduce government influence in the private sector.

The reason that he wanted to focus on environmental issues was his mission to reduce governmental influence. This was his election promise.

After elections in 2007 he became responsible for ecology and subsequently the VZ project. In this moment the chair for the delta committee which is supposed to change every two years and had been held by the previous delegate of Zeeland, became available for new leadership. The delegate from Zuid Holland claimed the role of chair and the delegate of Brabant, who was new in the field and had no initial interest in the content of the plans, agreed to this. He also allowed the delegate of Zeeland to be the chair of the BOKV. These developments lead to a less prominent position for the delegate of Brabant in the policy process concerning the VZ project.

The delegate is known for a style of leadership that could largely be characterized as transformational. There is however an important difference with the transformational ideal type in the sense that this leader has no direct focus on the content of the VZ proposal. It is a style that uses transformational elements such as advocacy, strong persuasive skills and charismatic presentation but is generally focused on obtaining results in the policy process. The actions of this delegate are mostly focused on pushing a proposal and subsequently drawing the conclusions and making the last decisive move toward implementation. The specific content of a proposal is secondary to the achievement of results.

I am not at all interested in a discussion about whether a stream is supposed to pass a village on the left or the right side. Let others do that. I am interested in the main outline of a policy, not in the details.

This characteristic feature of his leadership style is well known in his working environment, especially concerning the VZ project.

I once heard him make the statement that he really wasn't interested in the VZ project. He was just interested in solving policy problems.

Another characteristic feature of this delegate is his tendency to eclectic leadership behavior. Today he can push a proposal very strongly into a specific direction whereas tomorrow he might make a complete opposite move. This specific behavior was also encountered in a personal interview in which the delegate first stated that the salinization plans for the VZ project were highly important:

If I have one goal in this project, it is salinization.

But when asked later on if he could be an ambassador to the VZ plans, which are basically built on the premise of salinization, he stated:

No, because if I would say yes then I would imply to be able to defend a plan that I do not agree with.

This eclectic style makes him highly adaptable but also has a negative side because eventually it is said to lead to distrust and cynicism.

He has great skills to convince. Yet, some people in the provincial government are cynical about this because they feel that if push comes to shove in another arena, he might suddenly have a completely different story. They believe that what is achieved today might be broken down again tomorrow.

There is a tension between this delegate and the provincial council and I have the feeling that the delegate is not making an effort to reduce this tension

Personal ambition can be regarded as a major driver behind the day to day choices of the delegate as well as the specific leadership exercise in the case of the VZ project. With a less prominent position in the VZ project and the knowledge that the initial ambition for decisive action could not easily be reached without further deliberation, the project turned out to be a low priority for the delegate.

What I have noticed is that the delegate has many priorities which he finds more important than this project. Due to other priorities he has not attended meetings that were initially scheduled specifically based on his agenda.

There is some indication that the delegate's behavior and choice of priorities is based on a political ambition to become active on the national level. This became more eminent when the national government found itself in an impasse that lead to new elections.

With the breaking of the national cabinet we have seen that the delegate's agenda became more and more preoccupied with national politics.

Just after the recent national elections in which the liberal party, of which the delegate is a member, received the majority of votes and were privileged to form a new national government coalition, the delegate has officially announced to decline participation in the upcoming provincial elections and as such make himself available for other responsibilities and challenges.

As we have already pointed out in case 1, the mutual relation with the equally ambitious and prominently behaving delegate of Zuid-Holland can be somewhat tense:

I find it difficult to work with leaders such as the delegate of Zuid-Holland. They keep bringing the whole world in the equation. And tell everyone how very difficult it is for the province of Zuid-Holland.

Analysis

Influence of local context

The local context can be regarded as inviting for bringing the proposal of the project VZ further. The proposal originated from within the direct political environment and was part of an ongoing deliberation with local stakeholders which positioned themselves as cooperative in finding practically applicable solution strategies. Yet, the delegate has not been putting many efforts in bringing the plans further. This indicates that other influences have been playing an important role.

