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Cultivating trust : how do public policies become trusted

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CHAPTER 8

Cultivating Trust

This study has tried to explicate the complex relation between establishing trust and policy-making. The overall question was “how do public policies become trusted?” In the previous chapters, a variety of texts about the history of Dutch agricultural policy was studied to address this question. I started with a preliminary analytical framework of the trust process (part A). This part contained a general idea about how individuals come to trust someone or something. While interpreting the texts, I specified this trust process, collected information and made notes. These findings will be used in this chapter to devise a social mechanism of trusting public policies. I also addressed the question how *collective* trust was established (Part B of my framework). While interpreting the texts, four preconceived social mechanisms were analyzed and modified and will now be discussed further.

This chapter starts off with a short overview of the history of Dutch agricultural policy making in *Section 8.1*. The observations concerning the process of trust (part A of the initial framework) are presented in *Section 8.2*. Based on these observations, I present a general social mechanism of trusting public policies in *Section 8.3*. Then, *Section 8.4* discusses how this social mechanism makes the history of agricultural policy making more understandable. The observations made with regard to part B of the framework are presented in *Section 8.5*, followed by the discussion of three social mechanisms on collective trust in *Section 8.6*. Then, *Section 8.7* gives the implication of these social mechanisms for policy making. Finally, *Section 8.8* provides some final thoughts about how establishing trust and social capital relate to each other.

8.1 THE RISE AND FALL OF TRUST IN DUTCH AGRICULTURE

Looking back on the empirical chapters I first conclude that the history of Dutch agriculture is one long story of rising and falling trust. The level of participation in societal and political organisations and the amount of support from farmers in agricultural policies illustrate this. The level of farmer’s participation in interest organizations rose, for example, until the 1970s, but has been declining thereafter (*cf. Figures 3.1, 5.1*). Fur-

thermore, the amount of support from farmers for politicians and agricultural policies was high before 1970, but has been falling soon after that year (*cf. Sections 5.2.2, 5.6.2, and 6.5.4*). Several studies of the history of Dutch agriculture support this claim (Duffhues 1996, Smits 1996, Van der Woude 2001). Some studies explicitly relate these fading institutions to the fall of trust-relations in Dutch agriculture (Van der Ploeg 1999, Van Dijk 1999, Schnabel 2001).

In search for explanations for this rise and fall of trust most scholars agree that modernity in general is to blame (Seligman 1997, Giddens 1990; 1991, Zijderveld 2000). They say that social roles have become increasingly unclear and institutions have lost their taken-for-granted-ness. Traditional rules of conduct and value determining institutions have lost their obviousness. Modern society is pluralistic and full of different conflicting values, leading to problems of trust.

This trend is indeed also observed in Dutch agriculture. Termeer, for example, shows the increasing amount of actors involved in the policy process in the pig-breeding sector (1993). According to her, the policy community changed from a relatively closed policy network into a loose issue-network (see also De Vries 1989, Bekke *et al.* 1994; 2001). But also does she describe the increasing variety of policy problems that are discussed. She concludes that modern Dutch agriculture has become a highly fragmented policy community with many conflicts. Van der Ploeg discusses the erosion of typical agricultural institutions, such as the farmer associations and the expert networks (1999). He relates how increasing diverse farmers have been developing their businesses. Van der Ploeg therefore concludes that it has become difficult to establish general, homogeneous policies. Consequently, institutions that constituted these general policies lost their *raison d'être* (*cf. Section 5.5.2*). In the same manner Van Dijk *et al.* describe the disappearance of "classic" Dutch agricultural institutions, such as the *Landbouwschap*, and the increasing amount of conflicting values (1999). Thus, as in other domains of social life, Dutch agricultural institutions suffered from modernity, implying a loss of institutional obviousness, an increase of uncertainties, and rising problems of trust.

8.2 ESTABLISHING TRUST FOR AGRICULTURAL POLICIES

My conclusion that the history of Dutch agriculture is one of rising and declining relations of trust is not unique. Many other scholars have been addressing this issue as well. What then does my study add? If we examine the existent studies on trust, most of them tend to concentrate on measuring trust by counting the amount of participation in organisations (*Chapter 1*, note 3; *Section 2.3*; *cf. various National Election Studies; World and European Value Surveys; Putnam 1993, 2000*). In my opinion these studies neglect to analyse the establishing process of trust. Neither do they examine

the complex relation between establishing trust and day-to-day policy making (*Section 2.6*). With this study I aimed to fill in this gap, and learn about the relation between policy making and establishing trust.

