



# A SHIFT IN FOCUS FROM AIRSIDE TO LANDSIDE SECURITY

How the RNLN makes sense of the changing relationship with its stakeholders in providing landside security at the different national airports.

Pam Ummenthum

S1483692

Supervisor: Dr. J.J. Wolbers

Second Reader: Dr. G. Landucci

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The Netherlands

## **Preface**

This master thesis is an independent, original and unpublished work by the author, P. Ummenthum. This thesis is part of the Master Crisis and Security Management of Leiden University, Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs.

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## Summary

The shift in focus from airside to landside security has an impact on the authority structures at and around the national airports. For the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee (hereinafter: RNLN) this means that the relationship with its stakeholders in the network changes as well. This could have an influence on the sensemaking process of the RNLN at the national airports in providing landside security. There namely might be strategic efforts of certain stakeholders to influence the sensemaking process towards a preferred outcome, depending on the organizational interests.

In this study, the sensemaking process of the RNLN at the national airports stands central. The goal of this study is to see how the RNLN makes sense of the changing relationship with its stakeholders in providing landside security. The main question therefore is: *“How does the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee make sense of the changing relationship with its stakeholders in providing landside security at different national airports?”* This study attempts to explain what the role is of sensemaking in the way the RNLN executes her tasks at the national airports and how sensegiving is part of this process.

For this research, the extensive literature on sensemaking is delved into and used to explain how different authorities at and around the national airports influence the sensemaking process of the RNLN. Sensemaking here means the attribution of meaning to a certain target through the placement of this target into a framework. Sensegiving refers to the process of influencing the sensemaking process towards a preferred outcome.

The findings of this study show that the environment at and around the national airport, in which the RNLN has to execute its tasks, is complex and knows multiple stakeholders who all have their own interests. This means that the security interests must be considered in a powerful field of interests in which economical and other interests prevail. This has an influence on the sensemaking process of the RNLN and the way they provide landside security. This study sheds a light on the tensions between the different interests and how the RNLN tries to make sense of these and their relationship with the stakeholders. Nevertheless, for the RNLN the security interests always prevail, and one does not deviate from this interest. In doing so, a comparison is made between Schiphol Airport and the other airports of national importance.

## **List of Abbreviations**

BPVS	Platform Security and Public Safety Schiphol, in Dutch: Beveiliging en Publieke Veiligheid Schiphol
CPBS	Crisis Response Plan Schiphol, in Dutch: Crisisbestrijdingsplan Schiphol
Groningen Airport	Groningen Airport Eelde
GRIP	Coordinated Regional Disaster Relief Procedure, in Dutch: Gecoördineerde Regionale Incidentbestrijdingsprocedure
Maastricht Airport	Maastricht Aachen Airport
NCC	National Crisis Centre
NCSC	National Coordinator for Security and Counter Terrorism
OT	Operational Team
RNLM	Royal Netherlands Marechaussee
RSG	Royal Schiphol Group
Rotterdam Airport	Rotterdam The Hague Airport
Schiphol Airport	Amsterdam Airport Schiphol
SGBO	Integral staff, in Dutch: Staf Grootchalig- en Bijzonder Optreden

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Civil Aviation Security and the Role of the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee

It is Saturday morning, 30th of July 2016. It is the middle of the holiday season, and a lot of people are heading to Amsterdam Airport Schiphol (hereinafter: Schiphol Airport). However, there are much more traffic jams than one would expect. These are caused by extra security measures, implemented by the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee, the Netherlands military police force (hereinafter: RNLN). The Netherlands General Intelligence and Security Service received a signal of a threat against Schiphol and therefore visible and invisible security measures had to be taken to secure civil aviation. However, no further details of the threat were given (Deutsch, 2016).

This news report shows that civil aviation security is a ‘hot’ topic, especially since the attack on September 11, 2001. The terrorist attack highlighted multiple security issues which made the security industry flourish (Taylor and Steedman, 2003). From this day on, security is seen as a top priority. The focus is mostly on airside security. This means that the main goal is to make sure that the area within the passport control, customs control and security checks is safe. In the Netherlands, airside security falls under the responsibility of the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (hereinafter: NCSC).

However, a shift could be remarked when taking a look at the security of civil aviation. This shift is caused by the terrorist attacks on Brussels Airport Zaventem in March 2016 and the terrorist attack on Istanbul Ataturk Airport in June 2016 (Koebrugge, van Duijn and Duyvis, 2017). The focus is now more on landside security. Landside refers to the area of an airport that is open for all public. The attacks in Brussels and Istanbul show that airports have become ‘soft targets’. *“Soft targets are usually citizens or spots that are poorly protected”* according to terrorism expert Jeanine de Roy van Zuijdewijn (NOS, 2017). This asks for a different approach and thus has an influence on the way airports are secured. Other examples of soft targets are great events, hospitals, schools, theatres and restaurants (van der Lijn and Bakker, 2011).

Nonetheless, the shift in focus from airside to landside security also has an impact on the authority structures. The NCSC is responsible for civil aviation security in general and for airside security. But, the mayor of the municipality in which the airport is located is responsible for public order and safety, and is therefore responsible for landside security. Both parties thus could be the competent authority for the RNLN, who has a specific responsibility for ensuring a secure and integer airport (Royal Netherlands Marechaussee, 2018). Consequently, the RNLN has to act in an environment where public as well as private authorities have multiple

interests. Security interests have to be considered in a powerful field of interests in which economical and other interests may prevail. In order to execute its tasks, it is important for the RNLM to make sure the roles and responsibilities of the authorities are clear. Moreover, the role of the RNLM must be clear for the authorities and other organisations involved. Therefore, good contacts with the stakeholders are of importance for a good positioning in the domain. This asks for an investment in the environment.

## 1.2 Problem and Research Question

The situation as described above indicates that civil aviation security knows more liable authorities and various organizations execute their work in order to secure civil aviation. One of these organizations is the RNLM who executes the police tasks at the national airports in the Netherlands (Royal Netherlands Marechaussee, 2018). For the RNLM it is required to act adequately and timely when a crisis occurs at a national airport and to inform their partners and authority. Therefore, the officials have to make sense of the situation under pressure as they must make timely decisions that could have a major impact (Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld, 1999).

For example, the power failure at Schiphol Airport on April 29, 2018 emphasizes this. The RNLM had to act because public order and safety problems occurred. Therefore, the decision was made to close the landside area and the access roads. Unfortunately, the RNLM made this decision without involving the mayor of the municipality of Haarlemmermeer in the decision-making process. Thereby, the term ‘lockdown’ was used as command by the RNLM to close the access roads. However, this term caused confusion and framing in the media and by the other crisis organisations. They understood that Schiphol Airport as a whole was closed now (Gemeente Haarlemmermeer, 2018). Nevertheless, for the RNLM the term ‘lockdown’ refers to an effective command for quickly closing the access roads to the airport. Here you could see, the officials of the RNLM constructed a frame to make sense of the crisis (Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010). The material environment, in which the crisis situation takes place, may be of influence on this process of sensemaking (Stigliani and Ravasi, 2012). However, it is also important, as the present case shows, that all actors involved must use the same frame in order to prevent confusion.

As expressed in the previous paragraph, multiple actors are responsible for civil aviation security. They all have their own interests and responsibilities and therefore it is important for them that the RNLM executes her tasks in a proper way, i.e. considering these interests and responsibilities. But is there one proper way to execute the tasks, or does this depend on the interests of the environment? There might be strategic efforts of other actors to influence the



sensemaking process of the RNLM in a crisis towards a preferred outcome as organizations involved may have various organizational interests (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). For the RNLM, safety and security are the main interests. However, it is in the interest of an airport that the operational processes are not disturbed. Here you see that there might be a conflict between economic interests and security interests that makes it rather complex to act.

This study attempts to see how the sensemaking process of the RNLM is formed and if there are tensions between the interests of other actors, like the responsible authorities and the airport itself. The goal is to see if this has an impact on the way landside security is performed. By doing so, the politics of sensemaking are touched upon. The main question is: *“How does the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee make sense of the changing relationship with its stakeholders in providing landside security at different national airports?”* This study therefore explains what the role is of sensemaking in the way the RNLM executes its tasks and how sensegiving is part of this process.

### 1.3 Scientific Relevance

This research adds relevant information to the general body of knowledge of crisis management. More specifically, this research adds information to the body of knowledge concerning sensemaking. In this research, the network in which the RNLM operates at the national airports is looked at. This will shed a light on how the RNLM makes sense of a (crisis) situation at a national airport but is also shows how sense is given to the RNLM. Here the role of interests is of great importance. Personal interests, organizational interests, economic interests and security interests all have a role in the sensemaking and sensegiving process around the operations of the RNLM at a national airport. The way these interests are represented is not yet touched upon in detail in previous research. Thereby, the role of communication and the way the network is structured is touched upon. This gives an insight in the way sensemaking and sensegiving is influenced by the network as a whole.

It is interesting to take a look at the organization of the RNLM at national airports as airport security is a ‘hot’ topic, partly as a result of an increasing number of passengers and the elevated threat level accordingly (Eldering, 2016; Frederickson and LaPorte, 2002; Bron and de Hoog, 2007). The shift in focus from airside to landside entails also a change in the way airports are secured and thereby, authority structures change as well. However, the RNLM remains responsible for executing the police tasks. This research, in potential, gives an insight in how the different authorities and the environment influences the sensemaking process of the RNLM. The changing dynamics might cause tensions between the different interests and responsibilities. Therefore, this research clarifies on the politics of sensemaking. This field of

study is not yet delved into like this. It is not yet known how multiple actors compete with each other when influencing the sensemaking process.

#### 1.4 Societal Relevance

The goal of this research is to elucidate on the organization of the RNLM while performing her tasks at the national airports. This is relevant for all of us, as we are all users of the national airports and therefore, we can be affected by decisions made by the RNLM and their consequences. Society thus has benefits with a research on the organization of the RNLM.

This research is also relevant for the RNLM itself, because it shows how the authorities and the environment of an airport influence the sensemaking process. The RNLM may use this research to reconsider the design of their organization at the national airports and to position herself better relative to the authorities and the environment.

Thereby, one gets an insight in the organization of the RNLM. Despite the fact that the RNLM is now more visible than ever due to the substantial threat level and their attendance near high risk objects and locations, the organization is still quite unknown.

#### 1.5 Reading Guide

In the next chapter, the theoretical background on sensemaking and sensegiving is presented. After elaborating on the existing literature, the research design of this study is explained. In this section, the research design, data collection and research methods are justified. The following section of this study exists of the analysis and the research findings. In the discussion, the findings of this research are linked to the literature used. After all, a conclusion is formulated, and the research question is answered. In this final section, the implications of this research are also presented.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

For this research, the extensive literature on sensemaking is delved into. The concept of sensemaking is elaborated on first. According to Weick (1995), sensemaking is a process in which meaning is attached to an unexpected event. This event is then placed into a certain framework. The questions are: when is the sensemaking process triggered and what kind of factors influence this process? These questions are elaborated on and the literature concerning sensegiving is therefore examined. Sensegiving is the process in which actors try to influence the sensemaking process within an organization towards a preferred outcome. This makes clear, the way the sensemaking process is influenced and how sense is made of a certain (crisis) situation. An unexpected event like a crisis asks for immediate action and sensemaking is highly demanded (Weick, 1988). Fast-response organizations have to act swiftly and must create frames under pressure. This leads to the sensemaking process in fast-response organizations (Faraj and Xiao, 2006).

First, the concept of sensemaking is explained, even as the role of frames. Then, the accomplishment of sensemaking and the role of sensegiving in this process is delved into. Finally, the role of sensemaking in fast-response organizations is explained. All this gives a better insight in the sensemaking process in a crisis.