Influence of supra-local context

On the supra-local level the relations with the other provincial governments was an influential factor. In the division of roles and activities in the project VZ, the delegate of Zuid Holland had been able to secure the most prominent position in the project which left the delegate of Brabant with a relatively marginal role. In addition the national political developments opened up new possibilities for the progressive ambitions of the delegate.

Influence of personal characteristics

A very remarkable detail in the leadership exercise of this delegate is the combination of a transformational style with lack of a genuine focus on the content of the proposal. This can be explained when taking in to account the personal preferences and characteristics of the delegate.

Firstly, his personal preferences and priorities are more focused on less influence from government in order to stimulate economic developments and not on environmental policy and ecological rehabilitation. Above that the empirical material shows that regardless of content, the delegate is striving for decisiveness and has a strong ambition to score. Therefore his initial interest in the VZ project can be explained as reaching for a

potential possibility to score. In this situation he used his amiable personality and skills to convince other parties in agreeing with the proposed decision. However, when it became clear that the process was still far from reaching a successful decision and deliberation was needed, the delegate turned his interest toward other priorities that possibly suited his ambitions better. So here the same ambition that initially lead to pushing the proposal and announcing the decision, finally turned into a de-activator in the project and a choice to put his energy in a more nationally oriented perspective. Thus, the personal characteristic of ambition can be regarded as an important driver behind leadership behavior in this specific case. Simultaneously the lack of a personal identification with the plan is considered an important factor.

Conclusion

In this specific case of leadership the exercise of leadership is influenced by personal characteristics, contextual factors as well as interplay between these influences.

The motivational aspects of ambition interplay with contextual factors such as the interaction with the other delegates and in particular the division of roles in the decision-making process. A further contextual factor that had a combined influence on the leadership exercise is the need for more deliberation that was articulated by the stakeholders in the process. In addition, the opening up of potential possibilities on the supra-local level played an important role. These factors add up to a situation in which the leader decided to largely move away his focus and efforts from the project VZ.

Although we can conclude that leadership behavior in this case is a result of the interplay between personal and contextual factors, the personal characteristics can be identified as a primary element for the leadership exercise while the context is the secondary element. The context provides opportunities and constraints but the way to deal with these and the specific exercise that follows from this choice is in this case found to be highly personal.

Case 3

The exercise of leadership in the Volkerak-Zoommeer project

This delegate is considered an important figure in the process of the VZ project due to his commitment to the content of the plans.

The delegate is important because he strives for realization of this project. He sees an intrinsic need for salinization.

With his instatement as delegate, this leader took up the chair position of the BOKV and initiated the revival of this assembly in order to bring the VZ project further in a regional cooperation. His focus of action can be described as daring since he is focused on connecting the content of the proposal to the existing context and the mechanisms that are involved in the decision-making process. In a personal interview the delegate states:

Personally I would say that content should be primarily important, yet support for this content is indispensable. Therefore, the process is of great importance. So it is my goal to create a good balance between them.

In this act of balancing content and process a tendency toward accommodating brokerage behavior is recognized by several respondents in the interviews.

'The delegate has a very careful and conscientious role in the process of decision-making.'

'He's a man who tends to seek the middle of the road'

'He is more conserving than an innovator'

'He wants to keep everyone in the process on board'

Another example of this process accommodating style can be found in the interaction form. Here, this leader uses a non-competitive style, which is mostly focused on stimulating and preserving cooperation between the various parties in the process. Brokerage activities are not entrepreneurial but process facilitating. In the interactions with the neighboring province, he has already in a premature stadium declared that he will not push the proposal and strive for the chosen policy direction in case the experimental measures to retain the salt leak into the Hollands Diep would fail. It can be expected that re-salinization of the VZ would then meet lots of opposition from neighboring province of Zuid-Holland. Here an emphasis on the content of the plan is considered less important than the process of decision-making and the preservation of a low conflict level in order to keep all parties involved in the interaction.

In his overall strategies this leader displays an openness and flexibility in the communication which is congruent with a daring leadership style. He doesn't push his own position at the costs of other arguments yet at the same time remains focused on a distinct policy direction. He puts in a lot of effort to engage stakeholders in the decision-making process.