The assumption in part A of the initial framework (the process of trust), was that specific reasons had to be provided to establish trust. To reiterate from *Chapter 2*, the person who trusts must believe he has *good* reasons for doing so. These are not good reasons in any objective sense, but good reasons according to the perspective of the trustor. Reasons are essential to arrive at a mental status of favourable expectations.

In the previous chapters, a variety of reasons for trusting were presented such as ideology (*Chapter 3*), reputation (*Chapter 4*), economics (*Chapter 5*), the environment (*Chapter 6*), and ethics (*Chapter 7*). In *Section 2.4* I posited that a means to find out why individuals have specific reasons for trusting was to collect information about the trustor's previous set of interpretations of persons, objects, or situations and thereby discerning a pattern of intentional states: the background intentional states. This means that, if I trust something I do this because of some specific reasons. I have these reasons, however, because it fits within my previous established set of intentional states about objects, situations or persons.

The previous chapters illustrated how indeed trust was gained from individuals by providing reasons that fitted within their existent set of intentional states. We have seen in *Chapter 3*, for example, that Van den Elsen was able to establish favourable expectations for the *Raiffeissen* banking system among his fellow pastors by providing reasons that concurred with their beliefs, desires and other intentional states. On the other hand, however, this chapter also contained a case in which reasons were provided that did not concur with the subjective interpretations of the individuals whose trust was desired: the consultant Elema failed to establish trust among the farmers from Smilde. This was furthermore seen in *Chapter 4*, when the farmer associations could not gain trust from Koekoek because of his differing interpretation – compared to the average farmer – about the cooperation between the associations and the government.

I thus found support for the idea of the process of trust, as presented in *Chapter 1*. However, along the way of analysing this process of trust, I have made observations through which the process of trust can now be further specified.

8.3 A SOCIAL MECHANISM OF TRUSTING PUBLIC POLICIES (PART A OF THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK)

How do public policies become trusted? I discern two general ways. First, one can debate about the risks and uncertainties of a specific policy and try to suspend these. Second, one can instead remain silent about them, assuming that the risks and uncertainties will remain undisclosed and accordingly the policy will be supported.

Both ways for establishing trust for public policies are observed in this study. The first was, for instance, employed by Elema, when he established trust for fertilizers by showing the benefits, and accordingly debating the risks and uncertainties farmers possibly had about them. The second way, remaining silent about the risks and uncertainties, was illustrated by the non-vaccination policy. In that case, many farmers and policy makers were ignorant about the societal risks and uncertainties which made them accept the policy. As long as the unawareness persisted and as long as the policy had no negative consequences, the favourable expectations remained. Risks were not discussed and the policy became firmly institutionalized. Hence, both debating about the risks and uncertainties of a policy as well as remaining silent about them can result in trust.

The concluding sentence of the last paragraph would imply that it does not make a difference whether one debates the risks and uncertainties or remains silent about them. This however is too soon concluded, because I found that both courses of action can also result in distrust. Debating for suspension, as well as remaining silent can result in unfavourable expectations and again both effects are observed in this study. The case of Kootwijkerbroek, for instance, illustrates that the discussion organised by the state-officials only increased the farmer's distrust, whereas it was aimed to appease the unrest and take away all uncertainties (*Section 7.6*). Once the debate about the foot and mouth disease began, it only seemed to become worse over time. That is, more and more risks were uncovered and inserted into the debate. Farmers got angrier with the minute.¹

Equally, the case of Henkens in *Section 6.2.2* illustrates that remaining silence and withholding information from people can produce suspicion rather than trust. Henkens had highly unfavourable expectations about the government's restrictive manure policies to protect the soil and the longer the government postponed a discussion, the more frustrated and suspicious he became. It shows that once people harbour some initial suspicion, they seem to devise more and more reasons to have unfavourable expectations as time progresses. This continues as long as the silence remains.

To sum up, both options, debating for suspension or remaining silent, can result in either favourable (trust) or unfavourable expectations (distrust). Discussions about a policy can dissolve risks and uncertainties, leading to favourable expectations, as well as increase the awareness about risks and uncertainties, leading to unfavourable expectations. Similarly, silence about risks and uncertainties can leave people ignorant, leading to favourable expectations, or it can breed suspicion, leading to unfavourable expectations.

1. This is a problem often mentioned in the discussions about so-called interactive policy making. Since so many actors are involved, the attention given to potential risks generally increases, resulting in suspicion and inactivity, rather than in support.

