International cooperation between politics and practice: how Dutch Indonesian cooperation changed remarkably little after a diplomatic rupture
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Citation for published version (APA):
Vos, M. L. (2001). International cooperation between politics and practice: how Dutch Indonesian cooperation changed remarkably little after a diplomatic rupture

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Our fate is that we have to invent the political anew (Beck 1999: 47).

In this final chapter, reflections regarding scientific merits are presented, and particular recommendations for practice are offered. First, I reflect on the possible contribution the three games approach could offer to approaches in (foreign) policy analysis. Then I link the findings of this research to the current debate on the changing nature of politics. Finally, the changes in thought and action which constitute Dutch policies towards Indonesia are considered. Recent changes in bilateral relations are addressed and two recommendations for the new era in Dutch-Indonesian development cooperation are proposed.

Reflecting on the three games approach

The message behind the three game approach – used here as a research tool – is that one cannot understand policy processes, including the area of foreign policy, without including the non-government sector in the model. Unbeknownst and unexpected to the decision-makers in Indonesia and the Netherlands, projects followed their own rationale, making up for a different kind of bilateral cooperation than professed in political oration. Non-government actors have played an influential role in the policy process, placing new ideas on the political agenda or removing some objectives that should not have been on the agenda at all. The fact that the shopfloor of the policy process has an initiating role does not necessarily lead to anarchy or undesired effects. In this case of bilateral cooperation between the Netherlands and Indonesia, policy did reflect the aspirations of citizens, not because government had put these aspirations into policy wishes but because there were opportunities in the policy process for people to facilitate the realisation of their own objectives.

By adding the level of the 'shopfloor of practices' to the levels of politics and bureaucracy, another light has been shed on the workings and implementation of policy. If we acknowledge that at each level through which policy proceeds – different actors, with different rationalities and different stakes mould demands and rules – then a more complete picture is drawn of how policies come into being. In the interaction between the three levels of the policy process we found the solution to the riddle of how a political decision was actually implemented.
The findings of this study have once again demonstrated that hierarchy and rationality – the basic assumptions of the orthodox model – are nice principles, but principles which deviate from practice. Nevertheless, while most students of politics and bureaucracy know for a fact that the orthodox assumptions have died their final death, many of the objects of the study (politicians and civil servants) still reason from these two assumptions. The explanations given for continuation or discontinuation of projects are but a few of the many examples of such reasoning. To develop the three games approach, two models of domestic and international policymaking were used: the network approach and the two-level game approach. These models do not assume hierarchy and unambiguous rationality in the policy process. The conclusions of this research do however question the focus of these models. The strength of the network approach is that it conceptualises the policy process as interdependent organisations interacting – without a sovereign authority telling the policy-oriented actors what to do. Other authors have noted weaknesses of the network approach, for example that it adopts a managerial perspective when it comes to steering networks. Also, a perspective on accountability of policy networks in representative democracies is lacking: the model is not ‘open’ for citizens (cf. Rhodes 1997; Hoppe 1998). Another weakness is that the network approach does not devote specific attention to non-policy oriented actors (Grin & Van de Graaf 1994). Many more actors put their mark on the policy process and are not necessarily motivated by policy objectives. This study demonstrates that often the policy process starts without a policy objective: non-government actors perceive a problem and use the policy institutions to achieve their objectives. Indeed, such happens in networks, but factors which often set a network in motion are not necessarily policy related but are borne of practical problems. The inclusion of actors from the ‘shopfloor’ of society and their motivations to the network approach would complement the rigour of analysis. The issues of accountability and management are addressed in the next two sections.