'He took the initiative to ask the involved farmers what would be the best next step in their opinion'

'It was his idea to form alliances of stakeholders that can operate together and find possibilities to cover the costs for the planned innovations'.

However, it seems questionable whether a distinctively daring leadership moment of decisiveness in which a fixation of partial results is established, is reached as well.

'He has been a very good leader when it comes to the decision-making process and hearing all the stakes and opinions, yet I think it would be good if he would sometimes be a little more decisive.'

Generally this delegate performs an important role in the process of the VZ project. He puts in lots of energy to bring the process further. Characteristically this is not done with an advocating and energizing style but rather in an explanatory fashion, highlighting the substantive elements of the project and their necessity. As such he can sustain long in the processes of decision-making without taking the lead and display strong directive actions. With this process oriented and non-advocating style he has been able to influence the process.

The delegate has had a great influence in his own and modest way.

Table 4: The leadership exercise of delegate 3

	Transactional	Daring	Transformational
<i>Focus of action</i>	Process	Connecting Content with Process	Content
<i>Main repertoire of activities</i>	Accommodating brokerage	Entrepreneurial brokerage & Advocacy	Advocacy
<i>Interaction form</i>	Cooperation	Coopetition	Competition
<i>strategies</i>	Dialogue, Decide and Deliver	Announce, Dialogue and Adjust	Decide, Announce and Defend
<i>Betting on support</i>	No	Yes	No
<i>Interest in the content of the decision</i>	Low	High	High

When summarized in table 4 again a hybrid description of the leadership exercise emerges. With a high interest in the content of the VZ proposal and a clear focus on combining this content with the existing context of policy-making, this leadership can be initially described as daring. Yet, simultaneously in the day to day practice of decision-making the delegate shows a strong tendency toward transactional activities and interactions. With the existing political and public support for the plans of the VZ project it is hardly a bet on support to promote the project, especially when this is done in a process accommodating fashion.

In a description of the personal and contextual characteristics we will analyze this ambiguous leadership exercise and attempt to indicate the main drivers for the specific leadership behavior that was found.

Influences

The project of VZ has the most clear and direct benefits for the province of Zeeland. Most of the Dutch Delta area is located within its borders. Therefore most of the issues related to the Delta have a direct influence on the province and the people living there. The VZ project is seen as a primary and essential project and its success or failure will have a great impact on the policy processes and consequently the success or failure of many other projects in the region. Therefore both public and political support for the VZ plan is large. The initial skepticism of the farmers association has turned into a constructive attitude in which the plans for salinization can be agreed upon providing that the alternative supply of fresh water has been arranged properly.

For the local stakeholders there is much to gain. There is a great chance that the fresh water situation for the local farmers will be improved with the new arrangements. Historically they are used to farming in a very salt environment, focusing on basic crops such as potatoes and sugar beets. Furthermore, salinization is a direct solution to the yearly problems with algae for those who live in the vicinity of the VZ. This provides possibilities for recreation, tourism and an improvement in spatial quality. A salty VZ would also provide more opportunities for the production of high quality mussels, a speciality that is the pride of the region and forms an important part of its cultural identity.

Obviously, the direct political environment of this delegate is largely supporting the plans in the VZ project:

Salinization is not an issue of discussion in the politics of Zeeland. This is not a difficult case for the delegate.

Thus, the delegate of Zeeland can count on both political and public support for the VZ plans in his local environment.

The personal characteristics of this delegate show an interesting mix of skills and preferences. His direct environment describes him as a competent and composed leader who can provide good arguments in a discussion but is by no means a charismatic and enthusiastic speaker. He has a strong focus on the process of decision-making and performs this transactional leadership role with carefulness.

Simultaneously he displays a strong substantive motivation to bring the proposal of project VZ further because it has many benefits for his province and he is convinced that the proposed strategy is the best solution to the problem. This substantive driver is combined with an operational motivation to fulfill the representative tasks of a provincial delegate.

‘He simply wants to arrange these things in a way that is orderly and beneficial for the province of Zeeland.’