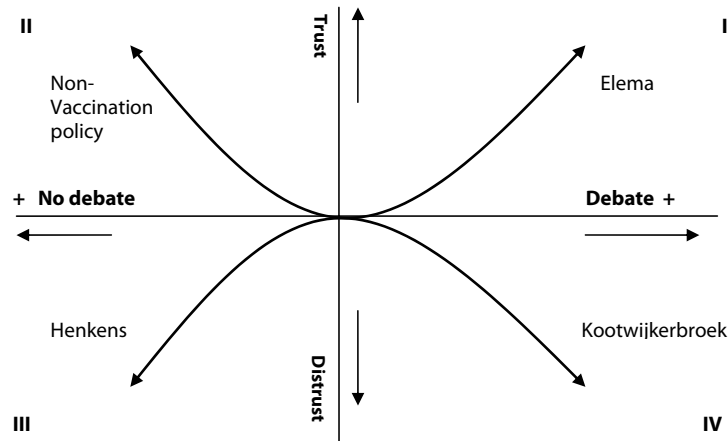


Figure 8.1 A social mechanism of trusting public policies

The mechanism discussed in this section, including the examples used, are summarized in *Figure 8.1*. The x-axis represents the period a policy is discussed, or not. The y-axis signifies favourable (trust) or unfavourable (distrust) expectations. The figure clearly captures that the consequences of either debating or remaining silent are indeterminate. One cannot predict whether or not debating for suspension or remaining silent results in trust or distrust. Moreover, both courses of action can have a mixture of consequences in which some will support a policy whereas others will not. Note that this social mechanism does not predict anything. It is a tool to understand what has happened if a policy is met with trust, distrust, or a mixture of both.

Complicating effects

The indeterminateness of establishing trust increases further when other observations from the empirical chapters are also taken into consideration.

Consider first what happens if unpopular policies are wrapped up in popular policies. In *Chapter 4* I related how the restructure policy of small farms was wrapped up in the land consolidation policy. Whereas many actors did not support the restructure policy, they did trust the land consolidation policies. By the time the involved actors, both farmers and politicians, realized that land-consolidation also resulted in the enlargement and specialisation of small farms, most of them had already come to support the unpopular policy too. In *Section 6.5*, however, an example is given where the wrapped up policy led to distrust when it popped out. In that case many politicians and spokespersons of the farmers initially had favourable expectations of the restructure policy of the pig-breeding sector in 1997. When, a half year later, the policy turned out to be part of a legally badly formulated policy to reduce the amount of manure, they started to lose their trust.

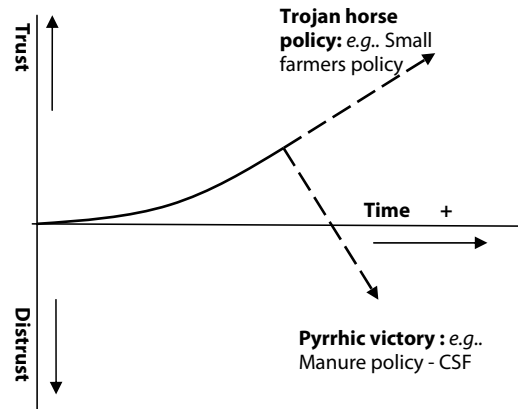


Figure 8.2 Wrapped up policies

Hence, on the one hand, the popular policy can serve as a real Trojan horse, and eventually cause people to trust a less popular policy. On the other hand, when the less popular policy is exposed, the actors involved may feel betrayed and become distrustful. In the later case, support for the initially favoured policy may decline and relations between the actors may deteriorate. With such high societal costs, the victory then becomes a pyrrhic victory. *Figure 8.2* summarizes both phenomena. Note again it's indeterminateness. Whether or not the unpopular policy will acquire support cannot be predicted beforehand; it can only be understood by analysing its historical context afterwards.

Consider furthermore that policies, which are initially detested, can nonetheless have beneficial effects for the recipients leading through retrospection to favourable expectations after all. The milk quota system in *Chapter 5* is an example of this effect. Initially, the farmers did not support the policy. But after experiencing its beneficial effects, they arrived at favourable expectations.

A variation on this observed phenomenon is that the recipients of the detested policy do not come to support the detested policy by evaluating its effects but through the actual watering down of the policy by the politician. Minister Mansholt in *Chapter 4*, for example, exaggerated many of his initial plans and, when protests rose, he watered them down to more acceptable proportions, leading to favourable expectations after all. *Figure 8.3* summarizes this observation. By default, the actors who the policy concerns do not trust it and simply maintain their unfavourable expectations as time passes by. However, they may experience beneficial effects, hence, they find good reasons to come to trust policies after all.

