

# 20 YEARS DELAY: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BETUWEROUTE AND HOLLANDSTRECKE

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# 20 years delay: The construction of the Betuweroute and Hollandstrecke

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## Abstract

In 2007 was the Betuweroute officially opened by the Dutch queen. The Betuweroute is a very controversial rail line in the Netherlands, designed to transfer freight from the port of Rotterdam to the German Ruhr area. At the Dutch-German border however, trains coming from the Betuweroute need to continue on the already existing German rail-infrastructure. The German continuation of the Betuweroute, the Hollandstrecke, is expected to be finished in 2026 at the earliest. Despite the fact that already in 1992 the Netherlands and Germany signed a treaty in order to construct both projects, the completion date of both projects differs for around 20 years. This thesis aims to explain this difference by using the concepts of planning culture and spatial imaginaries. In order to do so, the following research question was composed:

*Do differences in planning culture between the Netherlands and Germany influence the spatial imaginaries of the Betuweroute and Hollandstrecke in a cross-border context?*

In order to answer this question, a qualitative research was conducted where experts on both projects were interviewed. These experts were asked about the planning culture and spatial imaginaries for the project they are expert on. Furthermore were all interviewees asked about the international coordination.

From the interviews, the following can be concluded: The planning culture of both projects differed a lot and this has influenced the process and completion date of both projects. For the Betuweroute, the planning culture was very much aimed at a fast decision-making process, with support and an effective lobby for the project in the right places. Although the process for the Hollandstrecke took way longer, it also encountered less resistance. The Hollandstrecke however only recently got prioritized, compared to a high prioritization in the Netherlands. The use of spatial imaginaries for both projects was limited, but the imaginary used, turned out to be a result of the planning culture as well. Despite multiple efforts to coordinate both projects on a higher (European) level, the differences in planning culture prevented both projects to be dealt with as one single cross-border project.

*Keywords: Planning culture, spatial imaginaries, cross-border project, infrastructure, Betuweroute, Hollandstrecke*

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I hope you enjoy reading my thesis!

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## Introduction

In November 2021 a motion in the Dutch House of Representatives about the so-called 'Noordtak' was adopted by all Representatives but one. Despite the convincing majority in parliament, the motion did cause a lot of controversy in some of the eastern regions of the Netherlands (Mons, 2022). The motion was about investigating the possibilities of a new rail line between the end of the 'Betuweroute' in Zevenaar and the border crossing with Germany near Oldenzaal, 105 kilometres away. Local politicians argue that the liveability in the Achterhoek and Twente will dramatically decrease, while national politicians argue that the rails are needed because the current line won't suffice in the future (Mons, 2022).

The most intriguing part to me however, was not the disagreement between local and national politicians, but the fact that a new set of rail lines is needed in the first place to transport goods over the border with Germany. After all, the current end of the Betuweroute in Zevenaar is situated right at the border of Germany as well. The Betuweroute was designed to transport goods directly from the Rotterdam port to Germany and beyond. In a letter from 2019, the Dutch secretary of state on infrastructure wrote that although the Dutch part of the rail line was finished in 2007, the German part will be finished in 2026 at the earliest. She reported that the procedure in Germany to acquire the permits was the bottleneck and caused serious delays (Van Veldhoven-van Der Meer, 2019).

The costs of the Dutch part of the Betuweroute rose to 4.7 billion euro's, which was twice as was estimated. An expert on transport of the TU Delft, Wijnand Veeneman, stated that the Betuweroute has a lot of potential, but has failed to reach that potential partly due to the fact that the German part is not finished yet (NOS, 2017).

The different dates for the completion of the rail line on both sides of the border is despite the fact that the region forms the oldest Euregio (Sousa, 2013) and the fact that the European Commission has designated coordinators to promote a synchronised implementation (Cárcamo-Díaz & Goddard, 2007). This thesis will focus on the underlying reasons of this divergence in date of completion. Therefore the following research question is composed:

*Do differences in planning culture between the Netherlands and Germany influence the spatial imaginaries of the Betuweroute and Hollandstrecke in a cross-border context?*

To answer this question in a comprehensive way, the following sub-questions were composed as well:

*- In what way did the planning cultures of the Betuweroute and Hollandstrecke differ and to what extent did this influence both projects?*

*- What did the spatial imaginaries of the Betuweroute and Hollandstrecke look like and to what extent did this influence both projects?*

*- To what extent does the international coordination relate to the planning culture & spatial imaginaries in both countries?*

This research is interesting, as it helps to understand what difficulties hampered the development of a multi-billion cross-border project. This understanding will help with managing future cross-border infrastructure projects. Currently, some form of Euregion covers virtually all land borders and most sea borders in Europe (Klatt & Hermann, 2011). Cross-border cooperation in infrastructure has become increasingly interesting, as aspects of transport and logistics have gained more attention by policy makers with the emergence of global and regional production networks (Kuroda, Kawai, & Nangia, 2007).

This research also has academic relevance as it contributes to an understanding of the complex dynamics of cross-border cooperation. In the research of Klatt & Hermann (2011) they found that for four different regions, comparable issues and problems emerged in cross-border cooperation. They state however that current research still has limited knowledge on mechanisms involved with cross-border region-building as well as opportunities for successful cross-border cooperation. Furthermore, the research of Klatt & Hermann (2011) focusses on cross-border activities, and not on infrastructural cooperation. Other research, such as Cárcamo-Díaz & Goddard (2007), Fujimura (2004), Fujimura & Adhikari (2010). and Kuroda, Kawai & Nangia (2007) evolves around cross-border infrastructure but is mainly focussed on projects in Asia and South-America and most attention in these researches is given to the economic aspects of the projects, while other aspects are neglected.

## Literature review

In this chapter, an overview of the relevant literature is provided. First, the importance of infrastructure is discussed and why development of infrastructure is seen by many as necessity for economic growth. After that the concepts of social constructivism, spatial imaginaries and planning culture are discussed. After that, a definition of cross-border cooperation is given and difficulties for this concept are discussed. Finally, the role of Europe in cross-border projects in general and the Betuweroute in specific are discussed.

## Infrastructure

The globalisation of production networks has led to an increasing interest in transport and logistics (Kuroda, Kawai & Nangia, 2007). Infrastructure has become essential for economic growth and integration, according to Cárcamo-Díaz & Goddard (2007). Infrastructural investment has therefore become a part of planning policy that receives more attention from both policy makers and academics (Marshall, 2014a). They state that there is a positive relationship across countries between income levels and the quality of infrastructure. Infrastructure is defined as the set of engineering structures, equipment and facilities with a long-term useful life employed by households and the different productive sectors (Cárcamo-Díaz & Goddard, 2007). According to Olesen (2020), infrastructure characterises the urban and distinguishes it from nature. By facilitating trade, improvements in transport and communication across regions will lead to an increase in specialization in activities in which regions have a comparative advantage (Puga, 2008).

There is a consensus that infrastructure has a positive impact on economic growth and poverty reduction. Therefore, infrastructure is an important policy instrument for economic development (Kuroda, Kawai & Nangia, 2007). The priorities of governments lay thereby often on the physical infrastructure development that best suits their circumstances (Fujimura, 2004). Transport infrastructure however, does not normally end at the national borders for its users. For governments it therefore becomes necessary to develop cross-border infrastructure and associated institutions (Fujimura, 2004). Kuroda, Kawai & Nangia (2007) acknowledge the fact that the interest in infrastructure development stems from the influence it has on infrastructure governance – infrastructure design and management.

Cárcamo-Díaz & Goddard (2007) add that the road- & rail networks of two neighbouring countries becomes much more valuable to both producers and consumers if they are interconnected. The quality and quantity aspects of infrastructure can influence the competitiveness of an economy immensely by reducing the economic distance from external markets, build economies of scale due to wider markets, increase FDI inflows and expand trade in general (Kuroda, Kawai & Nangia, 2007). In short: connecting

two countries enables both old and new users to have wider accessibility to new locations (Cárcamo-Díaz & Goddard, 2007).

### Infrastructuralism

The contemporary planning of infrastructure is defined by the concept of 'infrastructuralism'. This concept implies that policymakers view the construction of new infrastructure as crucial for development (Oleson, 2020). This is rooted in the idea that infrastructure is paramount to competitiveness and economic development (Oleson, 2020). Business corporations are observing the rapid development of infrastructure in authoritarian states (with China as the prime example) and idolize this in comparison to the relative slow progress in Europe and USA (Marshall, 2014b). Therefore international organisations have devoted much attention to the issue, working on the assumption that there is a need for large scale infrastructure expansion and that states must service these "gateway" needs (Marshall, 2014b). This has as consequence that decision on infrastructure investments is often depoliticised. The decision to invest in infrastructure projects is often taken long before policymakers 'officially' have come to that conclusion. The investments are often justified by the argument that 'investment is "obviously" needed' (Olesen, 2020). Infrastructure projects thereby have a tendency to be underestimated in terms of construction costs while the demand for investment is overestimated. Politicians often act as promoters in regard to mega infrastructure projects, instead of as a neutral welfare maximiser. Infrastructure is often implemented as a prestige project and political appearances for opening ceremonies are part of political business (Olesen, 2020; Rothengatter, 2008).

### Interpretive turn

In order to understand the theoretical framework of this research, an understanding of the concept of social constructivism is needed. Davoudi (2012) argues that there are two distinct ways of conceptualizing space and place: the positivist and interpretive (or social constructivist) ways. Positivists view nature as independent and believe that all human behaviour can be explained by general explanations, disregarding the context. They consider one universal scientific method as the appropriate way of explaining causal relations in both natural and social phenomena (Davoudi, 2012).

In this research however, social constructivism is used as basic ontological and epistemological approach. According to Atkinson & Zimmermann (2018) this approach starts with the assumption that there is no objective and immutable reality out there to be studied. It is rather part of a social construct. The social constructivists consider knowledge to be a matter of understanding rather than explanation (Davoudi, 2012). Social reality is in this approach regarded as constructed, it is perceived through relative and relational interactions (Davoudi, 2012). An social constructivist approach is embedded in

discourse methodology as the world around us is shaped by the language we use to discuss it (Atkinson & Zimmermann, 2018).

Therefore does social constructivism involve the construction of narratives that present an image of aspects of the world. According to Atkinson & Zimmermann (2018) do such narratives frequently entail normative assumptions about the future that is desired.

### Spatial imaginaries

The discussion between positivists and social constructivists has a kind of equivalent in the spatial planning. There is an emerging consensus that the interpretive turn is the paradigm that dominates urban planning theory. Despite the fact that the paradigm has multiple interpretations and has undergone changes since its emergence in the 1980, critiques have only focussed on specific aspects rather than on the paradigm as a whole (Allmendinger & Tewdwr-Jones, 2002).

According to Marshall (2014b) in the discussion between positivists and social constructivists the visualisation of large infrastructure systems within ideas of the future of large territories appears to call for an engagement with social constructivism. A concept that is used often in relation to social constructivism in spatial planning is 'spatial imaginary' (Watkins, 2015; Marshall, 2014b). Spatial imaginaries are socially held stories, ways of representing and talking about places and spaces (Watkins, 2015). The perception of space and place is also important in the development of cross-border regions. Both mental or perceptual borders as well as formal territorial borders can be a significant obstacle to cross-border cooperation and the institutional development of a cross-border region (Walsh & Knieling, 2015). Despite the fact that the formal importance of borders in Europe is lessened through European integration, their influence remains (Walsh & Knieling, 2015).

Marshall (2014b) explains it quite simple: in order to do something with a large geographical and spatial component, something must be existing in the mind/imagination of the actors involved. Spatial imaginaries provide selective readings of complex realities, so that individuals can make sense of the world (Hincks, Deas & Haughton, 2017). Spatial imaginaries spread ideas about people, the environment, politics or the economy. Imaginaries make arguments about characteristics of the past and current situation to advocate what the future might look like, and what people should do to shape it (Martin & Simon, 2008, in Watkins, 2015). According to Jessop (2012) a spatial imaginary denotes a simplified, necessarily selective 'mental map' of a super complex reality. He further states that it is impossible that these maps are purely representational for an external reality, as these imaginaries help to construct the reality they try to depict (Jessop, 2012). In the literature there is a growing concern that strategic spatial planning is guided by infrastructure imaginaries which envision large-scale infrastructure projects as solution of urban problems (Olesen, 2020).

Spatial planning often comes down to a persuasive way of storytelling (Nefs, Zonneveld & Gerretsen, 2022). This involves rhetorical framing, in which deliberately chosen adjectives, nouns and metaphors are used to realize political and societal acceptance (Nefs, Zonneveld & Gerretsen, 2022). The flexibility of spatial imaginaries allows policymakers to establish their own reading on a certain problem and to propose a solution that fits their own viewpoint (Hincks et al., 2017). The fact that actors have their own reading on a problem, can cause disagreement among them, but the process of creating or refining a spatial imaginary can also bring them together, as it allows them to negotiate complex and contested issues (Hincks et al., 2017). When a particular subject is imagined in a particular way, this will play a visible part in the formation of policies and plans (Jensen & Richardson, 2007). A good example of a spatial imaginary is the 'Gateway to Europe' narrative. This narrative highlights the favourable position the Netherlands (and Rotterdam specifically) in the global trade network. This narrative is reinforced by the use of framing with images (Nefs, Zonneveld & Gerretsen, 2022).

It is a though challenge to conceptualise a spatial imaginary, as they are impossible to actually see them (Marshall, 2014b). Those imaginaries have to be excavated from written materials and actions in a partially speculative way (Marshall, 2014b). Spatial imaginaries can be revealed by analysing maps or planning documents or by textual expression (Marshall, 2014b). It is thereby important to emphasize that spatial imaginaries exist alongside other imaginaries (Hincks et al., 2017). Spatial imaginaries contain elements of these other imaginaries (for example economic, political, environmental or social imaginaries) and use this in their claim making (Hincks et al., 2017). For this claim making, metaphors are used often in spatial imaginaries (Marshall, 2014b). For an imaginary to build momentum, a clear and convincing logic is needed to support its existence. This logic may reflect a particular economic, political, environmental or social concern, but can also use a hybrid logic, emerged out of multiple concerns (Hincks et al., 2017). Finally Hincks et al (2017) emphasize the importance of the shift from early unstable stages of support, towards more stable groups of actors working together.

### Soft spaces

Concepts of space and place have received growing attention in the spatial planning literature (Walsh & Knieling, 2015). New planning spaces are more often seen as 'relational', while old planning spaces are more seen as 'territorial' (Paasi, 2013). However, it is not seen as if these two spaces are being directly opposed to one another, but rather interlinked (Paasi, 2013). In Europe spatial practices and governance are increasingly addressing tensions between the state bounded, territorial governance and relational, networked governance, through the emergence of hybrid or so-called 'soft spaces' (Walsh & Knieling, 2015).

Areas with ambiguous borders or areas between administrative borders are called a soft space (Kaczmarek, 2018). In these areas soft planning is used, which is not based on legal or financial instruments and only concerns with informal forms of action and implementing shared visions (Kaczmarek, 2018). With the use of soft spaces, different sectors and actors at variable scales can be integrated in the planning process (Allmendinger, Chilla & Sielker, 2014). Soft spaces provide an opportunity to address mismatches between administrative and functional areas by creating tailored spaces for dealing with specific issues (Allmendinger et al. 2014). Allmendinger & Haughton (2009, in Kaczmarek, 2018) therefore define soft spaces as areas where deliberate attempts are made to introduce new and innovative ways of thinking.

The assumption behind these 'soft spaces', is the idea that territorial governments work with clearly defined territorial boundaries, like for example the jurisdiction of a local government. The boundaries of many 'governance' initiatives however, do not follow the boundaries of single local body of government. Instead a variety of alternative geographies are called to life (Hincks et al., 2017). Soft spaces are open functional areas. Because of their fuzziness, these soft spaces are better suited to address 'real-world' challenges (Zimmerbauer & Paasi, 2020). Regions are hereby understood as fluid entities in a globalized and networked economy (Paasi, 2013). The creation of new soft spaces can cause tensions among existing actors, as they might fear a loss of authority or resources (Hincks et al., 2017). Despite this possibility for tensions, soft spaces are often viewed positively by the actors involved (Hincks et al., 2017)

Walsh, Jucaniak-Suda & Knieling (2015) argued that it is significant that the geography of soft spaces does correspond to anticipated functional relations associated with major transport infrastructure projects. This is particularly interesting when the continued presence of mental borders is regarded. According to Zimmerbauer and Paasi (2020) may the governance capacity of institutional structures for cooperation be impacted by the presence of mental borders. These borders act as an obstacle to development of relations of trust at the individual level (Zimmerbauer & Paasi, 2020).

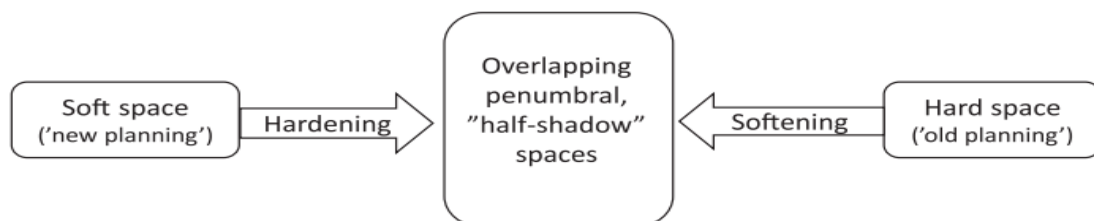
Soft spaces can be perceived very differently by different actors in different contexts, which can be seen as a positive feature, as this is deliberately and strategically employed. Soft spaces are employed by political and economic elites to frame policy visions about an aspired future of a transnational region (Walsh et al., 2015). Actors use soft spaces to build some institutional capacity and to find partners with common interests and potential opportunities for cooperation and collaboration (Walsh et al., 2015).