The second model that has inspired the three games approach is the two-level game model of Robert Putnam and colleagues. The notion that international relations and negotiations are two-levelled games: between the international and the domestic game was a departure point in understanding the implications and origins of the decision of 1992 (Putnam 1988; Evans et al. 1993). However, if it is indeed true that non-government actors carrying out international agreements influence those agreements through their practices, and interact at the same time or even before diplomats and heads of states do, then that level needs to be included in a model of international relations. ‘The domestic game’ is in Putnam’s model an imprecise entity. The focus on heads of state does not seem to do justice to processes in the states they lead. Recognising that many ideas and wants for international agreements originate from the non-government sector would make the analysis more inclusive. Again, this recommendation should not be a novelty to students of international relations. One year after Putnam publicised the idea of two level games Peter Haas introduced the notion of epistemic communities (Haas 1989; 1992). Haas argues that scientists, NGO-members and businessmen who share a certain scientific paradigm have put their marks on
international issues. These epistemic communities cut across national borders, similar
to the players in the implementation games studied here. The difference between an
epistemic community and a group of players in an implementation game is the scope
of their actions. Similarly, the late Susan Strange reminded one of the ‘nestors’ in
international relations, Stephan Krasner, that he had to wake up and realise that the
world has changed and international relations cannot be understood without extend­
ing the unit of analysis to international business. ‘Government-to-government diplo­
macy — the stuff of foreign policy analysis — is now one side of the triangle of politico-
economic bargaining’ (Strange 1994: 209-219; Krasner 1994: 13-19). Indeed, the stuff
of (foreign) policy analysis should be supplemented with the angle of citizens, be they
professionals or laymen.

The suggested broadening of the scope of analysis in my model is to encompass
factors deemed necessary for inclusion — underscoring the need to embrace the reality
of the changes that have taken place in the relation between politics and society. Tra­
ditional loci and foci of political science have broadened; what used to be non-politi­
cal is now political. Allowing for consideration of ‘non-political’ factors in models of
political and policy processes seems the more appropriate approach to address the
twenty-first century. The next section therefore considers this study in the light of the
‘rethinking and reinventing politics’ discourse of the late 1990s.

Rethinking, reinventing and redoing politics

Die-hard political scientists will hopefully cast this book into either their files on new
democratic governance or those on interactive policy making. It would be an over­
sight to list this research under the header of ‘game theory’. This research does not
stand alone in concluding that more than just politicians and bureaucrats define what
policy and politics is about. Such insights are inherent in many strands of literature
that question the relation between politics and society.

Although much has been written about non-state actors who greatly influence the
contents and nature of policy, a place for such actors in the practice of politics is yet to
be elucidated. Laurence Lynn’s ideal was to have all games do what they do best and
secure the communication and interaction between them (Lynn 1981: 143-144, 157). In
that way government can still be held accountable for the ‘authoritative decision-mak­
ing’, the bureaucracy for managing those decisions and the level of implementation
for its assigned tasks. However, that neat division is based on the assumption that all
actors involved know precisely what they can and must do and that they have ade­
quate information. The reality is however that at the level of implementation and
society knowledge is different — and often more intricate than the knowledge of the
authoritative decision-makers. The gap in knowledge and the fact that politicians
sometimes deliberately ignore knowledge from scientists and citizens calls for a
rethinking of our political system.
A popular solution to the acknowledged distance between government and society is nowadays 'interactive policy making': involving the targetgroups, citizens or businesses affected by a proposed policy. Interactive policy making thrives on a civic society: it departs from the assumption that citizens are capable and willing to participate in decision-making on matters that affect them. Experiments with interactive policy making are ample, both in the Netherlands and in other democracies (cf. Geul 1999; Pröpper & Steenbeek 1999; Edelenbos & Monnikhof 1998). However, some critical issues remain. It is the issue of who selects the participants; it is the question whether there is a place for people who think in different terms; and the doubt that policy-options will remain pre-cooked in interactive policy processes. Practically, are we ready and willing to devote the time and energy that a good interactive process requires? Shouldn't we attempt to go even further, like Ulrich Beck suggests, and re-examine the principles upon which our current democracy is based?

In his inaugural speech Maarten Hajer carefully attempts not to throw the baby out with the bath-water of orthodoxy in politics and political science. Hajer suggests that political and policy scientists should search for new political and governance practices that could function as new 'political spaces', in which the deliberation between actors with very different historic and cultural backgrounds can take place. That means that the students of government and politics should look into other spaces and learn how to look differently – for example from the angle of sociology – to existing and new political practices (Hajer 2000: 10, 25). In our times, where politics transcends the traditional territory boundaries, and becomes more a constellation of discourses and practices, the analysis of 'politics as design' should be the basis of a policy science of democracy. The dimensions of the analysis constitute the design of new political spaces: the way in which argumentation and deliberation takes place, the way in which culture, identity and shared values emanate, and the connections between societal debate and public decision-making (ibid. 27-34). The cases in this study can also be read as examples of how foreign policy is designed in the interaction between practices and policy discourses. Learning from these examples, we can draw lessons for the designing of a more discursive, democratic and feasible way of bilateral cooperation, without discarding the existing institutions and political functions of foreign policy – the focus of the last section of this book.