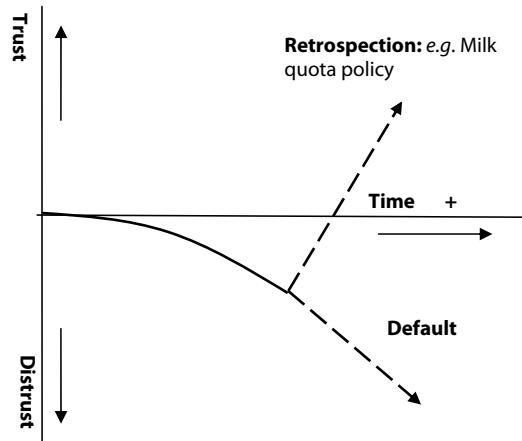


Figure 8.3 Trusting through retrospection

8.4 UNDERSTANDING RISING AND FALLING TRUST

How does this social mechanism make the rise and fall of trust in agricultural policies more understandable? The answer must be sought in the increasing indeterminateness of the reasons given in the debates. Before the seventies trust was relatively easy established because the reasons fell mainly on fertile grounds. In that time, the positive effects as illustrated in quadrants I and II in *Figure 8.1* were most dominant. However, from the mid seventies onwards, the reasons through which trust was maintained started to lose their obviousness. Farmers no longer supported, for example, all modernization policies out of economic reasons. They did no longer unanimously agree with the endless enlargements of their farms (*Chapters 4 and 5*). Furthermore, in the eighties and nineties the department of agriculture had to deal with changing values. It no longer solely supported agricultural production but had to formulate constraining policies. Beside that, society demanded for more animal welfare, recreation, sustainable agriculture, and nature preservation, which resulted in more restrictive policies. In short, the reasons for establishing trust lost their obviousness. They did not lead solely to trust, but also to distrust. With modernity, the effects as illustrated in quadrants III and IV have become more serious.

The increasing variety of values and policies in the agricultural sector illustrates how difficult it has become to establish trust. It learns us how fragile and uncertain the establishing process of trust has become. Reasons that are good reasons in the eyes of some farmers may antagonise others; new policies can give hope, but they might at the same time result in frustration. Following Seligman, I believe that this indeterminateness of establishing trust is one of the main problems of a modern society (Seligman 1997). Not only do our technologies become riskier and uncertain, but also our societal relations (Beck 1986, Giddens 1990). Increasing variety of values, competing ideas and

complex role-conflicts make finding good reasons to establish trust for specific policies compared to the past more difficult. The analysed case studies illustrate that modern policymakers and policy receivers must deal with an increasing larger variety of intentional states. Many new kinds of expectations, but also beliefs, hopes, desires and so on about the future of agriculture have arisen over the years, often leading to conflicts.

If indeed establishing trust in a modern society is to such an extent indeterminate, one could wonder if establishing *collective* trust is possible at all. This brings me to my second research question, how does a group of individuals come to trust a policy?

8.5 ESTABLISHING COLLECTIVE TRUST FOR AGRICULTURAL POLICIES

In part B of my analytical framework it was assumed that collective trust was established when individuals switched from an I-mode to a we-mode of thinking by means of social mechanisms. This means that individuals may have singular and collective expectations about something. I can either think "I expect him to do such and such" or "we expect him to do this and that" (*cf. Section 2.5*). In the empirical chapters I illustrated how individuals switch from an I-mode to a we-mode through various social mechanisms. I examined the social mechanisms of crisis, diffusion, coupling, and examples. The findings will now be further discussed.

Collective trust through social mechanisms

The first social mechanism that I distinguished was the crisis mechanism. As it was discussed in the various chapters, the 1880s grain-crisis, the post World War II food crisis, the EC's 1980s budget crisis, and, for the most part, the 2001 FMD crisis resulted in strong collective trust. Many actors felt that, they felt they had to solve the crisis together; they were "in it together." Consequently, some of these events enabled major policy changes. Think of the fixed price system instituted during the 1980s EC budget crisis and the non-vaccination policy severely criticised during the FMD crisis.

The second social mechanism concerned diffusion processes. Especially in *Chapters 3 and 4* I related how societal networks during pillarization, produced collective trust for many new ideas. Van den Elsen, for example, successfully dispersed his *Raiffeisen* banking system idea through the channels of the Catholic Church. Later on, after the Second World War, the pillarized organisations helped promoting modern production methods.

Third, the coupling mechanism was discussed as a mechanism to transfer collective trust from one object of trust to another. Various examples are provided that illustrated how groups of farmers shared a common problem definition through which various policies became trusted for a long time. The emancipation of religious groups of farmers is one such example. Most of their activities, from the establishment of co-

operative banks to the building of dairy factories to education, were geared towards this goal. The modernization of Dutch agriculture after the Second World War is another: All policies were aimed at that particular goal.