The creation of soft spaces often involves a process of trial and error in managing and testing evolving policy agendas (Hincks et al., 2017). They are often created for a single purpose and may disappear

after the goals are reached. However, they can also become lasting as soft spaces tend to become more solid by means of social and discursive practices (Zimmerbauer & Paasi, 2020; Hincks et al., 2017). This can for example be seen in the case of the Baltic Sea Region. Metzger & Schmitt (2012) argue that there were numerous governmental and non-governmental organizations who all saw themselves as part of, and as carrying for the region. However, they were all carrying their own articulations of the region that sometimes connected, but also often conflicted. The region can thus be characterised as a soft space. When the European Union entered the scene however, the soft space solidified. The EU managed to align the different versions of the region and its interests. The European Union positioned itself as legitimate spokesperson of the region (Metzger & Schmitt, 2012). Social and discursive practices can therefore solidify soft spaces through the singularization of previously differing articulations of the region (Metzger & Schmitt, 2012)

On the other hand do hard spaces also become more fuzzy. This can be explained by the increasing call to look beyond administrative boundaries. This is connected to the ideas of depoliticization and geoeconomization (Zimmerbauer & Paasi, 2020). The aim of depoliticized planning is to reach a consensus with more stakeholders (Zimmerbauer & Paasi, 2020). These two processes happening simultaneously are illustrated in figure 1. While soft places are ‘hardening’, are hard places becoming softer. This results in overlapping ‘half shadow-places’ where planning is executed.

Figure 2.1: A schematic representation of the creation of ‘half-shadow places’.



Source: Zimmerbauer & Paasi, (2020).

### Planning culture

The concept of spatial planning refers to government activities aimed at influencing the way in which territory is developed. Spatial planning is thus used in order to shape the future build environment, in particular with regards to the future distribution of people, activities and resources (Othengrafen & Reimer, 2013). Spatial planning covers and combines multiple overlapping policy processes and pursues multiple objectives. It employs certain paradigms concerning spatial patterns, future developments, and the longer term legitimacy of planning action (Allmendinger, 2011, in Othengrafen & Reimer, 2013)

In various academic fields is culture increasingly recognized as a key concept. In spatial planning however, the concept continues to be neglected as a significant contribution for analysing spatial practices (Fürst, 2009, in Knieling & Othengrafen, 2009). Spatial planning is often assumed to be more or less the same, regardless of where it is produced (Friedmann, 2005). This is remarkable however, considering the fact that spatial planning is understood and exerted differently all across Europe (Othengrafen, 2010). Despite the fact that communication within spatial planning is growing worldwide, there are still major differences in the ways that spatial planning is conceived, institutionalized and carried out (Friedmann, 2005). Othengrafen (2010) argues that this is the case, because spatial planning is strongly rooted in and restricted by specific cultural contexts and traits of a society.

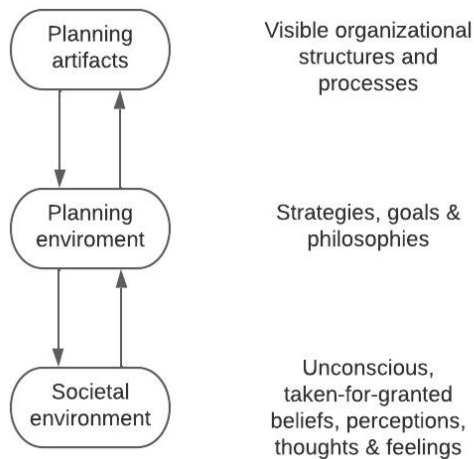
Planning activities are related to environmental conditions, as it follows a set of structural conditions, for example organisational and institutional arrangements that determine the scope, content and procedure of planning processes (Othengrafen & Reimer, 2013). Spatial planning is increasingly seen as a social and interactive activity and therefore planning objectives, norms, methods and instruments are bound to local cultural contexts (Knieling & Othengrafen, 2015). In this light, the concept of planning culture is relevant. Friedmann (2005) defined the concept as follows: *'The ways, both formal and informal, that spatial planning in a given multi-national region, country or city is conceived, institutionalized and enacted'*. A planning culture posits the norms that guide planning activities and measures its efficacy (Neuman, 2007). Different cities and countries have varying planning cultures, manifested by the prevailing norms. In the United States for example, is the planning culture dominated by words and numbers, while in Spain and Italy images prevail (Neuman, 2007).

Just like culture, is planning culture a concept that is hard to grasp. It is rather easy to observe what is happening in an organization or society, for example leadership, failures or arrogance based on past success. To understand why such things happen however is harder, and this is where culture comes into play (Knieling & Othengrafen, 2009). There have been multiple attempts to identify components that make up planning culture (Othengrafen & Reimer, 2013). In this research, the distinction made by Schein (2010) will be used.

He argued that culture can be observed and analysed at different levels, with levels referring to the degree of which the cultural phenomenon is visible for the observer (Schein, 2010). As can be seen in figure 2.2, Schein (2010) identified three levels. The first level are the artifacts, which are everything one can see, hear and feel when encountering a new culture. This level is easy to observe, but finding the meaning of these artifacts is difficult. In order to understand the artifacts, one could analyse the espoused values, norms and rules of a culture (Schein, 2010). This level is also known as the planning

environment (Othengrafen & Reimer, 2013). This level provides the principles that guide the behaviour of a group on a day-to-day basis. These principles are seen as the best alternative for behaviour by the group. The final level are the underlying assumptions. These differ from the espoused beliefs and values as these underlying assumptions leave no alternative. Schein (2010) uses the example that it is inconceivable in a capitalist country that one could design a company that operates consistently at a financial loss, while it in other cultures just might be the chosen alternative.

Figure 2.2: The culturized planning model



Source: Adapted from Schein (2010) and Othengrafen & Reimer (2013)

In order to identify the planning artifacts, the most obvious item one could look at are the distinctive visible urban structures, consisting of the architecture and significant major land use functions (Knieling & Othengrafen, 2015). According to Othengrafen & Reimer (2013) the responsibilities and division of tasks seems to be part of this level as well. Finally the planning products, spatial plans, make up part of the first level. This refers to the scope and degree of bindingness of the spatial plans, programmes, strategies and projects (Knieling & Othengrafen, 2015; Othengrafen & Reimer, 2013).

For the second level, the planning environment, one should look at the objectives and principles the spatial planning is aimed at. The way of decision-making is for this level of importance, as is the involvement of further actors in the process (Knieling & Othengrafen, 2015). Furthermore the scope of planning (extremely plan-led or development-led) and the specific decision-making environment can be as planning environment (Othengrafen & Reimer, 2013).

The last level is the hardest part to observe, as most of the attributes of this level are taken for granted and seen as the only alternative. Knieling & Othengrafen (2015) identify for example the orientation towards time as a part of this level. This implies whether a society is more oriented towards the present or future. Furthermore the consideration of nature in society is part of the third level. The level of

respect and acceptance people have for the spatial planning and the concepts of justice are also included in the societal culture (Othengrafen & Reimer, 2013).

### Cross-border cooperation

A lot has been written about cross-border cooperation, as there are many different forms this cooperation can assume. Boman & Berg (2007) defined cross-border cooperation as a neighbourly cooperation in all areas of life between regional and local authorities along the border and involving all actors. Perkmann (2003) adds that cross-border co-operation is happening between regions without intermediate interventions of the respective nation-states. He further states that cross-border cooperation can also exist between two non-neighbouring regions.

The most comprehensive definition found however, is the one from Sousa (2013):

*Any type of concerted action between public and/or private institutions of the border regions of two (or more) states, driven by geographical, economic, cultural/identity, political/leadership factors, with the objective of reinforcing the (good) neighbourhood relations, solving common problems or managing jointly resources between communities through any co-operation mechanisms available (p. 673).*

Some forms of cross-border cooperation have remained informal and sporadic, in other forms the arrangements are taken to a higher level of political commitment by setting up new associative entities, in which local and regional authorities on either side of the border work together (Sousa, 2013). These entities have grown in numbers over the past years, although most of them are still unknown to the majority of citizens (Sousa, 2013)

### Difficulties for cross-border cooperation

Besides the relatively unknown character of entities designed for cross-border cooperation, cross-border infrastructure encounters more problems. Fujimura (2004) argues that cross-border infrastructure projects are more complex and riskier than national projects. He argues that synchronizing project phases in different countries can be difficult as the different countries face different political and economic circumstances and cycles (Fujimura, 2004). Every country does have its own culture of governance and own routines, which in normal conditions would operate autonomously. People involved are also often unfamiliar with the political and governmental context of the other (de Vries, Harbers, Verwest (2007). Differences also exist across borders regarding spatial planning of state services, industrial or technological parts and transport/communication routes. These differences are not easy to integrate in a common planning based on a functional cross-border logic rather than a state one (Sousa, 2013). There is however a growing sense of agreement that

subnational authorities (although assisted by national governments) should assume a more important role in dealing with cross-border cooperation (Varró, 2014)

For successful cross-border cooperation a harmonisation of separate national political, social and technological mechanisms is needed. These mechanisms are set up around national rules and meet different local needs (Henderson & McGloin, 2004). Although cross-border infrastructure can induce benefits for trade and economic integration in the aggregate, the distribution of these benefits may not be perceived as distributed in an evenly way among the participating countries (Fujimura, 2004).

### Role of Europe

In the harmonisation of the differing mechanisms, there might be a role reserved for European institutions. In the following paragraphs the (potential) role of Europe in the spatial planning will be discussed, followed by two examples of European institutions that have influence on the Betuweroute and Hollandstrecke and are thus of relevance for this thesis. In the next chapter, these both projects will be discussed more extensively.

According to Sousa (2013), borders were physically dismantled across Europe, although a symbolic border remained. These 'scars of Europe's history' remained in the imaginary of people. This has its repercussions on the international freight transport. A report from the European Court of Auditors for example noted that on most cross-border rail freight in Europe the trains moves at an average speed of 18 kilometers an hour (ECA, 2016) This is remarkable, when is regarded that 60 to 75 percent of freight volume on Italian, Swiss, Austrian and Dutch railroads originates in another country (Lewis, Semeijn & Vellenga, 2001). The speed of the trains is one example why Lewis et al. (2001) argue that in many ways European rail is living in the past. The major challenges that the EU faces regarding freight transport concerns the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, dependence on oil as well creating an infrastructure that is suited to connect the countries and that way help in developing a single market from environmental, social and economic perspectives (Nocera, Cavallaro & Galati, 2018). Despite the efforts to build a European planning discourse, Healey (2006) argues that there are still substantial differences between the planning cultures of the different states.

On the one hand we thus see that borders still have relevance to contemporary rail freight, on the other hand however, are things shifting. Sousa (2013) for example argued that border regions became a fertile ground for cooperation and institutional innovation (Sousa, 2013). The EU has developed some power in big scale spatial steering (Marshall, 2014b). Through ways of imagining and framing, does Europeanisation has had effect on how key determinants of long term spatial change are shifting (Marshall, 2014b). The EU drafted a transport white paper, in which the main objective is to transfer 30% of the freight that is currently moved by road to other transport modes, such as rail by 2030 and

50% by 2050 (Nocera et al., 2018). To achieve this, it is not enough to simply share infrastructural decisions at a European level. According to Nocera et al. (2018) and Fujimura (2004) more coordination and special arrangements are needed between the different policy levels in different countries. The perception that the planning and approval of infrastructural projects across multiple countries has grown more difficult, has drawn more attention to infrastructural investment by policymakers and academics (Marshall, 2014a). The debates on the planning of infrastructural projects previously occurred on the national level. Since 2008 however, the EU has strong influence on the issue, as part of its revision of the Trans European Transport network (TEN-T) policy (Marshall, 2014a).

#### Trans European Transport Network

This policy is aimed at implementing and development of a Europe-wide network of infrastructure (European Commission, n.d.). The backbone of this network is made up out of nine corridors, which are identified to streamline and facilitate the coordinated development of the network. European coordinators are appointed by the European Commission to have oversight (European Commission, n.d.).

The idea behind this policy is that in a single market more traffic would flow between countries and that transport systems would be better suited to cope with greater movement when they are harmonised and opened to competition (Marshall, 2014a). Proposals on transport infrastructure are presented in a form of EU legislation which, if approved, becomes binding for the EU members. This means that future investment should be guided by the TEN-T schemas (Marshall, 2014a). It is remarkable that the same report that stated that the average speed on cross-border freight trains is around 18 kilometres per hour, also states that in rail freight corridors, the average speed is comparable to the speed of lorries (ECA, 2016).

The nine corridors that are designed by technical experts, are oriented around the main east-west and north-south axes and are focussed on freight. Therefore the orientation of these axes is based on major ports on the end of these axes (Marshall, 2014b). The Betuweroute is part of one of these corridors, the Rhine-Alpine corridor. This corridor is one of the busiest freight routes in Europe. It runs through the so-called 'Blue banana' and includes major economic centres in the European Union (European Commission, n.d.-a). In May 2015, Pawel Wojciechowski, a former minister of Finance in Poland, was appointed as European Coordinator for the Rhine-Alphine Corridor (European Commission, n.d.-a). The Rhine-Alphine corridor is already a mature corridor and thus has no major missing links. The main challenge therefore lays in eliminating bottlenecks emanating from increased traffic, for example the connection between Dutch and German networks, particularly between Emmerich and Oberhausen (European Commission, n.d.-a).

## Euregios

In order to eliminate these bottlenecks, cross-border cooperation is needed as different countries have to work together. The degree in which neighbouring countries have successful cross-border cooperation varies widely across different regions. This is dependent on a combination of factors, including on the economic, political, cultural, historical and geographical nature (Sousa, 2013). Among the many forms of cross-border cooperation among neighbouring countries in the world, the Euregios have the strongest forms of institutionalization and liability. This is caused by their relatively small-scaled geographic dimension and often shared traditions and history (Perkmann, 2003). Framing Euregios through a state-centric, scalar-territorial perspective however does not do justice to the cross-border spatiality (Varró, 2014). Since the spatial turn, it is broadly accepted that space does not pre-exist social relations, but co-constitutes them (Varró, 2014).

Among the Euregios, the connection between the Netherlands and Germany is one of the strongest. The first set of Euregios was established between these two countries, shortly after the Treaties of Rome (Sousa, 2013). The Euregio Rijn-Waal is a Dutch-German public body, with 55 member organisations. It's most important goal is to improve cross-border cooperation, both economically and socially (Euregio Rijn-Waal, n.d.). When in the Netherlands a discussion arose about a possible branch line of the Betuweroute, the so-called Noordtak, the Euregio spoke out. They argued for the use of their cross-border knowledge by investigating the possibility of this new branch (Dusseldorp, 2022). According to Tjeu Semmekrot, working on mobility for the Euregio, is there on the German side of the border little to no talking about a possible rail line, while it is a hot topic in the Netherlands (Dusseldorp, 2022). He stated that there first should be consultation between the Dutch and Germans, before any decision should be made (Dusseldorp, 2022).

## Context chapter

In the previous chapter the important and relevant concepts for this thesis are discussed. Before these concepts can be applied to this research however, it is necessary to describe the Betuweroute and Hollandstrecke more extensively. In this context chapter, the history of transport policy is discussed, as well as the process of constructing the Betuweroute and the controversy the project has caused. The chapter concludes with an overview of the situation of the Hollandstrecke in Germany and that of the Noordtak in the Netherlands.

Until the 1980's, transport policy was organised by vertically integrated monopolies who were mainly state-owned (Esposito, Cicatiello & Ercolano (2020). Attempts for a common transport policy proceeded extremely slow (Nash, 1999). This was mainly due to the fact that countries as Germany and France, were heavily regulating their transportation sector with the aim to protect their rail systems and domestic operators from foreign competition (Nash, 1999). New entries in the industry, fares and services were strictly controlled (Nash, 1999).

In the 1980's however, following a wave of management reforms in the organization of national public sectors, many governments within the European Union (EU) dismantled state-owned enterprises (Esposito et al., 2020). In addition was the European Commission taken to the European Court of Justice for failing to achieve a Common Transport Policy in 1985 (Nash, 1999). Since then the progress has been more rapid. Barriers which prevented operators to operate in multiple member-states disappeared for a large extent (Nash, 1999).

Revitalizing the railways even became a key objective in the transport policy of the EU in the 1990's as declared in the 'White Paper on Transport' (Esposito et al., 2020; Knapcikova, 2018). Rail transport is seen as an efficient and sustainable mode of transport. The European Commission did therefore in 1992 set a new main objective: to shift the balance between the different transport modes (Knapcikova, 2018; Dedík, 2018). One of the strategic implications of this shift is the positive influence it has on the environment, as rail is usually considered as a 'green' mode of transport (Esposito, 2020; Dedík, 2018).

In order to achieve this, Trans European Networks for Transport (TEN-T) have been planned for all long distance transport and the importance of the free flow of people and goods means that maintaining this network remains a priority (Nash, 1999; Dvořák, Sventekova, Řehák & Čekerevac, 2017). Transport infrastructure has always been used to promote economic growth by policy makers (Cigu et al, 2018). Although the guidelines on the TEN-T project define a core network of all transport infrastructure, special attention is paid to railways (Knapcikova, 2018). One of the projects which has profited from a financial contribution due to the TEN-T status is the Betuweroute. The Betuweroute is a 160 kilometre

freight railway line, running from the Rotterdam port to the German border (Koetse & Rouwendal, 2008). This rail line is included as a priority axis into the TEN-T as not only the Netherlands will profit from the project. Most of the freight it will transport is transit and most destinations for the goods are outside the Netherlands and therefore also other countries will profit (Koetse & Rouwendal, 2008).

### History of the Betuweroute

The construction of the Betuweroute has been a process that comprised multiple decades. At the end of the 1980's the awareness rises in the Netherlands that connections with its hinterland needs investment. Transport and logistics are increasingly recognized as important sector for the Dutch economy (TCIN, 2004). Due to economic recession are the public investments in the beginning of the 80's scaled back. This recession did however create a new awareness that the market economy is of vital importance for the sustainability of the welfare state (Koetse & Rouwendal, 2008). Therefore, when the recession is coming to an end at the end of the 80's, new investments are carefully considered (TCIN, 2004).

The ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management is at first not very enthusiastic about the Betuweroute. This is due to the fact that rail transport was regarded as something of the past (Pestman, 2001). A Rotterdam based lobby group however, 'Nederland Distributieland', representing all major players in the Dutch transport sector, conducted a very successful lobby (van Mierlo, 2004). The role of Schiphol and the Rotterdam port as mainports got emphasized and the concept of sustainable economic growth gained in popularity (TCIN, 2004). They used the Gateway to Europe rhetoric in their lobby (Koetse & Rouwendal, 2008). The internationalisation of production had caused an increase in the volume of the transport flows. Moreover did containerisation, the development of multimodal transport and trade liberalisation (emergence of a single internal EU market) have had an big impact on ports. The result was a competitive market situation in which competition was based on the port-based logistic chains (Koetse & Rouwendal, 2008).

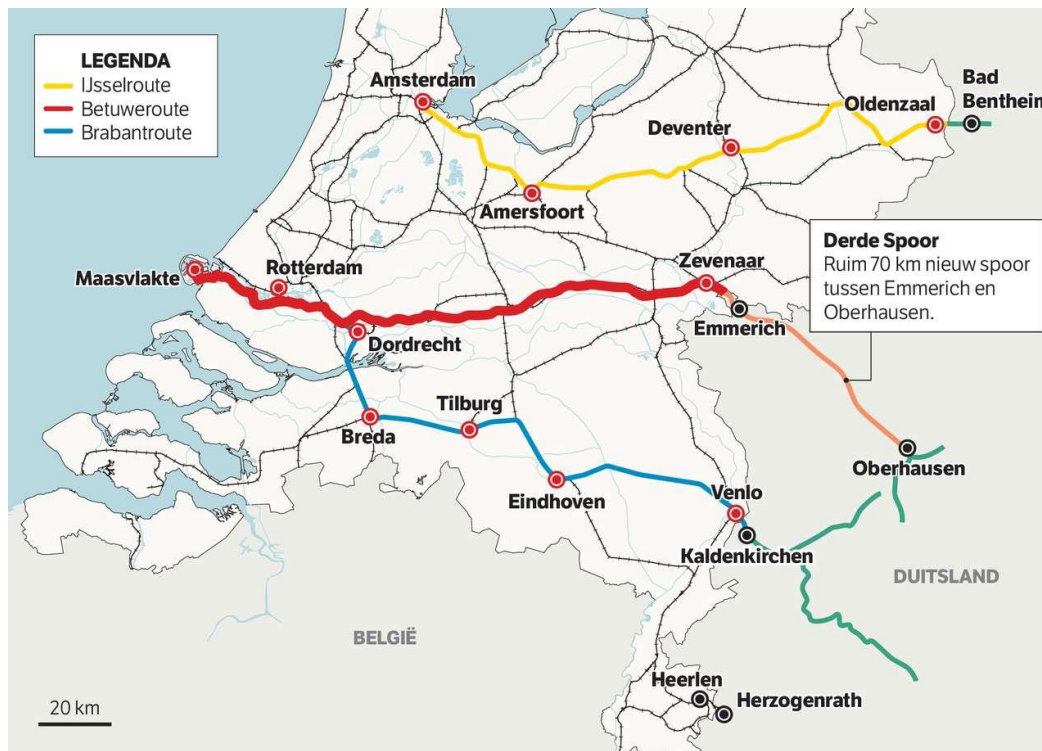
Former minister of transport and water management, Neelie Smit-Kroes, appoints in 1989 a commission that investigates the possibilities for freight transport by rail (Pestman, 2001; Koetse & Rouwendal, 2008). The report of this commission concludes that freight transport by rail is needed for the competitive position of the Rotterdam port and for the position of the Netherlands as a distribution country to facilitate the expected growth in freight traffic in the Netherlands (Algemene Rekenkamer, 2000; Koetse & Rouwendal, 2008; 2010). Furthermore the line motivated by environmental reasons, as it was considered as a relatively environmental friendly mode of transport (Koetse & Rouwendal, 2008; 2010). The commission introduced the concept of a 'oostwest-corridor', a main transport axle from the west to the east. A modernised and extended Betuweroute would be a major part of the axle (Algemene Rekenkamer, 2000).

As a consequence, the Betuweroute is included in the coalition agreement of 1989. A few months later, the Betuweroute is incorporated in a new-made section of a policy document named 'Tweede Structuurschema Verkeer en Vervoer' (TCIN, 2004; Algemene Rekenkamer, 2000; Koetse & Rouwendal, 2008). In this new section the point of view of the coalition is set out. In the document the discourse about the Betuweroute changed from 'necessary evil that needs to be prevented', towards 'required for economic growth' (TCIN, 2004). It is decided that the final decision on the Betuweroute is taken through a special procedure for projects of national interests. Therefore the decision can be made on the level appropriate for that purpose, in this case the national level (Algemene Rekenkamer, 2000).

However, despite the point of view of the coalition in 1990, is the decision on the Betuweroute not final. Not until 1994 the Dutch parliament approves the spatial decision on the project. In the coalition agreement of 1995, the project is questioned again, as two of the then newly ruling parties have opposed the project in the past. A new commission is set in place to investigate possible alternatives. After the commission advised in favour of the project, the coalition and the rest of the parliament agreed to continue with the project (Algemene Rekenkamer, 2000). As a possible explanation for the decision in favour of the projects, van Mierlo (2004) explained that the benefits of the projects are very concentrated, as only a handful of actors benefit from the projects, while the costs are fragmented. Proponents were therefore very motivated and held a successful lobby (Van Mierlo, 2004).

In 1996 the minister of Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieubeheer established the course of the Betuweroute (Pestman, 2001). It runs from the Maasvlakte in Rotterdam until the Dutch-German border near Zevenaar and includes connections with the existing network near Barendrecht, Kijfhoek, Geldermalsen, Elst and Zevenaar, see also Figure 3.1 (Pestman, 2001). After the Betuweroute was included in the Tweede Structuurschema Verkeer en Vervoer, the Dutch railway company (NS), took on the task to further develop the project in detail (TCIN, 2004).

Figure 3.1: The location of the Betuweroute and Hollandstrecke (The Betuweroute is the red line in bold. The Hollandstrecke is the thin orange line)



Source: Duursma (2016)

### Questionable assumptions?

According to some scholars, the assumptions on which the decision for the Betuweroute was based, are questionable. For example, Koetse & Rouwendal (2008) argue that the RIVM conducted an investigation in 1994, which compared the environmental impact of transport of an equal amount of freight by both rail and road and found relatively modest differences. Besides this, innovations in the trucking sector would mitigate the environmental impact of transport by truck. The Betuweroute would also attract additional freight and thus create additional pollution (Koetse & Rouwendal, 2008). Koetse & Rouwendal (2008) therefore argue that the environmental argument therefore could safely be ignored. Van Mierlo (2004) has the same opinion on the environmental aspect and adds that a thorough competitor analysis with other modes of transport is missing. The costs for the investment were way higher than expected, which is known to happen often by large infrastructural projects (Van Mierlo, 2004).

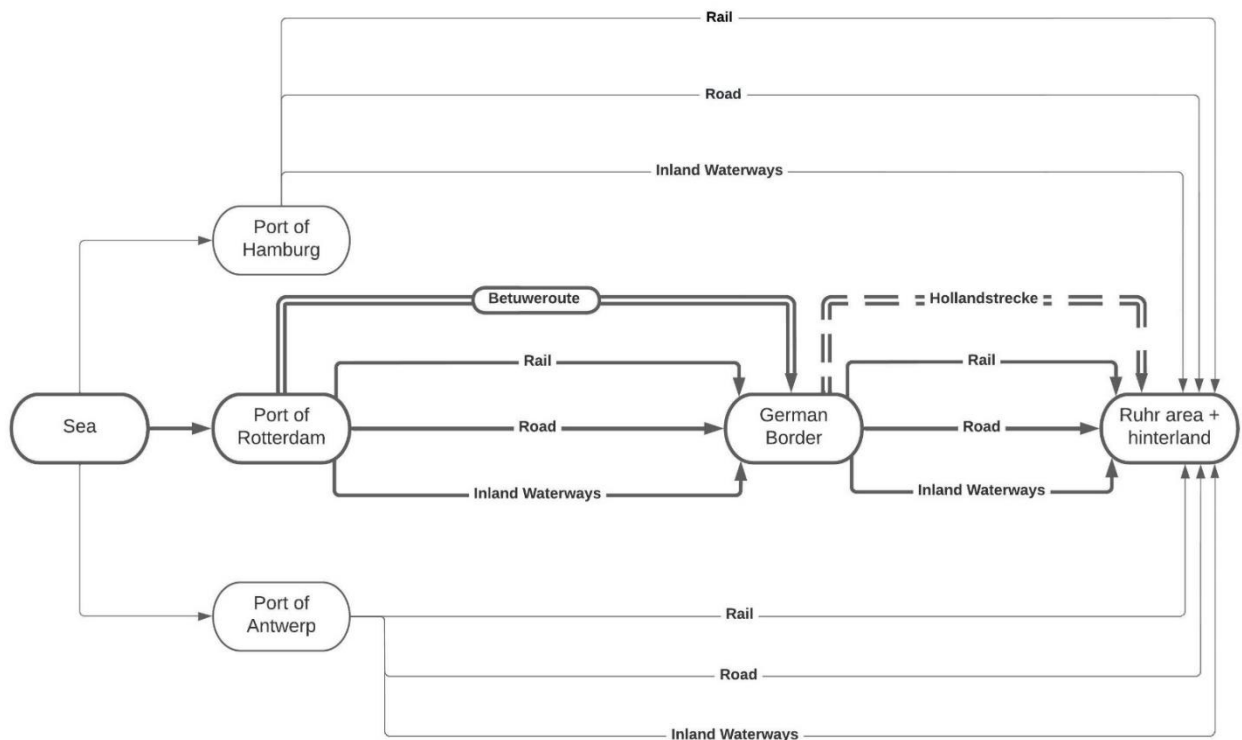
After the build was begun however, the reasoning of 'sunk costs' ensured that the project was completed. Politicians argue that a substantial sum of money is invested already and that these will never be paid back. Cancelling the project halfway would mean that this money is thrown away and therefore politicians have argued that it is better to complete the project. Moreover, can it be seen as a prestige project, which will never be cancelled by politicians, according to van Mierlo (2004).

Work on the port railway started in 1997. In 1998 construction of embankments, tunnels and bridges begun. In July 2007 the railway was completed (Koetse & Rouwendal, 2008; 2010). Projects with a shorter lead time than 3 years are easily to define upfront. As a project takes up more time, uncertainties and threats increase. In the case of the Betuweroute, an advantageous market ensured a saving of more than 400 million. Despite the market, did the 'do not harm paradigma' lead to the build of a lot of tunnels, overpasses and other 'pain relieving measures' along the route (van Veldhuizen, 2010).

### Hollandstrecke

A special characteristic of the Betuweroute is the fact that the rail line is only available in the Netherlands, while it is designed to transport freight to the Ruhr area and beyond. Rotterdam is the most important port for transporting freight from the North Sea to Germany and the hinterland, followed by the ports of Antwerp and Hamburg (Shipa Freight, 2021). These ports are included in figure 3.2 As can be seen in this schematic overview of the situation, does the Betuweroute imply a substantial improvement of the previously existing infrastructure. This improvement however, stops at the German border. The German continuation of the Betuweroute (also known as the Hollandstrecke) is not nearly finished yet, as it will be finished by 2026 at the earliest (Van Veldhoven-van Der Meer, 2019). The Hollandstrecke and the Betuweroute together form the fifth project of the TEN-T program (Merk & Notteboom, 2015).

Figure 3.2: A schematic representation of the infrastructure network for freight transport



Source: adapted from Koetse & Rouwendal (2008)

The fact that the German part is not finished yet is remarkable, considering the fact that the Dutch minister of transport and water management and the German federal minister for transport signed an treaty for the improvement of the Dutch-German rail transport. This treaty was signed on the 31th of august 1992 in Warnemünde. Among other things, it is included in the treaty that the rail line between the German-Dutch border – Emmerich/ Oberhausen are extended and that this should happen between 1998 and 2000.

According to the CEO of the port of Rotterdam Authority, Allard Castelein, the delay in the build of the German part is due to the fact that the building permits have not been granted yet. He stated in 2018 that there is no realisation date and that no progress was shown (van Leijen, 2018). In a letter to the Dutch parliament in 2019 the former secretary of state for infrastructure stated that her German colleague insists on a speedy issuing of the permits (Van Veldhoven-van Der Meer, 2019). She however also admits that the Germans are dependent on a carefully decision-making process (Van Veldhoven-van Der Meer, 2019).

### Noordtak

The missing connection with the German rail line became a hot topic in the Netherlands again after a motion was adopted by the Dutch parliament in 2021. The motion was about the so-called Noordtak, a possible new rail line that would connect the end of the Betuweroute, that is already located at the

border in Zevenaar, with another border crossing in Oldenzaal. The vice-chair of the German trade association for public and freight rail transport, Joachim Berends argued that it is unwise to continue with the Noordtak, as long as there is no plan in Germany to connect it with the German rail line. He stated that it is important not to make the same mistake again as with the original Betuweroute (Van Raaij, 2022). Berends argued that the only solution is to construct a separate rail line, for freight only, to Germany as well (Van Raaij, 2022). The motion did cause a lot of controversy. For example municipalities in the East of the Netherlands disagreed with the plan as they argued that it would decrease the liveability of the region (Mons, 2022). The Euregio did spoke out against the rail line as well, as they argued that there are sufficient alternatives (Van der Velden, 2022). Possibly because of the controversy however, are the plans put on hold by the secretary of state in June 2022.

## Methodology

In this chapter the analytical approach used in this research will be outlined and the concepts of spatial imaginary and planning culture will be operationalised. Goal of this research is to gain more insight into the dynamics behind the construction of the Betuweroute. The questions about which individuals and institutions have had most influence on the project and how their spatial imaginary looks like will be answered. The following research question was used: *'Do differences in planning culture between the Netherlands and Germany influence the spatial imaginaries of the Betuweroute and Hollandstrecke in a cross-border context?'* To capture the spatial imaginaries and understand the planning cultures, interviews with experts were conducted. In this chapter the choice for these in-depth interviews will be discussed after which the topics are operationalised and the topic list is drawn up. This chapter concludes with an explanation of the used analysis.

## Methods

The concepts, such as spatial imaginaries and planning culture, revolving the Betuweroute that are reviewed in this thesis are very specific topics. Moreover, these topics are sometimes hard to grasp. As argued in the previous chapter, the concept of planning culture for example needs to be understood in the context of the local culture, as it can be understood differently across Europe (Othengrafen, 2010). Qualitative research is used often to study realities, such as cultures, in a detailed and fairly objective way (Silverman, 2013). Furthermore, the concept of a spatial imaginary is impossible to actually see and these imaginaries need to be excavated in a partially speculative way (Marshall, 2014b).

Moreover, as we have seen in the previous chapter, prior research on cross-border infrastructure is often focussed on the economic aspects of these projects. These aspects are most often studied in a quantitative way, while the 'software aspects' are inseparable from the 'hardware aspects' in infrastructure (Kuroda, Kawai & Nangia, 2007). The software aspects include legal, regulatory, procedural and other supporting policy frameworks, as well as human and institutional capacities (Kuroda et al., 2007). For a better understanding of these specific topics, it is therefore needed to collect data in a qualitative way.

## Expert Interviews

As the main method of data-collection, interviews with experts are conducted in this thesis. According to Bogner, Littig & Menz (2018) conducting expert interviews can be used to reduce time-consuming data-producing processes. They argue that this is especially true when these experts are a key to practical insider knowledge.

A project, as extensive (and expensive) as the Betuweroute, has logically drawn a lot of attention. Besides policymakers, a lot of academics were also interested and a lot of research has already been conducted. At the start of this thesis, interviews with actors directly involved with the Betuweroute were pursued. The conducted desk research however, revealed that the decision-making process of constructing the Betuweroute was already extensively researched. Although the focus of none of these publications was particularly on the spatial imaginary used, it touched upon this subject now and then.

Therefore interviews with the researchers involved were conducted, to specifically ask them about their view on the spatial imaginary and planning culture used. A list of people involved in researching the decision making process of the Betuweroute was drawn up and ranked based on the extent in which their research touched upon topics relevant for this thesis. The four experts on top of the list were approached and all agreed to an interview. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the experts interviewed, their functions and why they are considered relevant for this thesis. What all had in common, is that they all published (scientific) articles and reports regarding the decision-making process of the Betuweroute. As the four interviewees already provided a lot of data and referred a lot to previous reports, it was expected that more interviews wouldn't add many new insights, especially as the interviewees were considered as the greatest experts in the field. This presumption was confirmed by the fact that most interviewees were mentioned during the interviews with other interviewees.

*Table 4.1: List of interviewees for the Betuweroute*

<b>Code used in this thesis</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Why approached?</b>	<b>Date, length and medium of the interview</b>
AD	Adri Duivesteijn	Was member of the Dutch Parliament & Chair of the Temporary Parliamentary Committee on infrastructure projects. This committee was established to investigate the role of the Dutch parliament in the decision making process in big infrastructural projects. It was established partly due to the decision making process of the Betuweroute	5-9-2022, 01:13:21, Zoom
HB	Hans Boom	Was in multiple capacities involved in the Betuweroute, for example as project manager for the political decision-making process of the Betuweroute. Wrote a book on the Betuweroute and eventually even wrote his dissertation on the decision-making process of the Betuweroute and another project.	12-9-2022, 01:16:15, Face-to-face
BW	Bert van Wee	Is professor in Transport Policy, head of the section Transport and Logistics at Delft University of Technology. Worked for the National Institute of Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) and was responsible for the prognosis and policy analyses in the	19-9-2022, 00:44:00, Face-to-face

		field of transport. Published multiple times about the Betuweroute.	
MRA	Michiel Roscam Abbing	Researched the decision-making process of the Betuweroute at the Delft University of Technology and later for the foundation of Sustainable Mobility. Wrote a book on the decision-making process of the Betuweroute.	21-9-2022, 01:03:42, Face-to-face

The original plan for this thesis, was to combine the insights gained in these interviews with an discourse analysis on reports of involved institutions, as for example from the Dutch audit office and ProRail. This however, turned out not to be manageable within the scope of this thesis. In the conducted interviews it got emphasized that there were very many reports and it was advised to narrow this thesis down even more than the original plan. Therefore it was decided to limit the research on the Dutch part and focus solely on the interviews.