### **2.1 The Sensemaking Process and the Role of Frames**

Through sensemaking, one aims to understand how events are being framed and how these frames influence individual and collective behaviours and inferences (Cornelissen, Mantere and Vaara, 2014). According to Weick (1995), sensemaking can be seen as the attribution of meaning to a certain target through the placement of this target into a framework. It highlights that people attempt to make things rationally accountable (Weick, 1993). This could also happen under pressure. Then, individuals must make decisions on time of which the consequences could have a high impact on their environment (Weick, et al. 1999).

In this study, sensemaking is regarded to as a process. However, an ontological distinction between sensemaking as cognitive process and sensemaking as a social process could be made (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014). When sensemaking is seen as cognitive process, individual frameworks and references are connected to organizational contexts. People develop a framework for themselves of how the environment works (Hill and Levenhagen, 1995). Individuals use certain frames as part of their sensemaking process to define certain situations (Cornelissen et al. 2013). Frames help to structure the understanding of a certain situation and they provide some guidance in times of crisis. It provides the basis for

sensemaking. However, according to Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010), there are two sides to this story. On the one hand, it facilitates sensemaking by creating meaning and coordinating actions. Experiences, interests and the environment people live in can help construct frames. *“Frames help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action”* (Benford and Snow, 2000: 614). Thereby, framing can be seen as a strategic process aiming to gain support and legitimacy for institutional change.

On the other hand, commitment to a certain framework can cause blind spots that impede the adaptation to a certain frame. Frames can create expectations as they direct individuals in a certain way (Lakoff, 1987) and help to predict behaviour of others (Pentland and Reuter, 1994). According to Scott (2003: 880), frames have a central role in the cultural-cognitive aspect of institutions which *“involves the creation of shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and the frames through which meaning is made”*. Framing thus captures the institutionalization of meaning structures, but at the same time it provides a *“macro-structural underpinning for actor’s motivations, cognitions and discourse at a micro level”* (Weber and Cornelissen, 2014: 1551).

Commitment to a certain frame thereby may also be an important source of failure as one is expected to be flexible and able to improvise when an unexpected situation occurs (Weick et al., 1999; Cornelissen et al., 2013). When a crisis occurs, it is expected that crisis responders handle rapidly and adequate. However, they should make sense of the situation first instead of moving too fast and losing grip of the situation. Holding on to a certain frame too tight could lead to the collapse of sensemaking (Weick, 1993). Therefore, opening up to other frames and being able to improvise helps to define the various aspects of a situation as these do not have to be the same for all actors involved. By doing so, the right considerations could be made.

Furthermore, the issue of simplification must be avoided. The placement of a certain target into a framework asks for simplification of the situation. The simplification of the situation allows people to ignore the details and just keep going (Weick, et al. 1999). However, this increases the likelihood that unexpected situations may occur. The framing might not be accurate enough. This happens in all organizations, but for some it might be more catastrophic than for others.

In contrast to sensemaking as a cognitive process, sensemaking could also be seen as a social process between people. In this way, *“sensemaking unfolds in a social context of other actors”* (Weick, 2005: 409). It is thus the construction and interpretation of the social world in which one lives. In this study, sensemaking is seen as a social process in which organizations and its members interact with their environment and with each other to interpret the world

around them and to act collectively (Maitlis, 2005). Maitlis and Christianson define sensemaking as *“a process, prompted by violated expectations, that involves attending to and bracketing cues in the environment, creating intersubjective meaning through cycles of interpretation and action, and thereby enacting a more ordered environment from which further cues can be drawn”* (2014: 67). Sensemaking is about connecting various cues to understand what is going on.

## 2.2 The Accomplishment of Sensemaking and the Role of Sensegiving

As concluded above, sensemaking is a social process. The question then remains: when is the process of sensemaking triggered? Triggers for sensemaking are ambiguous situations and uncertain consequences like a crisis. The routine processes are being disturbed and one becomes uncertain about the way to act. Sensemaking then occurs when *“the discrepancy between what one expects and what one experiences is great enough, and important enough, to cause individuals or groups to ask what is going on, and what they should do next”* (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014: 70).

According to Weick (1995), commitment to a certain frame is based on a way of framing the environment. He uses the concept of ‘enacted environments’ to explain this. Enacted environments refer to processes that have established a certain frame before, and therefore could be a source for future frames. Once an unexpected event occurs, one tries to understand what is going on by interpreting signals from the environment that provide a certain kind of order. This could be a certain work routine or communication strategy. When a frame is reinforced, it will strengthen the commitment to this frame. The more people commit to this frame again and again, the more it becomes dominant.

Multiple (f)actors influence the choice to commit oneself to a certain frame. For example, leaders and organizational stakeholders have an important role in influencing the sensemaking process. They have the legitimacy, expertise and opportunity to guide the sensemaking process (Maitlis and Lawrence, 2007). There might be strategic efforts of various actors to influence the sensemaking process of others towards a preferred outcome as well (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). Thereby, the preferred outcome is not the same for everyone. This depends on the interests and responsibilities of the various actors involved. The process, in which individuals tactically promote an alternative frame, is also referred to as frame shifting by Werner and Cornelissen (2014). They argue that *“strategically inclined actors are able to articulate alternatives to the institutional status quo and show when they align such frames with discourses at the macro level”* (2014: 1450)

The context in which decisions should be made, influences the sensemaking process. This context is formed by the influence of relationships with other actors and political structures among others. However, this happens more often covert because actors do not want to show their ability to influence the situation publicly (Frost, 1987). Thereby, not all actors have the same power and the intention to influence the sensemaking process as others do (Gioia, Thomas, Clark and Chittipeddi, 1994). This refers to sensegiving instead of sensemaking. Sensegiving is the process in which actors try to influence the sensemaking process within an organization towards a preferred outcome.

In most studies, sensegiving is considered as the way leaders strategically shape the interpretation of organizational members. However, it is not only a top-down process. Actors at any level and from different organizations may engage in sensegiving processes (Maitlis and Lawrence, 2007). When leaders successfully influence the sensemaking process in an organization, members become motivated to make changes and spreading the vision of the organization (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). Not only the leaders influence the sensemaking process, also managers and operational team captains do so by translating strategic visions into action. By doing so, a new organizational order is created and sensegiving is also used to convince one another of the value of the changes made to raise awareness. It is thus important not to focus only on top managers and leaders, the employees are namely responsible for the implementation of changes and therefore have a great role in the sensemaking process (Maitlis and Sonensheim, 2010).

According to Helms Mills (2003), the dominated frames and the accepted practices within an organization are products of power relationships between various actors. Some actors have more privileges than others and therefore have more influence on the sensemaking process. There are thus various sources for sensemaking, of which formal authority is one (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014). However, according to Maitlis and Sonensheim (2010), politics and power are still underexposed in the literature. Therefore, it would be interesting to see how multiple actors compete in crisis situations and what the effect is of this. This would give us a better insight into the politics of organizational sensemaking. But this also raises the question who is able to make sense of certain crises. Should we include a wide range of actors to make sense of a certain situation, or make sure that a few actors make sense of the crises and prevent ambiguity?

### 2.3 Sensemaking in Crises: Creating Frames Under Pressure

The process of sensemaking is also important in a crisis and the questions mentioned above count here as well. Thereby, a crisis also may be a trigger for sensemaking. *“As a low-*

*probability, high-impact event that threatens the viability of the organization and is characterized by ambiguity of cause, effect, and means of resolution*” (Pearson and Clair, 1998: 60), a crisis provides powerful triggers for sensemaking (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014). It may also trigger sensemaking in relation to responsibility and blame.

A crisis situation is difficult to comprehend. This has as a result that people want to gather as much information as possible to determine what the most suitable action would be. However, a crisis situation asks for immediate action and it is not desired to wait for all information to become available. Handling a crisis entails a trade-off between “*dangerous action which produces understanding and safe inaction which produces confusion*” (Weick, 1988: 305). Thereby, a crisis gets lots of publicity which strengthens the pressure to act. As a result, commitment is strengthened while flexibility and improvisation are needed (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014).

However, one should not focus on crises as this may lead to oversimplification of the sensemaking process. Hence, Maitlis and Sonensheim (2010) argue that insights from change studies should be integrated as well. Crises and change do not differ that much from each other. “*We sometimes think of crises as occurring very quickly and change unfolding over long periods, but a crisis can also be enacted very slowly, and a change can occur in highly pressurized conditions*” (Maitlis and Sonensheim, 2010: 552). They conclude that sensemaking in a crisis is foremost shaped by institutions. However, individuals also enact understanding that strengthens the institutions.

According to Weick (1988), sensemaking is highly demanded when a crisis, an event with low probability but high consequences, occurs. Creating frames under pressure and in unexpected situations like a crisis happens step-by-step. This is shown by Faraj and Xiao (2006), who delved deeper into the coordination mechanisms of fast-response organizations. Their research shows, that coordination can be effectively accomplished through communication and building up a common understanding of the situation. It is a process of ‘dialogic coordination’. This also counts for fast-response organizations “*where decisions must be made rapidly and where errors can be fatal*” (Faraj and Xiao, 2006: 1155). In fast-response organizations it is necessary to be adaptive. Therefore, adaptive sensemaking is of importance. One must be able to switch between various frames based on their experiences and interests (Bechky and Okhuysen, 2011; Maitlis and Sonensheim, 2010).

In fast-response organizations, the distinction between how one should coordinate and what and when one should coordinate is important to make because it is not evident that one could rely on a formal structure when a crisis occurs. It is therefore necessary to applicate

specialized skills and knowledge timely. This asks for a different coordination mechanism that is more dynamic (Faraj and Xiao, 2006).

However, coordination theories do not always apply to fast-response organizations as they don't prefer formal modes of coordination. Improvised ways of coordination are most likely to find place when a fast-response organization has to act. One could argue that fast-response organizations face a dilemma here. On the one hand they want tight structures and formal coordination to ensure a clear division of responsibilities. But on the other hand, they want to rely on flexible structures because decisions have to be made in split seconds while an informal coordination mode is used (Faraj and Xiao, 2006; Bigley and Roberts, 2001; Weick and Roberts, 1993). At last, Faraj and Xiao (2006) argue that coordination in fast-response organizations could introduce contingencies and intersubjectivities. This could have 'undermining of the processing of information' as a consequence. Differences in perspectives and interests ask for 'cross-boundary knowledge transformation' (Carlile, 2002).

Taking this all into consideration and based on a practice view, Faraj and Xiao formulated the following definition of coordination: "*a temporally unfolding and contextualized process of input regulation and interaction articulation to realize a collective performance*" (2006: 1157). Following this definition, one could argue that coordinated actions take place within a specific context which could be framed by historic actions and interactions that constrain future action. There are two specific characteristics in coordinated actions in a crisis situation. First, one will rely on 'expertise coordinated processes'. One depends on their expertise and knowledge, skills and drills. Second, 'dialogic coordination practices' occur as intervention is necessary despite anything else, for example when medical support is needed. Coordinated action are thus influenced by a certain frame based on experiences and interests of the actors. Thereby, it is crucial for coordination that the framing process is a collective act. The frame created must be strong to ensure successful coordination. One should pursue a common understanding to ensure that each and everyone knows what is expected from them (Maitlis and Sonensheim, 2010; Faraj and Xiao, 2006). However, strong, formal coordination could lead to the collapse of sensemaking as people will stop thinking and start to panic. What is important, is that the "*system remains intact in the individual's mind*" (Weick, 1993:640).