Finally, I examined the examples mechanism. In the initial framework it was assumed that the provision of examples would create a we-intentionality. Individuals who observed the same example would arrive at the same disposition which, upon recognition, should result in collective trust. Clearly, however, this was seen not to be the case. In *Chapter 4*, the farm shows, exhibitions, and model farms did not produce the expected result. No evidence is found that individuals who had visited an exhibition or a show came home with collective expectations. However, through farm shows, and exhibitions individual farmers came to trust new production techniques and machineries. Hence, examples produce trust, but not collective trust.

To conclude, I found support for three out of the four preconceived social mechanisms. Through crises, networks and coupling, individuals indeed switched to, or maintained, a we-mode of thinking. While examining these social mechanisms I observed, however, an effect that I had not preconceived in the initial presentation of the social mechanisms. To this issue I will now turn to.

“We-against-them”

In the original presentation of the four social mechanisms in *Chapter 2*, I assumed a shift between an I and we-mode for entire groups. I found, however, that in cases where these social mechanisms applied, different groups of individuals were established. Instead of one large coherent group, various smaller groups with dissimilar views were formed at the same time. Where a large group of individuals arrived at collective expectations concerning a specific public policy, the other smaller groups of individuals did not. Consequently, this generated “we-against-them situations”. I noticed this effect for all three social mechanisms.

Consider first the crisis mechanism. Although a crisis may have a strong effect on a group, in terms of establishing collective expectations, not all individuals involved in a crisis, arrive at the same collective expectations. The case of Koekoek in *Chapter 4*, the CSF-crisis in *Chapter 6*, and the example of Kootwijkerbroek in *Chapter 7* illustrated this. Koekoek did not believe a solution to the post war crisis was to be found by establishing corporatist organisations. In the other case, many pig farmers disagreed with the department about the necessity of a reconstruction of the sector after the CSF crisis. And finally, large groups of farmers disputed with civil servants about the spread of FMD, specifically in Kootwijkerbroek. In other words, they expected or believed differently than the largest group of farmers.

Second, the diffusion mechanism also generated “we-against-them” situations. As related in *Chapters 4* and *5* when in the 70s the societal pillars and their underlying values eroded, the homogeneity in collective intentional states eroded as well. More and

more, individuals had more diverse beliefs and expectations. In agriculture, this trend is illustrated by the competition that arose between the pillarized networks and the networks of religiously neutral, product organisations. The former were based on the collective intention of establishing a Catholic, Protestant, or some other society, while the latter were centred on the collective intentions of economic modernization and prosperity (*Chapter 5*). Due to increasing variation in intentional states, the pillarized networks eroded and the neutral product organisations gained support. Concurrently, many new environmental issue networks were established which had very different collective expectations than both the pillarized and neutral networks.

Consider thirdly the coupling mechanism. In *Chapters 4 and 5* I first described how farmers and most actors involved in agricultural policy making had relatively homogenous expectations about the future of Dutch agriculture. They collectively expected a fast modernization, which would improve their economic position. They trusted many different policies, such as land-consolidation, mechanisation and intensification projects. In due time, however, different views emerged. New environmental issue groups were established competing with the department of agriculture's policy objectives as shown in *Chapter 6*. As the department started listening to these new voices, farmers became suspicious. They noticed that the ideas about the future of agricultural no longer concurred with theirs. Some also started losing their trust in the farmer organisations, because they believed that these organisations did not defend their interests anymore. They expected the farmer organisation to take firm positions against unpopular policies, whereas the organisations saw themselves as intermediate organisations, both defending the farmer interests but also promoting less popular public policies among farmers. An increasing amount of farmers ended their memberships, leading, again, to many "we-against-them" situations (*Chapter 5*).

To sum up, the social mechanisms of crisis, diffusion and coupling do not only provide a clarification on how collective trust is established but also how societal fragmentation becomes accentuated and may even increase. Individuals may switch from an I to a we-mode through crises, diffusion, and coupling, but it is uncertain to which extent this collectiveness is homogenous. A crisis, for example, may result in collective intentions, beliefs, expectations etcetera, but it may also end in a situation where dissimilar collective intentions, beliefs, and expectations is generated. Hence, collective trust is possible and the three social mechanisms make it more understandable how this is so. The case studies, however, also illustrate that through the same social mechanisms an increasing variation of collective modes can be established, often resulting in "we-against-them" situations.

How do public polices become trusted if the establishing processes of both individual and collective trust are so indeterminate, as discussed in respectively *Sections 8.3 and 8.5*? I believe the answer to this question is found in the relation between intentional states and intentional modes, which will now be discussed.

8.6 CULTIVATING TRUST

In *Chapter 3 to 7* we saw the variation in intentional states of the agricultural community increasing, while, at the same time the collectiveness, that is, the number of individuals thinking in a homogenous we-mode, declining. In general terms this implies that with a higher variety in intentional states, such as believing, expecting, desiring, doing something together is more difficult. A football team in which players have different beliefs and expectations about a good strategy, will never result in a team with strong collective beliefs about it. This relation is illustrated in *Figure 8.4*.