In this thesis however, not only the Dutch part of the Betuweroute is researched. The spatial imaginary of the Betuweroute is compared with that of the German part of the rail line. As the German part hasn't drawn that much academic attention yet, interviews with currently involved actors on the German side are used for the comparison. In line with what Jensen & Richardson (2007) stated, it is important to identify the actors, working in policy spaces doing the imagining, as their imaginaries represent an acceleration of 'what we are doing now' (Jensen & Richardson, 2007).

In table 4.2 a list is provided of people who are interviewed for the German project and is argued why they are of relevance for this thesis.

*Table 4.2: List of interviewees for the Hollandstrecke*

<b>Code used in this thesis</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Why approached?</b>	<b>Date, length and medium of the interview</b>
PS, FZ	Philipp Schröder, Florian Zumklei	Both work at SMA und Partner. For this company they were responsible for the Zielfahrplan Deutschlandakt Guterverkehr. This is a plan in which the entire planning of the German traffic on rails is discussed.	2-11-2022, 00:52:02, Microsoft Teams
SK	Sjaak Kamps	Is director for the Euregio Rhein-Waal. This organisation's main goal is to improve and intensify cross-border collaboration. In that capacity was the Euregio involved in the Hollandstrecke from the start in an advising role.	7-11-2022, 00:38:13, Face-to-face
JB	Joachim Berends	Director of the company Bentheimer Eisenbahn AG, Vice-chairman for the Verband Deutscher Verkehrsunternehmen (VDV) & Chairman freight transporting companies in the VDV. In that last capacity, JB represents the rail-transport companies in Germany.	9-11-2022, 00:47:31, Microsoft Teams

TT	Tim Terhorst	Is for the municipality of Emmerich the press and public relations officer. Emmerich is one of the most affected municipalities by the Hollandstrecke and therefore a hot topic in the local community. TT worked previously at the Euregio	18-11-2022, 00:46:12, Face-to-face
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### Semi structured interviews

There are multiple ways interviews can be conducted. At one end of the spectrum lies a structured interview, which uses a collection of mostly closed-ended questions. At the other end lie focus groups, which makes use of an elastic agenda of open-ended questions (Adams, 2015). The approach used in this thesis falls between these two ends of the spectrum and is termed a semi-structured interview (Adams, 2015). With this method a combination of closed- and open-ended questions is used, which are often followed-up by ‘why’ or ‘how’ questions (Adams, 2015). One of the major advantages of the use of semi-structured interviews is that it is both versatile and flexible (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson & Kangasniemi, 2016). The method enables the interviewer to ask follow-up questions based on what the interviewee has said, without losing the structure of the interview completely (Kallio et al., 2016). A topic list is used often to cover the main topics of study to provide structure to the interview, but it doesn’t have to be followed strictly (Kallio et al., 2016). Later in this chapter the used topic list is explained.

Contact details of most approached experts were found online, after which they were approached via email. In one case the contact details were acquired through an intermediary. The experts were requested to be interviewed for about 1 hour. In order to prevent fatigue for both the interviewer and interviewee, this is typically considered a reasonable maximum length for semi-structured interviews (Adams, 2015). All approached experts agreed to an interview and a meeting was scheduled. In three cases, the interview was held face-to-face. One interviewee requested the interview to be held online, by the means of the online platform ‘Zoom’.

At the beginning of all interviews, the interviewees were asked for consent to record the interview and for the use of quotes in the thesis. The interviewees were told that the recording would only be used for transcribing the interview. The literal transcription of an interview helps in preserving the data, as a loss of details is inevitable when the interview isn’t recorded. On top of that does a recording also help the researcher focus on the interview, instead of being busy writing everything down (Harvey, 2011). It was made clear to the interviewees that the transcriptions would only be available for the researcher and his supervisor. The recording will be deleted after the thesis is completed. Some of the interviewees shared some quotes they wished not to be included in the transcript, therefore these quotes are not included in the transcripts. In some interviews the recorder gave an error message,

saying there was no sound being recorded. This was reason for the interviewer to start a new recording, which explains that time-stamps in some transcriptions are not correct.

### Operationalisation

As explained above, most semi-structured interviews are conducted with the help of a topic list, as well as in this thesis. All question were based on aspects of the theoretical framework underpinning this thesis. To compose this topic list, first the most important concepts of the theoretical framework are selected. For this thesis, these are 'planning culture' and 'spatial imaginary'. Then the first topic list was drafted. The first interview however proved, that the topic list contained to many questions and that some of these questions were hard to answer for the interviewee. Based on this experience the topic list was adjusted and the 'vague' questions were removed. The questions that remained can be found in appendix 1. For all interviews individual questions about the work/publications of the interviewee were added. During the interview more follow-up questions were asked, following the technique on semi-structured interviews (Adams, 2015).

### Analysis

After the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed as soon as possible. Hearing the conversation on tape, while it is still fresh in the mind, makes it easier to recall what is being said and makes the chance of errors smaller (Longhurst, 2003). For the analysis, the five stages, identified by Schmidt (2004) are used: first the categories for the coding are set up, based on the material. After that these are brought together in a codebook, tested and revised. The codebook can be found in appendix 3. Thirdly, using this codebook, all interviews are coded according to the categories. This is done using the software of Nvivo. On the basis of this coding, overviews of cases can be produced, which will be used for analysis in the fifth stage. The outcome of these analysis will be discussed in the next chapter, accompanied by quotes of the interviewees. Most of the interviews have been held in Dutch, but as this thesis is written in English, quotes are translated in the next chapter. Although the message of the interviews are translated perfectly, some imagery and figures of speech will be lost in translation. This is a weakness for this thesis, but for the consistency it is chosen to translate the quotes in English. It is tried to explain the figures of speech and imagery as well as possible in the commentation of the used quotes. While transcribing, it was noticed that small language errors were made. For the readability of this thesis, it was chosen to correct these small mistakes. On top of that were multiple terms used to indicate the Hollandstrecke and Betuweroute. For consistency it was chosen to only use Hollandstrecke and Betuweroute. For the same reason, it was chosen to only use the words 'rail line' and no other synonyms.

In the next chapter the results of this research will be discussed.

## Results

This chapter will explore the data gathered through conducting the interviews with experts on the topic. In addition, will this chapter interpret this data as it relates to the research question. The gathered data will be discussed per topic. For each topic, the Dutch experts and German experts will first be discussed separately, after which a comparison between the Dutch and German side will follow on the different topics. On the basis of the results discussed in this chapter, the following research question will be answered in the conclusions:

*Do differences in planning culture between the Netherlands and Germany influence the spatial imaginaries of the Betuweroute and Hollandstrecke in a cross-border context?*

This chapter is divided in three different parts. In the first part the planning culture for both projects is discussed and later compared. In the following part, the spatial imaginaries used will be explained. The third and final part of this chapter discusses the international coordination between the two countries that was observed by the interviewees. In the chapter following the results, the three parts will be placed in perspective and the research question will be answered.

### Planning culture

The planning culture is one of the two main concepts of this thesis. As we have seen in the literature chapter, does spatial planning refer to government activities that influence the way territory is shaped. The concept of planning culture helps understand the differences of these activities. In line with the distinction made by Schein (2010), three components of planning culture are used in this thesis. For each component the situation for the Betuweroute is discussed first, followed by the component applied to the case of the Hollandstrecke. After this, the comparison between the Betuweroute and Hollandstrecke is made. This is done for all components.

### Dutch Planning artifacts

In order to determine the Dutch planning artifacts regarding the Betuweroute, all experts were asked to indicate important moments, actors and reports in the decision-making process. The experts pointed at multiple important moments in the decision-making process. What is remarkable however, is the fact that all experts claim that the decision to build the Betuweroute was made long before the decision was made official, as can be seen in the following quotes:

*HB [00:03:25] The strange thing is...The project was up and running before the decision was taken at all.*

*MRA [00:04:18] Yes, the decision was made before the first report was produced.*

The third Dutch expert provided an explanation for this phenomenon. He stated that before the process had officially started, there was an informal process at play, which makes it impossible to go

back, which causes an 'Lock-in'. The first estimations for the Betuweroute were around 2.3 billion Guilders. There were multiple parties at the time who spoke out in favour for the Betuweroute. Later, when the official estimations turned out higher, those parties couldn't back out without loss of face. In a paper published by BW, the conclusions were that the cost overruns happened mainly between the first estimations and the formal decision.

***BW [00:06:38]** In our argument, there is 1 juridical moment in which the decision is taken, but seen from a political-societal standpoint, people have walked into a trap, from which it is impossible to escape.*

Both the first and last Dutch experts mentioned two other important moments in the decision-making process. AD, himself part of the political system in The Hague, mentioned the moment in which agreements are made during the formation of a government. When it is agreed that the Betuweroute will be build, and the coalitions sticks to that agreement, then the decision is made during the formation process. AD claims that this is often a bargaining between different parties of the coalition:

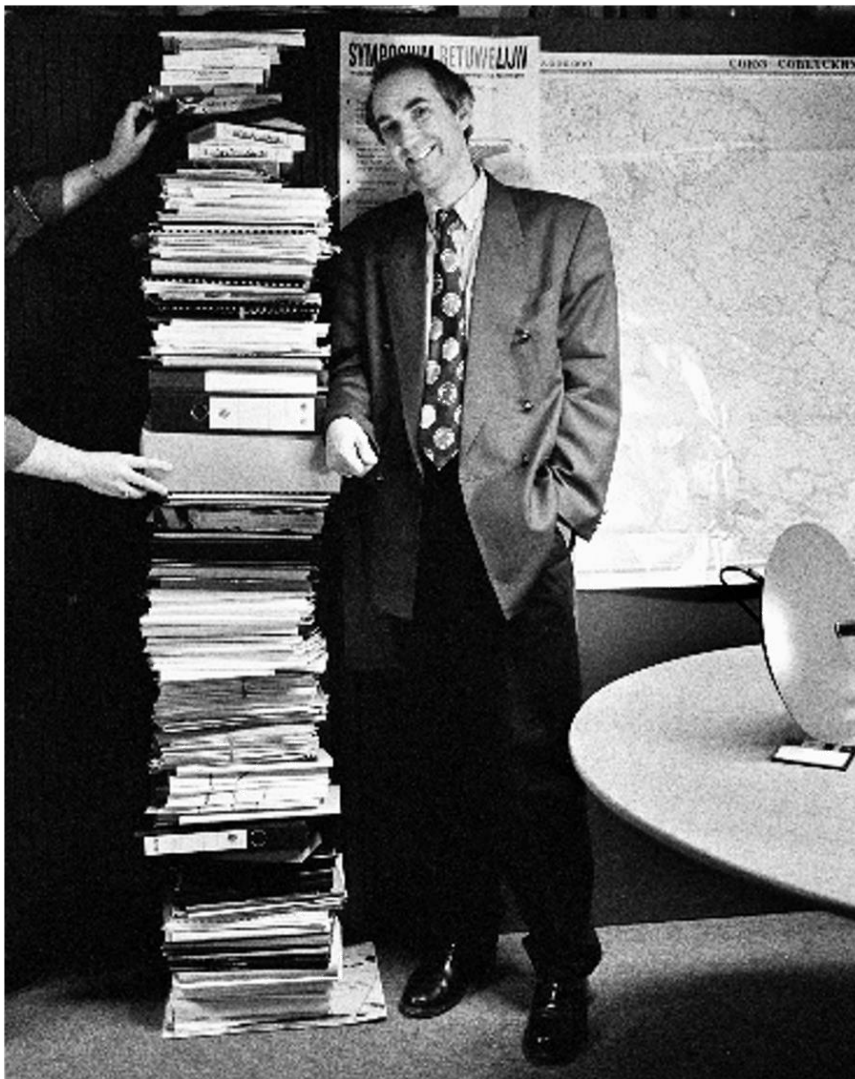
***AD [00:22:04]** We want this and you want that and how are we gonna offset that against each other (...) A parliament is just a marketplace where certain interests come together. Agreements are literally made for the coming term of office.*

MRA indicated the fall of 1998 as a period in which a point of no return took place. In October/November of that year a discussion occurred in the cabinet whether the Betuweroute should be reconsidered after all. The secretary of state for economic affairs later said that the decision to cancel the Betuweroute was close, but after all it was decided to continue.

***MRA [00:02:50]** And that was the final moment. It was the moment to stop in Kijfhoek with the construction. In the meantime was the Sophiatunnel already constructed, which was also part of a controversial route, but that could have been used for another goal. That was really the last moment you could have said: 'stop', or reconsider or look at alternatives. I think that was in the beginning of November 1998.*

In order to determine the planning artifacts of the Netherlands, it is not only important to identify key-moments. The experts were also asked about the role of reports. According to Knieling & Othengrafen (2015) and Othengrafen & Reimer (2013) the bindingness and scope of reports make up part of the planning culture. Therefore, all experts were asked about the importance of different reports. A lot has been said already about reports on the Betuweroute. In the interviews of AD, HB and BW was referred to a famous picture of Gerd van Leers. He was a member of parliament and posed for a picture alongside a large pile of reports, all published on the Betuweroute. The picture can be seen in image 5.1

*Figure 5.1: Gerd van Leers next to a pile of reports on the Betuweroute*



*Source: (Gerd Leers Naast Een Stapel Documenten Over De Betuwelijn., 2020)*

On the picture, AD said the following:

**AD [00:16:47]** *Member of parliament, van Leers, who later became major of Maastricht. He had gathered quite theatrical, all research on the HSL and Betuweroute and assembled such a pile (...) He wanted to show that a parliament can barely oversee in which phase the decision-making process is*

When asked about the amount of reports, the interviewees indicated that it was impossible for the involved actors to have read them all. One of them, MRA answered that it is incredibly much to grasp all reports on the Betuweroute. He told that he worked on the topic for over two years in which he had a chance to read them all from start to finish, on which he stated:

**MRA [00:12:54]** *Something you don't do for fun. But none of the politicians or the authors of the reports themselves, were able to read it all. But if you do, then you will see some patterns. Then you will see lines of argument that are being followed, or not being followed.*

When talking about the topic, the interviewer asked AD whether there was too much information. AD replied that it wasn't about the amount of information, but rather on the availability of it. He mentioned that it is quite inevitable that there is much information. AD stated that the commission, who evaluated the Betuweroute, emphasized the need for a research office, working in favour of the parliament to make information available to the parliament:

**AD [00:17:32]** *A government can simply bury a parliament with information (...) and thus we thought it would be appropriate for parliament to reinforce itself in research, to make such an information task manageable. Because, well, if projects are complex, then the complexity should be made available.*

It became evident in all interviews that there were way to many reports published on the topic. When asked about the most important ones however, one report was mentioned in three of the four interviews. It was the report of committee Hermans, named after the chair of the committee, Loek Hermans. The committee was appointed to take a another look at the usefulness and necessity of the Betuweroute. According to the interviewees however, was the unofficial assignment of the committee to smooth things over. The report was used by different political parties to maintain their position on the Betuweroute.

**MRA [00:14:14]** *The report Hermans was the decisive factor. Their conclusion was: 'The rail line has to be build, but under certain conditions. These conditions were flanking policy, make transport on the road more expensive, so that rail transport could become cheaper. But the flanking policy wasn't fulfilled. They just adopted the main conclusions.*

***BW** [00:29:11] Because what did the committee say? ‘Yes, the Betuweroute is profitable, as long as two ridiculous terms were met. (...) Two terms of which everybody knew they wouldn’t be met. (...) But that wasn’t the way it was presented, the terms disappear from the radar of most people. The general image that stuck was: ‘Yes, the Betuweroute has economic advantages’. If I were a member of parliament, I would think that was very misleading.*

Although HB had a quote that put this importance into perspective. When asked about the influence the reports have had on the outcome of the process, he replied:

***HB** [00:25:35] They didn’t had influence on our way of working or thinking within the project, because it had to be build*

He continued and told the interviewer that those reports could have a delay on the build, because a rare type of animal was found or some archaeological discovery was made during the building process. But, as the previous quote shows: these reports didn’t had influence on the outcome of the process, the Betuweroute was finished.

Based on the publications of Knieling & Othengrafen (2015) and Othengrafen & Reimer (2013) are the important actors identified as the final part of planning culture. Therefore were the interviewees asked which actors or organisations were decisive. In line with what AD said about the important reports, AD claimed that when the Betuweroute became part of a coalition agreement, it was decided that it was build.

***AD** [00:08:53] But the Betuweroute, that was in the plans of the ‘Vierde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening’. One could say that it was a plan written by civil servants and it was approved by the politicians and that is, if all goes well, a well-thought out plan.*

He further argued that he was positive about the concept of the Vierde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening, because it contains all important issues, but that in practice it didn’t had the effect that was expected. He concluded:

***AD** [00:08:53] So, in itself, I think it is good to have such a plan. In practice such a plan must be executed and lobbies will play an important role in that.*

Later in this thesis, the role of lobbies will be covered more extensively. The political parties who closed this coalition agreement thus made the ultimate decision that the Betuweroute would be build. In the interviews however, other organisations were listed as the driving forces behind this decision. HB and MRA for example, pointed at another important actor. They indicated the Nationale Spoorwegen (NS), the national railway company, as the driving force behind the construction of the Betuweroute. HB held an interview with the then director of the Betuweroute for his dissertation. The director showed

him a dossier that indicated that before there even were talks about the Betuweroute in the political arena and in the ministry, the drawings and everything were ready at the NS:

***HB** [00:04:48] At the builders, so to speak (...) At the moment it is a little less at the NS, but especially at the time, end of the '80's, beginning of the '90's, the NS had a unprecedented autonomy. And if they lacked money, they could simply ask for money at the ministry (...) So the decision to build the Betuweroute is taken, you could say, by the NS*

In addition, MRA added that the freight division of NS wanted to grow in those years, because it wasn't going well with the freight division:

***MRA** [00:04:37] They wanted to survive. In order to do so, a freight railway was needed. NS began early with raising that issue and drawing a route and stuff. Later, major concerns were brought up against it. But well, that actually is an improper procedure.*

HB explained that the idea to build a new railway came from the urge at the NS that they wanted another big job. Not so much a definition of a problem, the idea that they wanted to build a big project. They later needed a story to add, to make sure it could be sold as a decision. HB added a quote about the former project manager from the NS.