**International cooperation as deliberative practice**

In this last section the words and deeds of Dutch foreign policy receive some attention. Different discourses have been distinguished in Dutch policy towards Indonesia. Discourses are more than a set of coherent beliefs and words: they aim to incite people to behave in a certain way. I will argue that the current discourse on foreign aid must be understood from past experiences, but that it has certain flaws. In its stead, I propose an alternative set of 'thoughts and deeds' for foreign policy and aid towards Indo-
nesia. These thoughts and deeds should be based on deliberation with the people who have different rationalities and stand for the practice of policy.

The comments of Mr Deetman at the beginning of the former chapter were presented at a conference of the Netherlands Education Centre, a semiprivate initiative of 40 Dutch institutes of higher education who have set themselves to enter the ‘Indonesian market of education’ (Deetman 1994: 157). The contribution of the participants breathed the new discourse of ‘economisation’ of education. In that discourse, students are called ‘customers’; international education is sold as an ‘export product’ or seen as ‘investments’. Such talk is also heard in other segments of the Dutch-Indonesian community. If one carefully reads seminar-reports, official speeches, policy texts and titles of conferences on Dutch-Indonesian relations, an image of business-partners emerges as the dominant image of the Netherlands and Indonesia, no matter in what context the words are spoken. It appears as though, after 1992, that discourse on bilateral relations has had economic benefit as its main objective and justification.

Meindert Fennema presented an interesting comparison with regard to the new discourse. Fennema argued that four discourse coalitions competed in the debate on de-colonisation in the mid-1940s / early-1950s. A discourse coalition must be understood as a coalition of people who share the same beliefs on certain (policy) issues. The four discourses on de-colonisation differed in their beliefs on whether ties should be maintained with Indonesia and whether Dutch interests should prevail (Fennema 1994: 153). Fennema demonstrated how in the course of years the ‘modern realist’ discourse coalition – which argued that Dutch interests should prevail and formal ties between Indonesian and the Netherlands should not be maintained – gradually expanded its institutional base and gained hegemony in the political debate on de-colonisation.

A similar process took place in the Netherlands with regard to development politics and the relation with Indonesia after the de-colonisation. Since the undersigning of the Agreement on Technical Cooperation, the relation between the two countries was understood as one of between a donor and a recipient. The dominant discourse coalition in the period 1964-1989 can be characterised as a ‘world order’ discourse. Contrary to what in International Relations is called ‘realism’, world order discourse poses that in international relations and through foreign policy a peaceful world order should be pursued. This discourse is also referred to as idealism (cf. Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff 1981; Van der Pijl 1992). Dutch aid was based on the belief that the Indonesian society could be engineered into a peaceful and prospering society through the aid efforts. Altruism played a large role in the justification of the large amount of aid-funds to Indonesia. The altruism in the Dutch development discourse found its base in Christian principles, such as neighbour help, but certainly so a sense of guilt for past atrocities and exploitation in the colonial times.

Concurring with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the discourse on development cooperation and the relationship between Indonesia and the Netherlands gradually changed in the Netherlands, not in the least because of economic developments in
Indonesia itself. From several institutional bases, for example the new coalition in the Leiden University and the Department of Education and Sciences, the relation with Indonesia was defined in terms of creating influence, gaining market access, rather than pure aid. Economic benefit for both countries is considered to be a proper justification for aid. This justification received an unexpected boost after March 1992, when altruism and aid became *verbae non grata*. The Indonesian decision of 1992 accelerated the popularity of the new discourse on foreign policy and foreign aid in the Netherlands (Hellema & Vos 1998).

The new discourse and the way it became institutionalised in Dutch political circles resemble the change in discourse during the de-colonisation process that Meindert Fennema described. The new realist discourse explicitly acknowledged Dutch interests and argued that a business-like relation with Indonesia would be in the best interest for both countries. Professor Stokhof, as the academic node in the new policy network argued similarly, when he spoke about development cooperation: ‘It is the creation of networks, influence making’. The *Herijkingsnota* of 1995, the policy document that aimed to redefine Dutch foreign policy, speaks of a balance between the ‘small’ economic interests and the ‘broad’ international interests of world peace as the dual principles on which Dutch foreign policy is based (see also Chapter Four). While in the 1970s and 1980s mentioning Dutch economic interests was ‘not done’ in development cooperation, such is not politically incorrect at the turn of the century.