This study illustrates that shared crises, shared networks (as in the diffusion mechanism), and shared problem definitions (as in the coupling mechanism) affect the relationship in *Figure 8.4*. I draw the conclusion that a characteristic of the social mechanisms is that individuals in a group remain thinking in a we-mode – maintain their *collective* intentional modes – even though the variation in intentional states in the group increases. Because of a shared network, a shared problem definition, or a crisis, individuals not only switch but also retain collective expectations, beliefs, or any other intentional state for a while. In other words, they will continue playing the “societal game” despite any doubts they might develop about it. How does this work?

The coupling mechanism said that collective trust (or any other intentional state) may be transferred from one object to another object, because of a shared problem definition. This was for instance the case after the Second World War with the so-called “modernization policy” (*Chapter 4*). This policy lasted for quite a long time although many actors increasingly started loosing their trust in it. Most criticized element was the termination of small farms. The coupling of different structural policies such as land consolidation, mechanisation, intensification and the restructuring of small farmers, produced an array of expectations and beliefs. Yet, the overarching collective belief about the modernization of agriculture was maintained from approximately 1950

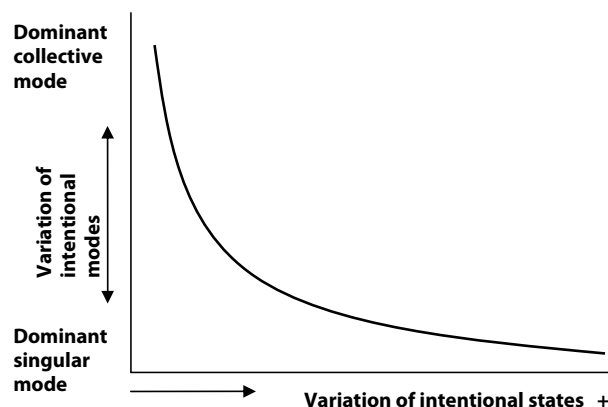


Figure 8.4 The relation between intentional modes and intentional states

to 1985. Hence, a shared problem definition may prevent the erosion of collectiveness, although the variation of intentional states increases among the members of the group. This observation then brings me to adjust *Figure 8.4*, into *Figure 8.5*.

As *Figure 8.5* shows, I also posit that shared networks and crises have the same effect on the relation between intentional modes and states. As mentioned in *Chapter 2*, a network through which new ideas diffuse is usually based on collective intentional states established earlier. In the late 19th century, the collective intention to establish a Catholic sub-society was such a collective state from which all individual intentions were derived. Nonetheless, intentional states varied widely within this network. Furthermore, this variation rose rapidly from approximately 1965 to 1975 as shown by the increasing amount of discussions about the role of the Catholic farmer associations. Despite this diversity, the members continued to harbour the desires of building a Catholic (sub-) society for some time. Therefore, I posit that a shared network may also forestall the erosion of collectiveness for a time, despite of the increasing variation of intentional states. Furthermore, I hold that the collectiveness is relatively higher compared to the group that has a shared problem definition. But that this collectiveness under a shared network erodes faster when the variation of intentional states increases than under a shared problem definition.

Finally, as mentioned in *Chapter 2* a crisis can produce collectiveness, but now I also add that it may prevent the erosion of collectiveness for a while. The crisis discussed in the pervious chapters illustrate that this collectiveness is intense but lasts shortly. A small increase in the variety of mental states during a crisis can easily dissipate the strong collective modes.² As seen with the pig-sector restructuring policy of *Chapter 6*,

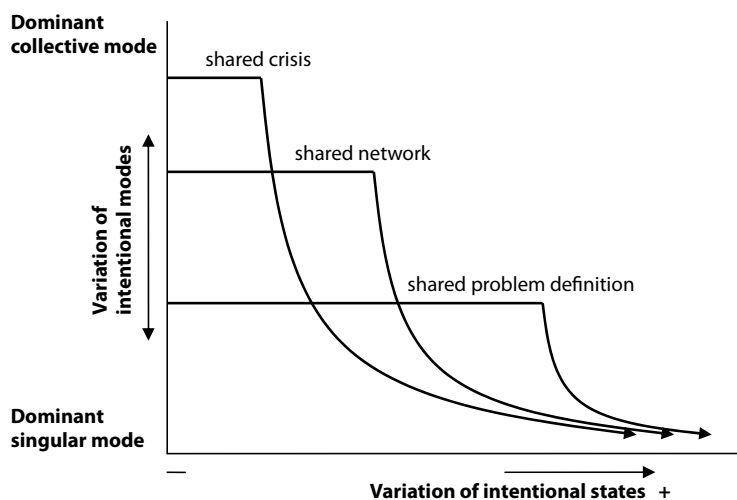


Figure 8.5 Relations between intentional modes and intentional states

2. Note that even during a crisis, some variety in intentional states will be present.

for example, all political parties initially expressed their support during the CSF crisis. Within three months, however, several had already come to regret their decision and criticized the policy.