***HB** [00:15:20] He said: 'There is only one project manager Betuweroute and that is me'. I told him: 'But Wim, some decisions still have to be made and the money needs to be secured and we need a good story for that'. 'Yes, well, the story will come'.*

It can be concluded that the NS was a driving force behind the Betuweroute. The ministry for Transport, Public Works and Water Management has also played an important role. What this role was however, remained a bit of a question. BW indicated that some of his knowledge was confidential. He however could tell that there were people at the ministry who were enthusiastic about the Betuweroute. Although he could not go into details, he stated the following:

***BW** [00:15:15] But let me put it like this: There are people who are firmly convinced that at the ministry there were a few people who would have really liked to have a Betuweroute. The idea behind this was: Often a lot of money was invested in rail-passenger transport, but can the rail-freight transport once get something? They liked the idea that money would become available for the Betuweroute.*

With some strong proponents in the ministry, MRA argued that it was impossible for officials to have another opinion. He stated that the ministry had it's a department that was a sort of planning office.

In that office, some officials were instructed to think about new developments and come up with scenarios. However, they were instructed to not deal with the Betuweroute:

**MRA [00:07:23]** *Everything that possibly could result in criticism on the Betuweroute, was being marginalised. It was really go go go.*

*INTERVIEWER [00:08:00] BY THE TOP OF THE DEPARTMENT?*

**MRA [00:08:01]** *Yes.*

Later in the interview, MRA stated that there were 500 officials at the ministry who worked on the Betuweroute. He stated that it was very hard for those officials to look objectively at things as they were dependent on their job:

**MRA [00:46:34]** *Everybody is dependent on salary, has a mortgage and lives somewhere. You are glad you have a job.*

#### German planning artifacts

Other than for the Dutch Betuweroute, the Hollandstrecke in Germany is yet to be finished. It is easier to indicate important moments from a backward-looking perspective. However, all experts on the German side agreed that the Hollandstrecke has passed a point of no return and will be finished in the future. Therefore the interviewees were asked to indicate this point of no return. JB stated that this was the case at the moment when the plans were opened to local inhabitants. This meant that the plans were made public and the people affected could react to and object against the project. Although the plans can be exposed to changes during this procedure, it is clear that it will be build. TT agrees that when this procedure is started, it is inevitable that it will be build. TT furthermore explains that the commitment of an organisation becomes visible to such an extent during this process, that it becomes clear that it will be build:

**TT [00:14:53]** *The 'Planfeststellungsverfahren', as we call it in Germany, is the point in which one sees: 'Oke, that is someone, in this case Deutsche Bahn, who wants something concrete (...) And in principle, that is the point one knows: 'it will be build' (...) Just starting the process is so expensive, that it is made clear it will be build. You don't know how, but the fact that it will be build, that was at that point clear to everybody.*

SK also acknowledges the importance of the planfeststellungsverfahren, and states that this is the final phase in the process in which all kinds of details are handled. He however, points at an earlier stage in which the project becomes definitive. He states that the moment in which the Hollandstrecke was adopted with priority in the Bundesverkehrswegeplan, it passed a point of no return.

Based on the interviews, it can be concluded that the point of no return on the German side is more tangible than for the Dutch side. The Dutch experts explained that before the decision to build was taken, a lock-in process had taken place, making it impossible to make another choice. Therefore did the Dutch interviewees indicated a moment previous to the official choice as a point of no return. It is impossible to pinpoint an exact moment for the Dutch side.

For the German side, two moments were indicated as point of no return: the procedure of the Planfeststellungsverfahren and the moment it was adopted in the Bundesverkehrswegeplan. Although it is made more explicit in the Dutch interviews, a kind of lock-in also seems to have happened in the German case as well. TT states that just starting the process is so expensive, that it is made clear that it will be build. The difference between these two processes of lock-in however, might be the opposition both projects faced. For the Dutch part, the opposition was a lot fiercer, which made a point of no return a way more sensitive topic. In the part about the planning environment this opposition will be examined further.

The German interviewees were also asked about important reports in the planning process and the influence the different reports have had. As the role of reports was covered so extensively on the Dutch part, it seems obvious that less has been written about the German reports. It is interesting to note here however, that two of the interviewees, FZ and PS have drawn up the Zielfahrplan Deutschlandakt Güterverkehr. This is a major project in Germany, which tries to synchronise the timetable of all German trains (Kemmeter, 2021). When it was realised that the capacity of the German network wasn't sufficient, an agreement was reached. The Deutschlandakt was the most important part of this agreement.

In this Deutschlandakt a long term timetable for the entirety of the German freight traffic by rail was made. The ministry saw itself as the conductor, but didn't have the expertise itself to draw up such a plan. They needed the know-how and hired the company which employed PS and FZ. One important element of the Deutschlandakt is that it changes the sequence of planning. It is the first time in Germany that the timetable for the entire country is planned before anything else. The infrastructure needed for example, is derived from the concepts of this planning. The Deutschlandakt wasn't finished before the point of no return of the Hollandstrecke and had therefore less to do with it. However, it is still interesting to note that PS and FZ indicated the Bundesverkehrswegeplan as a undisputed basis of the Deutschlandakt:

*PS [00:11:03] One basis, of course, was the already existing Bundesverkehrswegeplan. These measures were fixed and planned so it didn't matter whether they were necessary or not necessary but they were fixed. If the prognosis to Amsterdam would be would be much higher, then we also had to*

*derive more rail lines between Oberhausen and Emmerich. But we have seen that the capacity given by the new Bundesverkehrswegeplan, is efficient regarding the German prognosis for the freight traffic, that's very important.*

The Bundesverkehrswegeplan is here presented as undisputed and as a basis-scenario. For the Deutschlandakt the Bundesverkehrswegeplan is taken, and if additional infrastructure was needed, it would be added. However, the final sentence indicate that the Bundesverkehrswegeplan already provided enough capacity for the freight traffic. This Bundesverkehrswegeplan is a list of infrastructure that will be built by the country of Germany and all the measures it will take.

Other reports that were mentioned in two of the interviews, are a feasibility studies. According to SK, did the company Spiekermann produce the first study in which the conclusion was drawn up that at least one extra rail line was needed, as the capacity wasn't enough. TT also mentioned the reports of Spiekermann and noticed that they had a lot of influence. Not just in convincing that an extra rail line was needed, but also in where this extra rail line was supposed to be located:

*TT [00:04:15] 'No, all things considered it is better, from different perspectives, to use and widen the existing rail line. And not to plan an entire new rail line along the highway.'*

On the importance of these reports TT stated that people in Germany have a lot of faith in these kinds of reports. When an expert makes a recommendation, it is very often taken for the truth in Germany:

*TT [00:41:46] If an external expert states: 'It should be built like this and I recommend this', then we very often, have very much faith in that.*

It is remarkable that for the Dutch side, the amount of reports is the first thing that comes to mind when asked, but that it also seemed easier for the interviewees to indicate important reports. The Dutch report mentioned most, is mentioned as not objective, as its goal was to smooth things over. The Bundesverkehrswegeplan is considered as very important for the German part. Also the feasibility studies by Spiekermann had a lot of influence. In Germany these reports seem to be accepted more and taken for the truth. This might explain the difference in amount of reports. For the Dutch Betuweroute, there was always somebody prepared to write another report to dispute another reports, according to HB.

Finally, the German interviewees were also asked about the actors and organisations who were responsible for the ultimate decision to build the Hollandstrecke. In all the interviews the answer to this was the same, all experts indicated DB Netz as responsible for this choice. JB stated on this:

*JB [00:15:17] In Germany it is the same as in the Netherlands. If you build railway infrastructure in Germany, it is DB Netz. In the Netherlands, it is Prorail, and no one other.*

It is remarkable that both JB and SK stated it was the same as in the Netherlands, with Prorail as responsible, while the Dutch experts all pointed to NS. This can be explained however, as management of the infrastructure and transport were separated during the mid-'90's (NS, n.d.). PS used the concept of 'vorhabenträger' to explain the role of DB Netz. 'vorhaben' is a planning and 'träger' is the carrier or promoter. So DB Netz is the organization which has to carry the project:

*PS [00:29:21] Like when you build your house, you are the vorhabenträger. Of course you don't build the toilet and the roof, but you give them money and you are responsible that the project will be finished. Perhaps you don't have your own money, then for example you get money from your parents. And DB Netz got money from the German ministry. But nevertheless, the vorhabenträger is in this case the Deutsche bahn AG and they have to solve all discussions.*

DB Netz thus got mentioned in all interviews as the 'vorhabenträger'. In all interviews however, the role of the German ministry, or 'Berlin' got mentioned as well. As in the quote above, it was mentioned that the money comes from 'Berlin'.

*SK [00:16:29] The money comes from the verkehrsministerium. That is similar to ProRail in the Netherlands, the network operator. But the money ultimately comes from the country. That is the same in the Netherlands, those investment funds come from the country.*

For the German Hollandstrecke it became obvious that DB Netz is the organization that is listed as driving force. This can be compared to the NS, which was indicated as such for the Dutch Betuweroute. The difference lies in the fact that for the NS the underlying motives were discussed and were questionable according to the interviewees. In the interviews with the German experts, there was no mention of questions about the motives of DB Netz at all. Both ministries for infrastructure were mentioned for both sides as well. The described role is different however. The German ministry is mentioned as supplier of money, while the Dutch ministry is seen as proponent in other ways as well.

#### Differences in planning artifacts

The concept of planning culture plays a central role in this thesis. In line with Schein (2010) the concept is divided into three components. The first of these are the planning artifacts. Based on the interviews, it can be concluded that the planning artifacts differ among the two countries. The most striking difference is of course the fact that the Dutch Betuweroute was finished in 2007, while the German Hollandstrecke will not be for the next years. The Dutch Betuweroute passed a point of no return

before the choice was officially made. In Germany the point of no return seems to be a more formal moment. This means that the planning culture of the Betuweroute was more informal than that of the Hollandstrecke. This contributed to a fierce resistance in the Netherlands, on which the following paragraphs will elaborate further. On top of that, were there multiple driving forces behind the Betuweroute, while for the German Hollandstrecke DB Netz was mentioned as sole carrier of the project. The large pile of reports, produced on the Dutch Betuweroute might be explained by this as well: because the decision was taken unofficially before the official decision, opponents seized the opportunity to produce all kinds of reports in their attempt to stop the process. However, the decision-takers all committed to the project and would encounter loss of face when they backed out. Therefore the project could continue. Furthermore, the Dutch Betuweroute enjoyed additional support as well, as can be read in the next part on the planning environment.

#### Dutch planning environment

The first level of the planning culture are the things that are the most easy to 'see', as we have seen in the theoretical chapter. There are many underlying conditions that have influenced the decision that was observable in the planning artifacts. By defining the planning environment, it is tried to describe these conditions. In the literature-chapter we have seen that the way of decision-making is of importance, as the involvement of other actors (Knieling & Othengrafen, 2015). The decision-making environment can be seen as planning environment as well (Othengrafen & Reimer 2013). In the literature chapter also the scope of the planning is mentioned as part of the planning environment. In the conducted interviews however it was discussed so extensively, that an entire paragraph is devoted to the utility and necessity of the process.

For the planning environment of the Betuweroute, the involvement of other actors is thus of importance. This has been a well-discussed topic in the Netherlands. When reading newspapers or listening to old radio-interviews, the influence of the lobby of for example the port of Rotterdam is mentioned a lot. Therefore the interviewees were also asked about the lobby, and how big the influence of this lobby was. It is remarkable that the answers of the interviewees varied a lot. AD and HB both emphasized that, although a lot has been said on lobby, the influence might have been exaggerated. AD stated that lobby shouldn't be regarded as something harmful or not, but that it should be regarded as something that is present.

***AD [00:01:10]** Lobby is actually, as simple as it gets. When you need something arranged for your studies, you turn to the person responsible (...) You can then ask the question directly, but also via a middleman who asks the question on your behalf. A lot of parties have, literally and metaphorically, a lobby-organisation.*

HB stated that he dedicated a few paragraphs in his dissertation on the lobby. He argued that lobbying is overrated in general, but this is especially the case by opponents. Those opponents argue that the lobby-organisations have all kinds of resources.

***HB [00:19:32]** They included a few high-profile people, with a good network. But I can't say that there was a lobby in the sense of an agency, who did the lobbying, that wasn't the case.*

Both interviewees thus concluded that the result of the lobby shouldn't be overestimated. They argued that it is a phenomenon that happens everywhere, where there is money to be divided. AD added that the most important in lobbying is that it should be made more transparent and that it should be made clear who's interest is being represented.

In the other two interviews, the answers diverged. Although BW stated that he wasn't an expert on the matter, he stated that it was clear that at the ministry there were people who liked the project. And also for the port of Rotterdam and other professional lobby-organisations for the transport sector, it was an appealing project:

***BW [00:08:47]** And they all thought: It would be nice if the Betuweroute would be build. What happened exactly behind the scenes and who spoke with who, I don't know. But everybody was on the same page: 'We would like the Betuweroute'.*

BW further argued that he understood the position of the port of Rotterdam and that of the transport sector, as they wouldn't have to pay for the rail line, but gained another option to move goods. BW didn't mention the fact that the influence of the lobby was exaggerated, like the HB and AD did, he however acknowledged that it wasn't his expertise to talk about the lobby and that he didn't know exactly what had happened.

In the final interview with MRA however, the impression acquired of the lobby changed. MRA was more critical on the influence the lobby had. He emphasized the interest of the port in Rotterdam. They wanted a modern port, with three modalities: road, water and railway. The port was thus a strong supporter. He added that the TU Delft, a technical university in the Netherlands, wasn't that critical either. This because the engineers working at the TU Delft also needed the work. Finally you had the NS, who wanted to upgrade their freight transport and on which MRA said:

***MRA [00:10:22]** They originally came up with it. So they performed a Kongsji with the port. Together with the ministry that formed a, as I have written, a very powerful constellation which is impossible to compete with. (...) The term, I borrowed it from professor Polak, is a lack of counterbalancing power. So there is too little societal pushback against such a constellation of interest, all pointing at the same direction.*

The opinion on the influence of the lobby is varying among the interviewees. This might be explained by the background of the different interviewees. Although two of the interviewees argue that the influence of the lobby wasn't as big as suggested in the final interview, it can be concluded that the Betuweroute made sure some powerful actors aligned, the port of Rotterdam being the one mentioned most. In all interviews it became clear that people with a lot of influence wanted the Betuweroute. This isn't really remarkable, as it is a project involving a billions of Euro's. However, it is remarkable that it happened behind closed doors. As AD stated, that it is impossible to avoid lobbying, but in an ideal world people would have to indicate their interest when conducting a lobby.

As in the interviews, the role of lobby-work was discussed extensively, the role of the lobby against the Betuweroute also were considered. Although less was told about this opposing lobby, some remarkable things stood out. First of all, the opinion of the interviewees varied again on the topic. As discussed previously, MRA claimed that there was a lack of counterfailing power. BW gave an explanation for this in his interview. He stated that the opposition was less organized and didn't conduct an active lobby. The image provided by BW is that they just used the media to make their point, and didn't turn directly to the politicians responsible for the choice. He claimed that the lobby against the Betuweroute was less organized.

***BW** [00:10:43] They were less organized anyway. Those opponents, there were multiple (...) they were simply against the Betuweroute. They tried to supply the debate with ammunition.*

The claims of HB in his interview however, dispute the image of an ill-organized opposition. He emphasized the fact that the opposition had help of the media to discredit the construction of the Betuweroute. In his interview he also claimed that the opposition was better organized.

He also told a story about his time as project-manager of the project. At a certain point, during the time the post of minister changed, the project-management started having information sessions along the proposed rail line. During these meetings the opponents got a place as well to tell their story.

***HB** [00:29:24] And there we arranged some space for the opponents as well. So they were given a table. We all went to do that. It became a great success. That was appreciated.*

As stated before, the background of the interviews might explain the difference in opinion on the lobby. As HB was project-manager and directly involved with the lobby against the Betuweroute, he might have valued their influence more than the BW, who was more indirectly involved. What in both

interviews match however, is the fact that both emphasize the role of the media in the lobby against the Betuweroute. The lobby in favour of the Betuweroute happened more behind closed doors, while the lobby against sought the publicity and their story was supported by the media.

About this role of the media, BW had another interesting story to tell. He told me he was approached by an opponent of the Betuweroute. BW was asked if he still stood by the prognoses he made years earlier about the expected environmental advantages of the Betuweroute. BW answered the opponent that he would make some small adjustments, but that he stood by the fact that the advantages would be little to none. This quote then got published in a Dutch newspaper: 'RIVM acknowledges: Betuweroute not that good for the environment at all.' Later the claims got rectified by the journalist, but BW told about the motives story:

***BW [00:23:42]** So I asked: 'Why did you make those claims? I have always said that the advantages for the environment (...). Then they answered: 'Yeah, we needed something to bring the discussion to the attention in the media, so we misused this to bring attention to the issue'.*

In this thesis the lobby of the lower authorities is identified as the final part of the lobby. As the projects are spacious and cross the territories of numerous municipalities, it encountered lobby of these lower authorities as well. In the interviews it was asked whether did had influence and to what extent. This was a topic all interviewees agreed on. The interviewees stated that the lower authorities used their position to gain advantages out of the situation, to change the route of the new rail line a bit. They understood that it was impossible to stop the rail line from being build, but could take profit as much as possible of the build. Not all of the negotiations were necessarily related to the new train rail line. The mayors and other local politicians could act obstructive to acquire funds for all kinds of things.