The appointment of social democrat Eveline Herfkens to the post of Minister of Development Cooperation meant the end of morals and sentiments in development cooperation. With the appointment of liberal party minister Jozias Aartsen as Minister of Foreign Affairs, the new discourse on international cooperation became firmly institutionally based in the departments of Foreign Affairs and DGIS. Herfkens’ appointment seems to reflect a desire of the political majority for more efficiency and less moral sentiments in foreign aid. How the new discourse is manifested in the renewed relation with Indonesia deserves some scrutiny.

The development cooperation between the Netherlands and Indonesia that was so suddenly ended in 1992 was fully restored in 1999. Earlier in 1998, interim president Habibie had re-instituted the Agreement on Technical cooperation. Now that the political winds have changed the political order in Indonesia, the Dutch department was willing to add one more country to the recently reduced list of target countries. After the democratic election of president Wahid, Dutch minister of development cooperation Herfkens allocated 50 million US dollars to materialise the cooperation. The question is: how is that money used?

In the policy document on Netherlands Development Assistance it is stated that a sectoral approach is appropriate in a relation between two sovereign countries. Programme aid, which gives the recipient country much more influence than project-aid, is believed to be effective and a proof of trust because countries that receive Dutch aid are selected on the criterion of Good Governance. This criterion is based on the
work of David Dollar and Lant Pritchett on the effectiveness of aid. The authors of the World Bank report conclude that aid is only effective and wisely spent in countries that have a sound government organisation and whose governments are not corrupt (Dollar & Pritchett 1998). 'Good governance' and 'efficiency' are the new words used in the discourse on development cooperation.

The criterion of Good Governance may be based on sound research and correct causal links, but making it a criterion for receiving (Dutch) aid is a bit hypocritical, as well as difficult to establish (cf. Hulten 1999). At the time of this writing, an intense public debate on the integrity of Dutch politicians dominated the media. There seems to be a close link between the Dutch debate and the allegations that former German Chancellor Kohl had engaged in 'corrupt' activities. If the criterion of Good Governance were applied consistently, only the Scandinavian countries would be eligible for Dutch foreign aid... The underlying hypocrisy of Good Governance as a criterion is not new. Philip Quarles van Ufford has repeatedly pointed to the large gap between the (Dutch) development discourse and the reality of development projects. Popular criteria have been environmental sustainability, women's interests, cultural diversity, poorest of the poor, and so on. In many cases however, it is in the interest of both practitioners and politicians to not know about the reality of the shopfloor. The reality that women's interests are not served by particular policy programmes, or the reality that the environment does not necessarily improve by expensive solar systems are hard to accept when policymakers have laboriously studied and debated about the best goals and the best means. Such knowledge would only disturb the harmony of political objectives and concomitant discourse. Developmental aspirations accumulate, while practice remains stubbornly unchangeable or appears to be different than the expectations (Quarles van Ufford 1993; 1998). The gap between desires and practice goes even so far as to assert that the idea of the 'malleable' society (De maakbare samenleving) – a popular political slogan in the 1970s and ridiculed in the 1990s – is still applied when it comes to other, developing countries.6

Important to note in the light of this research is that the criterion of Good Governance is a political desire, to be applied top-down. No account is given of the variety of groups and practices within a developing country. If a government is corrupt, that does not mean that a local community that needs an irrigation system is corrupt. Besides, it would be too much of a democratic fiction to hold individual voters responsible for the governments they have. Even Dutch citizens, who live in a very democratic country in relative terms know how difficult it is to keep track of all the ways and means of their officials.

The new Dutch approach will furthermore be channelled via multilateral donors, such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Channelling the aid via these large organisations is believed to be an efficient and effective means to realise the objectives of (Dutch) development assistance. The 50 million dollars for Indonesia will be transferred entirely to the UNDP and the World Bank, which will ensure that compartmentalisation of the aid between donors will be avoided. However, a year after the announcement that the multilateral channel is preferred, Minister Herfkens...
criticised multilateral organisations for inefficiency. In a letter to Parliament, she criticised the UNDP for being obsolete in some countries, inefficient and, ‘at the cost of effectiveness put their showpieces and institutional ego’s first’. If the UN and the International Financial Institutions are also inefficient, why not take a closer look at the other qualities of bilateral projects?