### **3. Research Design and Methodology**

The theoretical framework presented above, guides the analysis of this research. In this section, the methodology and research design are enlightened. Here the literature also helps to structure thoughts and it guides the research design. The theoretical concepts are operationalized and the way these concepts are interpreted in this research is explained. Thereby civil aviation security is elucidated on. Here, the different authority structures and the role of the executor is explained. Next, the data collection is elaborated on and the validity and reliability of this research is discussed. But first the research design is clarified.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This research contains interpretative research. This refers to an epistemology that “*respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientists to grasp the subjective meaning of social action*” (Bryman, 2012: 30). The aim of this epistemology is to understand the human behaviour. This study aims to understand how the RNLM makes sense of the changing relationship with its stakeholders at and around the national airports, in providing landside security. Weber used the concept ‘*verstehen*’ to refer to interpretative understanding. It is the skill to “*project oneself imaginatively in other people’s shoes*” (Dooremalen, de Regt and Schouten, 2010: 147).

Interpretative research could also be seen as a process of inference which “*begins with a set of (presumptive) signifiers and attempts to place them within an intelligible frame*” (Geertz, 1973: 26). The goal of interpretative research is to “*uncover the conceptual structures that inform our subjects’ acts ... and to construct a system of analysis in whose terms what is generic to those structures, what belongs to them because they are what they are, will stand out against the other determinants of human behaviour*” (Geertz, 1973: 27).

Interpretative research is part of the constructivist’s ontology. According to this ontology, “*social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors*” (Bryman, 2012: 33). Not only social interaction therefore influences the environment, but a constant state of revision is seen here. There is no definite version of the world according to this ontology. Constructivist research only shows a specific version of the world.

This study strives for a deeper understanding of the organization of the RNLM at national airports. Especially the way the RNLM makes sense in an unexpected situation, like a crisis, and how stakeholders may influence this process by sensegiving. Theory is applied to the empirical case, with the aim of understanding it (Toshkov, 2016). The intent is to interpret the case in light of the theories used. By doing so, this thesis does contribute to the theory itself.

The goal of this research is thus to understand an empirical case by applying theory. This study aims to understand the way sense is given the RNLM when they must make sense in a (crisis) situation on a national airport. Therefore, a comparison is made between Schiphol Airports and the other national airports where the RNLM executes the police tasks.

### 3.2 Civil Aviation Security: Different Authority Structures, Same Executor

This thesis contains qualitative research. Qualitative research is a good way to conduct detailed research. Due to qualitative research, a better understanding of the social world of the various actors involved is achieved. This helps to better understand how certain situations are interpreted. Thereby, it may reveal possible tensions that consist within the organization and between the various partners. This is a benefit relative to quantitative research (Bryman, 2012).

The sensemaking processes of the RNLM on a national airport are delved into. The RNLM is a police organization with a military status who stands guard over the security of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and its territories in the Caribbean (Royal Netherlands Marechaussee, 2018). The three core tasks of the RNLM are controlling the borders, security and surveillance, and international and military police tasks. These tasks are set out in national legislation, i.e. Article 4 of the Police Act 2012. In this study, the police tasks of the RNLM at the national airports is looked at. This includes the border control task and the security and surveillance task.

Due to the police tasks at the national airports, the RNLM has a responsibility in securing civil aviation as well. As explained in the introduction, more actors are. The NCSC is responsible for civil aviation security in general, and for airside security (NCSC, 2018a). The mayor is responsible for public order and safety and is therefore responsible for landside security. Both parties thus could be the competent authority for the RNLM, while executing the police tasks at the national airports (Royal Netherlands Marechaussee, 2018).

The influence of the different authorities on the way the RNLM makes sense during the execution of her tasks on a national airport is delved into. It is therefore interesting to see how the different authorities and actors, like the airport itself, influence their sensemaking process. For an organization like the RNLM, that acts in a politically sensitive environment, with a plethora of other actors and interests, and under local as well as under central authority, it is of great importance to be able to make decisions adequately and timely. As concluded from the available literature, it is therefore of importance to make sense of the situation and available information and thereby giving officials more guidance in their work. Much is demanded from the RNLM, especially now in time of an elevated threat level. Therefore, one should be able to rely on the capabilities of the RNLM.

In this study, a closer look is given to the differences between the sensemaking process at Schiphol Airport and the other airports of national importance. It is a comparative study, because the expectation is that there are differences in the way authority structures influence the sensemaking process of the RNLM. The airports namely fulfil different roles in the Netherlands and in international perspective. Therefore, the interests of the different authorities vary probably as well. The goal of this research is to see if these different interests of the various authorities influence the way the RNLM makes sense and how they execute their tasks.

### 3.3 Concepts and Operationalization

Operationalization can be seen as the *“translation of abstract concepts and their attributes, into less abstract concepts that can be detected, classified, and measured in the empirical world”* (Toshkov, 2016: 100). In social research, sensitizing concepts are used to capture the theory. According to Blumer (1954: 7), sensitizing concepts provide *“a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances”*. The concepts used in this research should thus provide a general sense of what to look for while executing the research. Therefore, the concepts that are focused on in this research are outlined here in a broad way. During the research, the concepts might be revised and further specified. This depends on the data collection.

The first concept explored in this study is sensemaking. It is a social, collective process in which the RNLM interacts with its stakeholders to interpret the situation and to act collectively in the end. To see how the RNLM makes sense of the changing relationship with its stakeholders, first the expectations and interests of each actor need to be clear. This is the starting point from which can be seen how the stakeholders, together with the RNLM handle the situation and what kind of decisions are made. Because the starting point is known, the possible influence of the multiple interests on the sensemaking process of the RNLM can be seen.

The second sensitizing concept is sensegiving. There are multiple actors that could influence the sensemaking process and the choice to commit oneself to a certain frame. Stakeholders could influence the way the RNLM makes sense of the changing relationship with authorities in providing landside security. Various scenarios are touched upon in this study in which multiple stakeholders are involved. During the execution of these scenario's it is expected to see that sensegiving is part of the sensemaking process of the RNLM.

### 3.4 Data collection and Research method

This study has a comparative design. The role of the RNLM at Schiphol Airport and the relationship here with the various stakeholders is compared with the role of the RNLM at the

other national airports and their relationship with the stakeholders. By doing so, a better understanding of the sensemaking process of the RNLM is provided because the process is compared in relation to multiple situations. This enriches the theoretical reflections on the findings. Because of the qualitative character of this research, a multiple case study is conducted (Bryman, 2012).

The data used in this research is collected through interviews, exercises and a document analysis. The expert panels and interviews form the main sources of data. The document analysis is complementary. The in-depth interviews are semi structured. This means that the questions are not leading, i.e. there is room for interaction. A benefit of this method is that it enables the interviewee to give more detailed answers (Bryman, 2012). Next to this, the room for interaction provides the vision of the interviewee itself (Bryman, 2012). The interviews serve also as a way to understand how the RNLM makes sense on a national airport and how the different authority structures influence this process.

For this study, brigade commanders of the RNLM who are responsible for the national airports are interviewed. For Schiphol Airport, the coordinator for Schiphol is interviewed because multiple brigades are established here. The brigade commanders and the coordinator maintenance the relationship with the stakeholders at and around the airport. Thereby, when an unexpected event occurs, the brigade commanders and the coordinator have to deal with questions from the outer world and they have to inform the stakeholders. The brigade commanders and the coordinators have an important task accordingly in handling an unexpected event and to make sure that sense is made in a proper way. The interviews give an insight in how the RNLM experiences the relationship with its stakeholders and what the sensemaking process looks like when an unexpected event occurs.

As proposed by the interviewees of the RNLM officials from the airports itself and national as well as local authorities are approached for an interview. This is also known as 'snowball sampling' (Bryman, 2012). An official of the Royal Schiphol Group (hereinafter: RSG) who is responsible for the fire brigade, crisis and safety training, is interviewed. In fact, this official is responsible for the physical security and safety at the Schiphol Airport. Thereby, this official is the chairman of the board for landside security. In addition, a safety and security manager of Maastricht Aachen Airport (hereinafter: Maastricht Airport) is interviewed for this study. This manager is responsible for public order and safety at Maastricht Airport, with the focus on airside security. Both officials have a lot of contact with the RNLM, foremost with the airport coordinator. The interviews give an insight in the relationship the RNLM has with the airport and how they have to deal with each other when an unexpected event occurs. The tensions between the airport and the RNLM are touched upon.

Besides officials from the airport, officials from the authorities are interviewed as well. First a policy advisor public order and safety from the municipality of Beek is interviewed. The policy advisor is the point of contact of the municipality for public order and safety at Maastricht airport, as well as crisis management. Public order and safety foremost touch upon landside security. This interview gives an insight in the relationship between the municipality and the RNLM at a national airport. Thereby it sheds a light on how the municipality deals with landside security.

Also, a policy advisor of the NCSC is interviewed for this study. This policy advisor is responsible for civil aviation security and surveillance and is occupied with landside security among other things. This interview gives an insight in how the NCSC is responsible for civil aviation security and focuses foremost on airside security. However, landside security is inseparable from airside security and therefore the NCSC tries to bring all relevant stakeholders together to see how landside security can be best dealt with. At last, a safety and security advisor of the National Crisis Centre (hereinafter: NCC) is interviewed for this study. This advisor is responsible for aviation in general. This does not only entail airports in times of crises or disasters, but also the preparation for this. For example, the crisis management procedures of the airports are part of the advisor's responsibility. This interview gives an insight in how the relationship between the RNLM and national stakeholders is. Thereby, the interviews with the NCSC and the NCC shed a light on the differences in relationship with the RNLM at Schiphol Airport and the other national airports. In appendix 1, the interviewees are listed.

The table-top exercises are conducted in expert panels or focus groups as Bryman (2012) calls them. These exist of multiple interviewees from the RNLM, the airport, and other crisis organizations. A specific scenario is explored in depth. Two exercises are executed and observed for this study. The first exercise is a mono disciplinary SGBO<sup>1</sup> exercise. During this exercise, a SGBO of the RNLM practised a scenario out of the Crisis Response Plan Schiphol (hereinafter: CBPS, Crisisstrijdingsplan Schiphol). The participants are all of the RNLM and represent all task areas. During the second exercise, another scenario of the CBPS is practiced. This time the operational team (hereinafter: OT) is observed in which multiple stakeholders are represented, like the fire brigade, the national police, the RNLM, the safety region and the

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<sup>1</sup> SGBO the abbreviation of, in Dutch, Staf Grootchalig- en Bijzonder Optreden. When in the Netherlands a crisis occurs, a GRIP is announced, in Dutch: Gecoördineerde Regionale Incidentbestrijdings Procedure. This is a coordinated regional disaster relief procedure. There are five GRIP phases, from a normal incident to a national crisis. From GRIP 2 on, a SGBO needs to come together. This is an integral staff of the National Police or the RNLM in which multiple disciplines are represented. Within this staff, multiple tasks, responsibilities and capacities are coordinated.

airport itself among others. Both exercises give an insight in how the RNLM acts and makes sense of an unexpected event. The second event also shows what the role is of the other stakeholders in this process and how they make sense of the situation. In appendix 2, the exercises are listed.

The goal of the table-top exercises is to build up a view out of the interaction that takes place in the expert group. During the exercise, the partners have to communicate with each other and by observing this process, the sensemaking process becomes visible as well. The focus during the exercises is on the way the partners communicate with each other and how they interact. Attention is paid to the way actors formulate their goals and interests and how they share this with their partners. When a shift takes place in the goal and interests of an organization, it is imaginable that the sensemaking process is influenced by sensegiving, especially when the goals and interests of other actors become more prevalent.

The interviews give more depth to the results from the expert panels. Thereby, the exercises also bring together the most important actors and gives them the opportunity to practice a crisis situation. During the exercise, the focus is on the way participants communicate with each other and how they translate their interests in practice. The content analysis is complementary to the expert panels and the interviews. Evaluations of previous crises at national airports are delved into for example.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The results of the interviews, the observation of the exercises and the usage of relevant documents altogether give an insight in how the RNLM makes sense of the changing relationship with its stakeholders in providing landside security at the national airports.

