

Evaluating Knowledge Co-Production

Climate Proofing Urban Development in the Deepest Polder of The Netherlands

INSPIRATOR



Universiteit Utrecht



Maastricht University *Leading in Learning!*



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Process assessment III: From Project Design to Implementation

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Outline of presentation

- INSPIRATOR project
- Case Zuidplaspolder
- Analytical framework
- Results
- Conclusion



INSPIRATOR project (2010-2013)

“Integrated Analysis of the Science-Policy Interface in Research Projects on Global Change and Sustainability: Implications for the Actors involved in the Co-Production of Knowledge”



- Gap between science and policy in the fields of global change and sustainability
 - Can joint (transdisciplinary/mode2) knowledge production by scientists, policymakers and others help to bridge the gap?
- ⇒ **What are the merits and limitations of knowledge co-production?**
(e.g. more policy relevant knowledge vs. science tainted with politics)



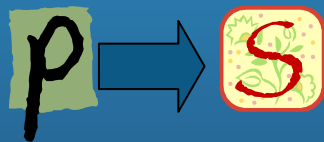
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Research Questions case study

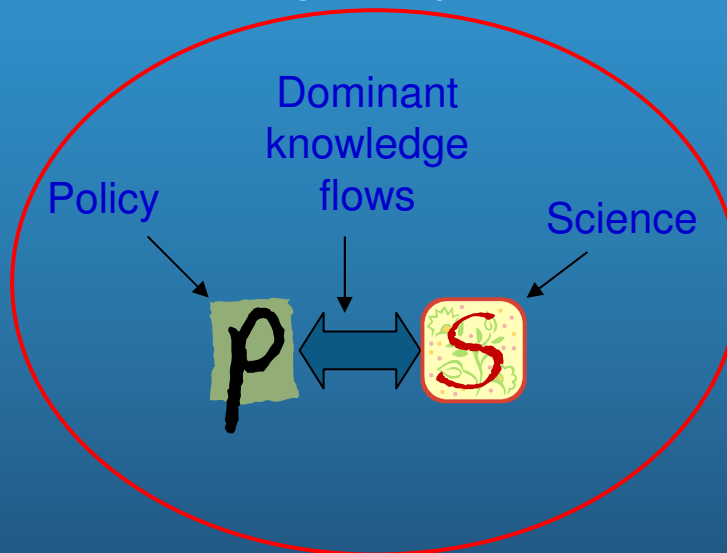
- How to evaluate knowledge co-production (recognizing; evaluating 'success'; explaining success)
- How to do knowledge co-production (lessons from an empirical case)

Policy Studies



Boundary?

Knowledge Co-production



Science Mobilization



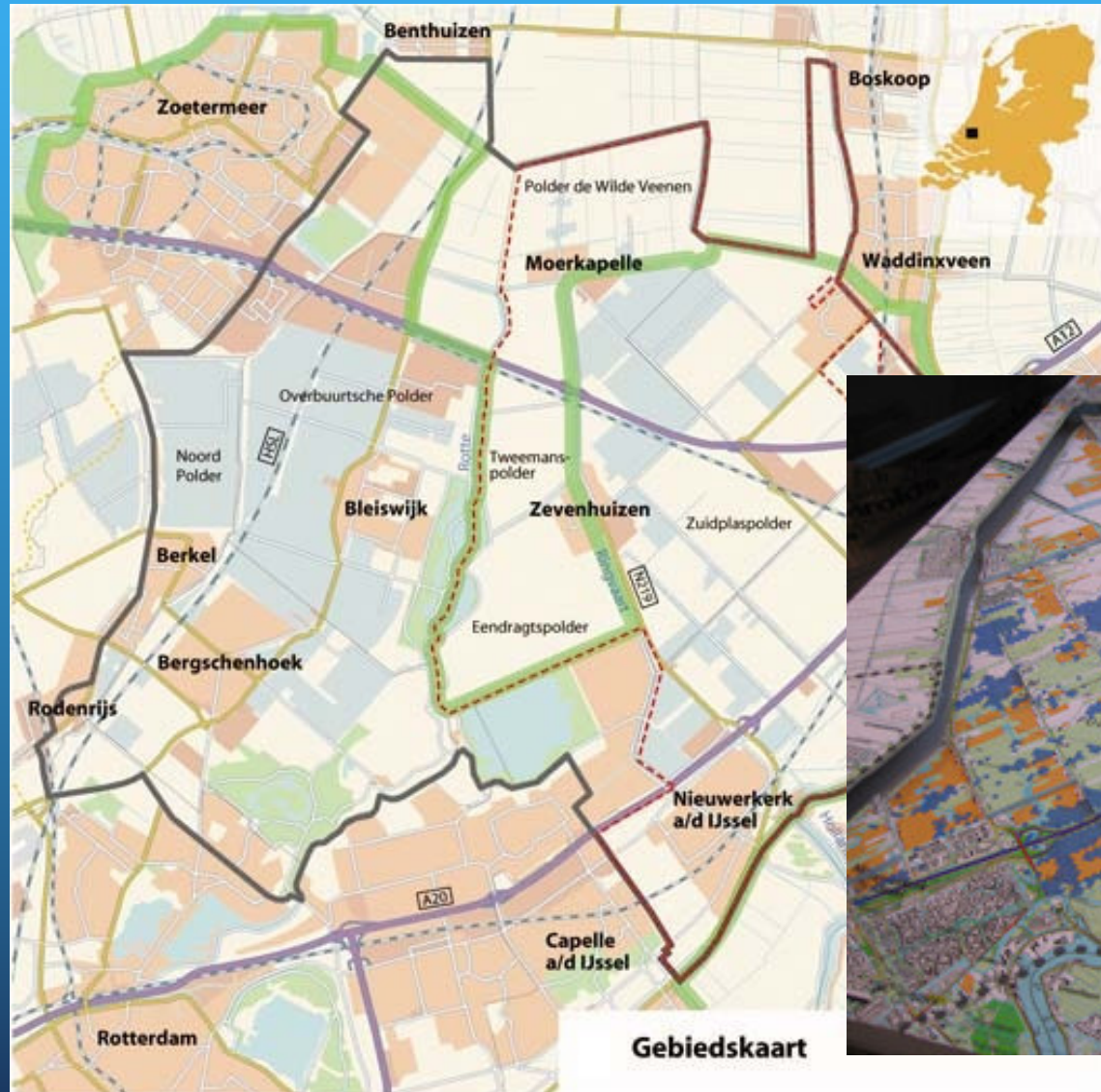
Boundary?