Small, individual and bilateral projects are labelled as inefficient and unsustainable in the new policy for development cooperation. In the case of resuming the aid to Indonesia, Minister Herfkens’ said that there is no infrastructure for Dutch bilateral programmes left in Indonesia. Surely, small projects may not be appealing in the face of grandiose development plans and may suffer from inefficiency, but there are qualifications to be found in these small projects that go beyond the criterion of efficiency.

First of all, there are the personal relations that are being built between nationals from two countries. As we saw, networks of people are created and reinvigorated continuously. These personal and professional networks are valuable sources of information and goodwill. While in the ‘bilateral times’ the networks of professionals could turn directly to their governments, now they have to submit their proposals to the multilateral agencies that work with a different set of rules. The chance of having a project endorsed is the reverse of the largesse of the Multinational Organisations.

Secondly, if it is true that such projects are more the result of advocacy from below than design top-down, a project promises much more ‘ownership’ than indifferent sectoral policy support. Ownership, participation and capacity building refer more to individuals than government organisations. The cases showed that when people ‘own’ a project, they are motivated to continue the work. And ownership comes for a large part from the opportunity for people to define their own needs and write their own proposals. In the bilateral policy era, before 1992, that opportunity was present.

Third, the expertise of people in small projects must not be underestimated. Working ‘in the field’ requires a special knowledge, experience and a Fingerspitzengefühl that cannot be expected of international consultants or rotating embassy employees that can devote only so much time to getting to know the specifics of the environment in which they temporarily work.

Fourth, particularly in Indonesia it would be waste of human and material resources if no use were made of previous investments and experience. The building of the windtunnel was perhaps not the wisest thing to do at the time, regarding the level of technological expertise in Indonesia, but it is prevails nonetheless. Indonesia could have a service industry in testing and repairing aircraft, without having its own industry in the highly competitive environment. With efforts to training Indonesian engineers and re-using the industrial park, the investments previously made would not have been for nothing. The same applies for the coffee factory in Aceh. The factory has been illegally taken from the farmers, an issue which needs to be resolved in the courts, but with some additional assistance a blooming coffee industry of organic high quality coffee could undoubtedly flourish in Aceh. More importantly, the objectives of the Coffee Project secured the ownership of the farmers of their work and they could earn a decent income. Many more previous investments of Dutch foreign aid
could be revitalised with little extra effort. There are for example many diesel-motors built by Stork that with some maintenance and training of local engineers can provide the required energy for the local economies.

My first practical suggestion is based on the Dutch principles of turning every penny before you spend it; and the ‘environmentally correct’ principle of recycling. The statement that there is no infrastructure left ignores the fact that there are many people with vast experience on Indonesia and that many Dutch capital investments have been made in Indonesia. The issue here seems to be that there has not been much investigation on what was left in 1992. Many investments – in human resources, infrastructure and factories – can be used and revitalised again. People who had been involved, including the embassy and DGIS personnel who worked in previous years in Jakarta, could use their knowledge and form a task-group for ‘recycling former capital investments’. Such recycling would not only involve material capital, but definitely so human capital (Vos 2000).

My second recommendation entails a different kind of policy practice and a different way of thinking about target groups. When thinking about standards and criteria, judgement about these should not start from the level of the political game, but from the lower end of the policy process. What constitutes ‘success’ or ‘failure’ in development cooperation is difficult to generalise, and are much better specified. Standards of effectiveness may range from macro-economic effectiveness or piecemeal solutions for unidentified target groups. The final and probably most reasonable decision on what is successful, or worthwhile to continue is often made at the lowest level of the policy process. Constructive and reflective thinking on other standards for evaluation and defining policy objectives is perhaps more fruitful than piling critical upon critical report, or inventing new criteria.

New efforts in policy-making should reserve a place at the table of the decision-making process for the people from the level of implementation, who have a closer and better linkage to society. Interactive and deliberative policy making should not only be reserved for domestic policy making. There is a lot of expertise at the level of implementation, which could be read as the other message behind the cases in this book. However, the channels to tap into that expertise are being dismantled when only multilateral organisations are the channels of Dutch aid. Foreign aid will deserve the term ‘development co-operation’ if right from the start deliberation with the people involved is the guiding principle. And that is in the end what politics is about. Decision-making for society, authorised by society, based on the needs and possibilities in that society. Perhaps at the tables where this deliberative foreign policymaking takes place, a new discourse on foreign aid will be born, a discourse that is open to other voices and starts not from great expectations, but small aspirations.