The results of the interviews represent the experiences and meanings of the respondents. These results are subjective and interpreted by the author and therefore cannot be seen as the ultimate truth. However, the interviews give an insight in the sensemaking process of the RNLM as interests of the stakeholders become clear and the way interaction takes place when an unexpected event occurs. The results of the interviews are linked by the author to situations that actually happened at the national airports. By doing so, a practical view is presented to you and the findings become more concrete.

The exercises also give a practical view of how the sensemaking process evolves during a crisis or unexpected situation at a national airport. During the exercises, the way the stakeholders interact with each other and how their interests are presented is observed by the author. For the analysis of this study, these observations are motivated by the results of the

interviews. Thereby, the exercises showed how the various interests compete with each other and how the RNLM handles this.

In the analysis, a comparison is made between Schiphol Airport and the other airports of national importance. The author made a comparison between the airports by taking a look at the establishment of the network and the way the stakeholders interact with each other. Thereby, the relationship with the stakeholders is compared following the experiences of the brigade commanders and the other respondents.

### 3.6 Validity and Reliability

*“The validity is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research”* (Bryman, 2012: 47). Internal validity is concerned with the formulated conclusions of the research, do the observations match the theoretical ideas that are being researched? In this research, the internal validity is secured because of the involvement of two table-top exercises in which multiple experts from various organizations take place. The participation of multiple officials strengthens the internal validity and helps to ensure a high level of congruence between the theoretical component and the observations made (Bryman, 2012). Thereby, the validity of this research is strengthened by making a comparison between Schiphol Airport and the other airports of national importance. By doing so, the results of this study are applicable to the organization of the RNLM in general.

Involving multiple crisis managers of various organizations in the table-top exercises also strengthens the reliability of this research because the findings of this research count for Schiphol Airport as well as for the other airports of national importance. However, because of the interpretative character of this study, the results are not applicable to every stakeholder. The results are based on the experiences and interests of the interviewees and the observations of the exercises. This has a negative impact on the reliability of this study.

#### **4. Setting the Scene**

Before the findings of this study are elaborated on, the environment in which the RNLM operates is presented here. In this chapter, the national airports where the RNLM executes the police tasks are touched upon. The role of the RNLM at the airports is delved into and the environment.

##### **4.1 National Airports**

In the Netherlands, we have multiple airports. These are regional airports where ultralight planes may start, but these are also national airports where international flights start and land. In this study, only the airports of national importance are delved into. Here, the RNLM executes the police task. The airports of national importance are Groningen Airport Eelde (hereinafter: Groningen Airport), Lelystad Airport, Maastricht Aachen Airport (hereinafter: Maastricht Airport), Eindhoven Airport, Rotterdam The Hague Airport (hereinafter: Rotterdam Airport) and Amsterdam Airport Schiphol (hereinafter: Schiphol Airport) (NCSC, 2018b). All airports are included in this research, except for Lelystad Airport as this airport is not yet operational and the RNLM does not yet execute the police tasks here.

To start with Groningen Airport. This airport is established in 1931 and is located in the North of the Netherlands, in the municipality of Tynaarlo. Their vision is to be the airport of the region, for the region (Groningen Airport Eelde, 2017). The airport offers comfort and convenience by short distances, minimal waiting times and customer-friendliness. The task of the airport is to facilitate the region optimally. In 2017, 230,000 passengers have chosen for GAE. In 2026 this has to be 400,000 passengers. The Airport is property of the province of Groningen and the province of Drenthe, of the municipality of Assen and the municipality of Tynaarlo (Groningen Airport Eelde, 2018). The brigade Drenthe-IJsselstreek is responsible for the airport. To ensure airside and landside security, the officials of the RNLM execute here the border control tasks and the police tasks. There are no specific teams for securing landside security, the officials rotate.

Maastricht Airport is located in the municipality of Beek. The activities of Maastricht Airport are focused on passenger and freight traffic. Freight traffic is the most important activity for the airport. Their vision is to build a worldwide network of destinations for freight traffic to improve the logistical position of the region (Maastricht Aachen Airport, 2018). In 2017, Maastricht Airport knew 167000 passengers. For 2018, the prognose is that 260,000 to 300,000 will chose for the airport (Schellen, 2018). The province of Limburg is the owner of Maastricht Airport. However, Trade Center Global Investments BV is the operator of the Airport since



2016 (van Hoof, 2016). At Maastricht Airport, the brigade Limburg-Zuid executes her tasks. The same rotation system is visible as on Groningen Airport. There are no specific teams who only execute the police the task in order to secure the landside area.

In 2019, Eindhoven Airport wants to grow to 6 million passengers. The mission of the airport is to connect the Brainport with Europe and the rest of the world to make the region internationally accessible. Speed and experience are two important core values (Eindhoven Airport, 2018). 2017 is the first year that the airport knows more than 5 million passengers, namely 5.7 million. In 2018, the airport expects to process 6.3 million passengers (Theeuwen, 2018). Eindhoven Airport is an independent Airport of which the shares are divided among three shareholders, namely: Schiphol Group, the province of North Brabant and the municipality of Eindhoven. The brigade Brabant-Zuid executes the police tasks at the airport. Also here, there are no specific teams for securing landside security. A rotation system exists here as well.

Rotterdam Airport is also part of the Schiphol Group and knows no other owners. On a yearly basis, the airport facilitates approximately 1.8 million passengers. The airport has to deal with multiple interests from various stakeholders. On the one hand, Schiphol Group as owner and on the other hand the users of the airport: airlines, the municipality of Rotterdam, the Hague and the residents (Rotterdam The Hague Airport, 2018). The airport facilitates not only aviation, but also the region. At Rotterdam Airport, the brigade Zuid-Holland executes the police tasks. Again, there are no specific teams for securing landside security.

Finally, Schiphol Airport. This is the 'best direct connected airport' in Europe (Schiphol Group, 2018a). In 2017, the airport facilitated 68.5 million passengers. This was a record and entailed a growth of 8% relative to the previous year. Schiphol Airport is an international hub where aviation, road and railway connections come together. Their mission is to connect the Netherlands (Schiphol Group, 2018b). The mission for Schiphol Airport is to become 'Europe's Preferred Airport'. It has to be an airport that distinguishes itself from others with their smooth and flexible processes and a great offer of shops and catering. It is not only about aviation, but about the whole travel experience (Schiphol Group, 2018c). At Schiphol Airport, multiple brigades of the RNLN are established and there are specific teams for securing landside security. For example, the armed security team civil aviation supervises at the airport, on landside, airside and on the platform. There is no rotation system here.

#### 4.2 Role of the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee at the National Airports

Following the Netherlands Police Law 2012, article 4, de RNLN executes the police tasks at Schiphol Airport and other airports of national importance. Thereby, the RNLN is responsible

for securing civil aviation. The police task at the national airports contains the border control task, reinforcement of public order and legal order, investigation, conflict and crisis management, as well as monitoring the compliance to laws and regulation concerning the security of civil aviation. Besides this, the RNLN executes tasks that are linked to the immigration process. These tasks are related to asylum request and the escort of aliens to their country of origin (Royal Netherlands Marechaussee (2015).

The multiple tasks at the national airports are executed simultaneously and are inseparable from each other. The RNLN, as police force with a military status, must be able to scale-up in all tasks in case of a crisis or threat. In the ‘Ontwikkelagenda 2017’, the development agenda of the RNLN, the tasks related to airports are named in the mission of the organization: *“we carry out specific police and security tasks on behalf of the central government. In the event of a threat, we can be deployed quickly and we can act robustly (...). We are leading in the field of human flows in relation to illegal migration, crime, security and access; including the investigation and police task on civil aviation grounds. We use a broad approach and look at all boundaries, both physical, virtual, internal and external. (...) We play a decisive role in the integral, international approach to our work as border police force”* (Royal Netherlands Marechaussee, 2017).

At Schiphol Airport, the RNLN is represented by the brigade Border Control, the brigade Police and Security, the brigade Supervision Security Civil Aviation and the brigade Foreigners. On the other national airports, only one brigade is representing the RNLN. For Groningen Airport this is the brigade Drenthe-IJsselstreek. For Maastricht Airport this is the brigade Limburg-Zuid. For Eindhoven Airport this is the brigade Brabant-Zuid and for Rotterdam Airport, this is the brigade Zuid-Holland.

#### 4.3 The Environment

The world in which we live, could be seen as a network environment in which dominant processes more and more become determined by streams of people, goods, capital, communication, information and energy. These streams all come together at physical and virtual locations whereof airports par excellence are examples of. An airport does not only processes passengers and goods, but it is also connected to worldwide logistical and economical activities. Airports form the link with the world around us and stimulates the network society we live in. Characteristics for the network society are the borders that become vaguer, mobility and anonymity. This influences the processes on an airport and could also influence security and integrity on an airport. Because of its tasks, the RNLN must take measures to act on these threats.

This makes that the RNLN has to act in an environment where public as well as private authorities have multiple interests. This counts especially for Schiphol Airport which in the meantime could be seen as a city (Dengerink, 2000). Typical for this context is that security interests have to be considered in a powerful field of interests in which economical and other interests prevail to a certain extent. However, these authorities also have a role within the security domain at an airport.

For the RNLN, good contacts with the present public and private authorities on and around the airports are of importance for a good positioning in the domain. The RNLN has a specific responsibility for ensuring a secure and integer airport. This can only be achieved when having an optimal information position which asks for an investment in the environment. In this network environment, the RNLN has to deal on a daily basis with lobby and power issues foremost driven on economic interests. The position of the RNLN at the national airports is thus not evident.

#### 4.4 Authority Structures

The security domain of a national airport knows multiple aspects, national as well as local, that must be tuned. The security of civil aviation falls under the responsibility of the Minister of Justice and Safety who has mandated the NCSC (Rijksoverheid, 2018). When runways must be closed, the Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management is responsible. When there is a threat against an airport or the chance exists that criminal offences will be conducted, the chief public prosecutor is the responsible authority. The local mayor is the responsible authority when public order and safety processes are at issue. The RNLN has then an advisory role (van Veenendaal and Noll, 2018).

## 5. Findings

The results of this study are presented to you in this section. To begin with, civil aviation security is delved into and the distinction between landside and airside security. After this section, the results related to Schiphol airport are discussed. First, the environment around Schiphol Airport is delved into. The stakeholders and their interests are touched upon. Second, examples are given of unexpected events that occurred at this airport and how the RNLM and the stakeholders have dealt with this situation. In addition, the same structure is used to explain to you the results of this study for the other national airports. By doing so, a comparison can be made. In this section the differences in security policies and the execution of this is delved into, as well as the differences in environment and how the stakeholders at the different airports deal with unexpected events.

### 5.1 Civil Aviation Security: Airside and Landside

Nowadays civil aviation security, public order and safety, security and surveillance and protecting the legal order cannot be seen separately from each other. In other words, airside and landside security could not be seen separately from each other. Here, airside security refers to the security of the area within the passport control, customs control and security checks. Landside security refers to the security of the area of an airport that is open for all public.

Initially, the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (hereinafter: NCSC) is responsible for civil aviation security. But with the shift in focus from airside to landside security, the question is to what extent civil aviation can be stretched? If it is not laid down in the law for civil aviation security, then the NCSC is no longer responsible, and the local authority should step in. *“You see here that a new structure is welcomed”* (NCSC, personal communication, 12 November 2018). A new structure asks for awareness, also by the local authorities. Therefore, the NCSC seeks for contact with all local authorities and the national airports and engages with them to make sure the authority structures are clear for everyone. Now that landside security becomes more important, the NCSC also includes the brigades in the consultations. *“We think the expertise should be lodged there where it belongs, in the operation in my opinion”* (NCSC, personal communication, 12 November 2018). It is not that the NCSC retreats, but their role in the domain changes. The NCSC is not the only relevant authority anymore, local authorities become more important and also the airports as such gain more responsibility.