***AD [00:13:09]** The main decision was taken already. You are then talking about the way the route gets executed. Sometimes a mayor or the council of a municipality or representative or group of people be able to change the route or to wrap the rail line (...) With the Betuweroute a lot of that 'suffering' has been paid off.*

***HB [00:30:05]** (...) They did it at the right time by saying: 'What happens over here, can't be done'. So the rail line were neatly covered there. And they even were able to pay for an extra sports hall.*

With the 'wrapping' in the quote above, AD refers to measures taken to encapsulate the rail line and lessen the disturbance for the neighbours. Also in the other interviews measures taken to reduce the disturbance for local residents was mentioned a lot. According to AD, the Betuweroute was a

prestigious project wanted by the national government, so a lot of money was available for people objecting. HB talked about the village of Barendrecht, who played their cards right and where able to negotiate an extra sports hall in exchange for the Betuweroute being built on their territory. Despite the example of Barendrecht, HB argued that a lot more should have been done to convince the local politicians. The problem according to HB is the fact that the different levels of government were focussed solely on their own problems and didn't communicate.

These statements about the negotiations of the lower authorities were reflected in all other interviews. BW even adds that some argued that the Betuweroute became much more expensive than was budgeted because of the negotiated adaptation measures. According to BW it was argued that the Betuweroute thus became more expensive because it needed support. This is too simplistic however, as this could be expected on beforehand:

***BW** [00:16:25] There was no mention of decent integration measures at all in the cost estimates, while the same government said: 'You need integration measures in these kinds of projects'. So you know that noise barriers are needed, for example.*

MRA took it even a step further and stated that the local authorities even had a saying by the creation of the first plans. According to MRA was the first plan to upgrade the existing line in the Betuwe, but was it blocked by mayors of the places it would cross. Following, there was a plan to transport all the freight trains over another route. The local mayors of that rail line objected, which had the result that a new route was planned: the Betuweroute. According to MRA it also helped that a lot of these mayors were part of the CDA, a political party,) and helped these contacts with the planning of a new route for the rail line:

***MRA** [00:28:19] So that had influence, there were a lot of CDA-mayors and they had contacts with Leers in the parliament. And then Leers went on to argue for a new route.*

#### German planning environment

The German experts were asked about the influence of different actors as well. Other than for the Dutch Betuweroute, no previous quotes regarding lobbying were found prior to the interviews. When asked, the interviewees indicated that it was indeed different in Germany compared to the Netherlands. JB argued that the Hollandstrecke in Germany wasn't such a debated topic as in the Netherlands.

***JB** [00:20:01] No, not the same. Building a new railway like the Betuweroute was in Germany on the agenda not under the first ten positions on the agenda I think. And there was no lobby like in the Netherlands for the Betuweroute in Germany.*

Whereas in the Netherlands the Betuweroute was pushed by the port of Rotterdam and the ministry, was the Hollandstrecke pushed less. SK indicated the Industrie – und Handelskammer, the chamber of industry and commerce for Kleve, Wesel and Duisburg, was of importance by placing the Hollandstrecke on the political agenda. They argued that the Hollandstrecke was required, based on the expected amount of trains and freight. And although the used numbers of the Industrie- und Handelskammer weren't questioned, it proved more difficult to put the project on the agenda in Germany:

*SK [00:06:39] And those numbers were not questioned. In itself people acknowledged that the capacity of the existing infrastructure wasn't sufficient, that something needed to be added. People did acknowledge that, but with that it wasn't included in the policy plans. And they lobbied hard for that. Somewhere in between 2000 and 2010 it got adopted in the Bundesverkehrswegeplan with a certain priority. So eventually it got adopted.*

SK later explained the motivation of the Industrie- and Handelskammer as well. He stated that they were mainly interested in the Hollandstrecke because of the port of Duisburg. According to SK, Duisburg has the largest European inland port with a lot of container turnover. It is a logistical centre for the river, but also for road- and rail transport. For Duisburg is Rotterdam the most important port, so there is a common interest for a good connection. This is also the reason why the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia was a strong proponent of a third rail line or even a new railway.

As we have seen in a previous section however, the money for the project has to come from Berlin. Although the federal state was convinced, this wasn't the case for the central government in Berlin, as it took longer for them to get convinced. In Germany it became a matter of prioritization and the project didn't get prioritized up until around 2010, a few years after the Dutch Betuweroute was finished. This prioritization went hand in hand with the German unification. The Warnemünde treaty got signed in 1992, a turbulent time in Germany, not even two years after the former DDR and BRD were merged. TT said the following on this topic:

*TT [00:21:57] (...) But it certainly has to do with priorities. And, you have to realise that in '92 we were just dealing with the Deutsche Einheit. So a lot of energy and money of course, also concerning infrastructure, was invested in the East of Germany. So that could have been a factor, why the focus of the Government wasn't placed on the Betuweroute.*

On top of that, TT argued that the German Hollandstrecke was located near a lot of villages and homes of people. He argued that the ones who had to take the decision therefore might have expected more problems and made a choice that would give them less trouble:

*TT [00:25:10] The ones who have to provide focus, they might say: 'You know, over there I expect a lot of arguments, I'm in office for another four years, maybe I would prefer building a highway in the East of Germany, where nobody lives or you have to deal with less stakeholders.'*

The lack of priority for the German Hollandstrecke is not the only problem it encountered. For some of the politicians in Berlin it was not only something with low priority, it was even a project that not desirable. According to JB, did the German minister responsible for transport promise the Dutch minister to build a railway from Emmerich to Duisburg in the same time the Netherlands were building the Betuweroute. JB was talking about the agreement of Warnemünde here. According to him the Dutch went on and started constructing the Betuweroute and then the following happened:

*JB [00:07:26] (...) in Germany there was a political change in Berlin. The new politician said: I didn't promise this. It's not my opinion and it's the problem of the Netherlands, but it is not a problem for me.*

As in Warnemünde a treaty was signed, this was the following question. JB answered that this is true, but that the agreement was not very substantial. He argued that it was more of a letter of intent, not a formal contract. There were no repercussions when the terms weren't met. As the treaty is covered extensively in all interviews, an entire paragraph further in this thesis is devoted to the topic.

As to why some politicians in Berlin saw the Hollandstrecke as undesirable, JB and SK both argued that the port of Rotterdam was seen as competition for some German ports in the North of the country. Where companies in Nord Rhine-Westphalia need the port of Rotterdam, does the region in the North, in which for example the ports of Hamburg and Wilhelmshaven are located, see the port of Rotterdam as competition. JB was convinced that there were politicians in Berlin who thought the same. Despite the fact that JB more than once that it was his own impression and he could make it stick, it is interesting to see what JB told about this:

*JB [00:17:09] It's my opinion that there are people in Berlin that have said behind a closed door: 'Let us don't build quite like the Netherlands, we need a new railway at Hamburg. That is clear. After that we can build new railway from Rotterdam to this border'.*

Unfortunately, in none of the interviews this was confirmed with certainty. However, SK did argue something similar. The connection from North to South is important in Germany, which was of influence on the consideration. The project could be seen as infrastructure mainly beneficial for the Netherlands according to SK:

*SK [00:20:23] And that is I think one of the reasons why Germany, or the German Bundesbahn has said: 'Well, the few trains that will come, can be handled this way. That doesn't require much'. With investments, a consideration has to be made. Do you choose to invest in internal connections, or do you invest in outgoing connections?*

What has become clear from these interviews is that the German Hollandstrecke differs from the Dutch Betuweroute in the proponents in the projects. Where the supporters for the Dutch rail line were very effective in drowning out the opposition, was this different in Germany. The proponents were mainly limited to individuals and organisations in the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia, while the money needed to come from Berlin. It seems like the lobby in Germany didn't reach far enough or didn't had enough influence, while in the Netherlands they were in direct contact with the decision takers and where directly involved in the project. This lobby however, is not the only part that makes up the planning environment. Another part is the decision-making environment and therefore the interviewees were asked about the opposition as well.

It turns out that the opposition to the German Hollandstrecke differed from the Dutch Betuweroute as well. Where the Dutch planning environment was characterized by fierce discussion about whether the project should be built in the first place, was this in Germany not the case. Although there were negative reactions to the project, an extensive movement devoted to stop the project seems absent. When asked, JB told that the response was an attempt to adjust the project, not to block it completely. He stated that the project got more expensive as locals demanded that more was done to compensate for the inconvenience. He also stated that people with interest in the nature made demands in order to alter the project and that these claims together caused the project to be delayed as well:

*JB[00:28:22] If you built it, it gets more expensive. After you get the people and you get the people of nature, you must build more and more and more and it gets more and more expensive to build the railway. And you need more years to build the railway.*

In the interview with TT this image was confirmed. TT stated that there was much to do about the design of the project, after which he was asked whether there were protests against the project in the first place. He answered the following:

*TT [00:09:48] I think that that discussion, who do you say that in Dutch? The die is cast? So in principle it is the way is. People over here have realised that in principle the rail line will be finished. That people don't want it, and that a lot of people don't want it, for all kinds of reasons, is logical, but there won't be a trial about that anymore.*

*Interviewer [00:10:18] But there was a trial about that? Or is that (...)*

*TT [00:10:22] No, not as far as I know. For that is also supported by the Treaty of the state, that was reached by the Netherlands and Germany in 1992.*

TT later continued that if there were any trials, they must have taken place in the earlier years, in the beginning of the 2000's or something, but that he didn't know. He stated that in those years, there was a lot of lobbying about the details of the planning, for example about who was going to pay, about how expensive it was going to be and where it would be located. This is in line with what SK told in his interview, when asked about the amount of resistance in Germany:

*SK [00:28:58] Oh yes, there was resistance against the Betuweroute. 'Betuweroute, so nicht' was a group. At a certain moment, when it was obvious it couldn't be stopped anymore. That Betuweroute is there already, they talked about: how to do it then?'*

When asked, SK clarified that this was during the time the Dutch Betuweroute was already existing, but the protests were about how to implement the German rail line. 'So nicht', or 'not this way' in English, was the theme. The protests focussed on the impact of the new rail line, that they shouldn't be dividing communities and that crossings shouldn't disappear and that kind of stuff. The protesters were worried that it would be harder to get to the other side of the rail line. The most important discussion point became the choice between upgrading the existing rail line with an extra rail line, or building an entire new line. When the choice was made to upgrade the existing rail line, the protesting movements evolved and they were involved in how it should be build and implemented.

Lower authorities played a large role in this discussion. As previously discussed, the role of these lower authorities makes up the last part of the planning environment. In the interview with JB, the impression was given that these lower authorities didn't had much influence in the planning process. He stated that it were the ministry in Berlin, the Eisenbahn Bundesamt in Bonn and DB Netz who were involved in the planning process. When asked if for example the city of Duisburg or Emmerich were involved, JB responded negatively. JB mentioned the port of Duisburg as possibly involved, but wasn't sure about this and repeated the statement that the three organisations mentioned earlier were involved.

This is remarkable, as the interviews with TT and SK gave another impression. The interview with FZ and PS couldn't shed light on this, as they worked less directly involved in the project. In the interview with SK however, he argued that municipalities along the rail line have played an important role from the beginning. They were mainly concerned with the implication of the rail line, whereby they didn't object against the project, as happened in the Netherlands. He argued that this was because nobody

wanted to lose their rail line. Some municipalities were afraid that a new rail line for freight traffic would eventually also attract high-speed trains and in the end would lose their connection to the passenger transport infrastructure. That was located close the city centres, so the local authorities voted for the variant in which the existing rail line were extended. SK said the following on this topic:

*SK [00:32:02] Because the rail lines are there, and nobody would like to lose that. In no case. Because it is an important connection for the population, for commuters to get to work and passenger transport also uses that line. You have these rail line and nobody wants to lose them*

On top of that, could the construction of a new rail line be used by the municipalities for their own gain. Although this was also the case in the Netherlands, were there some differences. TT explained this in his interview. In Germany there is legislation that states that change is needed before noise-reducing measures will be taken. This 'Bestandsschutz', states that existing infrastructure doesn't need to be checked on for example emissions and noise pollution. The construction of a new rail line ensures that new checks are executed, which granted noise barriers in places where they are wanted for years. TT provided the example of the crossing Löwentor, which is located in the middle of the town of Emmerich. Even before the second world war there were plans to alter the crossing. After the second world war it got rebuilt. From the 50's plans to alter it started to re-emerge. On these plans TT stated the following:

*TT [00:29:05] Deutsche Bahn didn't wanted that. That discussion went on for multiple decades. And now, with the Betuweroute, almost 100 years after the first discussion, there finally is made progress. It will be altered. For the most part the costs will be paid by the federal state of Nord Rhine-Westphalia, by Deutsche Bahn, by the federal government. So that fixes for us a problematic situation.*

Earlier in that interview TT told about the influence local protest-organisations have. He told that for example the Rettet den Eltenberg is a local protest-group. He stated that the group was able to conduct a strong lobby, as different local politicians from different political parties took part in the group. As these politicians were in contact with politicians from Berlin, was the initiative in the picture for national politicians.

In the interview with FZ and PS another remarkable difference in the planning environment was found. The principles and objectives of the planning is part of the planning environment as we have seen in the literature chapter. In the interview PS stated that they had a meeting with colleagues from the ministry in the Netherlands and ProRail. In this meeting, the Dutch told that they could transfer more trains on the rail line, while this wasn't demanded by the prognosis. The Dutch assumed that the demand for freight trains would increase, when more capacity on the network was created. For the

German side of the project however, the expected amount of trains was used in order to determine whether an upgrade of the rail line was needed:

*PS [00:13:50] So on the German side for the freight traffic you have a demand driven model to organize a number of trains. And on the Dutch side you have an offer-orientated planning philosophy.*

This is clearly an entire approach to the question whether a new rail line is needed. On the one side, the amount of trains determines the amount of rail line is needed. On the other side, the amount of rail line decisive for the amount of trains.

#### Differences in planning environment.

The planning environment makes up the second component of the planning culture. In the previous paragraphs we have seen that the planning environment between the Dutch Betuweroute and the German Hollandstrecke shows similarities, but certainly has some differences. Based on the interviews the differences in planning environment seem even more striking than those in the planning artifacts. The first difference is the fact that the lobby in favour of the Betuweroute was stronger in the Netherlands and had support from politicians at the right place. In both countries the money had to come from the national government. In Germany the support was most found at the local level and at the federal state, where the Dutch national politicians were convinced earlier. In Germany the rail line also encountered a lack of priority, partly due to the German unification and its implications. Another major difference in the planning environment is the way the plans were conceived. In Germany it was conceived more as a given thing that it would be built and the discussion evoked around where and how the project should be built. In the Netherlands there was a way more principle discussion about whether it should be built in the first place. This seems illogical, as the Dutch Betuweroute was completed years earlier. However, the German project affects a lot of individuals as it runs through a lot of villages and towns, who all had a chance to express their desires and a lot of negotiation about the rail line was conducted, causing delays. The different approach in both countries to the question on whether extra rail line are needed is also of importance for the planning environment. In Germany the prognosis for the demand of freight trains is of importance, while in the Netherlands the assumption is made that more capacity on the network will lead to more trains.

#### Dutch societal environment

The final component that makes up the planning culture is the societal environment. As stated in the literature chapter, this is the hardest component to see, because most of its attributes are taken for granted. For this thesis, the interviewees were asked about the consideration of the environment for both plans and about the reaction of the public. In the previous paragraphs we have seen that for both

projects there was quite some opposition. In order to dive deeper into the planning culture, the underlying values should be regarded. One of the attributes mentioned in the literature chapter is the level of acceptance and respect for the plans. It is however impossible to measure the degree of acceptance for both projects. Therefore experts on both sides were asked where the protest was coming from, whether it was out of self-interest, or out of a wider perspective. The orientation towards time turned out to be a hard concept to translate into a specific question and is regarded in the chapter about the utility and necessity.

The Dutch experts all presented the opposition as a logical consequence of the plans, as nobody would be happy to have some land scooped away to build a train rail line on it. In two of the interviews a foundation was named as part of the opposition. In the interview of MRA it first got mentioned as addition to the people acting in self-interest. These people were called NIMBY's (Not In My BackYard) in all interviews. Later in the interview MRA admitted that the foundation was located near the Betuweroute and was also acting partly in self-interest.

For the extent of attention nature got in the planning, the opinion of the interviewees varied a little. HB argued that nature was one of the foundations for the Betuweroute. He argued that traffic by train is more eco-friendly than any other traffic. In addition green spaces were designed along the route to integrate the Betuweroute in its environment. HB argued that special attention was given to these green spaces. When asked whether the local residents or the nature was taken into account more, BW argued that at least the local residents were taken into account, but that in some cases there was also attention for integration in the local environment, for example with the 'Pannerdensch kanaal'. MRA disagreed fully at first:

*MRA [00:30:04] No, not at all, no. Loss of landscapes, loss of ecological value, loss of agricultural land. None of all taken into account.*

When asked about the measures taken to integrate the Betuweroute, MRA admitted that these were taken. However, was this not taken into account during the decision making process. MRA stated that later all these measures were taken, but this was to compensate and integrate it as good as possible, but during the decision making process, nature wasn't taken into account.

#### German Societal environment

For the final part of the planning culture, the German interviewees were asked about the extent of self-interest in the protest against the Hollandstrecke as well. In the interview with JB, he emphasized that transport by rail is welcomed in general, as long as it doesn't affect the individual.

*JB [00:27:24] Yeah, that is a problem the railway have in the whole of Europe, in the whole world. The people want to get more transport per rail, not on the road. They want more to be done for the climate. But not in my backyard.*

This 'Not In My Backyard'-behaviour, as previously seen in the Dutch interviews, thus also got mentioned in the German interviews. The behaviour seems to be even stronger the case in Germany as the rail line are located closer to population centres. In the interview with FZ, he states that the Betuweroute in the Netherlands is located through the Betuwe area and that the German railway goes through villages and towns. This ensures that more people are affected and are thus more involved in the process. He depicts a situation in which the transport via the Hollandstrecke is essential in saving the environment, but simultaneously causes discomfort for people in the region:

*FZ [00:27:54] Yeah. In Germany on the one side, the people who have the rail line near their homes and on the other side, the people who want to save the environment.*

The people who have the rail line planned near their homes were obviously very concerned with the topic and by the means of citizens initiatives, they fought against the decision. According to FZ did this slow down the process of planning in Germany. TT was able to provide an explanation for this. He stated that the Dutch handle these processes more pragmatic and faster.