8.7 TRUSTING PUBLIC POLICIES

An important conclusion of this study is that establishing trust is an uncertain activity and may even be risky. The social mechanisms presented in the *Sections 8.3 and 8.6*, illustrate that reason-giving can result in a mixture of both (collective) trust and (collective) distrust at the same time. What are the practical implications for policy making? The reasons and arguments provided by the potential trustees will not solely concur with the set of intentional states of the potential trustors. Which reasons are *good* reasons differs from individual to individual. Clearly, an abundance of good reasons exists. Individuals can trust a policy because it has a sound legal structure, others support it, because it comes with sound control and audit systems, or because of an intuition, and so on. (*cf. Section 2.2*). The social context can deliver much information about which reasons will foster trust the most. Lawyers, for instance, are more prone to trusting a subsidy regulation easier if it has a sound legal basis than let's say business entrepreneurs. Which reasons are good reasons may also depend on the social and cultural context (Douglas 1978). Compared to Britons, for example, Germans confide more in general legal procedures, while Britons put more trust in individual agreements and contracts (*cf. Mosch and Verhoeven 2003*).

Humans, however, have so many intentional states that no well prepared government can anticipate all of them. By providing reasons and arguments intended to suspend potential risks and uncertainties, policymakers can actually increase the awareness of policy recipients to its risks and increase their apprehension. Hence, unfavourable expectations are still able to develop during debates about policies even with policymakers sensitive to the mixtures of intentional states. The precariousness of suspension through debate becomes even clearer when we consider that public policies are usually aimed at large groups of individuals with different sets of mental states. To establish trust among all members of the group would require a barrage of reasons from policymakers.

In practice, policy makers will have to deal with various indeterminate and mixed outcomes regarding trust for their policy plans. During discussions of the risks and uncertainties, some actors will arrive at favourable expectations whereas others do not. Hence, establishing and maintaining collective trust for policies and institutions is difficult. This trend in Dutch agriculture has led to large fragmentation. Now, both large general organisations, such as the Dutch organisation for agriculture and horticulture, and small issue groups, such as the Dutch union of pig-holders, exist. Policymakers are

forced to deal with both types, and face more fragmentation. In 1995 the *Landbouwschap* ceased to exist and in 2005 the sub-organisation for horticulture broke with the Dutch organisation for agriculture and horticulture, the *LTO*.

With the disappearance of these large networks and shared problem definitions, a high density in collective modes only appears to arise through crises. A member from the strategic management team of the department of agriculture once said in an interview that 'it seems as if things can only change in agriculture through crises' (interview January 2000). In the history of agricultural policy making, many crises have indeed boosted the development of policies and institutions. They have also, however, resulted in disagreements, implementation-failures and institutional breakdowns. Since crises only allow for a small variation in intentional states – and thus collective trust only remains shortly – coupling different policies to each other and formulating an overarching goal with a high density of collective modes is more worthwhile, but difficult to achieve.

8.8 SOCIAL CAPITAL, TRUST, AND MODERNITY

What does this study learn us about the function of trust in our modern society? Many scholars and politicians consider trust as an important building block for social capital (Elstar 1989; Putnam, 1993, 2000, 2003; Fukuyama 1995). Trust promotes stability, cohesion, and collaboration (Miztal 1996). They posit that once humans trust each other, it will be strengthened if people start using it. In this sense, trust is a moral resource, which increases through use (Hirschman, 1984). According to Putnam societies can have self-reinforcing virtuous and vicious circles of trust. The first pertains to the effect that trust breeds trust and cooperation, the latter to the opposite effect (1993, 2003).

The previous chapters, however, illustrate that maintaining trust is not as straightforward as these studies sometime assume. Especially if public policies change, the trustors may feel government is breaking her promises, as was the case when the department of agriculture had to implement restrictive production policies for milk, chickens, and pigs. Many farmers felt betrayed by government. This study also shows that the virtuous and vicious circles of trust are not as self-reinforcing as they are sometimes presented. The social mechanisms as presented in *Sections 8.3 and 8.6* demonstrate a more fragile nature of trust building and preservation. A new policy may be met with trust by one group of trustors, but antagonize another group. Trust is not established and maintained simply by getting as much people as possible involved in the policy process. The amount of participation does not ensure trust, but the reasons and arguments given in the debates are. If these do not concur with the set of intentional states of the potential trustors, then establishing trust remains uncertain or even foster distrust. Consequently, I posit that not all initiatives to involve citizens in policy

making is as fruitful for building trust, as many supporters of interactive policy making sometimes assume it is.