However, the NCSC is often the authority everyone is looking at when an unexpected event or crisis happens. ‘You are responsible for terrorism, right?’ is a question posed by local

authorities now and then. This indicates that foremost the local authorities are still looking for their exact role and responsibilities in the domain. This implicates that important time expires while during a crisis situation it is expected to handle quick and adequate. And according to the respondent of the NCSC it is not helpful that they *“are not only responsible for the political and strategical accountability, but sometimes also for very concrete things. Then it becomes very operational”* (NCSC, personal communication, 12 November 2018). The NCSC has an advising role in the local authority structure, as well as the RNLM, in case an unexpected event happens on landside. However, because of their expertise and knowledge concerning civil aviation security, it is sometimes still expected that the NCSC takes the responsibility and tells the stakeholders what to do and how to act.

This also has an impact on how the RNLM is positioned in the domain. It is for the RNLM important to invest in the environment and its stakeholders because of its elusive character. Therefore, a good relationship with the stakeholders would help also to better understand the organization of the RNLM and its responsibilities at the national airports. The representative of the municipality of Beek for example shares their view of the RNLM: *“You are the police on the airport and in the near surroundings. Outside this area, the national police is responsible. You are responsible for the police tasks at the airport and for security and surveillance. We actually don’t know if you also have other tasks with regard to the airport”* (personal communication, 5 November 2018). Besides this, the local municipalities, in this case of Beek and Tynaarlo, expect that if something bad happens, the RNLM just has to put on a button and a tin of high-risk security officers would be opened (brigade commander Drenthe-IJsselstreek, personal communication, 1 November 2018). That is true to a certain extent, but not in the time slot they have in mind. To avoid confusion about such ambiguities, it is of great importance for the RNLM to ensure a good relationship with local as well as national authorities, in order to manage expectations and to communicate quickly and directly.

Unfortunately, the relationship with the stakeholders sometimes comes under pressure because of the way the RNLM is structured. For example, because of the changes in personnel every now and then. What does it mean when every three or four years a new brigade commander has to introduce himself to the mayor? The RNLM wants to be a loyal partner in the network, but the quick changes in personnel not always work out in a good way. The RNLM is seen as an elusive organization, especially outside the Schiphol area. It is not clear, especially not for local authorities, what the tasks and responsibilities of the RNLM are. A reason for this could be that most of the tasks executed by the RNLM do not fall under local authority. The RNLM is, according to the brigade commander of Zuid-Holland, *“an organization with various factors, an organization without a collective memory, people come and go, come and go”*

(personal communication, 20 November 2018). This image is confirmed by the NCSC, “*About what RNLM are we talking? There are so many marechaussees*” (personal communication, 12 November 2018).

The RNLM is a very hierarchic organization in which a little bit looseness lacks, according to the respondent of RSG (personal communication, 27 November 2018). This influences the way conversations are held and the way the connection is formed. Thereby, the military identity of the RNLM entails besides the hierarchic character another disadvantage, namely the quick job rotation of military personnel. They stay for an average of two or three years at one position, before they have to switch. This has a negative effect on the relationship with partners like the airport itself. When you finally have people up to speed, when they understand the dynamics of an airport, they already have to move on to their next function. This is inefficient and also causes a loss of knowledge and expertise.

## 5.2 Schiphol Airport

### 5.2.1 *The Environment: Stakeholders and Interests*

At Schiphol Airport, the platform Security and Public Safety Schiphol (hereinafter: BPVS, Beveiliging en Publieke Veiligheid Schiphol) is established in which landside as well as airside security are discussed. This platform stems from the Commission Access Control Schiphol which was established after the diamond robbery in 2005 by the Minister of Justice (Donner, 2005). In here, all public and private parties related to Schiphol Airport are represented with the goal to keep control on security and fighting crime at the airport (Donner, 2006). Under this platform, multiple working groups are established. One of them is initiated by the airport, together with the NCSC, namely the working group ‘landside security’ of which the respondent of the RSG is chairman.

The RNLM is also represented in this working group and has an advisory role. This is one of the multiple sites where the RSG and the RNLM have to work together. “*It is like a marriage, sometimes it goes well and sometimes not. Sometimes you stand right in front of each other, but always in a good atmosphere*”. This is how the respondent of RSG would describe the relationship with the RNLM (personal communication, 27 November 2018). The relationship between the RNLM and the airport and a good cooperation between the two is of importance because airports more and more function as cities in which public as well as private parties have certain interests. As a consequence, security and safety concerns are considered in a field of multiple interests. However, these are all legitimate interests. For the RNLM, the most important interest is security and that takes precedence over anything else.

As foremost private enterprises, airports certainly have an economic interest too. For airports, it is important that passengers spend money, and this happens mostly on airside. That is why the airport wants passengers to go as fast as possible through the security checks and passport control. This has a security advantage as well. For example, at Schiphol Airport it is not desirable that too many people gather at Plaza, on landside. This would turn Plaza into a soft target according to the coordinator at Schiphol (personal communication, 6 November 2018).

The different interests between the RNLN and the airport ask for a clear communication between both entities and to the outer world. Thereby, good cooperation is of importance too. But the communication between the airport and the RNLN is not always as good as it should be. The RNLN sometimes has the feeling that they are played off. This has to do with the way in which the airport communicates with the RNLN and over the RNLN. The one moment the relationship and contact between one another runs smoothly, the other moment the RNLN has to suffer from unexpected allegations about the way they execute their tasks. But the RNLN is not accountable to any airport, they are not some sort of ‘business police’. Unfortunately, the RNLN for some parties has this image. *“If you are not careful, you stay in a reactive mode as RNLN”* according to the coordinator at Schiphol (personal communication, 6 November 2018).

For example, concerning the understaffing of the RNLN at the airports. This also has an influence on the airport processes. For example, RSG indicates that the shortage of personnel by the RNLN leads to stagnation in the airport processes (personal communication, 27 November 2018). This hurts the image of an airport, it is not consumer-friendly when passengers have to wait for another hour at the passport control after an uncomfortable night flight. Therefore, pressure is also applied by the airport on politics and the media is used by the airport to emphasize that there are concerns about the quality of the RNLN at the airport.

Besides the airport itself, the municipality is an important stakeholder for the RNLN. There are multiple consultation moments within the platform of BPVS. Thereby, the RNLN is represented by the brigade commander of the Brigade Police and Security in the local authority structure. However, it is still not insurmountable that one talks about the RNLN in absence of the RNLN. For example, after the power failure in April 2018. The way the municipality finger pointed at the RNLN was not appreciated by the RNLN. Besides the fact that it was partly legitimate, the manner in which accusations were made was not right according to the coordinator of Schiphol Airport. The mayor also could have made a nuance and support its people (personal communication, 6 November 2018). This case is explained more in detail in the following section.

From the conversation held with the brigade commanders of the RNLN, the administrative dynamics and the position game, what it is all about in the end, especially for administrators, prevails in the contact with local authorities. For example, when a crisis or unexpected event occurs at an airport, the mayor probably thinks ‘I should not grasp the nettle’ (coordinator Schiphol, personal communication, 6 November 2018). This phenomenon is seen by all brigade commanders. Especially around Schiphol Airport, Eindhoven Airport and Rotterdam Airport. For the municipality of Haarlemmermeer, Schiphol Airport is of great importance because of its scope and the status it has in the Netherlands and in the world.

### *5.2.2 Dealing with Unexpected Events at Schiphol Airport*

At Schiphol Airport, various unexpected events have occurred in the past years. One is already touched upon in the previous section. This is the power failure in April, 2018. A power failure caused a malfunction in the check-in system of Schiphol Airport. As a result, flights had to be cancelled and the advice was given to passengers not to come to the airport. On the airport itself it became very crowded, which disturbed public order (Geeld, Dallinga, Bouma and Eerten, 2018). This led to the decision to close the airport. This entailed the landside area and the access roads. The decision was made by the RNLN, unfortunately without informing the mayor of Haarlemmermeer in the decision-making process. The municipality was informed by the RNLN and Schiphol about the situation in the committee of consultation (hereinafter: CVO, Commissie van Overleg). The municipality, cluster safety and security, has the task to inform the mayor. However, the municipality had the idea for a long time that the situation was under control, following the nature of the information (Gemeente Haarlemmermeer, 2018).

Thereby, the term ‘lockdown’ was used as command by the RNLN to close the access roads. This term caused confusion and framing in the media and by the other crisis organisations. They understood that Schiphol Airport as a whole was closed now (Gemeente Haarlemmermeer, 2018). But for the RNLN, it is an operational command to close the access roads to the airport. In the media, the term is translated to the closure of Schiphol and also on traffic signs the words ‘Schiphol closed, no flights’. However, besides the check-in processes, all other airport processes continued. For the mayor of Haarlemmermeer, this was a reason to finger point at the RNLN and Schiphol Airport. Besides the fact that it was partly legitimate, the RNLN should have informed the mayor earlier in the process, the way of accusing was not totally fair. A nuance could have been made here (coordinator of Schiphol Airport, personal communication, 6 November 2018).

The RNLN, together with the stakeholders, practices certain unexpected situations to be as well prepared as possible. For example, in an operational team (hereinafter: OT) setting.



The OT then practices scenario's out of the crisis response plan Schiphol. A scenario might be an error in the kerosene supply at the airport. The side effects of a malfunction in the kerosene supply might be tremendous. Airplanes are not able to receive kerosene and so they are not able to fly as well. This has an effect on public order and safety at the airport itself as the terminal start to become very crowded. In a scenario like this, an OT will come together, as well as an integral staff, i.e. an SGB0. The OT has the operational leading during a crisis and its task is to advise the policy team. Herein the OT has to make decisions on an operational and tactical level.

During the exercise, the interests of the various stakeholders become visible. The interests of the airport for example are very clear from the start. The airport emphasizes multiple times that the flow of passengers and the airport processes should have priority in the decision-making procedure. Thereby, the airport makes decisions on their own about for example the evacuation of certain terminals. Remarkable was that the airport had more information about the situation than the other members of the OT. This made it hard for the OT to make decisions and to act on accurate information. This is also pointed out in the evaluation of the power failure, not everyone acts on the same information which causes unclarities (Gemeente Haarlemmermeer, 2018).

### 5.3 Other National Airports

#### 5.3.1 *The Environment: Stakeholders and Interests*

The other national airports do not have a similar BPVS platform as Schiphol Airport does. Public and private stakeholders do not gather in this way. However, Eindhoven Airport and Rotterdam Airport know a downsized version. There is a similar public-private consultation around both airports. But it is not that big and formalized like BPVS. An explanation for this might be the size and importance of these airports, as well as the fact that they belong to the Royal Schiphol Group. On Groningen Airport and Maastricht Airport, there is no such thing as a public-private consultation. Here the parties do talk with each other, but not on a regular base. The demand however is there, especially at Maastricht Airport.

The relationship at Maastricht Airport between the airport and the RNLM might use some reinforcement (brigade commander Limburg-Zuid, personal communication, 5 November 2018). Agreements are unfortunately not always met, and it is experienced by the RNLM that the airport not always understands the procedures of the RNLM. According to the brigade commander of Limburg-Zuid, the RNLM is still a passer-by in the whole network around the airport. More investment in the stakeholders is desirable. However, the elusive character of the RNLM and the lack of collective memory, as explained before, also is a

problem at the other national airports. The respondent of Maastricht Aachen Airport describes this problem in the following way: *“before they know everything and before they are familiar with all airport processes, they are already gone”* (personal communication, 26 November 2018). This also influences the atmosphere at the airport and between the airport and the RNLN. When military officers longer hold their function, they also get more feeling with the airport itself. They then execute their tasks with their heart and feelings and according to the safety and security manager of Maastricht Aachen Airport you can notice this.