He therefore tries to balance this focus on the content of the plans with the process orientation and the maintenance of support in the decision-making process. But maintaining a balance can be difficult:

‘In the complexity of decision-making processes there is sometimes hardly a chance to make sure that the quality of the process and the content of the proposal remain balanced. If the creation of support becomes the foremost concern you might end up with a bad plan, so content should be leading. Yet, in our current political climate public support is indispensable. It is always a struggle.’

The struggle between content and process in the case of this delegate results in a difference between wanting and actually doing. He wants to balance content and process orientations yet in practice it often results in a stronger focus on the process.

Regarding the personal characteristics of political ambition the delegate shows a remarkable position. In his current situation political ambition is completely absent. Due to circumstances within the political party a candidate for the position of delegate could not be found and, as a party member with lots of managerial experience, he was asked to postpone his retirement for one period and take the position. Due to these specific circumstances no political ambition other than doing what was asked to do for one administrative period plays any role.

On the supra-local level most important forces of influence are found in the financial issues. The province of Zeeland is highly dependent on other parties to (co-)finance the project. Most parties are very reluctant in their possible financial contribution to the implementation and point toward the national government to take responsibility for the plans. But with an abrupt change of government in an economic unstable period it is unclear whether there will be support for the VZ plans and more specifically the government’s contribution in financing the project.

Analysis

Influence of local context

It can be concluded that the local context in Zeeland provides a very positive climate for pursuing the proposed policies in the VZ project. Therefore a bet on public and political support is in this context not an issue. Still, this specific context invites a decision-making strategy that is focused on bringing the proposed project further. Considering these characteristics it is remarkable that this leader shows a tendency toward transactional behavior even though he has outspoken desires to act with a stronger focus on the content of the proposal. A possible explanation for this can, according to respondents in the interviews, be sought in the dominant culture of the region. While comparing leadership styles from the different delegates one of the respondents in the interviews remarks:

'The style of leader 2 would probably not work in Zeeland, because there is a difference in culture. In Zeeland things are handled very quietly and well mannered in a process with lots of discussion'.

Influence of supra-local context

The uncertainties of the supra-local context are similar for this delegate in comparison to the other two yet the province of Zeeland has the most to gain in the project and is the most depending on the several parties, opportunities and constraints of the supra-local context. Nevertheless this doesn't inhibit the delegate from carrying on his activities in the process of the project VZ.

Personal characteristics influence

Regarding his skills and personal propensity the delegate from Zeeland has a strong process accommodating characterization that fits very well with the description of the policy-making culture in Zeeland.

Nevertheless, the specific personal situation of the delegate, which is unhindered by possible future ambitions, creates an opportunity for daring in the decision-making as well as a display for non-transactional leadership behavior.

In this light, the transactional tendencies of this delegate give rise to the question whether ambition is a driver specifically for non-transactional behavior and whether the absence of ambition in the case of the delegate is therefore explanatory for the tendency toward transactional behavior.

Conclusion

Explanations for the observed tendency toward transactional behavior in a local context that largely invites non-transactional behavior can in this case be found in personal characteristics as well as in the dominant culture of which this delegate is a part. The question of what is the greatest determinant of the leadership behavior in this case remains largely unanswered.

7. Discussion

In this article a description and analysis of the leadership exercise in three cases of local leadership is given. From the empirical analysis it can be concluded that the traditional dichotomy of transactional and transformational leadership, as it is used in organizational theory, does not sufficiently describe the leadership role in the inter-organizational, public domain. The appending of the daring leadership concept thus provides an alternative, based on the two types, that is applicable in the domain of public policy-making. This has resulted in a three-tier typology which provides a means for coherent analysis of public leadership behavior.

As can be expected with any ideal-typical classification, the empirical reality shows that several deviations from the ideal types can be found in the day to day exercise of the public leaders. Nevertheless, these deviations provide a basis for analysis of the leadership situation. Thus, the model can be used as a conceptual tool to analyze the observed behavior but observed deviations from the ideal types are purely observational and have no prescriptive value.