Furthermore, this study also discussed how the variety of intentional states has been growing over the years. This has resulted in a fragmented agricultural community consisting of various groups holding different expectations – and beliefs, desires etc. – for dissimilar reasons. Given this condition, establishing collective trust is more difficult than it was one or two generations ago. Many scholars and politicians are therefore inclined to believe that modern society is lacking trust (Putnam 2000; Fukuyama 1995). I posit however that a modern society does not lack trust – we do not live in a low-trust society – but trust has simply become heterogenic. We trust objects and persons, for increasingly different reasons. In the past the intentional backgrounds were more similar, and thus also the interpretations about objects and persons upon which trust was build.

Cultivating trust in a modern society

If in a modern society the variety of intentional states is still increasing, one might wonder, whether it is at all possible to establish trust for public policies among a large number of individuals. I deem it is not. The indeterminedness of trust is here to stay. It is a problem that pertains to the whole of our multi-valuable society (Seligman 1997). Consequently, modern government must learn to live with this fact of modernity. I believe that two pathways are open to solve this issue of which one is fruitful and the other is not. The first option is that policy makers discontinue the process of trust all together and regulate everything into the details. The second option is that they will be satisfied with trust among small groups and lose some of their control over these groups.

The first option implies that policy makers no longer try to establish trust by suspending risks and uncertainties with reasoning but to rule out all possible risks and uncertainties by means of regulations. This was the case when farmers did not trust the milk quota system and the department saw itself forced to implement the system by means of detailed rules and regulations. The effect was that the department had to hire a lot of extra legal experts (who remained in service), adjust the regulations many times, and got involved in numerous law-suits (*Section 5.6.2, cf. Bekke et al. 1994*). I believe, however, that the ruling out of risks and uncertainties through regulations, only results in a further fragmentation. Consider that, if the government wants to regulate one sub-group, it should also regulate the other group(s). At least, it must describe and classify the group to which the policy pertains to. Hence, it stipulates the differences between the groups and thus enforces societal fragmentation, which, in turn, makes the establishing process of trust even more difficult. Moreover, this course of action is expensive. It ends with an overregulated policy sector, in which every new regulation or policy plan will be met with cynicism and distrust.

The second option is to let go of the idea that collective trust can be established among a large number of individuals. This has some major consequences for policy making. First, government agencies can be forced to choose explicitly between groups to establish and maintain collective trust. In 2005, the minister of agriculture said, for example, in a strategic policy document that especially the dairy industry and the horticulture will have a future in the Netherlands (LNV, 2005). Secondly, government agencies on national level should give local, regional and sub-sector communities the freedom to formulate their own public policies as much as possible. This is essential because the assumption underpinning this option is that collective intentionality can be established through building on the high levels of collectiveness on local, regional and sub-sector level, rather than on the national level. Consequently, local, regional or sub-sector specific policy projects, which have a high level of collective intentional states, should be supported rather than regulated. National government should stimulate local or regional networks to spread new ideas among citizens in the region. Local communities, on the other hand, should cherish the existent networks and their common goals (*cf.* Putnam 2003, 286ff). Third, policies will fit local circumstances better than national desires. The assumption here is that public policies made on the local level will concur better with particularistic situations because, local politicians and community leaders, know better what is desired in small local groups. Hence, policy making should follow a bottom-up pathway, rather than a top-down implementation.

A side-effect of this second option may be that policies become entirely determined by like-minded individuals, have a predominant local character or are completely set up by individuals from a specific sub-sector policy community. I, therefore, deem it is essential that local leaders must have the ability to prevent policies from becoming too particularistic and regionalist. Their aim should be to bridge the various sub-communities and reweave social webs between various groups (Putnam 2003, 294). Consequently, the reputation and moral standing of these local leaders is crucial for establishing and maintaining collective trust in a modern society.

Cultivating trust is balancing between establishing trust among small groups of like-minded individuals and coordinating between these groups. It needs to bring down the policy making process to local levels; the level upon which politicians and community leaders know the set of intentional backgrounds best, and therefore also know through which reasons trust is established. Existent local networks consisting of individuals with collective trust should be cherished by its leaders, the "local champions". They should preserve this collectiveness, by continuously observing the various intentional states of its members. These leaders, however, should be of a high moral standing in order to make the cultivation of trust into a success.