At Rotterdam Airport, the brigade commander experiences the same, the RNLN is not always understood by the airport and therefore the relationship comes under pressure once in a while. The RNLN experiences at Rotterdam Airport a less transparent environment. This makes that the relationship with the airport itself is not always as good as it should be. The RNLN is seen here as part of the logistic process. Because of this view, the RNLN is often forgotten to inform about for example a renovation. When this renovation has an influence on the way the RNLN must execute her task, the whole process must be opened up again. However, there is room for doing business properly and this is well-experienced by the RNLN. Rotterdam Airport strives for a fast handling of the passengers and an atmosphere that feels like a living room. The concept of Rotterdam Airport is the concept of fast handling. However, it is made clear by the brigade commander of the Brigade Zuid-Holland to the airport direction that *“they might want passengers in the plane as fast as possible, but the RNLN wants the passengers in the plane as safe as possible”* (personal communication, 20 November 2018).

To improve the flow of passengers at the airports, the RNLN for example makes use of electronic gates where the border control takes place. These gates must be purchased by the airports, they have to facilitate the RNLN. However, what you then see is that airports do not want to invest in something that has not yet proven to be successful. The airports will only invest when success is proven. However, some airports already see the advantages of the electronic gates, for example Rotterdam Airport. The director of this airport thinks commercially, but the image is also of importance, despite the fact that commercially seen the gates will generate profit only by a certain number of passengers.

Hence, the airport knows an economic interest, but also a political interest. Foremost local politics are depending on the national airports. For example, the municipality of Beek invested in the airport with quite some money and multiple actors are therefore financially dependent (brigade commander Limburg-Zuid, personal communication, 5 November 2018). This creates the opportunity to establish a common interest between the various partners related to the national airports.

However, this does not mean that a good relationship with local authorities is evident. The elusive character of the RNLM makes it even more difficult. Especially in Rotterdam, the RNLM *“has extremely bad contacts with the local authorities”* according to the brigade commander of Zuid-Holland (personal communication, 20 November 2018). If you take a look at the local politics in Rotterdam and at the persons you have to deal with, those are not conversation partners for a brigade commander, a major. This has an impact on the way the RNLM is situated in local politics and the local authority structure. In other words, the RNLM is not represented in the local authority structure. In Rotterdam, the RNLM is now represented by the National Police despite the fact that they are not responsible for landside security at the airport. *“When something in our domain must be negotiated in the local authority structure, we should be there, not the police”* (brigade commander Zuid-Holland, personal communication, 20 November 2018). That is the reason the RNLM wants a periodic consultation in the local authority structure.

Not being represented in the local authority structure does not mean that there is no contact with local authorities. Foremost, the brigade commander has contact with the Safety and Security Director of a municipality. The brigade commander of Brabant-Zuid for example has a consultation with this director two or three times a year. Here, there is a good connection between the municipality of Eindhoven and the brigade Brabant-Zuid. For example, when unattended luggage is found at the airport, it is the task of the brigade commander to inform the mayor. Here, a phone call with the mayor himself is not odd when it is expected that public order processes could be disrupted. These good connections have not always existed unfortunately. Here, the personality of the brigade commander is of great importance. The relationship with the municipality and the mayor had to be build up from the ground.

To keep the conversation going between the RNLM and the local and national authorities, it is important to have contact with the right persons regularly. *“When you work together on a regular base, you are going to work together in a better and different manner”* (NCSC, personal communication, 12 November 2018). The brigade commander of Brabant-Zuid also sees it as his task, to have sufficient antennae in the region.

### 5.3.2 *Dealing with Unexpected Events at Other National Airports*

Also, at the other national airports, various unexpected events occurred in the past years. From a serious terrorist threat at Rotterdam Airport (NOS.nl, 2016) to the evacuation of Eindhoven Airport because of unattended luggage (de Bekker and de Jong, 2017). The terrorist threat at Rotterdam Airport, announced by a platform where people can make anonymously a report of crime, made the brigade commander call the director of the airport. The intention of this phone

call was to inform the director of the airport of the possible threat and to give him the information that could be shared at that moment. The brigade commander of the RNLM also gave a tip about how to handle in this situation and who else to inform. What happens next is that the airport takes measures without informing the RNLM, while the threat was not yet interpreted. This has an effect on landside security as people see that measures are being taken without informing the public (brigade commander Zuid-Holland, personal communication, 20 November 2018).

Dealing with unattended luggage on landside is another example of an unexpected event in which prevailing interests become visible. The RNLM then has the task to create a safe zone and to inspect the piece of luggage. When the RNLM does not trust the situation, measures could be taken. For example, dogs trained for explosive detection could be asked for. However, this costs time, and time costs money one would argue. But time is of major importance when quick action is desired. The urgency of the threat defines how much time there is. This is the moment the airport is likely to contact the brigade commander to ask if the processes could not be expedited because they disturb the airport processes (brigade commander Brabant-Zuid, personal communication, 12 November 2018). Especially on a regional airport this is the case because here there is less space to avoid the area in which the piece of luggage is located. In this example, you also see the security interest of the RNLM. The RNLM takes no chances and creates a safe zone.

This also happens when unattended luggage is found in the arrivals area. This should be a safe area where only passengers who have just landed have access to. The assumption therefore could be made that luggage found over there should be safe as well. However, it is up to the RNLM to make a risk assessment and to act. There might be a small chance that someone avoided the security measures and slipped into the arrivals area without being checked upon. In this case, the unattended luggage might form a threat. This is why the RNLM can make the decision to scale up and to bring in dogs for example who are able to detect explosives. This has an impact on the airport processes and might cause disruption. This is exactly what happened at Maastricht Airport, the airport believed that the RNLM scaled up too quickly. The RNLM has a certain responsibility and they are trained to act when unattended luggage is found. But they should first inspect the piece of luggage and see if the bag is labelled before they escalate and scale up. *“They should act on facts, not on assumptions”* (manager Maastricht Aachen Airport, 26 November 2018). Here a difference in interpretation between the RNLM and the airport can be seen.

## 5.4 Schiphol Airport versus Other National Airports

According to the previous findings, a few topics stand out in which Schiphol Airport differs from the other national airports. These topics are: the position of Schiphol Airport in the Netherlands compared to the position of the other national airports, the position of the RNLN in the local domain, the relationship between the RNLN and the airport and the way landside security is provided. These topics are further discussed in this section.

### 5.4.1 *Position of the Airport in the Netherlands*

Schiphol Airport is of great importance for the Netherlands, economically and politically seen. Therefore, a lot of attention goes out to Schiphol Airport, also from a RNLN perspective. At the brigade Drenthe-IJsselstreek this image is confirmed: *“That is the case a lot, first Schiphol and then, there is nothing for a long time...”* (personal communication, 1 November 2018).

What you see is that Schiphol Airport is supported better in every way. Also, when you take a look at the professionalism of the airport processes, the processes at the other national airports do not meet the standards of Schiphol Airport. For example, when you take a look at the organization of the RNLN at the national airports. As mentioned before, at Schiphol Airport multiple brigades are established, while the other national airports are part of one regional brigade. Thereby, at Schiphol Airport an administrative component is established which supports the brigade commanders and maintains the relationships with partners. The other brigades do not have an additional staff which supports the brigade commander in his network. But the need is there as pointed out by the respondents.

Also, for the NCSC, the contacts with Schiphol Airport are better than with the other national airports. Because of the regular consultations, for example in relation to BPVS, one has more contact with Schiphol Airport. Because of the absence of such a platform at the other national airports, it is harder to keep in touch and consequently the gap between private and public authorities increases, which complicates communication in the event of an emergency (personal communication, 12 November 2018). This is confirmed in the report of the Inspection for Security and Justice (2015) in which is noted that the further away from Schiphol Airport and the more towards the local domain, the RNLN, but also other public authorities, feel more distant from the private authorities like the airport itself.

Schiphol Airport could be seen as an example for the other national airports, like a bigger sister. Those airports depend on the expertise and experience of Schiphol Airport. For example, how BPVS is organised. The other airports are not represented in this platform. Therefore, a similar platform, a reduced form, might be introduced to the other airports to stimulate multidisciplinary cooperation over there as well.

#### 5.4.2 *Position of the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee in the Local Domain*

As pointed out earlier in this chapter, local authorities become more important when talking about civil aviation security, especially regarding landside security. This has an impact on how the RNLM situates itself in the domain around the airport. A good relationship with the local authorities would help to better understand the organization of the RNLM and its responsibilities at the airport. Nevertheless, it would also help the local authorities to better understand their role and responsibilities with regard to landside security. A good relationship with the local domain would restrain ambiguities and improve the cooperation regarding the provision of landside security. In table 1 the position of the RNLM in the local domain is summarized for each national airport.

Table 1. Position of the RNLM in the local domain

National Airport	Position in Local Domain
Schiphol Airport	Regular consultation moments RNLM is represented in the local authority structure
Rotterdam Airport	No regular consultation moments RNLM is not represented in the local authority structure
Eindhoven Airport	Regular consultation moments RNLM is not represented in the local authority structure
Maastricht Airport	Foremost informal contacts RNLM is not represented in the local authority structure
Groningen Airport	Foremost informal contacts RNLM is not represented in the local authority structure

At Schiphol Airport, one could see that the RNLM has a well-arranged position in the local domain. There is contact between one another on a regular basis, for example within the BPVS platform. Thereby, the brigade commander of the Brigade Police and Security represents the RNLM in the local authority structure of the municipality of Haarlemmermeer. However, the structure of the RNLM and the quick job rotation of the RNLM officials has an impact on the position of the RNLM in the local domain. This makes it hard for the RNLM to be a loyal partner in the domain. At and around Schiphol Airport, this problem is less present than at other national airports. This might be a positive result of the organization structure of the RNLM at Schiphol Airport, the multiple brigades and the support staff. This ensures that there is some sort of collective memory.

At the other national airports, the position of the RNLM is less regulated and formalised in the local domain. At Rotterdam Airport the contacts with the local authorities are extremely bad according to the brigade commander Zuid-Holland. Here, you have to deal with great personalities as RNLM, this asks for investment in personal relationships and attention from the highest level. A major is no conversation partner for the mayor of Rotterdam, a general should sit over there to start the conversation. This has an impact on the way the RNLM works together with the local authorities and what their vision is of landside security. For now, the airport in general is no priority for the local authorities and the RNLM is thus not regarded as a legitimate conversation partner. This has as an effect on landside security that it is seen as a regular process for the local authority. But as soon as an unexpected event occurs on the airport, the local authorities want to be in charge.

The brigade commander of Brabant-Zuid has a different experience with regard to the relationship with local authorities. Here, there is also no structured and formal consultation between the RNLM and the local authorities. However, there are regular contacts between the two. Multiple times a year, the brigade commander has contact with the Safety and Security Director of the municipality of Eindhoven. As a result, they can find one another when an unexpected event occurs at the landside area of Eindhoven Airport. However, these contacts with the local authorities have not always been there, this depends foremost on the personality and openness of the brigade commander and the local authority itself.

For Maastricht Airport and Groningen Airport, the position of the RNLM in the local domain foremost depends on informal contacts between the brigade and the municipality. Here, there are no formal and regular consultations. Thereby, the airport has another position in the region and is therefore not the biggest asset for the municipalities. When an unexpected event occurs at landside, they know how to find each other. But in the cold phase there is less contact between the RNLM and the local authorities.

#### *5.4.3 Relationship between the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee and the Airports*

Besides local authorities, also the airports gain more responsibility with regard to civil aviation security. The airport itself is responsible for taking security measures. This includes the landside area where the airport has a responsibility with regard to for example the roof and the use of specific safety glass in the windows. In other words, the airports are responsible for taking physical security measures, on landside as well as on airside. In table 2 the relationship between the RNLM and the national airports is summarized.