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Case Zuidplaspolder

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tcJWzGieRPA&feature=relmfu>



<http://www.xplorelab.nl/?id=62>



Case Zuidplaspolder

Mainstream planning process
(2003 onwards)

Climate proof region
(2050 and beyond)

Knowledge exchange
-key persons
-open days

Hotspot Zuidplaspolder (2007-2008)

- A) 6 background studies on climate effects
- B) 5 climate proof designs
- C) Societal cost-benefit evaluation

- Deepest polder of the Netherlands (-6.7 m)
- Designated as important urban expansion area in southern part of De Randstad (Controversial!)
- Hotspot within “Climate changes Spatial Planning” Program (Proponent of “joint knowledge production”)
- Project carried by Xplorelab, province of Zuid-Holland
- Variety of actors involved: government agencies, universities, several consulting companies, architects and other commercial participants
- Triad approach: climate effects; design; evaluation
- Interaction between mainstream planning process and Hotspot ZPP

Analytical Framework I

1 Recognizing Knowledge Co-production

- Production and mobilization of knowledge across borders of science and action
- explicit and tacit knowledge
- OPERATIONALIZATION: Reported examples of knowledge which could not have been developed in isolation

2 Assessing the Success of Knowledge Co-production

- Success of the *co-production* vs. success of the *project*
- Knowledge acceptable to extended peer community
- Look at the perceived *credibility*, *salience* and *legitimacy* of the knowledge produced for a variety of *dimensions*



Analytical framework - assessing the knowledge produced

Dimension	Credibility	Saliency	Legitimacy
Actors			
Discourses			
Rules			
Resources			



Analytical Framework II

3 Explaining the success of knowledge co-production: expected success conditions

Dimension	Success conditions
Actors	- Careful selection of actor network fit for the job
Discourses	- Development of shared problem perceptions
	- Reflexivity on expectations, e.g. regarding role of knowledge in policymaking
Rules	- Division of responsibilities (integration vs. absorption of experts in policymaking)
	- Reflexive choices on degrees and forms of cooperation
	- new forms of social accountability and quality control
Resources	- General (finance) and specific resources: boundary objects; facilities/organizational forms; competences



What has been co-produced?

- Content-wise knowledge (climate effects; desiccation)
- Knowledge on the practice of climate change adaptation (rational approach; knowledge infrastructure; personal competence development)
- Policy measures (24 bill. Euros), new entities (Xplorelab), new practices, networks and alliances



How successful was this?

- *Credibility* and *legitimacy* did not emerge as important issues in interviews
- Foci with respect to *salience* varied
 - Support for building in ZPP slightly more important for policymakers
 - Researchers emphasized other issues (desiccation; but also: practical knowledge, input for journal articles)
- Some ‘non-salient’ knowledge was produced, but this was compensated by the high quantity of knowledge produced

=> CO-PRODUCTION IN ZPP SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY SUCCESSFUL



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Which factors explain this success?

- Project-specific factors
 - Xplorelab; physical proximity; rational set-up; finance by Climate Changes Spatial Planning
- Some more general lessons:
 - Reflexivity throughout the project is important (co-production does not happen automatically)
 - Key persons can act as bridges between knowledge and action
 - Knowledge co-production can be steered only to a limited extent (task uncertainty and unpredictability)



Conclusions & discussion

Knowledge co-production...

- is in principle possible
- can be analyzed through a constructivist approach
- was judged successful, even more so than standard approaches

Next steps...

- Additional cases; analysis of actor perspectives; providing input into real-world projects



Thanks for your attention!

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