When regarding the views of respondents these deviations have specific consequences. In case of leader 1, the deviation from the daring leadership type in the main repertoire often creates an undesired sphere of conflict that can hardly be prevented but often obstructs the process unintentionally. For leader 2 the one strong deviation from the transformational type makes his actions seem eclectic and untrustworthy. For leader 3 the deviations from the daring ideal type lead observers to assume that the full potential of the situation is hardly ever utilized.

Key motivational elements have been explored in the description of the three cases of leadership. Generally, such influence on leadership behavior originates in personal characteristics of the leader, the context in which the leader must operate as well as interplay between these two factors. The case analyses have generated some specific observations regarding the nature of these influences and their relations.

In the first case of leadership we have observed an uninviting context for non-transactional behavior. The fact that this leader is nevertheless displaying non-transactional leadership points toward an influence from personal characteristics. Furthermore to explain the observed tendencies toward transformational behavior in an otherwise daring exercise respondents emphasize personal characteristics as a main driver for these behaviors. In this case we therefore conclude that personal characteristics are a primary element in understanding and explaining leadership behavior.

In case 2 the context can be described as inviting non-transactional behavior aimed at coupling the innovative proposal to the existing policy context. Still this leader decided not to push the proposal further and refrained from involvement in the project. A first explanation is found in the personal characteristics of the leader and specifically his ambition to score. Simultaneously, contextual factors such as the less prominent position within the project for this leader as well as the opening up of new career possibilities on the national level play a role. So in this case interplay of contextual and personal factors can be observed but the specific way to deal with the opportunities and constraints that are provided by the context is regarded highly personal and subject to influence from personal characteristics. Therefore we conclude that also in this case personal characteristics are the primary element in the influence of leadership exercise.

For leader 3 the local context equally invites non- transactional behavior, yet in this case a tendency toward transaction could be observed. It remains unclear whether these tendencies are to be explained by contextual influences specifically rooted in the local culture to which the individual leader must adapt his behavior, or that this tendency is simply part of the personal make- up of the leader which would indicate a personal influence. Especially since this leader was born and raised in this area, culture and personal characteristics can be regarded as highly intertwined. The observations in this case make clear that the model used in this research has its limitations since it does not provide for a cultural explanation.

Although one case remains unclear the two other cases provide indications of personal characteristics to be key motivating factors without dismissing the importance of context. Respondents in the interviews have put a great emphasis on personal characteristics as influential for leadership exercise. In the coded empirical data 49% of the codes referred to the items in the category of personal characteristics. Influences of the local context were described in 34 % of the total amount of codes whereas the quotes on supra- local context summed up to 17 %.

Based on these specific empirical results, it is hypothesized that personal characteristics of the individual leader play an important role in the influencing of leadership exercise in this research. These exercises can not be completely explained following the logic of appropriate behavior that is derived from an institutional context which provides the normative standards within which an individual can operate (March & Olsen, 2009). Undeniably, the context provides opportunities and constraints but the way to deal with these and the specific exercise that follows from this choice is in this research found to be highly personal. This can be related to the idea that policy actors acts with their own understanding of the nature of the problem and the feasibility of particular solutions, each with its own individual and institutional self- interest and its own normative preferences, and each with its own capabilities or action resources that may be employed to affect the outcome (Scharpf, 1997 p.11).

With regard to the influence of personal characteristics the role of ambition as a driver for non-transactional behavior has been highly emphasized by respondents in this research. The urge to score and be a successful politician can be regarded as a positive driver to bring the content of a proposal further. This is clearly shown in the first case of leadership that we described. However, the leader's identification with the proposal as well as the perceived opportunities for success have shown to be indispensable conditions. In one of our cases we have observed that lack of identification with the plans, going hand in hand with a lack of interest in the content of the plans and lack of possible opportunity to score worked as a strong de-motivator. Nevertheless, in both scenarios the fact remains that personal ambition is a main driver for leadership performance in this study which leads to the hypothesis that a highly important role for the shaping of leadership behavior is to be found in the personal ambition of the individual in a leadership position.

Personal ambition of individual actors in a leadership position can thus be considered an essential ingredient in policy making and something to be reckoned with for those with a desire to instigate policy change, e.g. to promote a sustainable policy agenda.

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