Table 2. Relationship between the RNLN and the national airports

National Airport	Relationship with RNLN
Schiphol Airport	Regular consultation moments on different levels BPVS 'Like a marriage' (RSG, personal communication, 27 November 2018)
Rotterdam Airport	Regular consultation moments on different levels Downsized version of BPVS 'Less transparant' (brigade commander Zuid-Holland, personal communication, 20 November 2018)
Eindhoven Airport	Regular consultation moments on different levels Downsized version of BPVS 'They are willing' (brigade commander Brabant-Zuid, personal communication, 12 November 2018)
Maastricht Airport	Regular consultation moments on different levels No platform like BPVS 'It is a stiff relationship' (brigade commander Zuid-Limburg, personal communication, 5 November 2018)
Groningen Airport	Regular consultation moments on different levels No platform like BPVS 'The lines are very short' (brigade commander Drenthe-IJsselstreek, personal communication, 1 November 2018)

At Schiphol Airport, the relationship between the RNLN and the airport is well arranged and there is contact on a regular basis. The BPVS platform is partly responsible for this because it supports the cooperation between the two, also with regard to landside security. Thereby, multiple interests come together in the platform. These are for example the economic interests of the airport and the security interests of the RNLN. The platform facilitates in finding a balance between these interests. What an economic interest for the airport is, may be a security interest for the RNLN. For example, stimulating the flow of passengers through the security checks. At Schiphol Airport this would mean that Plaza would not become overcrowded which improves landside security. This is an advantage for the RNLN. Thereby, people spent more money on the airside, what is an advantage for the airport itself. Here you see that a good relationship between the RNLN and the airport has benefits for both parties. It has a positive effect on landside security as both parties experience advantages.



For the other national airports, the same benefits would be there if there is a good relationship between the airport and the RNLN. However, these airports do not know a platform like BPVS and therefore the relationship with the airport is less obvious. At Rotterdam Airport, the RNLN experiences a less transparent environment. Therefore, the relationship with the airport itself is not always good. However, both parties are clear to one another about what their intentions and interests are. In relation to landside security, this means that the airport takes measures that are necessary to provide landside security and supports the RNLN in doing so to a certain extent, as long as it is in line with the vision and interests of the airport.

At Eindhoven Airport, the brigade has regular consultation moments with the airport direction at all levels. This makes that almost everything is negotiable and one is willing to help each other. For landside security this means for example that the airport facilitates the RNLN in working places at the terminal or that the airport emphasizes the need to have enough and capable Marechaussee officials at the airport.

At Maastricht Airport, the relationship between the airport and the RNLN is less well experienced. The quick personnel rotations of Marechaussee officials might be a cause for this. The RNLN is still a passer-by for the airport. This also has an impact on landside security as officials who work longer at Maastricht Airport would execute their tasks in another way according to the respondent of Maastricht Aachen Airport (personal communication, 26 November 2018). The RNLN then would have more feeling with the airport and the processes.

Finally, the brigade Drenthe-IJsselstreek has consultations with Groningen Airport on a regular basis as well. The brigade commander only has contact with the director of the airport when the need is there. Regular consultations are with a formal Marechaussee officer who now works for the airport. This has a positive effect on the cooperation between the two and makes it easier to talk about landside security. Nevertheless, the shift in focus here has not entailed major changes as the same officials as before execute the tasks.

## 6. Discussion

In this section, the findings of the study are linked to the extensive literature concerning sensemaking, as presented in the theoretical background chapter. The structure of the findings section is followed here as well. First, civil aviation security is linked to the sensemaking literature. After this, the sensemaking process of the RNLM at Schiphol Airport is looked into and explained following the literature. The same is done with the sensemaking process of the RNLM at the other national airports. At last, an explanation is given for the variations in the sensemaking process, according to the literature.

### 6.1 Making Sense of Civil Aviation Security

Airside and landside security no longer can be seen separately from each other. This has an impact on how stakeholders at and around the airports interact with each other. Thereby, it also has an impact on how the RNLM makes sense of the changing relationship with the stakeholders, especially with regard to landside security. As local authorities become more important and also the airports gain more responsibility, the frames one relies on change as well. Where sensemaking first was seen as a cognitive process in which individual frameworks were mostly related to organizational contexts (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014), sensemaking is now more seen as a social process in which stakeholders should interact more with the environment and with each other to act collectively (Maitlis, 2005).

When landside security was a less hot topic than it is nowadays, the authority structures were clearer for all stakeholders. The NCSC is responsible for civil aviation security and therefore it was also the most important stakeholder for the RNLM. There was no need to invest in the relationships with local authorities for example. One was committed to one frame which might have caused blind spots as landside security has always been there (Lakoff, 1987). However, the focus was not there. With the shift in focus, it is expected to be more flexible and adaptive. One must be able to switch between frames. Here sensemaking as a social process becomes more visible because interaction with the stakeholders is more needed now with the stakeholders to interpret the situation and to act collectively in the end (Maitlis, 2005). The RNLM thus has to invest in the relationship with the relevant stakeholders. A shift in focus might also mean that the RNLM needs to invest in other relationships than they did before. As the local authorities gain more responsibility and importance in the field, the RNLM should respond to this.

This does not only count for the RNLM, but also for the local authorities for example. As they gain more responsibility, they must invest more in the relationship with the other

stakeholders at and around the airport as well. As mentioned in the theoretical background chapter, sensemaking is about connecting various cues to understand what is going on. This means that the stakeholders must work together, share information and build up a common understanding of the situation before acting (Faraj and Xiao, 2006).

Unfortunately, the structure and character of the RNLM organization could be a disturbing factor in the sensemaking process. The quick job rotations make that the RNLM is not always seen as a loyal partner in the network. This might also be a cause for the elusive character the RNLM has for stakeholders. For the sensemaking process, this means that expertise and knowledge might be absent in some situations which makes it harder to attach meaning to a certain situation and to place it into a certain framework. This has as a result that situations might be placed in a certain framework too quick by the RNLM which could cause the collapse of sensemaking (Weick, 1993).

## 6.2 Making Sense of Landside Security at Schiphol Airport

How does the RNLM make sense of the changing relationship with its stakeholders in providing landside security at Schiphol Airport? At Schiphol Airport, the BPVS platform could be seen as a facilitator for the social process of sensemaking. This platform offers a place for the stakeholders to interact with each other and to interpret the world and act collectively (Maitlis, 2005). The RNLM has an advisory role in this platform and therefore also is part of the collective sensemaking process when an unexpected situation may occur. The working group 'landside security' makes it possible to connect various cues to understand what is going on and to see what kind of frames the stakeholders will commit themselves. The platform and working group also give an insight in the multiple interests of the various stakeholders which could have an influence on the sensemaking process of the RNLM. Stakeholders with other interests might promote an alternative frame to the RNLM (Werner and Cornelissen, 2014).

Promoting an alternative frame could be done by the airport who has foremost an economic interest as private entity. The findings also show that the airport experiences advantages when passengers flow to the airside as soon as possible. This is where the passengers spent most of their money. The airport here holds on to an economic frame, while the RNLM commits herself to a security frame which entails the fact that it also has a security advantage to have more passengers on airside. It is important for both the RNLM and the airport to make these interests clear to each other to stimulate the social process of sensemaking. Now, the RNLM sometimes has the feeling that they are played off and the social process is disturbed. Sensemaking then occurs as a more cognitive process (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014) as the RNLM experiences that it is tried to influence the sensemaking process towards a preferred

outcome (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). This for example is shown by the fact that the RNLM has a problem of understaffing at the airport which has an effect on the airport processes. The focus for the RNLM is to make sure the airport is as safe as possible, on landside as well as on airside. For the airport, the disturbed processes hurt their image and therefore politics and media are used to emphasize the problems of the RNLM.

However, one can also see that the airport and the RNLM work together to make sense of landside security. For example, during the power failure in 2018. This unexpected event was a trigger for sensemaking. A power failure has an high impact that might threaten the viability of the stakeholders. Routine processes were being disturbed and it became uncertain how to act on the situation. Crisis sensemaking takes place here as sense has to be made under pressure in order to act adequately. As a situation like a power failure is difficult to comprehend, people will try to gather as much information as possible to determine what the most suitable action would be. However, this situation asks for immediate action. Therefore, the RNLM, together with the airport, decided to create a lockdown. The RNLM created a frame under pressure, based on their expertise and training. A common picture is created by the RNLM and the airport. Shared presumptions that are established in ongoing communication are seen as a common ground (Clark and Marshall, 1981). Therefore, it is important to know what other stakeholders know and what other stakeholders would see as the appropriate thing to do (Cornelissen et al., 2014). Unfortunately, the local authorities were not informed in time about the measures taken and the nature of the incident. The local authorities thus committed themselves to another frame which had an impact on the sensemaking process of landside security in general. Here, the politics of sensemaking became visible. A finger pointing game started but this did not improve the process. This emphasizes the importance of sensemaking, also in relation to responsibility and blame.

Another hiccup in the sensemaking process during the power failure was the usage of the term 'lockdown' by the RNLM. This term is an operational command for the RNLM and thus a certain frame. However, for other stakeholders the term referred to another frame which caused unclarity and disturbed sensemaking as a social process.

### 6.3 Making Sense of Landside Security at Other National Airports

How does the RNLM make sense of the changing relationship with its stakeholders in providing landside security at the other airports? The other airports do not know a platform like BPVS that facilitates the social process of sensemaking. As a result, there is a big chance that a cognitive process of sensemaking is seen when an unexpected event happens at a national airport as the network around the airports is less formalized. The organizational context of each

stakeholder forms the individual frameworks and references of the officials. This also makes that the RNLM has a different relationship here with its stakeholders. There is less interaction with the airport and the local authorities which makes it harder to make sense of landside security following a social process.

The elusive character of the RNLM and the lack of a collective memory does not improve this process. The quick job rotations of the RNLM have an impact on the cooperation between the RNLM and its stakeholders as it is harder to build up a sustainable relationship. This also means that there is less interaction between the stakeholders which makes it harder to act collectively (Maitlis, 2005). Thereby, the lack of a collective memory within the RNLM organization and the quick job rotations make the sensemaking process more difficult. It is harder for the officials to develop a framework for themselves of how the airport processes work and how landside security is provided (Hill and Levenhagen, 1995). It is expected that the officials hold on to their training too tight, instead of making sense of the situation first at the airport. This may cause the collapse of sensemaking (Weick, 1993). When officers of the RNLM longer hold their function, they also get more feeling with the airport itself and are therefore able to improvise and opening up to other frames.

Another trigger that influences the sensemaking process is the relationship with the airport. At the national airports, the RNLM is seen foremost as part of the logistic process. Therefore, the RNLM is often not informed about decisions made by the airport and a conflict in interests may appear. For example, with the terrorist threat at Rotterdam Airport. The measures taken by the RNLM and the airport both had an effect on landside security. However, the measures were not tuned. The RNLM made sense of the situation first, took their own measures and informed the airport. The airport subsequently took measures on their own as well that had a great impact on the way landside security would be provided. The airport made sense of the situation by themselves, following a cognitive process. There was no collective act and an alternative frame is promoted here by the airport (Werner and Cornelissen, 2014).

At the other national airports, the changing relationship with the local authorities also has an impact on the sensemaking process of the RNLM. The local authorities gain more responsibility and therefore play a bigger role in the sensemaking process of the RNLM with regard to landside security. However, the local authorities are still searching for their role in the domain and therefore do not already have frameworks they can rely on. It is likely that the local authorities will commit themselves to frames that are connected to their organizational context, instead of interacting with the RNLM to interpret the situation together and act collectively. When the RNLM is not represented in the local authority structure and for the local authorities

it is not totally clear what the role and responsibilities of the RNLN are at the national airports, it is hard to make sense of the situation together.

