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Navigating mega projects through complexity and uncertainty: strategic and adaptive capacity in planning and decision-making

Giezen, M.

Publication date
2012

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Citation for published version (APA):

Giezen, M. (2012). *Navigating mega projects through complexity and uncertainty: strategic and adaptive capacity in planning and decision-making*.

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Acknowledgements

During a PhD there are many instances of loneliness. There are moments when you feel that nobody understands the argument you are making and you are at a loss as to how to improve it. There are days when there seems to be just you and your office phone in a stare-down; you know you should call an interviewee but the whole day passes with numerous variations of the call in your head but none in reality. There are months that you do not want to talk to anyone about what you are thinking and writing because you only want to present it once it is perfect. Or at least in such a state that you do not have to cry when your colleagues slate your work and tell you that everything you wrote is wrong but that it is an interesting thought. Or that is what you think they are saying. And of course then there are years during which you step out of university life and you seem to be the only one that thinks you are actually doing a job and are not just an extended Masters.

But of course these feelings of loneliness are a product of your mind. In reality you are surrounded by people doing the same work, having the same anxieties, and facing the same problems. They just seem to be so much better at dealing with it than you. And they even find the time to help you. And to them, I would like to express my gratitude in the coming paragraphs.

I of course would like to start by thanking my interviewees who for some reason I promised anonymity at the start of my research and I now feel a bit sad for not being able to acknowledge you in person. You are the backbone of this dissertation. You have provided me with information and inspiration. I can only hope that you now receive a little bit of both back from this dissertation.

I would like to continue with my academic family, and where better to start than with my academic fathers: my promotors Willem Salet and Luca Bertolini. It has been five years since the start of the PhD and it seems strange that only now do I thank you for the faith you put into me. I have grown very fond of you both over the last years and I have great memories about our meetings and the workshops we went to together. I hope that we will find ways to still work together even though I have moved to Utrecht University. You have taught me a lot about academic work and I aim to do justice to those lessons for many years to come.

As my research was part of an international program, I had the luck to gain an international academic family as well. Starting with Harry, Phil, Richard and John of the Omega Centre to whom I am very grateful for providing me with the opportunity to participate in the

project. We have had many discussions, but your great personalities and hard work have kept the group together and ensured a rich source of qualitative data about mega project planning and appraisal which is unique in the world. In relation to that I would like to thank VREF and Habiforum for funding my PhD. I would also like to thank the other partners in the Omega centre for their stimulating inputs during the workshops. But the most valuable contribution of the project to me personally is the group of PhD students that were funded by the project: Billy, Caroline, Frederik, George, Matthias, Patrizia, Sophie, Stephanie, Varina, and Yen-Ning. I always look forward to seeing you at conferences and workshops, and hopefully this summer in France. It was especially nice meeting George at the first Omega workshop I participated in as we had already met during our studies at UCL in London. We did not hang out much then, but now I do consider you to be one of my closest friends.

Another international academic family is that of Aesop and especially the Young Academics. I enjoyed my 2 years on the Coordination team very much. I especially have fond memories of the PhD workshops in Hindsaeter, Kostelec and Selli Island. Our topics might be different but our struggles are the same. I have had great experiences with many fellow planning PhDs such as Antonio, Ceren, Mara, Kristi and of course Cha Cha, who holds a special place in my heart and to whom I wish nothing but the best.

But of course most of my PhD time was spent at the former Amidst institute in the G-building on the Nieuwe Prinsengracht in Amsterdam. At an institute there are many colleagues to thank that take care of a lot of administrative work behind the scenes. In particular I would like to thank Barbara, Gert, Guida, Marianne and Puikang, but I realize there are many more. In my first year as a PhD, I came into the best room any starting PhD could wish for. Perry, Anna, Rogier and Robert quickly made me street wise (academically speaking of course) and with whom there was never a dull moment. I would also like to thank the Dreamers (Anita, Fredrico, Guowen, Rick, Manuel, Melika, Leonie and Stan) and the Mobility Group (Andrew, Antonio, Els, Jan, Marco, Paul, Roel, Thomas and Wendy) for their critical reviews of my papers. I would especially like to thank Sebastian for his precise feedback and for his friendship and that between our daughters (at least when there are no individual property rights involved). Annika and Marjolein were great neighbors in the office next door. Emma and Iris with whom I shared many great conversations over freshly brewed coffee; a welcome distraction from the PhD loneliness. And Monika, who with her open personality gets me to talk about things I do not discuss with anyone else.

My new academic life is now with the Environmental Studies Group at Utrecht University. I would like to thank Carel, Frank, Hens, Margien, Peter en Walter for taking the leap of faith

in hiring me before the PhD was completely finished, and for their support during these last months. I also get a lot of energy from my new coffee partners Dries, Wanda, Heleen and Greetje. I would like to especially thank Clare who, with her enthusiasm and care, makes coming to the grim Van Unnik-building something to look forward to.

Moving towards friends and family, I owe a lot to all of them but more specifically in relation to my thesis, I would like to only name a few. Willem, who next to being a colleague over the last years, is and has been primarily a very good friend. Our lives have run parallel in many aspects and I hope they continue this for many years to come. I would like to thank Evelyn for the memorable moments and the most precious gift of all: my beautiful daughter Kima, whom I love with all my heart. And Sophia for spending so much time with me and Kima, and distracting me from the worries of every day life. Of course I would especially like to thank Jørine and Pijke for their support throughout my whole life and whom I can always trust on being there for me.

But my last words are for my paranymphs. Inge for being there throughout one of the most difficult parts of my life. The last year has been difficult also for you but you have always found time to get me out of a borrowed house and cheer me up with your great personality. And finally Wouter whom, over the last years, I have come to consider my closest friend and without whom this dissertation would have never become reality. In addition to being a great roommate -not in the least by accepting my messy desk - and keeping me adequately caffeinated, he kept me in the boxing ring the many times I wanted to throw in the towel and walk away. This PhD would have been a lonely affair without you and to you I owe my greatest thanks.