*TT [00:18:02] In Germany we need 100% or 120% certainty. Every interested party has the ability to participate in the process. And every participation needs to be reviewed.*

TT added that there were two initiatives by the citizens important in the reaction to the plans. 'Betuwe so nicht', as already mentioned by SK and 'De Bergretter', are these two foundations. TT stated that most critical individuals rallied behind these foundations. He also added that there these projects always lead to justified issues.

*TT [00:32:10] Yes, because when you say: 'Not In My Backyard', it is like saying: 'You want to have goods from Asia, but you don't want rail line running through your garden'. You have to be careful with that. There are people who get in serious trouble by the construction of a new passing. They don't know how to get (...)*

*JB [00:33:27] home from work.*

*TT [00:33:30] Yes exactly, who are located close to the rail line. So there are individual issues that need to be taken very seriously.*

According to the interviewees, were not only the individual problems with the Hollandstrecke taken

into account in the planning, but did nature also get considered a lot. SK compared the amount of attention with the amount in the process of the Dutch Betuweroute. He claimed that it received the same amount of attention. He however made a side note, that the Hollandstrecke is not an entire new rail line and that the damage to nature will remain relatively limited. But on the amount of attention he said the following:

*SK [00:28:08] Those aspects are definitively taken into account. But you can compare that with the requirements applying in the Netherlands. So that evolves around plants and animals. So whether it is a 'Natura 2000 area' or that it is a 'Naturschutzgebiet' or a 'Landschaftschutzgebiet', we have the same in Germany. Works exactly the same way.*

TT confirms the importance of the nature in the German planning process. He states that it is a 'hot item'. He used an example in Rees for this, because a Beech marten was found next to the rail line, which couldn't stay there, because of the construction of the Hollandstrecke. A new area was built, for the marten to live in. He also mentioned another foundation, the Naturschutzbund Deutschland (NABU), who are very busy implementing the interests of nature in the process. He mentioned them as important actor in the process. Remarkable the fact that the local president of the NABU is also part of the Bergretter, which was mentioned earlier. TT stated this is always the case with these protest-groups, that a network will form, that keeps getting bigger and bigger.

In his interview, PS also indicated the fact that nature plays an important role in the case of the Hollandstrecke. Although PS acknowledges that it should play an important role, he argues that it sometimes can hamper the planning process seriously. He states that the planning can be blocked using arguments about nature or delay the process by years. He says the following about taking nature into account:

*PS [00:25:09] I understand that. But I think the rules are sometimes a little bit too detailed or too strong. But most of the blockades of new railways is not the animals but the noise and all the people which are living next to a railway line when the axe of one rail line is, I don't know, ten meters next to the house for example.*

Based on the interviews, the impression arises that nature is taken into account for the Hollandstrecke, in a similar extent as in the Netherlands. However, as PS already stated, the inconvenience of the public seems to be a bit more discussed and important in the planning process.

### Differences societal environment

As mentioned in the first paragraph on societal environment, this third level of the planning culture is the hardest to grasp. This was reflected in the interviews, as the answers on the questions were quite brief. However, some interesting things stood out. On both projects, the interests of the local residents are the main motivation for protests. This seems the case a bit more for Germany, as the rail line there is located closer to population centres. The attention for nature is present in both countries as well. Although this seems to be the case a bit more in Germany. As stated however, do the interviews not provide a lot of data on the topic, so it is quite tricky to draw any hard conclusion based on the interviews.

### Spatial imaginary

Next to planning culture, is spatial imaginary the second central concept in this thesis. The way a project is envisioned, represented and promoted is important in the process of creating an infrastructure project. A spatial imaginary is a very hard concept to grasp, but often comes down to a persuasive way of storytelling (Nefs, Zonneveld & Gerretsen, 2022). The questions about the spatial imaginary were divided in two categories: First the interviewees were asked whether they recalled certain images, adjectives, nouns or metaphors that were used in order to promote the project they are expert on. Following, the interviewees were asked which arguments were used in order to promote the projects.

### Dutch imagery

The interviewees were thus asked whether there were certain images, words or metaphors used in the discussion about the Betuweroute. By the time this question was asked, it was confirmed in all interviews that the Betuweroute was a well discussed topic and it was thus interesting that ‘Nederland Distributieland’ was the metaphor that in three interviews was mentioned as focus of the proponents of the project. According to AD, the phrase ‘Nederland Distributieland’. Was used in the Netherlands for a long time to advocate for a lot of infrastructure projects. He mentioned it as a prestige project for the politicians, no matter from which party these politicians were. It is remarkable what AD said about the use of this phrase:

***AD** [00:26:07] And often you can't argue against that ofcourse. So most parties do think 'Nederland Distributieland'. It would be crazy if you are located strategically and you (...)*

INTERVIEWER: [00:28:36] DON'T USE IT.

***AD** [00:28:38] Yes, that would be a bit stupid. But that doesn't mean that the consequences are well thought-out for that principle*

According to AD, proponents of the projects used a phrase, which seems impossible to disagree on. However, is the effect in reality something that might be questioned. By using this phrase, the opposition is given a hard time denying the positive effects of the Betuweroute, as it is 'common sense' to use the strategically location of the Netherlands. BW affirmed the frequent use of the phrase 'Nederland Distributieland', and added that there was another logic that was used often. According to BW you would encounter the oneliner 'road is worse for the climate than rail, so a Betuweroute is needed' in the debates around the project.

Besides the fact that 'Nederland Distributieland' was used by proponents, it turned out hard for the interviewees to indicate other metaphors or imagery that was used in order to promote the project. In the literature it was also found that spatial imaginaries were always accompanied by other imaginaries. When asked about this however, the interviewees all responded that they couldn't recall this. Because all interviewees struggled answering this question, it can be assumed that there were no metaphors or other imagery that were used and could be recognised as such. About the arguments used however, did the interviewees had a lot more to say.

In line with what was stated on 'Nederland Distributieland', were the economic arguments used a lot. As AD argued, proponents often came up with a line of argumentation that seemed irrefutable. The economic opportunity for the Netherlands was often depicted as very stupid not to take. AD argued however, that it is hard for people to fully understand the situation and its implications. AD said the following about this line of argumentation.

*AD [00:28:38] About the Betuweroute, nobody will object the notion that we need a connection to Germany. But it gets odd at the moment that the Netherlands constructs a Betuweroute that isn't connected to Germany. So often, the principles in those policies are not bad per definition.*

In the interview with BW, the economic arguments were also discussed. According to BW did the argumentation went along the following line:

*BW [00:39:30] Rotterdam, the large port, a lot of goods are moved to Germany, hinterland. We don't have a good infrastructure. Germany was at the time busy investing money in there. Also with Antwerp we wanted to compete, so a better rail connection was needed to the hinterland. Read: the Ruhr area.*

He told that there was a report was drawn up by Knight Wendling that was used for the economic argumentation for the project. The report stated that freight transport by rail would thrive if the Betuweroute was build. BW believed that report promised 65 million tonnes to be handled in the

Netherland if the Betuweroute was finished, against a marginal 5 million tonnes if it wasn't completed. The difference of 60 million tonnes was then used to defend the economic value of the project. Complete shoddy work or broddelwerk in Dutch, according to BW.

***BW** [00:31:57] I know from a reliable source that the conclusions were determined in advance and that a consultant was wanted who was willing to write them down (...) In the professional community everybody agreed, nobody took that seriously (...) Among scientists, we joked about it, laughed about it, but apparently in the public debate and politicians haven't realised that in time. That misleading information was being spread.*

MRA stated that a rosy picture was given, about the amount of freight that would be transported and that it was argued that the Betuweroute was necessary for that reason. When asked whether this was supported by numbers, MRA answered approvingly, but told that these numbers were not substantiated. He mentioned the same report as BW to illustrate these claims. He stated that this report made use of old predictions, which weren't accurate anymore, as at the time the report was published the waterway transport, was shipping way more than was predicted.

***MRA** [00:23:47] To justify the construction of the Betuweroute they used very rosy numbers. Numbers of around 65 million tonnes was supposed to go over the line by then and then. That was wishful thinking, that didn't add up at all. That was exaggerated on all sides. Unrealistic and way to high.*

MRA was then asked where these numbers came from. He answered that it started at the NS, who had two scenarios. One of them was a base scenario, the other a growth scenario. The following report took the growth scenario and used this as base scenario, in combination with a growth scenario that thus exceeded the first growth scenario. That happened two or three times, resulting in, according to MRA, enormous, unrealistic numbers.

The economic argument wasn't the only one used however. As might have become clear in previous paragraphs, an environmental argument was used often as well. BW argued that on the emission of CO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> quantitative goals were set by the government. These goals were threatened not to be met, and the Betuweroute was expected to contribute to a solution.

HB answered that the environmental argument was one of the most important aspects of the project. He argued that freight transport per train is way more CO<sub>2</sub>-friendly than any alternative. Besides was the rail line added with special zones directly adjacent to integrate it in the local environment. HB was thus relatively positive about this aspect of the project.

MRA on the other hand, had another opinion. He told that the story at the beginning was that the Betuweroute was needed from both an economic and environmental point of view, both of equal importance. The environmental argument however, was nonsense according to MRA. He stated the following about the topic:

**MRA [00:15:34]** *But it is about the economic value of the project. When it all gets sorted out, it turns out that the environmental advantages don't exist. In no single way, the more you transport, the more you emit. So it is a demagogic game. It sounds good: 'We do it for the environment. We do it to relieve the traffic jams'. Then however, it turns out that only a tiny part is eligible to be transferred from road- to rail-traffic. Awful.*

As mentioned by MRA, both the environmental and economic arguments were used a lot. According to BW this wasn't the case in the beginning. He argued that the environmental arguments were not used in the first years of the discussion. In 1990 the Betuweroute was already mentioned in the government decision that the Betuweroute would be discussed. It was not until 1994 however, that the RIVM was asked to calculate the consequences for the environment. Prior to that moment it was economic underpinned. BW argued that the CPB made some incorrect calculations based on false presumptions, which showed a small economic profit. On what later happened BW said the following:

**BW [00:18:28]** *First report, I think in '93, wasn't that positive actually. And in '95 even the CPB came to the conclusion: 'It will turn out negatively for the economy'. So later they thought: 'Oke, if the economic argument isn't sufficient, we need another argument'. That became the environmental argument.*

BW worked at the RIVM at the time and made calculations about what the impact would be on the environment. He came to the conclusion that the advantages would be little to none and if it wasn't properly coordinated with Germany, there would be no environmental advantage at all. As already mentioned in the paragraphs on planning environment, these calculations later were used by opponents to re-start the discussion. BW final statement on the topic was interesting, after he argued that coordination with Germany was needed for environmental gains, he stated that the connection with Germany wasn't considered seriously enough. A later paragraph will discuss the way international coordination was viewed, but it interesting to see that the RIVM concluded that coordination was needed to reach one of the two main goals of the Betuweroute. Despite the fact that the coordination fell short, the argument was used nevertheless in the Dutch discussion.

MRA confirmed in his interview that the environmental arguments were dragged in because the economic arguments weren't sufficient. He argued that this was because of the Environmental Impact Report, which is mandatory for large projects. In the report the recommendations was made that the effect would be little to none. However, as it is an advice, it can be neglected by the minister, which is

what happened according to MRA. Later the argument for the environment were used nevertheless for the public opinion:

*Interviewer [00:34:25] And later was the argument still used?*

**MRA [00:34:30]** *Yes, for the environment, to cut down traffic jams.*

The congestion-argument was also mentioned by BW, although he identified it as a separate argument instead of as part of the environmental argument.

**BW [00:37:05]** *Anyway, they first tried to justify it on economic grounds. That didn't hold up, so the environmental-argument was used more. When that didn't hold up as well, the congestion on the A15 was used. Traffic experts said on this: 'Just a drop in the ocean, the Betuweroute'. So actually the three cornerstones were slowly demolished, but it needed to be build.*

BW did note however that the congestion-argument didn't play a large role anyway. He was under the impression that only a handful insiders knew the argument was used and later refuted.

A final change in argumentation was mentioned by MRA. An alternative for the Betuweroute was upgrading the already existing network. When the existing network would be expanded, the Betuweroute would become unnecessary and therefore became mentioning this alternative undesirable during the discussion on constructing the line. When the line became irreversible, was the argument used to cancel the Noordtak, a branch of the Betuweroute:

**MRA [00:22:18]** *So at the moment it is irreversible that the Betuweroute was constructed, could these argument suddenly play a role again.*

This indicates at the influence proponents of the project have had. They were able to manage the debate on the Betuweroute to a large extend. As can be seen in the following paragraphs, this is one of the main differences from the German debate.

#### German imagery

Just as for the Dutch interviewees, the German experts also had difficulties answering the questions regarding the used imagery. Both SK and JB stated that they had no memory of certain images that were used in the discussion. PS told that the opponents tried to collect as much examples of proof for the disturbing elements as possible. He however added that it was impossible for them to tell more about this, as they weren't as closely involved in the project.

TT is thus the only German interviewee who had something to say about the imagery. The first thing that came to mind was the name used in Germany. According to TT is the name 'Betuweroute' or

'Betuwelinie' used the most often. He found it remarkable that it in the Netherlands is a region, after which a railway line is named, while in Germany the Betuwe is only linked to the rail line.

*TT [00:37:02] Here in Germany does nobody know, or at least in this region, almost nobody knows what the Betuwe actually is. For a Dutchman is it common knowledge that the Betuwe a region is. You can travel there. And for us it became a railroad. De Betuwe, for us Germans really problematic, we have Germanised it now.*

TT continued that the word is pronounced differently, with emphasis placed on another part of the word. It has become a concept in Germany, a metaphor that exist in the minds of people. He recalled this as the only metaphor used however. In his interview, two other images were brought up swiftly. First TT told about the Eltenberg, which became a keyword as well. As stated before, a local protest-group was founded to protect the mountain. TT stated the following about what the Eltenberg means:

*TT [00:07:45] So the Eltenberg is always the keyword. 'Oh, Betuwe, they will take something away from our mountain, or well, hill. But behind it is, so much more hides. More is behind it. So yes, that is also such a phenomenon. And that is why it will always be an item on the political agenda.*

This gives the impression that the rail line are to be constructed will take something away of the people that is 'theirs'. A non-local project that takes away a local landmark, that would be undesirable and arouses resistance. The second imagery TT mentioned, had an opposite effect compared to the former. This imagery resembles what he told about important reports. TT did stated there that two reports of Spiekermann were very important for the local politics. In the reports they used hard figures and some arguments. What it would mean if the rail line were located near the highway or not. When asked whether these reports presented some images or not, TT answered the following:

*TT [00:42:32] Yes, as I stated already, I haven't seen that report in years. But I think it contains something about the danger for passenger transport collapsing, especially the regional passenger transport. And that is certainly an image what was convincing at the time and was of influence for the crucial questions: 'Where will the rail line be located?'*

Thus the image of passenger transport collapsing was existing in Germany, promoting the idea of the Hollandstrecke, as that would save the passenger transport from moving from the centre of the population centres to another train rail line. This way the Hollandstrecke would prevent the local population centres from being cut off.

On the argumentation used, more interviewees had some interesting things to say as well. It turns out this differs from the Dutch argumentation. According to SK it started with Warnemünde agreement.

The Dutch agreed to construct the Betuweroute with that agreement, while the Germans were intending to handle the extra freight on the already existing rail line. When the Dutch rail line came close to finishing, the Germans realised that the freight traffic would increase and that this would cause a lot of extra inconvenience as the current rail lines are located right in the middle of population centres. On top of that the fear arose that passenger transport would be repressed. Deutsche Bahn argued that this would be solved with a higher frequency of trains. The local reaction to this was that this wouldn't be sufficient however. Following a report feasibility study was conducted. SK told the following on this study:

*SK [00:03:11] This study, conducted by Spiekermann from Düsseldorf, concluded that the current capacity wasn't sufficient. On the German side, at least one extra rail line was needed. The famous Third Rail line.*

According to SK have the Germans officially argued that it would be able to handle on the current rail lines. The numbers in this study however, were of great influence. These were never questioned. SK argued that locals realised that the capacity wasn't enough and that something extra was needed. That was realised. But with that realisation it wasn't in the plans yet. This required the push from local governments to Berlin, where the ultimate decision was taken.

SK also added that there was another discussion at the time. The Euregio, the organisation where SK works, suggested that the Germans might consider constructing an entire new train rail line as well. This could be done perfect alongside the A3, just like in the Netherlands alongside the A12. This would be more expensive, but would provide an rail line outside the residential areas for the freight trains and would keep the current rail line available for passenger transport. The local governments however, feared that high-speed trains and such would be transferred to this new rail line and that their local stations would lose connection to the passenger transport network. So the region itself chose for expansion of the current network with an extra rail line.

This is in line with what TT stated on the Spiekermann reports previously. When experts make a claim, this is often taken for granted in Germany, as there is a lot of faith in these expert.

The impression is given that in Holland the necessity is discussed more, while the Germans accept it more easy that such a project is needed. TT was asked what his opinion was on this matter. He replied that he agreed:

*TT [00:38:39] Yes, Although that is another one of these feelings I can't really make stick. But that is the feeling I have, for example when one talks about constructing work on highways. And it could be that that was also the case in this project.*

TT mentioned this as a difference between the Netherlands and Germany. In the Netherlands it was discussed more extensively whether the project provided added value. In Germany this was less the case, as it was agreed with the Netherlands to construct the project. The added value was still discussed, but in principle the project was unquestionable because of the agreement of Warnemünde. This agreement will be discussed in the upcoming paragraphs.