#### 6.4 Role of Power and Interests

Other factors that might influence the sensemaking process with regard to civil aviation security and the shift in focus from airside to landside security are power and interests. There are multiple competing accounts present in the environment at and around the national airports. Thereby, political processes have an influence on the interpretations made (Maitlis and Sonensheim, 2010; Maitlis and Christianson, 2014). These factors cause struggles in the collective sensemaking process and make that stakeholders compete in the network to shape meanings and influence the sensemaking process towards a preferred outcome.

Power relations are crucial in the environment at and around the national airport. Various stakeholders could have this 'power position'. When taking a look at Schiphol Airport, the airport itself is an important stakeholder in the environment and has a powerful position as private entity. The airport is highly regarded and therefore has an important role in and influence on the sensemaking process of the RNLN. The airport holds on to an economic frame and is not afraid to use politics and the media to make their point clear. Concerning Rotterdam Airport, local politics play a crucial role in the sensemaking process of the RNLN. Here you see that local authorities do not see the airport as a priority in the region. This has an impact on the way the RNLN is situated in the local domain and how sense is made of the changing relationship with the stakeholders because of the shift in focus from airside to landside security.

This indicates that sensemaking, especially in times of crises, is foremost shaped by institutions and their role in the domain. Hence, the link could be made between crisis and change as they do not differ that much from each other and both need sensemaking (Maitlis and Sonensheim, 2010). The shift in focus from airside to landside security is a change of which sense has to be made by the RNLN as the relationship with its stakeholders changes as well. This causes ambiguities and feelings of disorientation as well and asks for an investment in the relationship with local authorities and airports who both gain more responsibilities.

#### 6.5 Academic Declaration for the Variations in the Sensemaking Process

The first major difference in making sense of landside security at Schiphol Airport or the other national airports is related to the formalization of the relationship with the stakeholders. At Schiphol, the BPVS platform facilitates collective sensemaking as a social process. The platform offers a place for the stakeholders to interact with each other and to act collectively when an unexpected event occurs. At the other national airports, there is no formalized structure

that connects the various stakeholders at and around the airport. As a result, sensemaking is more an individual process in which the organizational context influences the personal frameworks. Thereby, the platform offers the opportunity to see the various interests of the stakeholders and offers the opportunity to promote alternative frames to the RNLM related to landside security. When there is no platform like BPVS, these interests and alternative frames are more likely to be presented in another way which causes the idea of a not transparent environment in which sense is given to the RNLM outside the social process.

What you see is, that it is easier for the RNLM to make sense of landside security and the changing relationship with its stakeholders at Schiphol Airport than at the other national airports. This is also caused by the fact that around the other airports, the stakeholders do not know exactly what the role and responsibilities of the RNLM are at the national airports. Therefore, it might be easier for the stakeholders to promote their own frame that represents their own interests instead of interpreting the situation together.

Sensegiving is therefore seen at Schiphol Airport as well as on the other national airports. Foremost the airports itself influence the sensemaking process towards of a preferred outcome. For example, by using the media to write something about the personnel shortages at the airports, or by calling the brigade commander to ask if the processes could not be expedited because they disturb the airport processes. Here, the economic interests of the airports prevail as the airports want their processes to continue. This might influence the way the RNLM makes sense of the situation and how the stakeholders are involved in this process.

The biggest difference in the sensemaking process of the RNLM with regard to the changing relationship with stakeholders in providing landside security between Schiphol Airport and the other national airports stems from the interaction with the local authorities. The shift in focus from airside to landside security makes that the local authorities gain more responsibilities and therefore become important stakeholders for the RNLM. When an unexpected event occurs at landside area that disrupts public order, the municipality has to be informed as they have the authority. For Schiphol Airport, this process is well designed and the RNLM has a proper relationship with the municipality. This stimulates sensemaking as a social process and minimizes the chance that sense is given by the local authorities when a crisis actually happens. Trust is already built up between the two and therefore it is possible to use informal coordination modes. However, communication and building up a common understanding of the situation stays important. It is a process of dialogic *coordination* “*in that it is highly situated in the specifics of the unfolding event*” (Faraj and Xiao, 2006: 1164). In the process of dialogic coordination, the coordination practice ‘epistemic contestation’ is seen. This refers to the fact that the interaction between the RNLM and the local authority may be touchy

and opinions may be different. The separation between roles and responsibilities might know a certain tension and therefore generate an ‘epistemic tussle’ (Faraj and Xiao, 2006). Another underlying practice of dialogic coordination that is seen here is joint sensemaking. This process starts in the operation and follows its way up in the hierarchy. Experts step in where needed, which asks for significant negotiation. In this case between officials of the RNLN and employees of the municipality.

At the other national airports, the relationship with the local authorities is less systematic. This makes it harder to make sense of a situation collectively. Thereby, it is more likely that the local authorities try to influence the sensemaking process of the RNLN towards a preferred outcome as there are still some unclarities concerning the role and responsibility of the RNLN. Besides this, the elusive character of the RNLN and the lack of a collective memory does not influence this process in a positive way. But also, political structures have a role in the sensemaking process and form the context in which decisions should be made. This is especially seen and expected to happen at Eindhoven Airport and Rotterdam Airport as the municipalities belong to the ‘big five’. Therefore, the mayor has a certain reputation to preserve. At Maastricht Airport and Groningen Airport, this is less visible. Here, informal contacts between the RNLN and the local authorities exists, and an informal coordination mode is used. To improve the sensemaking process and to make sure it is a social process in which the stakeholders act collectively, the RNLN should invest more in the relationship with the local authorities.

## 6.6 Summary and Suggestions for Future Research

In the discussion section, it becomes clear that sensemaking is an important process for the RNLN to carry out their tasks in a proper way. Sensemaking is foremost seen as a social process by the RNLN. In the interaction with the airport, and the authorities, it is seen that the will is there to act collectively, especially with regard to Schiphol Airport. There is a collective act of multiple stakeholders around the airports to interpret the world or a certain unexpected situation like a crisis. However, the RNLN does not always experience the sensemaking process as collective, social process. Here you thus see that sensemaking as cognitive process is present as well. The cognitive process may be stimulated by the elusive character of the RNLN and the lack of a collective memory. Another stimulator of the cognitive process might be the various interests of the stakeholders. The economic interest of the airports versus the security interest of the RNLN influences the way the RNLN makes sense of a certain situation. Here you see the process of sensegiving.

Besides economic interests, also political structures, foremost related to the local authorities, influence the sensemaking process of the RNLN. The administrative dynamics and



the position game of administrators makes that the political pressure is high for local authorities and therefore the relationship with the RNLM is not always as good as it should be.

The military identity of the RNLM, the hierarchic organization and the quick job rotation also has a detrimental impact on the sensemaking process, especially when an unexpected event takes place. Here, a flexible and adaptive sensemaking is desired. But for the RNLM this is not what they used to, they will rely upon their training and experiences and make sense of the situation following the cognitive process in first instance.

This discussion sheds a light on how the RNLM makes sense of their environment at a national airport. However, this study also left room for further research. First of all, further research could shed a light on how and when an organization switches between sensemaking as a cognitive process and sensemaking as a social process. This could have an influence on how the RNLM invests in the network at and around the national airports. Second, it would be interesting to delve deeper into the political structures and power relations at and around the national airports to see how these compete with each other, especially in crisis situations. In this study, the first step is made by taking a look at the various interests of the stakeholders at and around the airports. However, it not yet shown how these compete with each other. Finally, future research could further delve into the sensemaking process of the RNLM during a crisis. In this study, the normal situation and the unexpected situations like a crisis received attention. But it would be interesting to further delve into the sensemaking process in a crisis situation to see how the RNLM then interacts with their environment.

## 7. Conclusion

In this study, the organization of the RNLM at the national airports is delved into. The shift in focus from airside to landside security has an impact on the authority structures at and around the national airports. For the RNLM, this influences the relationship with its stakeholders in the network as the local authorities and the airports itself gain more responsibilities. This also has an impact on the sensemaking process of the RNLM. There might be strategic efforts of certain stakeholders to influence the sensemaking process towards a preferred outcome, depending on the organizational, economic and political interests. To see if the sensemaking process of the RNLM is influenced by the authorities and the airport itself, the following research question is posed: *“How does the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee make sense of the changing relationship with its stakeholders in providing landside security at different national airports?”*

The results of the study show that the environment at and around airports, in which the RNLM has to execute her tasks, is quite complex and knows multiple stakeholders who have their own political, economic and personal interests. It is important that the stakeholders are aware of each other's interests and their backgrounds. For now, it seems that there is a lack of awareness which has an influence on the sensemaking process of the RNLM with regard to the changing relationship with its stakeholders. Improving the awareness and investing in the relationship with the stakeholders will also improve the communication with them. This is a benefit as one is able to find another faster when the need is there.

Sensemaking is an important process for the RNLM to execute their tasks in a proper way. Sensemaking is seen as a social process and as a collective act of the multiple stakeholders. However, the stakeholders in the domain do influence the sensemaking process of the RNLM at the national airports. The economic, political and personal interests of the local and national authorities and the airports guide the sensemaking process of the RNLM. However, the RNLM does not lose their security interests out of side, this interest will always prevail. How hard the other stakeholders try to let their interests prevail, the security interest does not compromise. But this offers an opening for conversation between the RNLM and the authorities and airports to define a common interest and to improve the sensemaking process, to make it a more social and collective act. This could help in defining a turning point where the economic interests become subordinate to the security interests. This is a positive contribution the decision-making procedure, when this turning point is known and accepted by every stakeholder at and around the national airports.

The results of this study are based on various conversation with stakeholders and the RNLM. The results are thus based on experiences and interpretations of the participants, they

are thus subjective and not the ultimate truth. This is a limitation of this research as the answer to the main question thus also is a subjective answer, as interpreted by the author. Another limitation of this study is that not all relevant stakeholders at and around the national airports are interviewed. The results of this study therefore are not applicable to every airport and or authority as they might interpret the situation in a different way. However, the results do give an overview of the most important stakeholders and their relationship with the RNLM. The interests of all become visible even as the way these various interests do influence the sensemaking process of the RNLM at the national airports.

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## **9. Appendix 1 – List of Interviewees**

### Royal Netherlands Marechaussee

- Commander of brigade Drenthe – IJsselstreek (1 Nov. 2018)
- Deputy Commander of brigade Drenthe – IJsselstreek (1 Nov. 2018)
- Commander of brigade Limburg-Zuid (5 Nov. 2018)
- Coordinator Schiphol Airport (6 Nov. 2018)
- Commander of brigade Brabant-Zuid (12 Nov. 2018)
- Commander of brigade Zuid-Holland (20 Nov. 2018)

### Maastricht Aachen Airport

- Safety and security manager (26 Nov. 2018)

### Municipality of Beek

- Policy advisor public order and safety (5 Nov. 2018)

### National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism

- Policy advisor civil aviation security and surveillance (12 Nov. 2018)

### National Crisis Centre

- Senior Safety and Security Advisor (10 Dec. 2018)

### Royal Schiphol Group

- Senior manager fire brigade, crisis and safety training (27 Nov. 2018)

## **10. Appendix 2 – Exercises**

Mono-disciplinary SGB0 exercise Royal Netherlands Marechaussee

- Scenario of the Crisis Response Plan Schiphol (CBPS, Crisisbestrijdingsplan Schiphol)

Multi-disciplinary Operational Team exercise Safety Region Kennemerland

- Scenario of the Crisis Response Plan Schiphol (CBPS, Crisisbestrijdingsplan Schiphol)