Finally the arguments used in the Dutch discussion were also used in the German discussion. The port of Duisburg was mentioned in the interviews of both SK and JB as important in this discussion. According to JB numbers were important in the discussion and the position of the port of Duisburg was crucial in this. He stated that this explains for 70 to 90% the German interest in the project. The environment was also mentioned in all interviews, but the impression was given that it is regarded more as an additional benefit than main reason for the construction.

#### Comparison spatial imaginaries

It has become obvious that the spatial imaginaries for both projects differ. It turned out that most questions regarding the imaginaries were hard to grasp for interviewees on both sides of the border. All interviews combined however, did result in some interesting findings. First off was in the Netherlands the impression was given that the country would miss out on an enormous business opportunity when the Betuweroute wasn't built and that the project was needed for the survival of the freight transport by rail. When the economic arguments appeared as not strong enough, the environmental aspect was brought into the discussion.

On the German side, seemed the imaginaries even more absent than on the Dutch side. The discussion turned out to be different as well. It was more about the question of 'where' than whether the project should be built in the first place. In Germany the necessity was generally accepted, partly because the Dutch project was built already. The conclusion was reached that the current network wasn't capable of handling all freight traffic. The economic and environmental arguments were used as well, but it seemed more 'common sense' that the project was needed. The delay was caused by the discussion on where to build it. Eventually the fear of losing connection for local population centres was decisive in the decision to build it alongside the already existing rail line.

#### International coordination

As the two projects meet up at the border and form an international connection, it is also interesting to note how on both sides cross-border cooperation is viewed. In the preparation for the interviews, two topics deemed important. First, the agreement of Warnemünde. As can be seen in the theoretical chapter, this agreement was signed by the ministers for infrastructure of both the Netherlands and Germany. A lot remained unclear about this agreement however, so it is interesting to see how the

interviewees view this agreement. Next to Warnemünde, is it also interesting to see how the European TEN-T policy is viewed. Both projects are part of a priority axis and thus could profit from support on European level. In the interviews it was thus also asked whether the TEN-T policy had influence.

#### Warnemünde

It is remarkable that on both projects, the interviewees were valuing the agreement of Warnemünde negatively. In his interview, BW notes that he is no legal expert, and different stories about the legal bindingness of the agreement are circulating. Some state that a promise is made to construct the Betuweroute, and therefore there is an obligation to do so. However, BW stated that he later spoke to some lawyers who stated that it wasn't legally binding at all and it was legally possible to get out of the situation. However, it was regularly used in the discussion as an argument to construct it:

***BW [00:42:06]** So yes, it was used as argument to argue that the Betuweroute should be constructed.*

According to MRA did the minister for infrastructure closed the agreement to solve some issues. In the Netherlands the discussion about the connection with Germany had arisen. According to MRA:

***MRA [00:20:08]** And she obviously needed something she could use to say: 'Yes, that will be fixed. That is no problem.' The solution was then: Two branch-lines right? (...) and all kinds of commitments of the Germans, who were supposed to work on that.*

The agreement was thus used to appease some of the opponents and to tackle their argument that the Betuweroute wouldn't get a good connection with the hinterland. MRA continued that the commitments of the Germans proved worthless, as the Hollandstrecke is not completed yet. When the remark was made that the Dutch also didn't honour their commitments and haven't built the two side-branches, MRA acknowledged that. He stated that the two side-branches were thrown away by the minister, who stated that those weren't needed anymore. When asked how it is possible that both sides didn't honour the agreement and how binding the agreement is, MRA answered the following:

***MRA [00:21:31]** Not. Look, Maij-Weggen pretended that it was a binding agreement. But the Germans thought otherwise.*

This view on the agreement of Warnemünde was confirmed in the interview with JB. He also spoke out negatively on the agreement and stated that although the Dutch and German minister agreed to construct both projects at the same time, that it wasn't put into a strong contract. JB stated that the ministers for infrastructure on both sides agreed to do so, after which the Dutch project began to be

build. However, a change of politicians in Berlin happened and the new politicians weren't convinced of the project. According to JB did the new politicians in Berlin say that it was a problem for the Netherlands, but not for them, as they didn't think the same about the Hollandstrecke. JB thus talked about a verbal agreement, which raised the question about the agreement that was signed. JB had the following to say:

*JB [00:09:30] Yeah. That's like a LOI, a letter of intent. In Germany and a letter of intent in Germany, you can put it away, every day.*

*Interviewer [00:09:46] Oké.*

*JB [00:09:47] It is nothing. It is nothing. If you make a LOI in the Netherlands, a letter of intent, it is stronger.*

JB later referred to an interview with a Dutch newspaper, in which he stated not to make the same mistake with the Noordtak as was made for the Betuweroute. He stated that a strong contract is needed for future collaboration, in which clear commitments are written down. On top of that repercussions should be included, in case these commitments are not met. Politicians come and go, but a good contract should prevent these agreements to be broken. SK added to this point of view, as he stated that the German intention has always been to handle all freight traffic coming from the Betuweroute on the existing network. The Germans have claimed for a long time that the amounts of freight could be transported with the capacity available on the existing rail line. From the interviews it can thus be concluded that the Germans and the Dutch viewed the Warnemünde agreement differently. For the Betuweroute it was used as argument to start constructing. After all it was a promise made, and you have to keep promises. The Germans however, saw it as a letter of intent and saw the Betuweroute being constructed, but didn't feel obligated to build their own Hollandstrecke up until the moment it became clear their current network didn't have the capacity.

#### TEN-T

Another attempt to coordinate the cross-border infrastructure projects is the European TEN-T policy. Both the Betuweroute and the Hollandstrecke make up part of a priority axis in this policy and thus were the interviewees asked whether this policy had any influence on both processes. For the Dutch experts, did the answer to this vary. Both BW and MRA stated that they knew the policy, but couldn't recall whether it was of any influence. BW argued that the principle behind TEN-T was used, that European cross-border infrastructure was wanted for multiple reasons. However, it wasn't used directly:

*BW [00:39:56] The following wasn't said: 'Because the European Committee has this TEN-T policy, we need to do this'. I didn't encounter that in the discussion.*

BW explained this, as he had the impression that the TEN-T policy became important after the discussion on the Betuweroute had come to an end. And although it revolves around the same topic, both BW and MRA stated that they didn't encounter it at all during the discussion.

This is remarkable, as HB argued that it was one of the pillars of the Betuweroute. The goal was in line with the Pan-European plan to promote the traffic of freight by rail. This was wanted by multiple countries and thus also by the Netherlands. The difference in view on this policy can perhaps be explained by the position of the interviewees again. They all agreed that the project is in line with the policy, but only HB responded that it was of importance. The policy wasn't directly involved, as no European funds were used in the construction, and it wasn't used in the societal discussion on the project. However it could be possible that the policy enhanced the opinion of the proponents of the project. As HB was more directly involved in the planning process it could be possible he indicated the policy as important for the Betuweroute.

In the interviews with the German experts, the influence of TEN-T on the Hollandstrecke turned out to be hard to define as well. None of the interviewees could confirm whether the Hollandstrecke would get funds from the TEN-T policy, while it was mentioned as realistic option. The EU would give the countries participating money, in order to stimulate these projects to be build. JB reckoned that it is being discussed at the moment in Brussels:

*JB [00:40:15] That's a discussion at this moment in Brussels. Can we get a little bit of money from Brussels? So that we think we must build it because it's an advantage for us in Germany or for the Netherlands or for the Belgium or for France or other countries.*

Both SK and TT stated that it very well could be possible, that there will be European funds for the Hollandstrecke, but also acknowledged that they didn't know.

*SK [00:37:00] I think the TEN-T policy is meant to do the following: When you say: 'I'm located in such a corridor and I have internationally some measures we want to execute', and you have the national government supporting that, then there is an option that you receive some European funding.*

SK however, admitted that he didn't know whether there was European funding used for the Hollandstrecke or not. TT stated that the train rail line between Emmerich and Oberhausen are a bottleneck for the train connection between Rotterdam and Genoa. This ensured a crucial interest of the European union. And although the TEN-T policy didn't have any local influence, he argued that the European Union and all agreements on that level made sure that the Hollandstrecke became more

prioritised in Germany. On top of that he argued that the European union uses funding to ensure higher priority to these kinds of projects. These projects are seen as the solution for bottlenecks in an European wide network. When asked whether there was funding used in the project, TT answered that he assumed that there will be funding as far he knew. The attention of the European Union thus ensured a higher prioritisation in Germany, particularly through the possibility of funding.

*TT [00:12:53] Meanwhile there are so many necessities on European level to construct the line, that it will be build.*

The TEN-T policy ensured a lot of means to finance the measures needed. TT added that proof of this can be found along the rail line. Signs, for example in the city of Rees display the EU-flag, to show that it is financed by the EU.

From the interviews it can be concluded both the agreement of Warnemünde and the TEN-T policy are both regarded differently. Although there remained questions about the legal bindingness of the agreement of Warnemünde, it was presented as binding and used in the discussion to make an argument. In Germany it was seen as a letter of intent, without obligations to build the Hollandstrecke. The original plan was to handle all freight traffic on the pre-existing network. When it became clear that this wouldn't comply, the Germans started with the Hollandstrecke. According to the interviewees, the TEN-T policy was in the Netherlands regarded as in line with the Betuweroute, but not as anything more. It had no direct influence in both the funding or the discussion on the Netherlands. For the Hollandstrecke this differed as well. Although none of the interviewees could confirm that TEN-T funding is used in the construction, it is seen as a very realistic option. On top of that is the attention drawn by the TEN-T policy partly responsible for the prioritisation the project deserved.

## Conclusion & Discussion

In this chapter, the research questions will first be answered based on the data presented in the previous chapter. First the conclusions of this thesis will be presented. This will be followed by a discussion on these results. In the final part of this chapter, the limitations on the used methods and process underlying this thesis will be presented.

### Conclusion

This thesis was written in order to answer the following research question:

*Do differences in planning culture between the Netherlands and Germany influence the spatial imaginaries of the Betuweroute and Hollandstrecke in a cross-border context?*

With this research question, a contribution is made to an answer of the question why the completion date of the Betuweroute and Hollandstrecke differs for about 20 years. For this end, interviews with 9 experts were conducted. For the Dutch Betuweroute, 4 experts were interviewed. They all published previously about the Betuweroute, and most were involved with the Betuweroute in another fashion as well. For the German side, 5 experts were interviewed. As no (academic) publications were found about the German project, interviews with directly involved actors were conducted. All interviews focused mainly on the three main topics of this thesis. First of all, the planning culture of both projects is reviewed. Following, the interviewees were asked about the spatial imaginaries of the projects and lastly the influence of cross-border cooperation was questioned.

In this thesis a lot of interesting findings on the planning cultures of both projects were made. The most obvious difference between the projects is the fact that the Betuweroute was finished 20 years before the Hollandstrecke will be. The decision to build the project was accordingly taken prior to the decision in Germany. It has become clear that the decision in the Netherlands became inevitable earlier in the process, in a more informal manner. Dutch decision-takers had committed themselves early on in the process to a great extent to the project and couldn't back out without loss of face. Maybe because of the early, informal decision did the Dutch Betuweroute encounter more discussion about necessity and usefulness. This caused a lot of research to be done and a lot of reports to be written. Although the German process took longer, the project wasn't questioned as much. The faith in experts and the published reports was very large in Germany.

What also differed on both projects was the lobby conducted. In the Netherlands, this was a much discussed topic. The lobby in the Netherlands turned out to be way stronger than its German counterpart. It also proved to be conducted in more efficient places. Politicians in the Netherlands were also involved in the lobby and otherwise quickly convinced of the added value, while for the Hollandstrecke it were merely politicians on the level of the federal state that supported the project. The money and decision however, needed to come from the national government. Support on national

level proved more difficult for the Hollandstrecke, especially because Germany was preoccupied with its unification in the initial stage of the project and other (freight) rail lines were favoured.

The way the plan was received also differed. For the German Hollandstrecke did the principle discussion on whether the project should be build stay absent. However, the Dutch Betuweroute was planned alongside an highway, while the Hollandstrecke is constructed through the middle of population centres. The choice for this option was highly debated and the project continues to be, as it affects a lot of individuals. In Germany concerns and remarks of all these individuals are very carefully taken into an account, leading to a lot of negotiations and delay.

It turned out hard for the interviewees to answer questions regarding the spatial imaginaries used for both projects. The image that was painted in the Netherlands however, was that an enormous business opportunity would be missed, if the Betuweroute wouldn't be constructed. When this argument didn't seemed enough, the environmental argument was added. For the German Hollandstrecke however, it was less necessary to paint a picture, as it was seen as common sense to most Germans that the rail line was needed. The image that was of relevance in Germany had more to do with the location of the rail line, as people were afraid to lose their connection.

Two forms of international coordination turned out relevant for both projects. As both were considered differently in the two countries, it may also be part of an explanation for the difference in completion date. In the Netherlands, the agreement of Warnemünde was presented as binding contract and used as an argument in the discussion, while the Germans regarded it as a letter of intent. On the other hand, was the TEN-T policy regarded in the Netherlands as something that was in line with the Betuweroute, but not as anything more. The same policy however, is seen as realistic option for funding in Germany and at least ensured that the Hollandstrecke received more attention and priority.

It can be concluded that especially the planning cultures of both countries differed a lot and that this had considerable influence on the completion date of both projects. Despite the fact that the use of spatial imaginaries was limited, it has become clear that this imaginary was the result of the planning culture in both countries. In the Netherlands everything was done in order to construct the Betuweroute as fast as possible, while the Germans didn't felt that urge. Whether the German planning culture was misunderstood or disregarded by the Dutch and vice versa, remains unclear. However, that a differing planning culture has prevented both projects to be dealt with as one single cross-border infrastructure project, has become undoubtedly clear.

## Discussion

The interviews with experts on both projects provided a lot of insights on the processes behind the projects. In this thesis the concepts of spatial imaginaries and planning culture was focussed on. As expected, these concepts proved useful in understanding the differences between both projects and in the explanation why the completion date of both projects varies so widely. In the theoretical chapter we have seen that Fujimura (2004) stated that cross-border infrastructure projects are more complex and riskier than national projects, as the countries face different political and economic circumstances and cycles. The Betuweroute and Hollandstrecke proved excellent examples of this.

The literature chapter started with some paragraphs on infrastructure and infrastructuralism. In these paragraphs it was stated that infrastructure is often depoliticised, as the decision is often taken long before policymakers 'officially' have come to that conclusion. Politicians often act as promoters in this regard and it is often seen as a prestige project (Olesen, 2020; Rothengatter, 2008). This especially proved to be the case for the Betuweroute. The entire planning culture was focussed on constructing the Betuweroute as fast as possible. Despite the controversy in the Netherlands about this discussion, the project was finished years before its German counterpart. In the Netherlands, the international coordination was used as well as argument in support of constructing the Betuweroute quickly. In Germany the planning culture wasn't aimed at constructing the project as fast as possible. Other projects were prioritized and thus got built before. The international coordination helped in getting the project on the agenda, but this was done years after the Dutch decision was made.

It proved harder to apply the theory of spatial imaginaries in this thesis. What has become clear however, is that the clear and convincing logic in the Netherlands wasn't conveyed to everybody. Hincks et al. (2017) stated that this was needed for a spatial imaginary to build momentum. This momentum had been absent in the Netherlands. For the Hollandstrecke on the other hand, people are more convinced of the necessity of the project. This did however not translate into a spatial imaginary with momentum.

Prior to this research, I wasn't expecting as many differences as I have encountered between Germany and the Netherlands. For me it seemed quite simple when both the Betuweroute and Hollandstrecke were presented on a map: two parts of the same line. As both countries have a strong connection, it felt very odd that both projects differ in completion date the way they do. In this thesis however, it was shown that the forms of international coordination were viewed differently in both countries and that the spatial imaginary also differed. The main difference however, was found in the planning culture of both countries. Despite attempts to coordinate both projects, like the agreement of Warnemünde, it seems like an understanding for each other's planning culture seems absent. For successful cross-border cooperation, this is essential.

## Limitations

For this thesis interviews were conducted with experts on both projects. This proved very insightful, as all interviewees had a lot of information on the topic. The expertise of the interviewees also presented some challenges however. As the Betuweroute was a much discussed topic in the Netherlands and most of the Dutch interviewees previously had been involved with research on the decision-making process themselves, it proved difficult to keep focus from time to time. The Betuweroute and its decision-making process is been criticized a lot and it therefore was tempting to focus on the problems of this decision-making process. The goal of this thesis however, is to gain insights in the differences between the Betuweroute and the Hollandstrecke. In the interviews the decision-making process of the Betuweroute is extensively discussed as this was obviously something the experts had a lot of knowledge about. And although this is an interesting topic, it was not all relevant for this thesis.

Another weakness is the amount of interviews. Due to the limited time for this thesis, only 9 experts were interviewed. This thesis would have been stronger if more interviews were conducted, also because the interviewees sometimes disagreed with each other. Especially for the German side, more interviews could have been helpful. For the Dutch side, is the project already some years ago and is it already finished. And although the interviewees had a different background, which might explain some of their varying points of view, it is questionable whether other people could have recalled as much information as the experts already interviewed. For the Hollandstrecke this might be different however. As it is a project that is highly debated right now, it might have been interesting to hear people with another point of view.

On top of that is this thesis written in English and are most interviews conducted in Dutch. Two of the interviews were conducted in English, but in both cases the speakers weren't native speakers. This is another weakness for this thesis, as the nuance of words is of importance, especially for the topic of this thesis. The quotes used however, are translated with due diligence, to make the room for errors as small as possible and to translate the message as good as possible. It is therefore expected that this limitation has been kept to a minimum.

A final remark on this thesis is the concepts chosen. It proved a good choice to focus on the planning cultures of both countries, as this provided a lot of insights. The choice to focus on the concept of spatial imaginaries was less successful, as the interviewees had less to say on the topic. This might be explained by the relatively simplicity of both projects. The concept might be more suited to be applied to projects that encompass more spatial interventions than that of a new rail line. It is therefore interesting for future research to look at the use of spatial imaginaries in more encompassing spatial projects in cross-border regions.

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